

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to present a petition on behalf of people who are concerned about the high cost of education on property taxes.

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

The people who have signed this petition are from Wadena, Kuroki, Margo, and Fosston.

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again this afternoon on behalf of citizens of Moose Jaw and district concerned about a lack of dialysis services. The prayer reads as follows:

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

Again today, the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are all from the city of Moose Jaw, and I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I stand once more to present a petition on behalf of producers in the Cypress Hills constituency. This concerns the issue of Crown grazing land lease renewals. And the 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 almost exclusively by constituents around the community of Claydon and Eastend.

I so present.

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

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

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

I so present.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of people very concerned about the condition of Highway 47. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 47 South in order to avoid serious injury and property damage.

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

And this is signed by people from Estevan, Macoun, Crosby, North Dakota, and Regina.

I so present. Thank you.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition of behalf of people from west central Saskatchewan concerned with the alarming rate of school closures in the area. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its position on the isolated school grants and have them reinstated for negative grant divisions; and further, stop the discrimination against our rural citizens by supplying a quality education central in their community.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the good folks from Major, Saskatchewan and Superb, Saskatchewan.

I here present.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens opposed to the crop insurance premium increases.

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

As in duty bound, our petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by citizens from Mantario, Kindersley, and Flaxcombe.

I so present.

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon.

Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure current Crown land lessees maintain their first option to renew those leases.

And as duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Battleford and Cando.

I so present.

**Mr. Lorenz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I bring a petition forth in recognition of the condition of Highway 14.

Whereby your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to recognize the deplorable condition of Highway 14 from Biggar to Wilkie, and to take necessary action to reconstruct and repair the highway in order to address the safe concerns and to facilitate economic development growth possibilities in rural Saskatchewan.

Duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

And this petition is signed by people from the city of Saskatoon, the town of Wilkie, Unity, and Marengo.

**Mr. Hart:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents concerned with the condition of Highway 22, that section between Junction 6 and Junction 20. The prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Strasbourg, Earl Grey, and Bulyea.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are very, very concerned with the government's handling of the Crown land leases. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Rabbit Lake, Spiritwood, and Dundurn.

I so present.

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Clerk:** — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby presented as addendums to sessional

papers no. 10, no. 12, no. 13, 18, 35, 36, 41, 90, and 100.

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of CIC: during the month of April 2002, how much money did SaskPower spend on television ads?

Mr. Speaker, I have also similar questions for subsequent months.

I also have the . . . I give notice that on day no. 46 I shall ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of CIC: during the month of April 2002, how much money did SaskPower spend on radio ads?

And then, Mr. Speaker, there are subsequent questions for subsequent months.

And finally, I give notice that on day no. 46 I shall ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of CIC: during the month of April 2002, how much money did SaskPower spend on print ads?

Mr. Speaker, there are also questions for subsequent months and I'm pleased to present these questions.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the CIC minister: what are the guidelines for allocating funds to corporations of which CIC has 100 per cent equity in; and what are the guidelines for further allocating cash injections to the company or companies; and specifically, what are the debt to equity ratios within these guidelines?

I so present.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Sask Water: does Sask Water have any water sharing agreements with the states of Montana and North Dakota; if so, could the minister please provide details of these agreements?

**Ms. Bakken:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Justice: how many different lawsuits is the Government of Saskatchewan currently defending against?

I so present.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

seated in your gallery are two guests from the province of Alberta. They are Rob Renner. Mr. Renner is serving his third term as Member of the Legislative Assembly for Medicine Hat. He is a member of the standing committee on law and regulations, the Treasury Board, and the Standing Policy Committee on Health and Community Living, and he chairs the Government Reorganization Secretariat.

He is accompanied here today by Dennis Gartner, who is the assistant deputy minister of pensions, insurance and financial institutions and serves as the superintendent of financial institutions. They're also accompanied here today — not with them — Mr. Peter Thomas of the pensions, insurance, and financial institutions division.

And these gentlemen are here to discuss insurance matters with officials in Saskatchewan. I would ask all my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to join me in extending them a very warm welcome. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the member opposite on the government side to welcome our visitors from Alberta to Saskatchewan.

And we know that this is a difficult time in the area of pensions and insurance right across Canada, and we look forward to co-operating with you and building what is correct for Western Canada.

So I hope you enjoy your visit to the legislature and the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the rest of this House, some young people who won the Orange Zone contest.

We have up in your gallery — and I would ask them to stand as I read their names — Mark Laprairie, grade 10 student at Campbell Collegiate and winner of the Orange Zone Challenge. You'll be seeing his Orange Zone ad on the TV.

And accompanying him, Katrina Bray, grade 12 student at Campbell Collegiate and runner-up in the Orange Zone Challenge. And you may have already seen her ad in print — the turtle crawling through the oranges — a very effective ad.

Also accompanying them are Howard Jesse, who is the principal at Campbell Collegiate, and Stuart Harris, the computer science teacher, who I hear has done an excellent job with all the students in enabling them to develop their skills and talents, and we see this particularly in these two.

The Orange Zone Challenge project was created to have advertising material developed for younger, newer drivers by younger, newer drivers. And they have done an excellent job.

Accompanying them also would be Marita Bray, Katrina's

mother, who we welcome to the legislature. And from the Department of Highways and Transportation, Brian Cook, senior information officer; and Layna Segall, Internet manager.

So I'd ask you to join me in welcoming these folk to the legislature.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you, 25 grade 12 students and their teacher, Leslie Tivas from Esterhazy.

I'll have the good fortune of meeting with them shortly and I'd ask all members to welcome them here today.

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

**Mr. Kasperski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to also introduce to you and through you to my colleagues in the legislature, a group of 27 grade 5 students from Ruth M. Buck School seated in the gallery opposite.

I'm looking forward to meeting with them after their tour of the building, and also I'd like colleagues to recognize their teachers, Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Bailey, and welcome them here today. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of this House, someone sitting in the west gallery. This gentleman lives in Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan, and is the candidate for the New Democrats in the Wood River constituency.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased. Trevor Davies, Trevor Davies, Mr. Speaker, came and spent the day at a caucus meeting, and here to give notice to the member from Wood River to get out there and do some work because he's got a fight on his hand come next election.

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

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Swift Current Business Excellence Awards

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, last evening the Swift Current Chamber of Commerce hosted the fifth annual Swift Current Business Excellence Awards that was attended by over 240 people. A very successful evening, Mr. Speaker, as the Swift Current business community gathered together to honour both those who had been nominated for awards and those who eventually went on to win.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the winners last night included Anderson & Company, barristers and solicitors in the Property Appearance Award category. Boston Pizza won the Community Involvement Award. The Heritage Award was won by Armstrong Implements, Mr. Speaker, and the New Business Award was won by John's Country Cafe in downtown Swift

Current. And Golden West Radio, that operates both the AM (amplitude modulation) and FM (frequency modulation) stations in Swift Current as well as the AM station in Shaunavon, won the Customer Service Award.

The Business Choice Award was a hotly contested category won by Tim Hortons. And, Mr. Speaker, the Business of the Year Award was won by Diamond Energy Services Inc. — the other nominees, Robertson Implements and Shaunavon Chevrolet Oldsmobile Pontiac Buick GMC — as the Swift Current Business Excellence Awards, for the first time in their five years, expanded to the whole region.

But the winner again in the Business of the Year Award — and congratulations to —Diamond Energy Services, an excellent and dynamic company in Swift Current.

(13:45)

And, Mr. Speaker, I know members of this Assembly will want to join me in congratulating all those who were nominated, the winners, and to thank the businesses in Swift Current and area for all that they do for Swift Current and the entire Southwest. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Cathedral Village Arts Festival**

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want you to know that it's that time of year again. For reasons as varied as all the unique things our constituencies do, I'm very proud to represent Regina Centre, and at this time of year we're having the 12th annual Cathedral Village Arts Festival. And I think anyone who has tried to drive down 13th Avenue these days would see that there's a lot going on.

It is in the heart of the city, Mr. Speaker, and it has the characteristics and virtues of a village — tight-knit yet diverse community of performers, artists, small-business people, school children, immigrants, volunteers, seniors, young families — very proud to be at the heart of Regina. And it is . . . I think the Cathedral Village Arts Festival was created as a way to express the good fortune to be members of the village, members of the province, the nation.

And we invite everyone who is listening today and everyone here to join us in the many delights we have to offer.

We did have a bit of cool beginning on Monday at the picnic but I want people to know that there's something on every night in every available church basement, hall, etc., all the way down 13th Avenue. There'll be musical talents, drama, street theatre, poetry, art exhibits, craft sales, movie under the stars. And this is on Saturday, one of the largest craft sales now in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there's magicians, face painting, and we have food and drink — something for every age and taste. So congratulations and thanks to festival coordinator, Debra Bell, and her committee.

Right through to Saturday night, Mr. Speaker, we invite you all

to come on down to the Cathedral Village Arts Festival. Thank you very much.

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

#### **National Aboriginal Awareness Week**

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week is national Aboriginal Awareness Week, and it has been designated to raise public awareness of Aboriginal issues and is part of the federal government's strategy to foster increased employment and retention of Aboriginal people in the public service.

And why is increased awareness important, Mr. Speaker? Well Aboriginal people represent the fastest-growing segment of our population. Saskatoon and Regina have the highest percentage of Aboriginal people of all Canadian cities at 7.5 per cent and 7.1 per cent respectively, yet Saskatchewan has one of the weakest Aboriginal workforce participation rates in all of Canada.

In our province, Aboriginal unemployment is four times higher than the general population, and this phenomena is not because of Aboriginal culture, Mr. Speaker. The social and economic conditions of many First Nations people are the result of historical factors, including failed government legislation, and government interfering and controlling Aboriginal lives.

Many Aboriginal people have not had the same opportunities for education or employment as other Canadians. And this is slowly changing, Mr. Speaker, and provincial and federal governments must continue to work with Aboriginal people in order to find solutions to these unique problems. It is up to community leaders to forge understanding, set examples, and work together.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just mention to people of the Assembly, as well as people across our province, how very important it is to learn to walk alongside each other in harmony.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Emergency Medical Services Week**

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is Emergency Medical Services Week, a time when we recognize and honour EMS (emergency medical services) providers for their dedication and professionalism.

This group of health care practitioners includes emergency medical technicians, emergency medical practitioners advanced, paramedics, emergency medical dispatchers, and first responders. This year's theme is EMS: When it matters most, which is a reflection of the critical role played by EMS practitioners in the delivery of health care.

According to the chairman and CEO (chief executive officer) of the Saskatchewan Paramedic Association, and I quote:

Gone are the days when the attendant simply picked up an individual in an ambulance and drove as fast as they could

to a hospital. We are now a mobile health care team . . . comprised (of a team) of very highly skilled practitioners.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year the first-ever Stars of Life awards were presented by the Saskatchewan Emergency Medical Services Association to recognize the achievements of 10 EMS professionals from various health regions. A highlight of this week is the presentation of the Governor General medals for exemplary service to 11 EMS professionals from across the province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues and all in the Assembly to join me in congratulating the various award winners and in acknowledging the fine work of all EMS practitioners throughout the province for the crucial role in making our health care system the best in Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Wilkie Student Provincial Winner of the Great Canadian Geography Challenge**

**Mr. Lorenz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have a student that has met the geography challenge. Adam Baslar, a grade 9 student from St. George School at Wilkie, captured first place honours at the provincial level of the Great Canadian Geography Challenge held in Estevan on April 5.

Adam won the gold medal at the school level held in mid-January. He then wrote a qualifying test to be eligible for the provincial competition. There were over 105,000 competitors from across Canada who took part in this year's challenge. Of those, 345 moved on to the provincial competition. Adam beat out 22 other Saskatchewan students to capture first place.

Mr. Speaker, Adam will now compete in the on-line national finals held on May 24. The top three students will be declared the Canadian national champions and will receive Bank of Canada scholarships of 3,000, 2,000, and \$1,000. The first-place student will earn the berth to the Canadian team that will compete at the national geography championship in Florida this July.

Mr. Speaker, join me in congratulating Adam and wishing him good luck in the national finals.

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

#### **Volunteer Honoured With Sterling Award**

**Ms. Jones:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every year the Sterling Award is presented to a woman from the Saskatoon area in recognition for her contributions to the quality of life in the community. I am pleased to say this year's recipient of this prestigious award is Lorena Dora Nickel, from my own constituency of Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Nickel is a worthy recipient of the Sterling Award. While living in Rosthern, she served as a member of the hospital auxiliary and was responsible for organizing seminars

and workshops for the community. She must have done quite a job. When Ms. Nickel moved from Rosthern into Saskatoon, the hospital auxiliary honoured her with a lifetime membership.

Ms. Nickel's volunteer work has taken her to Africa twice, where she worked in mission hospitals. On her first trip she, along with her husband and two small children, spent a couple of years in the Congo. Some time after that, now with a family of five, Ms. Nickel returned to Africa — this time to Tanzania where she taught in a nursing school.

In 1995, Ms. Nickel began volunteering at the Saskatoon Sexual Assault and Information Centre, devoting hours to the crisis line and helping abuse survivors in other ways, even accompanying them to the police station and hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Lorena Dora Nickel on being presented with the Sterling Award and in thanking Ms. Nickel for her dedication to the community.

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

#### **Conference on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder**

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Drinking alcohol is an acceptable norm in our society. Unfortunately, the consequences of drinking alcohol while pregnant can be devastating to an unborn child.

I attended a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder conference called One Voice: Shared Vision which was sponsored by Human Resources Development Canada as part of its Saskatchewan homelessness operations. The purpose of the conference was to kick-start better relations among various groups and organizations working with people with FASD (fetal alcohol spectrum disorder).

Mr. Speaker, it's heartbreaking listening to individuals affected by FASD speak about not being able to cope in mainstream society, about not fitting in, about the struggles within a system that's set up for an average person and not a person with a disability. They talk about their disability, which isn't visible; being called lazy or disruptive when in fact they are unable to understand. They talk about not knowing what was wrong with them and the sense of relief when they are finally assessed.

It's equally heartbreaking to talk with parents whose children are in the justice system or struggling to make their way. Parental frustration with a lack of understanding by the education, social, and justice systems was also very apparent. Frustration by judges, social workers, educators, and health officials for the lack of resources and understanding was also very apparent.

Mr. Speaker, FASD is totally preventable. I ask all my colleagues to share the vision of the conference and to integrate the departments to best serve the needs of the people who are afflicted with FASD, as well as educating the public in understanding this totally preventable and heartbreaking disability.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Yesterday the federal Minister of Agriculture, in the province of Alberta, announced that one case of BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy), also known as mad cow disease, had been confirmed in an eight-year-old beef cow in that province.

In response, the United States imposed a temporary import ban of beef cattle and beef products from Canada. However, USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) officials are confirmed to be working closely with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to investigate the incident, and hopes are that this case will be isolated and the ban lifted in short order.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain to this Assembly what conditions must be met in order for the US (United States) to lift this ban so that Saskatchewan and Canadian beef exports to the US can resume, and how long may it take to meet those conditions?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I will ask the Minister of Agriculture to respond to following questions, but I wanted to speak on behalf of government to say that we, and I'm sure all members of this legislature together, take this issue very, very seriously. Mr. Speaker, we are not alarmed but we are treating this with great diligence and I appreciate the co-operation of the opposition in this circumstance.

I do want to report to the House that since this became known to us there have been virtually hourly consultations between our officials, the federal officials; USDA has been co-operatively involved; that the department and minister are putting together an advisory committee of the stock growers, producers, the meat processors, all involved in the industry within our province.

I've taken the opportunity to speak to our Saskatchewan member of the federal cabinet and have been communicating with the Prime Minister's office on this matter. And I think we all, as legislators today, feel the weight of seriousness that attaches to this issue given the significance — the large significance — of the industry in our province, indeed in Western Canada and in Canada total.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to thank the Premier for his concern. It's certainly one that all Saskatchewan residents share.

We of course have been hearing from our constituents ever since the story hit the news yesterday. And there's a lot of concern amongst the public about the safety of beef products. But let it be said in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that the discovery of this case in Alberta proves without a doubt that the beef inspection system in Canada works. Canadian beef products are most certainly held to some of the highest standards in the world. And because of this system, this animal did not enter the public food chain.

While ongoing investigation in Alberta is important to secure this case and return Canada to our BSE status free, it is also important to help Saskatchewan beef producers, slaughter facilities, and meat — pardon me — meat production companies weather the impact of this incident.

I appreciate the announcement of an advisory group and I wonder would the minister include industry participants in regular briefings on the progress of this investigation and seek their input on how the government can help ensure that this province remains BSE free?

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

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition Saskatchewan Party makes a very important point. Not only are we advising the industry committee on a daily basis or on an hourly basis as the information comes to us in terms of the findings, but we also have established within the department ourselves a working group of four men and women who are senior members of our administrative team led by two of our physicians, or two of our doctorates, who are in the Department of Agriculture.

We are also in a daily communication, every morning, with the federal government and the CFIA (Canada Food Inspection Agency) and on an ongoing basis if there are new developments that are occurring. And so what we're attempting to do, Mr. Speaker, is to keep not only those who are in the industry informed on an ongoing basis, but also communicating that information with the general public so that consumers are also aware of all of the findings that are occurring on a regular basis.

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

(14:00)

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our understanding from a technical briefing by the Department of Agriculture officials this morning is that the CFIA is taking swift action to depopulate and quickly test all of the animals in the source herd and to trace back the origin of the infected cow. They have also traced out sales of animals from that herd and quarantined the farms where those animals now live.

It is important that Saskatchewan Agriculture officials are kept up to date on the progress of this investigation and that we as a province participate in any way possible in assuring the safety of Saskatchewan and Canadian cattle and beef products.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain what the province of Saskatchewan is doing to help with the investigation into the BSE case in Alberta?

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

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. One of the first things that we did as soon as the information became available is that we . . . Our officials were contacted by the federal officials, and our officials and the federal officials are working very closely in monitoring and overseeing in tracking and tracing of the information on the animals that are from this individual's farm.

Because there is such broad movement in the livestock industry, Mr. Speaker, it's hard to know where this animal might have actually originated from. It's been with this particular producer, I believe, for three years. The animal's eight years old; it's been on that farm for three years. They're now tracing and looking through their surveillance, through the manifests and the ear tags and the brands to see where in fact this animal actually originated from.

So we're working very closely with the Alberta officials, working closely . . . very closely with the federal government. We're also closely involved through the federal government and USDA. The USDA has in fact offered up their expertise to assist us in the overseer of this particular issue, Mr. Speaker. And we'll continue to work closely with those three, with those two provinces, our province, and the federal government, to ensure that we stay abreast of this issue as it moves along.

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

### Operation of Justice System

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, it's been almost a year since Saskatoon police officer John Popowich received \$1.3 million in apology from the NDP (New Democratic Party) government, this NDP government, for malicious prosecution.

At the time, former Justice minister Chris Axworthy said six other people who were wrongfully accused will likely receive compensation as well. He said, and I quote:

We would anticipate that in fairly short order we'll be hearing from those plaintiffs. I think it is the first in a series of settlements.

Mr. Speaker, almost a year has passed since Chris Axworthy apologized to John Popowich and promised similar action with the others who were maliciously prosecuted by the NDP justice system. When is this government going to do the right thing and apologize to those people as well?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, I believe that 11 suits, other than the Popowich suit, have been filed in Saskatchewan courts. Four of those are related to the investigation and prosecution of the Martensville prosecution. Six other suits are related to three other prosecutions and one suit has been withdrawn.

I want to say to the House, Mr. Speaker, that it is important to note that the prosecutions branch deals with approximately 84,000 charges each year and about 18,000 prosecutions. We have over the past 10 years, five cases that have given rise to 12 lawsuits.

I have every confidence in our prosecutors, Mr. Speaker. If there are allegations that they have done something wrong, in these cases those allegations can be put before the courts and the courts will decide whether the prosecutors have done something wrong. And that process is before the courts and we will abide by the decision of the courts, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, why is it that this government has the penchant to hide behind, it's in the courts? You would almost think that they love things in the courts so they don't have to answer questions in the House or to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, across this country, not just Canada but North America, people know of the Martensville case; they know of the Klassen case; they know of the Milgaard case — all things that have happened under the watch of this NDP government.

So I repeat, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: when is this government going to do the right thing and apologize to those people?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, I take it from the member's question that the member has decided that the prosecutors are in the wrong, and the police are in the wrong, and the plaintiffs are in the right. That is what the member has said, Mr. Speaker.

In this particular instance, Mr. Speaker, justice . . . The plaintiffs have their right to their day in court; so too the government, the prosecutors, and the police have their right to their day in court.

And ultimately, Mr. Speaker, we have a system whereby the judges decide. I understand that some of these cases are proceeding to trial. The courts will decide. It is not for me to decide. It is not for the member to decide, Mr. Speaker. It is for the courts to decide and we will respect that process.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The people that need an apology, Mr. Speaker, are the people who are involved in the same situation as Mr. Popowich. The former Justice minister apologized. If this Justice minister feels these people are guilty, he should go out there and say that or give the apology as was committed to by the former Justice minister, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, justice delayed is justice denied. These people were falsely accused of one of the most heinous crimes imaginable — the abuse of children. It took eight years for John Popowich to receive some amount of justice, even though nothing can really compensate him and his family for what they all went through. But at least after eight long years, he received compensation and an apology. The others, Mr. Speaker, are still waiting.

Mr. Speaker, what's the holdup? When are these people going to be compensated for the terrible injustice they suffered at the hands of this NDP justice system?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, if it is in fact the case that individuals have been subjected to false allegations of abuse, the member knows that those allegations did not originate with

the government; they originated with other citizens. The fact of the matter is when that happens, the police, the prosecutors, are expected by society to respond in some way to those allegations. I am not saying that anyone is guilty of anything. I'm not saying these plaintiffs are guilty of anything; I'm not saying the police necessarily are guilty of wrongdoing, or the prosecutors. That, Mr. Speaker, is a matter of dispute between the parties. The courts are set up to determine that. The plaintiffs will have their day in court.

And the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, may have drawn his own conclusion; the Justice critic may have drawn his own conclusion. They may have concluded the plaintiffs are correct and the police and the prosecutors are wrong. We, Mr. Speaker, are not judging the case. The case will be decided on its merits in due course.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, it's easy for this government to haul out a truckload of lawyers and drive some ordinary people of Saskatchewan into distraction wondering if they'll be able to hold out against the resources that this NDP government has with these people.

Mr. Speaker, 13 people in a separate but similar case are also waiting for justice from this government. Today some of them are waiting on the front lawn of this legislature. Richard Klassen and 12 others were falsely accused of abusing three Saskatoon children in the early 1900s. The government was willing to negotiate a settlement in the Popowich case — negotiate the settlement, Mr. Speaker — but has been absolutely unwilling to discuss settlement in the Klassen case. What's the difference, Mr. Speaker?

In both cases, the Justice department falsely accused people of abusing children. In both cases, the charges were found to be unfounded. And in both cases, the people have had their lives and their reputations ruined by this terrible false accusation.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP refusing a settlement case situation in the Klassen case?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite and I say to the public, the allegations of abuse did not originate with the Department of Justice. There were members of society that accused the plaintiffs of sexual abuse, as I understand it. Those allegations were later withdrawn. That is not the fault of the prosecutors. It is not the fault of the police. If the prosecutors and the police acted on the allegations in a wrong way, Mr. Speaker, the courts can determine that. And the matter is before the courts, Mr. Speaker.

It is fine for the members of the opposition to take the side of the plaintiffs against the police and against the prosecutors and say that the police are wrong and the prosecutors are wrong. That's what they're saying, Mr. Speaker.

On this side of the House, we will respect the process. The process is before the court. The plaintiffs will have their day in court. The judge will decide.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, that NDP government and the former Justice minister settled out of court with Mr. Popowich. The situations are similar. They know it. Everyone in those front benches know it. They need to do the right thing today.

Mr. Speaker, time and again we've seen falsely accused people by the NDP justice system, and everyone pays the price except those who are responsible. David Milgaard spent 23 years in prison for a crime he did not commit and then taxpayers paid \$10 million in compensation. But there were no consequences for anyone in the justice system.

John Popowich was falsely accused, maliciously prosecuted for child abuse. After eight long years, taxpayers paid \$1.3 million in compensation. But there were no consequences for anyone in this NDP justice system.

Six others in the Martensville case and eleven others in the Klassen case are still waiting for justice from this government. But there are no consequences in the justice system.

Mr. Speaker, why did the NDP justice system allowed . . . was allowed to botch up so many high-profile cases with no consequences for anyone responsible?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, in case the member opposite doesn't know, the Milgaard case actually originated about 30 years ago. I want the member to know that.

My second point, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite refers to the justice system as the NDP justice system and I want that member to know, Mr. Speaker, whether they want to hear it or not, that the police and the prosecutors are not affiliated with any political party, Mr. Speaker. They are not an NDP justice system. They are not a Saskatchewan Party justice system. They are a justice system that operates free and clear of politics.

And, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite would be well advised to take that kind of advice and not politicize matters that shouldn't be politicized. The police are not political. The prosecutors are not political. Mistakes can be made in any system but the system is dealing with a situation where individuals may make allegations against others. And when you don't act on those you get criticized for that as well, Mr. Speaker. Were mistakes made by the police and prosecutors? I don't know. That will be determined by the courts.

The member says this case is the same as the Popowich case. If the member had any personal knowledge of this case, then the member himself should come to testify at court, Mr. Speaker. But my point is, this matter should be left before the courts who will properly deal with it, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, this NDP government made a political decision and settled out of court with Mr. Popowich. They need to take the same responsibility and make settlement with other people who are falsely accused. They know they



should. They know they should.

Mr. Speaker, Saturday's paper had another example of justice delayed being justice denied. An individual from Carlyle was charged with sexual assault in July of 2000. But the charges were thrown out in April. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because it took the case too long to get to trial. Mr. Speaker, that's a very disturbing conclusion to this case.

I have no idea whether the accused was guilty or innocent and no one else in Saskatchewan does either. But now we'll never know because the charges were thrown out due to delays in this NDP justice system.

Mr. Speaker, what good is a justice system that takes too long to deal in cases that the judge simply dismisses the charges? What is being done to address these lengthy delays?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well I wanted to say in answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, that if the delay was the fault of the prosecutors or the police, then we need to look into that. We are looking into it. My office has spoken to the director of public prosecutions to get the reason for the delay. And we need to take steps to make sure that that does not occur again.

(14:15)

But I also say to the member that this illustrates the point that I was just saying to the member a moment ago, which is the justice system will be criticized when it operates too zealously and too quickly, as he's alleging it did, or when it doesn't operate quickly enough on allegations, Mr. Speaker.

And my point is this. It is a system, Mr. Speaker, where some human beings will make allegations against other human beings. In his first questions the member criticizes the police and prosecutors for acting on them. Now this question is he's criticizing them because they didn't act quickly enough. Now that, that criticism, may be warranted, Mr. Speaker. And if the criticism is found to be warranted, then I can say to the member, we need to make sure that doesn't happen again.

But I also say to the member he ought not to jump to conclusions. Neither should I. We should let the proper authorities decide the case, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's under the watch of this NDP government that the justice system took too long to prosecute in this case. That's a matter of looking at the calendar. Surely this Justice minister can handle at least something as simple as that and make sure that doesn't happen in this particular province.

Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing is a pattern of mismanagement of the justice system by this NDP government. We see people like David Milgaard, who spent 23 years in prison for a crime he did not commit. We see people like John Popowich and Richard Klassen and others who are wrongfully accused, maliciously prosecuted for crimes they did not commit. And

then they are forced to wait for years — that's the problem then, Mr. Speaker — they're forced to wait for years for an apology from this NDP government.

Then we see a case like this one in Carlyle, where charges are dropped simply because the justice system takes too long.

Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a pattern of mismanagement and botched cases in this NDP's justice system. Why is the NDP mismanaging the justice system in this province so badly?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, if the member doesn't know this, the member should know that there have been people all over the United States found to be wrongly on death row because of mistakes in justice systems. There have been mistakes in justice systems throughout this country and throughout the world, and we should do everything we can to make sure those mistakes don't occur.

But I do want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the police and the prosecutors in this province, I'm told, review more than 84,000 charges each year; they deal with nearly 18,000 prosecutions. And what we have, Mr. Speaker, are over the past 10 years, 5 cases giving rise to 12 lawsuits. That's regrettable, Mr. Speaker, but is it a justice system out of control, as described by the member opposite or different than other justice systems?

The answer to that is absolutely, no, Mr. Speaker. We have a very good justice system in Canada, in Saskatchewan, staffed by competent police, competent prosecutors, and I'm sure that they don't need the assistance of members opposite who jump to all kinds of conclusions, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Regina Correctional Centre

**Mr. Heppner:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, has it really come to this, that this NDP Justice minister has to hide behind the American justice system to show that his is better? What a shame. John Wayne he isn't, I can assure you.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety. Here is another example of NDP mismanagement in the justice system. Last week a Provincial Court judge announced what amounts to the NDP's catch-and-release program for convicted drug dealers. The judge cut 12 months from the jail sentence of two drug dealers who were caught with 100,000 ecstasy pills worth two and a half million dollars.

Why, Mr. Speaker? Well according to the judge the NDP government has allowed the Regina Correctional Centre to deteriorate to the point where conditions are too oppressive even for hardened drug dealers.

Mr. Speaker, why has the NDP allowed conditions in the Regina jail to get so bad that the judge was compelled to let two convicted drug dealers out a year early?

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think what we've seen today from the Sask Party is a complete across the map on every issue. On the one hand they say we're prosecuting too slow; on the other hand we're prosecuting fast. On the one hand they're saying that we're running the jails too tight; on the other hand they want boot camps for kids.

As the Minister of Corrections I can tell you that the Regina Correctional Centre was not designed to be the Hotel Saskatchewan. It is a tough place, there's no doubt. But I say to those members opposite, tell me in the estimates as we go through them, where we find that \$90 million. Tell me what schools we take off the capital list; tell me what hospitals in rural Saskatchewan we take off the capital list; tell me that. Tell me, Mr. Speaker, how it is that we move that facility up.

Now the question that's raised about the three days for one is one that we are going to have to take up with the chief judge. This is an issue that we are going to have to resolve but we will resolve it in a place better suited for that discussion than on the floor of this Assembly.

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

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Efforts to Trace and Eradicate Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell Saskatchewan citizens what we are doing to help our beef industry address the BSE.

Everyone will be aware of one beef cow in Alberta that was discovered to have BSE. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, CFIA, is leading the process to trace animals from this particular beef herd, and to trace the origins of this cow and determine how it acquired the BSE. They are also leading the efforts to eradicate this disease.

Saskatchewan has made an offer to the CFIA and to Alberta to provide any assistance they require to help them trace and eradicate the BSE.

The closure of several export markets has the potential to have a significant impact on our beef industry if it lasts very long. The United States market is particularly important to our industry. We have a substantive two-way trade with the US in live animals and meat. Access to the US market is important for the long term and the profitability of our beef industry.

I am encouraged, Mr. Speaker, by the response we are hearing from our American friends. They recognize we have a strong food inspection system combined with a traceability system that is among the best in the world.

The federal minister has talked directly with the US Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Veneman, informing her and her officials about the case of BSE and what we are doing to trace it down. The US has offered to provide technical assistance to trace down and eradicate the BSE, and our respective food inspection/animal disease agencies are in a daily contact.

The US has indicated that they are in every likelihood to reopen the border relatively soon.

Saskatchewan has also taken action to ensure that we are able to respond quickly. We have established an officials committee who continuously monitor the situation and provide daily updates to myself and the government and respond to calls from customers and consumers, the industry, and the media.

My officials are also participating on a daily briefing with the CFIA, the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and all provinces and territories.

We have also established an industry group . . . an industry advisory group of producers, processors, and marketers, and technical experts who exchange information on a daily basis. This group will also advise me with respect to any other actions that our province should take.

I want to re-emphasize that Canada has a strong food safety and traceability system. It was our hope that we would never see or have to use this system, particularly in respect to the BSE. We are now in a situation where our system is being put to the test, Mr. Speaker. I have every confidence that we will quickly trace the origins of the outbreak and again make Canada a BSE safe area.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the minister for sending a copy of his statement in advance. And even more, I would like to thank the minister for allowing his officials to meet with us earlier today to give us a technical briefing on what is being done with this serious issue.

There is no question that there is grave concern from every member of the entire Assembly towards this week's announcement that one beef cow in Alberta has been discovered to have bovine spongiform encephalopathy. We are very pleased to hear that our government is responding expediently and positively in supplying any assistance that they can to both to the CFIA and the province of Alberta.

The cattle industry is extremely valuable, not only to our province but to Canada entirely, and we have the utmost confidence that the systems that the industry and the governments have put into place to protect the consumers and the industry are both effective and efficient. I know that a lot of work has already been done in a very short period of time to isolate the source of the disease, to trace its place of origin, and to ensure its eradication.

It's also comforting to know that our federal government is in constant communication with the US because we can never underestimate the importance of that trade and the seriousness of the boundaries being closed for any length of time. It is my understanding that the USDA is helping in every way that they can, so that too is a positive indication that every possible effort is being taken to eradicate Canada of bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say it again that we will be strongly supporting our government and the federal government's efforts. And I would like to express my confidence in the safeguards within the system to address this situation. And I want to ensure the people of Saskatchewan that I will be enjoying my beef supper tonight.

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

### Saskatchewan Forest Centre

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to inform the House of a matter of importance to Saskatchewan's forestry industry and to the province.

More than half our province is covered in forest. Forestry has attracted nearly \$1 billion in private sector investment during the past four years. Over 8,000 new, direct and indirect jobs have been created in the past four years.

The Saskatchewan Forest Centre was established in 2001 as part of our provincial growth strategy to support and stimulate further growth in this industry. It is operated out of various facilities in Prince Albert. Construction of a new building for the centre has been scheduled for this year, consolidating all staff and functions under one roof.

However, Mr. Speaker, the merits of the new facility were called into question. I therefore asked my deputy minister to review this proposal and report to me on the level of support for the project. Mr. Speaker, I have now reviewed the report from my deputy minister. I'm very pleased to inform the House that construction of the Saskatchewan Forest Centre will proceed as planned.

The review, Mr. Speaker, affirmed the need for the project. The review showed solid support for the project from the Saskatchewan Forest Centre board, the forest industry, various Aboriginal stakeholders, and the community of Prince Albert. The review confirmed Prince Albert is the most logical home for the project and the downtown location as the best possible site with considerable cost savings compared to the proposed SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) site. Mr. Speaker, on this basis, the project will proceed as planned.

I want to thank all the people of Prince Albert who took the time and trouble to make their views known. Their efforts have contributed towards a state-of-the-art forestry research centre for our province. It's my hope, Mr. Speaker, that over time the Saskatchewan Forest Centre will enjoy the same stature in Prince Albert as Innovation Place does in Saskatoon and the Regina Research Park does here in Regina.

With continued support and involvement from the private sector, the centre can take us beyond primary production and help us more fully explore value-added development of our forest resources. It can deliver a range of new technology and enhance the province's capacity to manage this important resource.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good project for the industry, a good project for Prince Albert, and a good project for the province of

Saskatchewan. I therefore hope all members will welcome this announcement and get on board with Prince Albert. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to respond to the minister's statement. I thank the minister for providing me with a copy of the statement which he just delivered to the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has always strongly supported the establishment of a forestry research centre located in Prince Albert as an important part of the growing forestry industry and the economy of Saskatchewan. However the NDP's current plan is to build a \$12.7 million, government-owned office building in Prince Albert, financed 100 per cent by Saskatchewan taxpayers. The Saskatchewan Party has called on the Government of Saskatchewan to provide a business plan for a forestry research centre that demonstrates the project's primary function will be research as opposed to the provision of new office space.

(14:30)

Mr. Speaker, the minister in his statement alluded to Innovation Place in Saskatoon and the Regina Research Park. And, Mr. Speaker, all of the information we've received about the forestry centre indicate that it's no research park that the government is planning on building in downtown Prince Albert. At best it might be a centre for some technology transfer. But, Mr. Speaker, it's far from a research park.

There is a . . . One concern is just a major move of SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management) offices from one office building to another because SERM will be a major tenant in the new facility. In fact, in a recent column, Randy Burton of *The StarPhoenix*, in speaking of the deputy minister, Spannier's review of the situation says, and I quote:

If Spannier answers the question of what the primary purpose of this project is supposed to be, then the solution to this problem ought to be relatively straightforward. A research facility would be better placed next to a centre of learning like the SIAST campus, as Innovation Place is located next to the University of Saskatchewan. If the research agenda has yet to be established, then delaying the building until the industry knows what it needs seems not unreasonable.

If the forest centre is a downtown revitalization project then the government must answer a whole new set of questions, including:

What new jobs are created if this project is simply relocating existing government employees from elsewhere within Prince Albert?

Mr. Speaker, the business plan which is required to demonstrate the financial viability of the project . . . And, Mr. Speaker, they're heckling on the other side but you'd think this government would learn that by not doing a business plan they get themselves into deep trouble. They've done it time after time after time with Crown Investments Corporation, with

SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company). Mr. Speaker, business plans are very, very essential to success.

A business plan in this case should demonstrate the financial viability of the project through financial support and a commitment to equity participation by private sector forestry companies and First Nations. Finally, the business plan should include strong evidence that the location selected for the forestry centre will be the best one from the perspective of facilitating research in the forestry industry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member from Athabasca on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — To ask for leave to introduce a guest.

Leave granted.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct your attention, to you and through you, to make welcome a friend of mine in your gallery, Mr. Duane Favel.

Mr. Favel has travelled in from Saskatoon to have several days of discussions with me. And we've been after this guy for quite a long time to come and work with us, and it appears that we're going to have some success.

Mr. Favel originally comes from Ile-a-la-Crosse but has taught at the high schools in Saskatoon and is an accomplished actor. And yes, Mr. Speaker, he's also a hockey player.

So he's going to be doing some, hopefully some work for us, and I'd like to ask all members of the Assembly to welcome Mr. Favel to the Assembly today. Thank you very much.

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

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member for Saskatoon Meewasin on her feet?

**Ms. Jones:** — For leave to introduce guests please, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

**Ms. Jones:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, two guests seated in the west gallery, Ms. Kaitlin Stocks and her friend, Annie Zhang.

And earlier we had visitors here from the Campbell Collegiate, and Kaitlin and her friend are also from Campbell Collegiate and they're here to take part in some of the proceedings today.

So I ask all hon. members to welcome them here.

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

### STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

#### Quoting Letters

**The Speaker:** — Before orders of the day, hon. members, I wish to make a ruling. Hon. members, I wish to rule on the matter regarding the letters referred to me by the Minister of Agriculture during question period of May 13, 2003, which were the subject of a point of order on May 15, 2003.

In raising his point of order the Opposition Whip claimed that the Minister of Agriculture quoted from two letters on May 13, but tabled one . . . but only tabled one. He asked that the second letter be tabled forthwith.

I have carefully reviewed the record of what was said by the Minister of Agriculture on May 13 as it relates to the letter in question. As well, to the extent that I could, I have followed the advice offered to me by the members who intervened on the point of order. I will begin with the passages as recorded in *Hansard*.

In *Hansard* on page 1051, the minister says, and I quote:

I have a letter here, Mr. Speaker, that's written to me by Mr. Peters. And he says, Mr. Peters says:

The minister then goes on, using the first person, to refer to what the individual said in a letter. On the basis of this passage, it is reasonable for the Opposition Whip and the other members of this House to conclude that the minister did indeed quote from more than one letter. The minister went on to say on page 1054, and again I quote:

I'd be pleased to table the letters that I quoted from.

This too leaves the impression that the minister quoted from more than one letter.

In speaking to the point of order, the minister claims on page 1116 of *Hansard* that he merely paraphrased the content of the second letter. The government Deputy House Leader asked me to review the video record of the proceedings, which in his opinion supported the minister's contention that the Minister of Agriculture did not actually read from a letter. I've reviewed the video record and it supports the claim that the minister did not directly read from a letter, but does this mean he did not quote from the letter?

It is my opinion that members are quite capable of quoting without reading directly from a text. So where does this leave us? On the one hand, we have a *Hansard* record that leads one to believe a letter was quoted. On the other hand, we have the solemn statement of a minister that he paraphrased the letter in question. This leaves the Speaker in a difficult position.

Paragraph 494 of Beauchesne's, 6th Edition, and I quote:

It has been formerly ruled by Speakers that statements by members respecting themselves and particularly within their knowledge must be accepted.

*Hansard* goes on to say:

On rare occasions this may result in the House having to accept two contradictory accounts of the same incident.

In these cases it is the practice of this Assembly to accept the word of the member. On this basis I find that there is no requirement for the document to be tabled.

Before concluding, I wish to address the suggestion raised by the member for Canora-Pelly in his intervention on the point of order. He suggested that the Speaker access the letter to see whether or not the words used by the minister match what is in the letter.

The Speaker has no authority to demand that a letter be produced. Subsequently however, the minister on his own initiative voluntarily provided the letter to me. I have compared the letter to *Hansard* and can advise the Assembly that the *Hansard* record is not a quotation. This affirms my decision that the minister is not required to table the second letter.

I want to close by cautioning ministers on their choice of words when referring to documents. The Minister of Agriculture left the impression that he was quoting from a letter. I request that in the future, ministers make it very clear to the House when they are quoting from a document.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table written responses to questions no. 279 to 290 inclusive.

**The Speaker:** — Responses to questions 279 through to 290 have been submitted.

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 36

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Serby that **Bill No. 36 — The Agricultural Safety Net Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly am pleased to be able to enter into the debate on Bill No. 36. The Bill is an amendment to The Agricultural Safety Net Act, which basically changes or allows this government to change the old NISA (Net Income Stabilization Account) program, if I use that term, because it is coming to an end under the agricultural policy framework into the new NISA.

But, Mr. Speaker, that would imply — and that is what the minister said during the second reading debate, his second reading speech; he said that's the purpose of this amendment — and that would imply that you're taking a program and making some changes, some minor changes to it, but at the end of the

day that the program would resemble the old program. Well, in fact, Mr. Speaker, that certainly is not the case with the new NISA program.

The only thing that is similar between the old program and the new program is the name. It in no way resembles the old program. It is completely different; it incorporates a number of new concepts that most producers aren't familiar with. This program is being designed as it's being implemented.

At a recent conference, the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) convention earlier this year, an official from the federal Department of Agriculture did a presentation on the new program and a number of answers to questions that were asked by delegates to the convention who were by and large, a majority of them were farmers. When this official was asked questions about certain aspects of the new NISA program, the official couldn't answer because the answer was those are details that need to be worked out at a later date.

And there is great concern, Mr. Speaker, in the farm community about the haste with which this whole program — the APF (agricultural policy framework) and particularly the business risk management portion of it, which NISA and crop insurance make up those two pillars of the APF — with the haste that both levels of government are showing to implement the program. As I'd indicated last March, there was a number of questions that are . . . were still no answers to, and I am assuming that we probably have very few more answers, Mr. Speaker, today.

If one looks at some of the headlines in some of the papers in the last month or two dealing with this program, we have headlines that . . . such as "Ag ministers, industry warn of 'chaos' without extension" to the current programs. "Confusion reigns over framework deadline" is another headline. Here's an article that's dealing with the launch of the new APF program, "Agricultural plan limps out of starting blocks." The Canadian Federation of Agriculture insists the government to postpone the APF to allow more input from producers. Mr. Speaker, another headline, "Farmers resist Ottawa's new ag plan."

Within our own province, our farm organizations have asked this minister to just slow down and make sure that the plan is developed and thought out and communicated to producers before they move ahead with it. But what does this government do, Mr. Speaker? They're surging forward with a great deal of haste, in my opinion, to implement this new program, to go into an area that it seems no one is actually certain as to what the final product will look like because changes are being made as we move along.

And what type of information is being presented to producers, Mr. Speaker? Well if you look at the Sask Ag and Food and Rural Revitalization Web site, Mr. Speaker, if you go there to find some information on the province's position on this program, this APF program, what will you find? Well way down in the lower right-hand corner, you'll find an icon that will lead you to the federal site. There is no provincial input into this program and that's indicative, Mr. Speaker, of the way the whole program was developed.

When the federal Minister of Agriculture went down this path of developing a new program, what did Saskatchewan do and

what did this Minister of Agriculture do? He said, well I'm not going to get involved in program design. He made up some excuses about funding and those sorts of things, but the net result was that the program was designed by other parties — the federal government, perhaps one or two provincial governments, but certainly not Saskatchewan.

And then here in March, Mr. Speaker, this government decides that it's time to sign on after the program is designed, and we're going to just shove it through. The minister said at a news conference following the signing of the initial agreement of intent that it's a done deal, so we may as well just have a few meetings and send out some information to farm producers to tell them what the new program is all about.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of any provincially organized information meetings or, as a matter of fact, any provincial information about the new program that has been sent out to producers. But what has been sent out to producers, Mr. Speaker, just this very week, is a nine-page package of information from the federal Minister of Agriculture.

And it's rather interesting, Mr. Speaker, to look at the timing of when this information was sent to producers. It's entitled, Proposed Changes to the NISA Program, and it's sent out, Mr. Speaker, in the middle of May in seeding time when farm producers are busy out on the land trying to get this year's crop sowed. In many areas we've had a late spring, and do you think farmers are going to have time to sit down and read through nine pages of information about the new NISA program?

You know what's going to happen with this information, Mr. Speaker? It's probably going to get piled up on a desk or a cupboard or some such place and other material's going to get put on top of it. And I would venture to guess that there'll be very few producers that'll actually take the time because they just don't have the time right now to go through this detailed information to try and grasp and understand what this so-called new NISA program is all about.

And it's not anything like the NISA program that we've had in the past, and in fact, it shouldn't even be called NISA, Mr. Speaker. It should be called something else. It should be called AIDA (Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance) with a premium, CFIP (Canadian Farm Income Program) with a premium — take your choice, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote from an e-mail that I received in the last few weeks from a farm producer at Qu'Appelle. And I quote:

The importance of a sound and beneficial Risk Management agreement for Saskatchewan farmers is imperative. The present package is not sound nor of benefit to prairie producers. It was rushed in with tactics of intimidation, arm twisting, lack of producer organization input and severe time restraints.

The farmers require a package that will truly be of assistance when needed. Remember this is a long term package, so let us get it right the first time. (Please) press for a delay of implementation by the provincial and federal departments of agriculture.

Yours respectfully, Larry McCulloch

of Qu'Appelle, Mr. Speaker.

And I think this e-mail certainly outlines the feeling amongst farm producers with regards to this new agricultural policy framework and in particular in the reshaping and the total dismantling of programs that they are familiar with, and the implementation of programs that farmers — many farmers — haven't seen, don't understand; they haven't had time or information to really understand it and review the program, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, if I could just quote from a column by Kevin Hirsch which I think will certainly predict the outcome of this haste that we are seeing, from not only this government, Mr. Speaker, but from the federal government. And I quote:

As one farmer suggested this week, Saskatchewan should apply for . . . (a) call centre that will handle all the questions from farmers and accountants once this wonderful expanded NISA is foisted upon us.

Vancief and Serby may get lucky. Perhaps by the time this all gets ugly, they will no longer be our ministers of agriculture.

And, Mr. Speaker, I certainly think that this article certainly nails it down. Because as our farm producers understand and see the implications of this new program, Mr. Speaker, I think they will certainly not be happy and that there certainly will be a lot of discontent. And there will certainly be a lot of questions, Mr. Speaker.

And as suggested in this article, I think that probably the biggest benefit to this province would be a call centre to handle these questions that producers will have.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that there are a number of my colleagues that would like to enter into the debate on this Bill, so at this time I would adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

### Bill No. 37

The Assembly resumed the debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Serby that **Bill No. 37 — The Crop Insurance Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Lorenz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on Bill No. 37, amendment to The Crop Insurance Act. Any changes made to The Crop Insurance Act are very important changes that need to be recognized and recognized in the sense of the new agricultural policy framework as well. It's very vital to the producers of this province to have crop insurance coverage that gives them adequate coverage for the needs of producing their crops and for the needs of providing that whole economic opportunity through agriculture in this province as well.

And any time changes are made, we need to look very closely at the type of changes that are made and how they're going to

affect the coverage that it's going to provide to the producers as well.

And we look into the Bill and we see that there's an addition of insurance against occurrence or non-occurrences of any climatic event designated in the regulation that has the potential to cause loss to an insurable crop. And I think that's a very important issue that we need to take a look at and recognize — the value of having an identification of an occurrence or a non-occurrence — and we need to understand and appreciate the value of having that type of coverage in there.

We need to have some, I guess, some background and some understanding of the purpose and the value of having that change placed into that level of coverage, of understanding what crop insurance meaning is, and identifying how that relationship of that level of coverage will affect the overall coverage of the producer as well.

When we're making some provisions in the sense of providing the use of new technology when establishing the yields for the corporation, it becomes very, I guess, essential to understand the type of technology that we're going to be getting into and the type of value that we're going to have in identifying the type of crops we're growing and the production of those crops as well.

If we're using a remote sensing technology, and if it can identify the actual production of crops out there, and it also talks about . . . and any other method. Well when you talk about using any other method, it leaves that door pretty well wide open in the sense of how you can arbitrarily come in and make a decision on the type of technology or the type of calculation or the system or the methodology that you're going to use going in there to establish those yields as well.

And I think that's a very significant point that needs to be addressed, and how we're going to identify the usage of that privilege to go in and state that you're going to arbitrarily use another form of calculating yields for that particular crop as well.

The amendment also talks about giving the corporation the right to levy administration fees. Mr. Speaker, administration fees has always been part of the premium that the producer's been paying. And over the years the Crop Insurance has always been very diligent in expressing the fact that they've been very efficient and running with a very minimal cost of administration in the corporation which is, you know, which we need to appreciate and we need to commend the corporation in being able to provide that.

The privilege of having the ability to establish a separate fee for administration, there's a real interest of understanding, you know, what the thinking, the methodology is going to be in the sense of how that fee is going to be established, and the purpose and the value of having that fee set separately, that you can go in there and start setting those fees.

It may relate a little bit into another part of the amendment that is talked about here, is having the privilege and the opportunity to contract on with outside organizations or corporations to provide a service. And if it's the service of administration, is

that a direct downloading of those costs of administration that arbitrarily the corporation makes that decision on, not the producer?

The minister did make comment on his opening remarks that producers pay an administration fee, which offsets the cost-sharing formula for the fees. At some point in the future, Saskatchewan farmers recommend this option. We have our legislation to be able . . . to enable this to happen. But we don't see very often that that actually is the process that goes back to the producer; that the producer actually has the choice of the type of fee that they're going to be paying for the program that they've signed into.

Those are always kind words but in actual form of implementing that ability of giving choice and giving the strength to the producer to make a choice if they wish to have that fee or wish to have that style of administration, isn't built into the program where they have that ability to go there as well.

And I guess maybe the question that begs to maybe be asked as well is in the sense of where that alternate relationship of contract may lead. And if it's in the sense of having purpose of going to other forms of providing insurance, I guess that obviously would be interesting to know and understand what the value of that process may be.

The minister did speak on the sense of why hail insurance was removed from crop insurance, and he spoke in the sense of having direct competition against the line hail companies and that the interests of competing against the private sector was one of the reasons why they removed hail insurance from the crop insurance program.

Is that an avenue that's being explored right now in the sense of contracting on with other companies and providers of services as well? So we need to talk about and understand what is happening in that whole area of service, administrative services or other services that are being provided as well.

We've seen what happens where crop insurance was related to the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program, that that whole program was cancelled. It was really the only safety net program that we had. And we've had a number of years, almost decades already, that we've been waiting for other programs to replace the revenue sharing insurance program which is very vital to, I guess, that whole agriculture economy, to have some stability, have a bottom line to that whole industry as well.

Disaster relief program was another one that the province talked about an awful lot and this current government talked about an awful lot after the whole Crow rate was dismantled. And there was supposed to be dollars set aside through the federal-provincial sector that were going to look after these problems that we have when we have disasters.

And we can definitely say there was a disaster last year in the whole farming economy. And there was . . . In the last two or three years, we've had areas of the province that have had huge disasters as well, and we haven't had anything that really has addressed that whole area of concern and problem that we've got out there.

We need to design and we need to have a system and a program in place that is not a knee-jerk reaction, that is something that can be built over a period of time. There can be dollars put into that program, and those dollars are going to be real dollars that you can access in years of need when those disasters do occur in that respect as well.

I guess as far as also having giving the privilege of adding additional fees to the program without not . . . with the program not relating to the loss of production. And that is one change that's made in the amendments as well, is we're asking to remove the clause for the loss of insured crops and replacing it with a rise from the contract of crop insurance.

Well if you're going to adjust premiums just to the fact that there's a contract in place, it arbitrarily can be adjusted for a multitude of reasons. Normally you adjust your premiums according to the usage of a contract and the claims that have been processed through that contract, where this has a tendency to give you the understanding and the belief maybe that there is an ability with that type of a change, that you can go in there and make those changes and add those fees at any time that you wish to make that change. That doesn't have to relate to the amount of usage to that contract through loss claims have gone over the past year in.

So that's another one that you've got to take with a bit of a grain of salt to understand on the sense of what's the purpose of giving you that privilege within a contract that it's not really tied to the activity of that contract over the period of time that it's there as well. And I guess any time we see some signs that there are some changes made of this nature without having some relevance to the program itself and to the strength of the program and to building a better program for coverage over the years, I think we always need to ask that question of what's happening there as well.

(15:00)

Also there's a provision in here, and I guess it goes back to the relationship of establishing yields and the whole calculation and the methodology that's being used and the way that calculation of coverages is being handled and is being proposed to be changed as well. I have had discussion with some of the producers out there that they've gone away from the actuary which the minister did allude to and speak to through estimates that they no longer use the actuaries to calculate coverages on past performance of yields.

There is a new way of doing the calculation and we haven't seen or heard on the way those numbers are put together right now and the methodology again that's being used to do that calculation. And when you hear producers losing four bushels to the acre, which is huge coverage when you're talking that type of coverage that you're losing from your contract on just a system and the method that calculation is being put together, we need to understand that a little bit better and clearer in the sense of what's happening with those crops.

There's also in that calculation, you've now found that . . . or you can see in there that your stubble coverage premiums and coverages are higher than your summerfallow crops. Summerfallow crops, normally they have a higher coverage but

they also have a higher premium. But when you have a higher premium with less coverage that you're getting off your summerfallow acres as well, you need to understand or we need to have somebody give us direction of what changes were made in the contractual form as well to really cause that to happen — that you can actually charge a premium at a higher rate than the coverage that you're giving on the fact that it's summerfallow and it's not stubble. And I think we need to understand that as well and get some clarification of where that's coming from with the changes that they've made.

So I think there's a number of concerns or a number of questions that we need to still bring forth and we need the minister to address those concerns and give us some clarification. And hopefully we can move on to create a better program and a more efficient program for our producers. So at this point I'll adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

### Bill No. 38

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Serby that **Bill No. 38 — The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With pleasure to speak to Bill 38, The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act. Mr. Speaker, the whole system that this Act revolves around and the ability to loan money through the financial stability Act is a very important one.

As a producer who is a member of a feeder association, has worked with feeder associations, and speaking to stakeholders in the industry, we have found that this is a very important part of the beef industry in Saskatchewan. The ability to finance cattle is always a concern, and this has been a very reliable source of financing.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we know there's a feeder program and a breeder program, and for the most part they have been very successfully run. As always there are some instances where individuals have defaulted and unfortunately that is a fact of life. So it's important that some changes are made to The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act to protect the investment, to protect the taxpayers' investment in this program, as we know that the taxpayer of the province could be liable for 25 per cent of the loss of a loan.

So it's important that this program continues. It's very important to the future of the beef industry in Saskatchewan, that as we grow and develop the beef industry in Saskatchewan, that one of the big hurdles is financing the purchase of livestock.

As we know many . . . There has been a number of feedlots formed and the community has backed these feedlots with financial investment. But at the end of the day, once the feedlot is up and ready to operate, there is a huge need for financing of livestock. And this goes a long ways to giving that feedlot, as an individual identity, the access to financing through this plan. And it's an important aspect that this has taken place.



Of course we have to take into account, of course, the liability aspect and the protecting of the whole system. And the changes that have been made concerning the branding of the animals, as far as identification, and allowing feedlots to buy and sell from associate members is all very important. And we must keep in mind that we need to keep this financial package stable for the benefit of the whole province, into the future.

And, Mr. Speaker, our Saskatchewan Party Ag critic has been talking to the industry and will continue to do so into the future. And we will certainly look forward to other members who would like to speak on this piece of legislation because of the importance of it to the feeding industry in this province.

And at this time, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

### 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.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand today to make comment on Bill No. 8, The Youth Justice Administration Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Corrections had put out a press release on April 1, 2003 outlining the need for this Act and also the government's intention of dealing with the Act here in the province.

One of the concerns that I have with the Act — and my main concern, Mr. Speaker — is in implementing this Act, we don't seem to have the proper measures in the province, alternative measures, that we need in order to affect the Act properly.

The Minister of Corrections has indicated that the province would look to community-based measures that would allow communities to basically take care of this kind of first offender of crime; but we see throughout our province one of the main omissions in the justice system and in a system to help our young people recover from crimes, is that we don't have, Mr. Speaker, we don't have an alcohol addictions centre for youth in the province.

Now we had that at one time and we don't have it now. Many, many of our youth, Mr. Speaker, are in trouble — of course for various reasons — but many of them carry with them severe addictions and unless we can address those kind of things, we're not going to be getting too far in the number of young offenders declining.

The number of young offenders is declining a little bit, Mr. Speaker, but Saskatchewan still has the highest rate of young offenders in custody in Canada. For every 10,000 youth in Saskatchewan, there are 36 young offenders in correctional facilities. Manitoba is the second highest with 28 out of 10,000 in correctional facilities. Youth crime . . . Or the youth crime rate, rather, is a concern. As well, Mr. Speaker, there is a concern with the overrepresentation of Aboriginals in the youth

correction system.

Mr. Speaker, many of the Aboriginal councils in Saskatchewan have been trying to implement some of their own measures to assist youth out of the world of crime and to have them come back into the community and to assist them with measures that will be meaningful to them. Deeper rooted problems affect many Aboriginal people, as well as other youth, and those deeper rooted problems need to be looked at. And to the credit of many of the Aboriginal communities in our province, they have a new way of addressing the troubles that youth are dealing with and, although they don't always work, I believe they're on the right track in looking at that.

Mr. Speaker, there are many questions that have not been addressed by the province. And I guess the federal government, I feel, is kind of pushing this on the province without the province being able to or having the resources at hand and in place right now that will assist this in being an effective Act. Some of the programs that need to be in place do not exist here in Saskatchewan. And I have mentioned one, Mr. Speaker, and that one that I think is really very important is a youth addictions treatment centre.

And the other . . . The problem with this Act being implemented, Mr. Speaker, is communities. Communities have not had adequate time to prepare the resources and have not been able to have any assurance from the province that the province is going to be able to provide those resources, financial and human resources, to deal with troubled youth.

So, Mr. Speaker, programs do cost money and that is lacking in many communities. And as I mentioned, there isn't an assurance by the province that that money is going to be forthcoming.

Mr. Speaker, it appears the Youth Criminal Justice Act is going to be tougher on youth involved in violent crime and that's, I believe, a very good thing. When there are repeat offences and youth continue to do those offences, it's very, I think, proper that that kind of violent crime and repeated crimes to prevent youth at risk from becoming . . . They're trying to prevent youth at risk, rather, from becoming enmeshed in the justice system. But I think those violent crimes and repeated crimes need to be looked at in a different way and will be.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to go on at length with this. I wanted to mention one other issue that is prevalent in our province and it is linked to youth that are incarcerated, and it's the problem of FAS (fetal alcohol syndrome). FAS awareness is becoming greater.

Just a few weeks ago, Judge Sheila Whelan spoke at an FAS awareness conference held in Regina and she pointed out some very, very educational things that were necessary for society to know, and for provincial government and communities to know, in dealing with crimes that are committed by youth that have FAS. And I think we need to be sure that we look at and incorporate all of those, those suggestions that have come down from Judge Whelan, as well as from Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, to try to find a way to have meaningful rehabilitation for our youth.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to adjourn debate on this Bill at this time so that we may continue to debate this very necessary Bill. Thank you.

Debate adjourned.

### Bill No. 27

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 27 — The Condominium Property Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is one of the new pieces of legislation that just came down the last week or so, and is a fairly complex Bill. It deals with condominium property in this province, of which there is a growing amount, Mr. Speaker, and certainly is of benefit to those who have the opportunity to participate in a condominium.

We see mainly the condominium projects, Mr. Speaker, going up in our urban centres where they provide good housing, Mr. Speaker, on a limited amount of actual dirt, you might say, a property size where you can have a more intense habitation than you would under normal residential circumstances, Mr. Speaker. A lot of these condominiums provide benefits to the individual owners or tenants that are different than the benefits provided by individual home ownership, Mr. Speaker — such as the person may not be required to deal with any of the outside duties or maintenance duties that would normally take place in an individual residence, Mr. Speaker.

(15:15)

But what this does is it makes considerable changes to an Act that we previously had put forward before this House in 1993. This is the first update on these. And there has been a number of issues that have arisen, problems that have shown to have been in place with the previous Act, Mr. Speaker. And there are a good many people across this province who believe that there was changes needed. And they have made proposals. And some of these proposals have found their way into this piece of legislation.

It's very important that the people who are condominium owners, who are property managers dealing with condominiums, have an opportunity to review this particular piece of legislation to determine whether or not the changes that are being brought forward accurately reflect the needs of people in condominiums.

One of the main changes that are coming forward, Mr. Speaker, is a determination as to fees and assessments against property where they fit into the assessment of liens and caveats and mortgages on a particular piece of property.

Right now if a condominium owner takes out a mortgage, let's say, to purchase their condominium, obviously the financial institution is going to want to be the primary recipient of any returns from the disposal of that property up until such point in time as the mortgage is paid off.

The proposal with this Act, Mr. Speaker, changes that relationship in allowing the condominium property, the entire corporation, to place their lien or caveat against the property in precedence to the financial institution.

So let's say a condominium sells for \$100,000; a person gets a \$75,000 mortgage against that particular property. And the condominium corporation then does some work, replaces the roof, does sidewalk curbing, street maintenance, and their parking lot, Mr. Speaker, and they have a \$10,000 assessment placed against that condominium. That \$10,000 will now, if not paid by the homeowner directly, by the condominium owner directly, will now be assessed against the value of that property. And that \$10,000, should the property be sold, will take precedence over the mortgage. So the \$10,000 would be paid first and then the mortgage would receive the remainder of the assets.

And that's not, not a bad thing, Mr. Speaker, because the rest of the owners of the condominium need to be protected from a delinquent owner as well. But what it does do is changes the relationship between a mortgage holder and the mortgagee, Mr. Speaker. It changes the relationship between a financial institution and the person seeking a mortgage for a condominium.

It could come to the point, Mr. Speaker, if let's say your . . . there needs to be a major, major reconstruction of your condominium project, as has happened in British Columbia, where the assessed fees and costs assigned to that individual unit raises up the debt on that particular property over and above its 100 per cent level, Mr. Speaker. So let's say on the \$100,000 you now have a total debt of \$125,000.

The financial institution is going to come back to that owner and say, we need more security. Either pay down your mortgage so that the debt is down to, let's say, a 75 per cent level again — so in that case you'd have to pay \$50,000 immediately — or provide us with additional securities, whatever those may be, which might include a second mortgage as well if you had equity built up in your condominium which you may not do in some cases.

So it's going to change the relationship between the financial institutions and people who are seeking mortgages. It also provides, though, protection to all of the other condominium units in the particular unit that anyone may have. So there are certainly benefit there.

But I think we need to learn and understand how that relationship is going to change and how the banks are going to . . . banks and other financial institutions, people who supply mortgages are going to look at these types of arrangements now, Mr. Speaker.

And it may have an impact on how quickly future condominium developments take place because the banks are not going to be able to project ahead what those costs may be in a lot of cases. In some cases, they may be able to. But in a lot of cases, there are future costs that the banks are going to have to take into consideration. What they may do instead of providing someone with, say, 75 or 80 per cent of the finances necessary to purchase a condo may reduce that down to, say, 60 to 70 per

cent, so that that leaves a little more gap in there in case additional costs come forward and are charged against those unit holders.

There are a number of other things as well, Mr. Speaker, when determining how assessment is done on condominiums, whether it's done on the entire project and then distributed back on a unit factor basis determined perhaps by the number of bedrooms versus one unit versus another. There is a factor built in to the current Act that explains how this is determined. Or the corporation may have one unit is one unit factor for everyone, no matter what the condominium itself is like.

This Act is changing that now so that it reflects more the individual value of the units rather than taking a unit factor as the basis for assessment. And so, two units side by side with the same floor plan, the same floor space may be assessed differently because of the way that the individual owner is dealing with their own property. You know, you can look at gold taps for your bathrooms, like Saddam Hussein had, versus pewter or cast metal, Mr. Speaker, and they have a different value. And that will be reflected then in the value of the unit. That'll be reflected in the value of the assessment for tax purposes. That is another change as well, Mr. Speaker, that wasn't in place before and is going to be a change, not necessarily better or worse, but certainly a change, Mr. Speaker, in how people will be viewing condominiums.

And there are a good number of other areas, Mr. Speaker, that this Act is making changes. It deals with the areas of interest rates and how they can be charged on arrears and on assessments provided by the corporation to the individual unit owners.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think there needs to be a little more time taken here to get a response back from the condominium associations, from the people who deal with providing financial support for condominiums such as the financial institutions. So at this time I would move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

### Bill No. 26

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Melenchuk that **Bill No. 26 — The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to enter into the debate under adjourned debates on Bill No. 26, The Income Tax Act . . . Amendment Act of 2003.

Mr. Speaker, as indicated by the minister when this Bill was introduced, we see the Bill, the revision to The Income Tax Act occurring each and every year. And as I've indicated before, as official opposition and I'm sure as people in Saskatchewan, we're very pleased to see continued revisions to The Income Tax Act.

I recall in 1999 during the election campaign that the official opposition, the Saskatchewan Party, had indicated that there

was a need for income tax changes to become more competitive with the Western provinces, especially our neighbour to the west.

And the decoupling of taxation took place where the taxes now are calculated not . . . The provincial tax, I might add, is not calculated on tax paid federally, but is now calculated on income. And those revisions were implemented over a period of time since 1999, and today we're seeing the final revisions for 2003 under The Income Tax Act.

And, Mr. Speaker, the 11 per cent rate, and the 13 per cent middle rate, and the 15 per cent upper rate are a good move, and we're moving in the right direction. However, Mr. Speaker, when we compare to a flat rate of 10 per cent in Alberta — that is 10 per cent across the board — we note that there have been examples of residents of Saskatchewan who have determined that they would like to sell an asset or to retire from a particular job, and in the end have purchased a residence in Alberta prior to year-end, prior to the calendar year-end, so that they would be able to be taxed as an Albertan.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's a very simple calculation. If you look at your upper bracket and are looking at a sizeable return due to sale of an asset and you're looking at not just a couple of hundred thousand dollars but a million or so dollars of asset, you can see the difference in income tax that you would pay if you were taxed at a 15 per cent rate in Saskatchewan or a 10 per cent in Alberta.

And that is still of great concern I think to . . . should be of great concern to this government, and it is to us because we need to ensure that this province continues to grow. And as a result, there will have to be some additional changes made to The Income Tax Act over the years to become more competitive.

One of the other concerns, Mr. Speaker, has been raised by many individuals. At the lower income tax area where we see that the exemption level in Saskatchewan is now at \$8,000 personal exemption for an adult, for an individual, but, Mr. Speaker, that still means that even someone at the minimum wage earning level who works, you know, a full eight hours a day at one or two minimum-wage-paying jobs, they're still going to be taxed. They will still be paying income tax in Saskatchewan based on the fact that we only have an \$8,000 exemption.

Now I know the minister has included indexing of those exemptions and they'll grow. But in Alberta, already today, that number is well over \$13,000 as far as a personal exemption. So when you look at an example of two individuals, two adults that are looking at a family income, both in Saskatchewan, each is paying tax above an \$8,000 exemption. In Saskatchewan, that combined income of \$26,000 plus would not be taxable.

So we're slipping further and further behind in the exemption levels. And as a result, Mr. Speaker, we have people that are looking pretty seriously at the rate of return on a job when they look at the income tax — not only the income tax rates as to where they would fall based on their income levels, whether they'll be in the lower income bracket with an 11 per cent rate or middle income bracket at 13 per cent or an upper bracket at 15 per cent. They do compare those things to the 10 per cent

rate in Alberta. They also look at the exemption level in Alberta of over \$13,000, and here in Saskatchewan at \$8,000. So those concerns are there.

I know that the Bill tries to correct, I believe, a weakness, Mr. Deputy Chair. It did not clarify well enough the abilities for graduating students to obtain the post-secondary tax credit. And now the Bill has introduced sections that will clarify that and indeed, I believe, it was the intention of government all along that one person would be eligible for one tax credit.

And the amendments that have been proposed under this Bill, Bill No. 26, clarify that so that at no time will there be, I believe, a misunderstanding that someone might be eligible for more than one tax credit.

So I think those are positive steps, Mr. Deputy Chair.

(15:30)

And we're taking a look at some of the other sections that have been proposed in the Act. I note that the comments made by the minister on May 12 at the introduction, he indicated that there was a need to address the small-business tax. Well I want to make it clear to the people of Saskatchewan as we look at this Bill, that these changes to the small-business tax rate are not for this current year — not for the year 2003. There has been some misunderstanding about the current rate and when the new, reduced rates would come into effect.

The rate for small business in Saskatchewan — the small-business tax rate — is 6 per cent. It is 6 per cent in this year in its entire year. What has been proposed by the government is that effective January 1 of 2004, we will see that rate of 6 per cent reduced to 5.5 and then to a subsequent rate of 5 per cent in the year 2005. So this is a long-term strategy to reduce the rate a very small amount.

Mr. Deputy Chair, the Saskatchewan Party opposition has made it very clear that we believe Saskatchewan has to have a distinct advantage over other provinces. And we've looked at how to grow this province and one of the things that we need to do . . . Because we recognize, people recognize that small business is the largest employer. It accounts for about 80 per cent of the jobs in the province of Saskatchewan, like it does all across Canada. Small businesses are the engines that drive this economy and what we need to do is ensure that Saskatchewan has an advantage.

And our plan, Mr. Deputy Chair, is that that 6 per cent tax rate be reduced to zero. We need to have a clear advantage in this province to tell people who are currently in Saskatchewan and want to develop a small business or people who have moved from Saskatchewan, to say that Saskatchewan will have an advantage. And we need to reduce that to zero, not just to 5 per cent.

Mr. Deputy Chair, there are a number of concerns of clarification that we require. Those will be able to be dealt with in Committee of the Whole when we have an opportunity to take each of the clauses separately and to move forward. So, Mr. Deputy Chair, there's no need to continue with debate in adjourned debates. We will allow the Bill to move forward to

Committee of the Whole where we will have an opportunity to clarify some of the concerns raised by people in Saskatchewan.

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

### Bill No. 21

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Melnychuk that **Bill No. 21 — The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bill No. 21, the superannuation amendment Act, is a very short Bill because it basically clarifies a couple of items.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've had the opportunity to speak with the president of the Saskatchewan Government Superannuates Association to ask for any idea as to, from that association, as to whether or not, you know, the Bill addresses some of their concerns.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, no question the need to ensure the superannuate the ability to reregister a new spouse — and I guess the definition there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, means that either through death of the superannuate's spouse or through a marriage breakup, there is a new spouse that enters into the picture — what can the superannuate do to be able to . . . or enable them to be able to make the payments directly to a new spouse?

And this section of the Act clarifies that and allows that person then to be registered through a registry system as the person now designate to reach . . . to receive the spouse's allowance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the concerns of course of many pensioners in Saskatchewan who belong to one of the plans that were indicated in this Bill, those defined benefit plans as you can see that the minister has made reference to . . . Sorry, not defined benefits. Defined pension benefits, I guess, is the correct way to look at it. There are over 7,900 pensioners that are going to be affected by this Act as of December 31, 2002, so that may have changed because this plan of course covers people that have been retired for a considerable length of time.

One of the concerns expressed by the members of the Saskatchewan Government Superannuates Association is that the . . . many of the plans are not indexed. And as a result of the calculation of a pension 20 or 25 years ago, it's a small amount of money. So because of not having indexing as part of their benefits, we've seen the eroding of the purchasing power of those pensioners.

And one of the examples that was given is that if a spouse's allowance, if a pension is calculated at \$500, 60 per cent of that is only \$300. And in many instances when a spouse is left after a superannuate passes away, the costs are still there. If it's a rental of a property, if it's an ownership, vehicle payments are still there, or the upkeep of a vehicle, the insurance — those kinds of costs are still there. So to fall from 100 per cent of a small amount of pension to suddenly 60 per cent puts extreme

difficulties . . . has placed spouses in extreme difficulties.

And the lobby by many pensioners is, of course, is that that 60 per cent is something that needs to be addressed. This Bill does not look at that . . . of those values, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I understand that. But one of the concerns raised by the pensioners is that there has to be a complete look at the pensions that are being paid to various superannuates of the various pension plans and to address the concerns being raised that in fact those calculations, because they did not have indexing, have fallen further and further behind. And there's a need to address that. So the Minister of Finance I'm sure is being lobbied on a regular basis to look at those concerns, to address those concerns in the future.

But the Act itself, no one has raised any concern about the actual amendments that have been proposed. They seem to be in order to address the concern to define spouse and define the replacement of a spouse by a child or children, as in the case if there are more than one child who is still under the age of 18. Those things are all clarified, and we can move this Bill on to committee, and clarify some of the technical concerns during Committee of the Whole. Thank you very much.

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

#### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

##### General Revenue Fund Public Service Commission Vote 33

##### Subvote (PS01)

**The Deputy Chair:** — I recognize the minister and ask the minister to introduce her officials.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Today with me is Wynne Young, the Chair of the Public Service Commission. Diagonally across here, Rick McKillop, executive director, employee relations. Sitting beside Rick, Clare Isman, executive director of human resource development. And beside Wynne, Lynn Jacobson, director of corporate services.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Welcome to the officials and thank you, Madam Minister, for providing us this opportunity today to delve into some of the questions surrounding the Public Service Commission.

I begin with just a very basic first question of how many employees does the Public Service Commission have under it, full time and part time?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you very much for that question. The permanent employees are 86, and there's a variety of part time, casual, and labour service, bringing the full total to 113.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I would have a question just with regards to how many of these employees are directly involved with classification, and how many classifications there are within the government and the public

sector as a whole. Thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — It's an interesting answer to this question. Yes, within the public service itself there's four staff that work on development of class plans and 10 who work on classification, reclassification. And government wide, at the management level, there's 13 different classifications, and in scope there's 14 different classifications.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Would you, just for the rookies on the block, be kind enough to explain the difference between the in-scope and out-of-scope classifications?

(15:45)

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Fifteen per cent would be managers or out of scope and 85 per cent would be considered employees or in scope. And that is as defined under The Trade Union Act with the definition of an employee, interpreting how people fall into those two different categories.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. With regards to the 13 classifications that you mentioned that the government has, how long has this system been in place?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I just wanted to be clear. In 1985 the out-of-scope plan was established. In 1998 the in-scope plan that we currently have was established. And in 2002, the CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) plan was established.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you for that answer, Madam Minister. With regards to the various classifications, the 13 of them, what is the demarcation for each of them? How are they measured and how are they measured specifically relative to other public service commissions in other provincial governments? And I'll just let you go from there.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — In the junior manager area, that would be the classifications 1 to 5; in the manager's category, that would be 6 and 7; directors, 8 and 9; executive directors, 10 and 11; and assistant deputy ministers, 12A and 12B.

The way that those are determined is really through four factors: skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions. And under pay equity plans like the kind that applies to this government that would be a very common way of approaching it.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you for that answer. With regards to these classifications, both in the four part and how they're measured and in the demarcation of them 1 through 5 and so on, how does this compare with what our federal counterparts would do with their bureaucracy? How many classifications would they have? And what would their measurement and do you . . . Further to that, would you have a liaison that, you know, checks with the way that it's being done at the federal level?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — We don't have the details of the federal plan here but we do know that the four criteria that I mentioned just a minute ago are basically the same ones used because the federal government went through pay equity as well and that is

a common way of approaching it. If you are interested in more detail on their plan we can get it for you.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Maybe the minister — thank you — could comment for me. In the development of the Saskatchewan plan, did you follow the federal government's model or did you lead and it's created in-house here in Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — These criteria again, I'll just affirm, are comparable to other governments. And certainly the principles that underline all these other pay equity plans would have been applied to our process, but we did design our own and some of the differences between what Saskatchewan did and other places is we did it by policy, not by legislation.

We negotiated along the way with the union representatives of the employees and, as well, we did a reclassification at the same time that we did the pay equity. So we didn't just take pay equity criteria and apply them to outdated classifications. We also re-evaluated each job in the process. And as well, the process was gender neutral, so there was men as well as women whose pay rates were adjusted during the process because of reclassification being involved.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. With regards to the 10 employees that work with the classification and reclassification, not in setting the classifications but in dealing with actual members of the civil service, how many cases a year would they look at, just in a general number? And what kind of workload per individual would those employees be facing?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — The division completed in the last . . . this'd be the last year — 2,083 classification reviews, 338 classification appeals, and 3 reclassification challenges.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. The next question I would have would be with regards to how many persons at the Public Service Commission are employed in recruitment.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Between Saskatoon and Regina, there would be 17.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. And from that, how many employees were hired last year through the system as a whole?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — The ones that the Public Service would be involved in would be the permanent appointments; the non-permanent are done at a different level. But in the permanent appointments, there's 895.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Madam Minister, for the long term, it's my understanding that within the broader scope of the public . . . of the civil service in Saskatchewan, we have a demographic bubble that's coming up, and I was wondering if you could outline what the long-term recruitment strategies that are being employed are to meet this challenge.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — A succession management framework is in place for government. And at the Public Service Commission level, they're conducting an in-depth analysis of supply and demand for the senior management positions across

executive government, identifying government-wide senior management succession needs, and developing recommendations wherever there is at-risk positions, in the sense of who is going to be coming forward to fill those.

But at the department level, because there are human resource capacities at the department level as well, they're initiating succession management activities to address succession needs for positions other than management, and as well a marketing strategy has been developed to fill those positions as well.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Have there been any studies done just specifically with regard to the demographic bubble, and you just outlined some of them? And I was wondering if there is a dollar figure put on meeting this challenge? How much money has been spent with regards to being able to meet the recruitment challenges and the retention challenges that we're going to be facing over the next 10 or 15 years? And with regards to the senior management, just if you could clarify for me again, that's for positions classified as 8 through 9, up to 12B? Thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Yes, generally the cost of the work is being done within the ongoing resources of the different areas. There was a small amount of 30,000 on some consulting that occurred on the marketing strategy. And there would be some costs that are tied up in, if you want to call it modernization of the system, to do with being able to receive applications on-line, to be able to respond back on-line, to be able to update files on-line, that kind of thing.

Because we found that more and more of the people who were wanting to access this type of information from the commission were wanting to access it on-line. So there has been, over the last couple of years, a transition from using paper-based bulletins to providing much more of the interaction on-line. And we are totally automating this whole system throughout government and within about a year or two it should be, the work should be pretty much completed. But it's a fair substantial amount of work to get all of the personnel areas on-line. But that's certainly our goal.

(16:00)

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Could you explain for the Assembly, please, what liaison there's been with the federal government and their initiatives to meet the same challenge, and how our provincial government is either mirroring, copying, or working with them, or are we out on our own? Thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Just to let you know that with the federal government, and in fact all the governments across Canada, a young public-servants youth network has been established so that I guess that people in that age group will have . . . start to build up the new network that will carry forward people who have chosen public service as a career and are working in those kinds of areas in governments right across Canada and with the federal government.

The federal government does have a career assistance program which moves people around so that, on a fast-track basis, they get exposure to a number of different areas and are able to

enhance their management and . . . level skills that way.

Any studies that different governments do are freely shared. Certainly the Chairs of the various public service commissions, or whatever particular structure each government has, meet regularly to share that information. They share reports. So I think people just work quite collaboratively in this whole area.

And provincially we also have one special initiative which is the Aboriginal initiative which helps to try to get more people at the management level, to have a more representative workforce.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I'd like to return now to . . . with regards to the employees of the Public Service Commission. I've accounted directly, thanks to your answers, for 23 of the 86 employees — those in classification, re-classification, and employment and recruitment.

I was wondering if you could go through the other job outlines which exist there, and spell them out as they may be? Thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I was not able to break down for you the permanent versus the labour service, casual and part time, but for the total of 116 . . . And I think the previous figure I gave you is 113 employees, but there's three vacancies so it's 116. And in administration there would be 16.5. In human resource information services — which is a lot of the management of information and information technology — there's 18.5. In employee relations — and that of course is the labour relations, classifications, anything to do with dealing with a grievance, things like that — there would be 19. In the human resource development area — and that would be classification, organizational development, training and development, the EAP, the employee assistance program — there's 46.4 there.

And then the Aboriginal internship and management development program, although these employees don't work specifically on Public Service Commission work, they're accounted for in this budget and that's 16.5 people.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. With regards to the . . . it's the human resource at 46.5 persons, could you give me an outline of just what the responsibilities of that aspect of the Public Service Commission are, what duties they would have, and what their mission statement would be? Thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — The objective of that area is to provide staffing standards and means to evaluate applications to facilitate recruitment and selection of public service employees, to apply standard classification criteria to jobs in the public service, to provide human resource planning in organizational development services, to provide employee and family assistance counselling, workplace diversity programs, and leadership in the transition of human resource management functions across the public service. And then, that's their objectives.

And in terms of actual program delivery, the program provides recruitment and selection services to government, including the development of criteria against which candidates will be evaluated. The program evaluates and classifies public service

jobs against established criteria. It provides leadership and counselling services to government employees and their families in support of corporate wellness. The program coordinates a government-wide workplace diversity program to enhance diversity within the public service.

Human resource planning and organizational development services are provided to support government strategic plans. Leadership and support is provided to departments throughout the transition of human resource management functions across the public service. So it's quite a wide range of activities in that area.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Just with regards to the answer that you've provided, and this would be the subsection of the Public Service Commission that would have been directly responsible last year for the 895 hirings, which you provided before, and the 2,083 reclassification and the 883 appeals and the 3 reclassification appeals. Is that correct?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — That would be correct.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. With regards to that, then could you tell me how the ratio for the number of cases relative to the number of employees stacks up relative to other public service commissions provincially in the country, and also at the federal level?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Strange you should ask that question because we asked the same question last year ourselves and found out that we are fairly lean in terms of the number of people that we have compared to other jurisdictions doing these kinds of work.

We don't actually have the study with us, but we did compare very favourably to other jurisdictions.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Just from some quick figuring, I get here on an average, I see that we have a ratio of one employee in this section to 72 cases. And I would just wonder, relative to the classification structure that you outlined before — 1 through 5, all the way up to you know 12A and 12B — for covering this kind of caseload in this human resource aspect of this, where would the majority of those employees fall relative to that classification system?

Would that be 6 or 7, 8 through 9? Thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Mr. Chair, if we could just get a clarification on that question. Were you asking about the number of classifications compared to the number of people who do classification? . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, if you could maybe just repeat your question.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — My question is . . . relates to . . . we have 46 and a half employees in that human resource department. And I want to know what their, as employees, classification falls under, on an average, you know. Or you know, you've got 46 people here. Are most of them classified as 10 or 11, or 8 or 9? Thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Out of that 46, about 12 would be

professional staff and they would be at the 4, 5 level and out of scope.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you. Sorry, if I could just ask for some further clarification. The remainder then would be . . .

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — The remainder are in scope and would be in the 5 to 9 range.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you. With regards to the classification from 5 to 9 for the in-scope employees, they're evaluated relative to — you said there's four criteria — skill, effort, responsibility, and work conditions. Could you break down for me how that equates into actual tasks that need to be performed on an ongoing day-to-day or week-by-week basis?

(16:15)

And the reason that I'm putting this question forth, Madam Minister, is just from the information that you've provided to us today, it seems to me that we have a ratio of . . . For every employee hired in this human resource department, they have an average around 72 tasks to perform for the year with regards to classification, the appeals, and the hirings. And I just wondered if you can — relative to those skill, effort, responsibility, and work conditions — determine if . . . or just outline why the status quo is acceptable.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Okay, we'll try to get this a little more focused here. We've got 12 who are in staffing specifically; 10 who are in the classification area; 3 in the employee assistance; 5 in the organizational development, learning, and planning; 3 in the diversity and the Aboriginal management internship program.

And of those 12 that are in staffing, there would be . . . they'd be involved in the 900 staffing actions that occur in a year. Of the 10 in classification, they would be involved in the over 2,000 classification exercises that go on in the year. So just as far as ratios go, I think that would change the view of the ratios.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Yes, it does. Thank you, Madam Minister. Thank you for that clarification.

I would have a very generic question, so there won't be a detailed digging this time, just about the relationship of the Public Service Commission relative to the other departments. And if you could outline it in the broadest context on how, when individuals enter the civil service, how they are hired, and then from that what the relationship on an ongoing basis is with the Public Service Commission if they're in the department of, say, Justice just as an example. Thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Everybody sort of has their share of work at different levels of the process. But the Public Service Commission writ large is the employer's representative in the whole process of hiring, labour relations, policy, procedure. All permanent hiring for the government again . . . and an earlier question I differentiated between permanent and non-permanent. And one of the main roles of the Public Service Commission is to maintain the independence of the Public Service Commission.

That's why there's a board of commissioners who are responsible for policy within the Public Service Commission in terms of independence of hiring, the principles on which hiring is based, and to ensure a professional civil service, and then to administer all the various things that are agreed to in the collective bargaining agreement — you know, the grievance process, the assistance programs, things that are system-wide.

Individual managers are more responsible for making sure the jobs within their area are classified at the right level, that they get the right kind of people to do them in consultation with the Public Service Commission and to administer the day-to-day management, supervision within the workplace, to do things like the training plans. The Public Service Commission would be at a consultative and advisory level. The individual departments would look at what their training needs were for their individual employees. The Public Service Commission would be setting policy, for example, on diversity. At the departmental level they would be looking at how they could achieve their contribution to a representative workforce in the government.

So again, the Public Service Commission has the overarching responsibility but modern management theory has it that well-paid managers have a fair degree of both responsibility and accountability in administering at the departmental level.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you for that overview, Madam Minister. I'd like to turn now . . . Just with regards to what you've said as acting as an umbrella organization and from the outline of what you said, the Public Service Commission does retain the responsibility of workplace environment for employees.

And I'd like to turn now with regards to the sexual harassment policies of the Public Service Commission. And my first question regarding this is: when did the zero policy for sexual harassment within our public service come into existence? And could we have a definition of what that zero tolerance meant initially when it first came into existence and what it meant up to the end of the last fiscal year.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Well we've got the whole history for you here. In '82 was the first time this appeared in the collective agreement and that would have been negotiated then with the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union) and it applied only within the framework of the employees covered by SGEU.

In 1987, it became part of government-wide policy to deal with harassment, but in '93 . . . sexual harassment specifically in '87.

In '93 the harassment policy changed to include sexual, racial, harassment of disabled. And so there was an expanded definition and that was included in changes to the occupational health and safety code which then took it to all workplaces, not merely government.

And then in 2000, within government again, there was . . . Within the occupational health and safety code, it was expanded even further to be places where people would identify, I think it would be fair to say, what they believed to be the harassment that they were experiencing, and was made consistent with the



Saskatchewan Human Rights Code on the basis of race, creed, religion, colour, sex, sexual orientation, family status, marital status, disability, age, nationality, ancestry, place of origin, or receipt of public assistance.

So it's been a gradual process of broadening what that means. And under the previously existing policy, I'll read you the definition:

Harassment in the workplace will not be tolerated. The abuse of one's authority or position to intimidate, coerce or harass is forbidden. Harassment constitutes a disciplinary infraction that shall be dealt with through appropriate measures.

(And) this policy does not limit or constrain the employer's right to manage the workplace. For example, work assignments, operational reviews, performance reviews, coaching, work evaluation and disciplinary measures taken by a manager or supervisor, in good faith for valid reasons, do not constitute harassment in the workplace. These supervisory and management actions must remain respectful of the individual. This policy will not, under any circumstances, be used to impede the supervisory relationship, nor is it intended to inhibit normal social interaction in the workplace.

So as you can see there's quite a bit of scope for interpretation in there but yet it gives some pretty clear direction as well.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Madam Minister, if you could possibly clarify — thank you for that quote — was the name of that outline zero tolerance, because I didn't hear that terminology within what you just quoted to me, or else I missed it and I'd like clarification.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I think where the zero tolerance notion came from was more from the justice system when there was a provision put in that when there was cases of domestic abuse and violence, that whether or not the person who was the victim in the particular situation desired it, the police would still take action on an instance, in fact were required to take action.

And so this phrase, although commonly used, was not actually in the policy itself. And so one of the changes that was made was to make it clear that the intent as reflected in things like the changes to the justice Act and certainly in people's view being the intent of why you would have a policy like this, those specific words were not embedded in the policy. So one of the changes that occurred recently was to specifically embed those words in the policy.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Madam Minister, it was my understanding when we sat in question period here a month or so ago that it was the government's position that zero tolerance was the policy for the government of the day on sexual harassment.

I would ask you if you could outline the changes that have been made so that, as you've said now, this doesn't appear that this was the case, semantically anyways. And I'd like you to take the opportunity to outline what the changes have been so that this terminology is clear first and foremost to the Assembly.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I think it's best reflected in point 1 of the summary of the recommendations of the review team. And the new paragraph that will be in a prominent place within the policy document and all relevant literature is, and I quote:

The government has a zero tolerance policy towards harassment in the workplace. No reported incident of harassment will go unaddressed. Allegations of harassment will be taken most seriously, and if substantiated, will be addressed through appropriate corrective action which reinforces the policy and ensures the harassment does not continue.

And I would argue that that is the spirit of the original document but not stated in such plain language.

(16:30)

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. And I commend you for that clarification.

I would have some questions now with regards to the Public Service Commission and their taking action to prevent sexual harassment. I have a document here which is just a publication from the Public Service Commission. And I would ask just, first and foremost, how many general awareness workshops did the Public Service Commission facilitate or initiate in the last fiscal year, and if the minister wouldn't mind, for the fiscal year prior to that as well?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Well I think we've got a good start here, although I would not be able to give you workshops because the Public Service Commission themselves do not actually run these workshops. They do have a Web site that posts the policy.

Employees are informed of the policy through the occupational health and safety committees because that's a responsibility of the occupational health and safety committees. And departments are responsible for the actual implementation.

And in the policy there is a section that directs people where to go for information or help. It says: to your supervisor, your human resource branch, a member of your occupational health and safety committee, a local union official, SGEU if you're a member, CUPE if you're a member, the Human Rights Commission, the employee and family assistance program, the occupational health and safety division of the Department of Labour, the police.

And so it does direct people to a number of places they can go if they believe that either they are experiencing this or somebody else is experiencing this and they wish to report it. But it would be done again through the occupational health and safety committees and departments.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Madam Minister, I'll ask again, just with regards to the total number of employees that would be protected by the Public Service Commission in all departments, total number of civil servants that we have, could you give me a round number, even to the thousand, how many that is, please?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Ten thousand would be the sort of

ongoing and 12,000 when there's peaks of employment.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, the dissemination of this information — what has been looked at so that with regards to the workshops that are put on, that we know that employees and employers have an understanding of this issue — what was the dollar figure associated with it?

And further to that, what has been the initiative of the Public Service Commission to look at what the numbers for harassment cases are relative to other institutions of similar sizes? In Saskatchewan, I would say for example the University of Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I guess I'll answer this in two parts. One is that although I don't have interjurisdictional comparisons, I do know that the total number of complaints dealt with in the last year were 11; and with an employee body of that size, that would not seem to be an extraordinary number.

The second thing I would say is that at the time The Occupational Health and Safety Act occurred the changes, there was a rollout of workshops, but we don't have those figures because that was '93 and we don't . . . We, I presume, could track back and find it but there was a whole rollout of workshops. What we're hoping to get to in the process we've committed to, following the work that was done recently, is to find a way to again bring up the awareness level.

But my own view — and I am speaking of my own view, but certainly we've discussed this — that as we move into our automated system, we should also be able to have some on-line opportunities for employees to go through a process, answer questions, and thereby verify that they've completed a section of awareness or training.

And that would then be automatically recorded so that we would know who had actually gone through the required awareness, at least of the existence of the policy. If not an in-depth understanding of all the possible ways one might look at the issue, there would at least be that understanding that there are rules and that they have to be followed.

And I do believe that an automated system gives you much greater capacity to do this than a paper-based system which would require hours of management to know who had done what.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister, Mr. Chair. I'm glad and I have — to see that you are addressing this serious issue — I have no doubt that on a personal level you take this with the utmost seriousness. But I do have grave concerns with the way that the government has been handling this.

Over the last nine years, there have been only eight confirmed cases of sexual harassment, and this is provided by the information given from written questions which I put in the House earlier this year. That is 1 per cent of 1 per cent of the employee base, just from the figures that you have given me.

Even by your own admission, last year there were 11 supposed cases out of 10,000. And from the answer that I have from the

written questions, there was one was confirmed.

It begs the question, and . . . that there is an inadequacy here. When we have stats coming from the federal government stating specifically that up to one out of four women in society are sexually harassed at some place — and often this occurs at work — that there is a huge discrepancy between the numbers your department is providing today and possibly the reality which exists in the workplace.

I hope that it is . . . I hope that it is addressed in the most serious of natures. And I would ask what fiscal commitments are being put forth to address this with, and in the terms of studying this relative to other institutions of similar sizes, and what results base is expected from the implementation of the recommendations from the new report?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I think we've got a bit of an apples and oranges situation going on here. The numbers that we give you are formal complaints, so that means that all attempts at resolution have failed, whereas the federal numbers are a matter of an employee survey. So it's . . . theirs is an opinion-based survey whereas ours is a matter of a complaint-based record keeping. And that's very different.

There may well have been many more instances that are revolved . . . or that are resolved through a managed discussion between the two parties — a mediation — and those do not reach the level of a formal complaint, therefore aren't reflected in those numbers. So I think what you've got is two different kinds of numbers.

And in terms of the resources to pay for this, again it is management's responsibility as part of their managerial duties to do that. It's what they're compensated for. And in some workplaces, through their occupational health and safety committees, this information is posted on the bulletin boards. It's quite available, it's very visible, so there's not a necessity to spend a ton of money essentially to convey this information.

It's part of things like WHMIS (workplace hazardous materials information system), the occupational health and safety things you have to be careful about, protection from chemicals and cleaning products and workplace hazards, and this is another workplace hazard. So there aren't totally separate and distinct programs for every single thing that can happen to you in the workplace, but it is a clearly identified part of a larger body of policy.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Madam Minister, I thank you for that answer but I would again ask what are going to be the measurements of criteria for this? I asked the following written questions with regards to the 2001-2002 fiscal year of how many sexual harassment prevention program public education workshops were conducted within the Department of Environment, and there were three Respectful Workplace seminars conducted.

But we know from what's come out in the news this year, there were six female employees at one of these . . . in this particular department that had suffered sexual harassment for a number of years. So the question is going to be again, what are going to the criteria for measuring the success of this?

And secondly, when you said there were a number of resolutions probably which occurred which never get calculated into the figures that you've put forth, what is being suggested to start to track these so that we really have an understanding of this issue in the workplace? It's a two-part question, and . . . thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again, thanks for the question. In the report, one of the things that was an outcome of this report was directing that departments include the initiative as part of their annual human resource plans, and once being formally included in the human resource plans they then would be accountable for measurements and reporting. And so the requirement for it to be included formally in the human resource plans will then create an outcome of measurement and reporting.

(16:45)

But we do take your comment very seriously and helpfully, that we should look at whether we should find a better way to capture the level of incidence even if it's not at the level of a formal complaint. So I'll thank you for that.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I do have a number of concerns even with regards to the document which I was able to pick up at the Public Service Commission.

The document is entitled, *Taking Action to Prevent Sexual Harassment*. It has a . . . and it's part of a sexual harassment prevention program. It has amongst it the outline of five different categories: a general awareness workshop, a manager/supervisor workshop, and a train-the-facilitator workshop, along with consultation and public education.

What I am very concerned about is that, although this is published, and relative to the answers I've got back from written questions, there's no way to track . . . or there hasn't been sufficient tracking on whether these have ever been done. And what this . . . causes me great concern is when we have a few months ago very public statements that this government is in a position that they believe in a zero tolerance policy, yet from this Public Service Commission we see that there hasn't been this accountability relative to their own guidelines.

And I'd like to know, and feel free to embellish, just how this is going to be addressed.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again I think the protection is in the requirement that it formally be included in the human resource plans. And I think I did share with the member just a few moments earlier my own view that once we are able to deliver more of our training on-line on an individualized way to employees and new employees, we will have a better way to track who has actually received which kinds of training and awareness and who has done the orientation that's required in terms of being familiar with government policy.

And you know, to not put too fine a point on it and to not get argumentative at this time of the day, the fact is is that there are many policies in government both related to interaction with co-workers and to the actual work you're doing. And sometimes different things will come to the forefront depending on whether the issue is a public issue of a service provided or

whether it's a workplace issue of relationships, interactions, and not every issue is going to be top of mind at all moments, no matter what you do, because nobody can keep everything top of mind all the time.

And so our goal is to make people as aware as possible, to have it in the formal human resource plans, to require then measurements and reporting, and as we sophisticate the systems to have more accountability through the technology. Because it would be very difficult at this point to manage this well through an entirely paper-based system when you've got people coming and going and changing jobs and changing levels.

But I think it would be fair to say that people know that this is not acceptable and that what we're going to do is work to close the gap between knowing it's not acceptable and being able to confirm that in fact the intention is being fulfilled. And again, we have new tools available today that we didn't have when this began.

But, you know, society and the public service and society in general operates a little bit on the honour principle. You can't make a law that covers every aspect of human behaviour and, to a degree, people have to adopt some social standards and internalize them without being policed constantly. So I would say that I think a little bit of honour system is required in these situations, as well as accountability.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. As this is my last question for the day, I would first of all like to thank you for your answers this afternoon and thank your officials for participating in this process.

My final question has to do with regards to the way that sexual harassment will be dealt with by the minister when we have confirmed cases that have gone all the way through the process. We had a situation this spring where a bureaucrat made a poor decision . . . or it's been assured to this House that it was an uninfluenced decision. We'll see if that paper trail ever pops up, but we'll take that as it is.

What are going to be the changes for the next time so that we don't have these questions?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — As affirmed by myself and, I might say, as supported by your leader — I have the quote but not with me — we want to continue to have a separation between the professional public service role and the policy role of policy makers, the elected officials. And so what we've tried to do is give much stronger policy direction and much stronger supports at the level of the professional public service to make this happen.

But we still do not intend to interfere directly in these processes. This is the job of the managers. It is the job of the public service, and if we have failed to provide clarity and direction, it's our job to fix this. But certainly it would be my hope that 99.999 times out of 100, you would not have to overturn decisions.

The committee reported progress.

The Assembly adjourned at 16:54.

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