

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present petitions on behalf of people from my constituency who are really concerned about the condition of Highway No. 49.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair Highway 49 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth in Kelvington and surrounding areas.

The people who have signed this petition are all from Okla.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today on behalf of citizens of Moose Jaw and area concerned for the lack of dialysis services in their area. The prayer reads as follows:

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

Signatures on this petition this afternoon, 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 rise again to present a petition on behalf of constituents of the Cypress Hills constituency; it concerns Crown grazing 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 by residents of the community of Mendham.

I so present.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the dangerous and deplorable condition of Highway 43. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair Highway 43 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth in rural Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals of the communities of Gravelbourg, Swift Current, and Vanguard.

I so present.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition with citizens concerned about the rapidly deteriorating state of Highway No. 20. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair Highway 20 from Nokomis to Strasbourg in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth in rural Saskatchewan.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Duval, Strasbourg, Humboldt, and Regina.

I so present.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in the House to present a petition on behalf of citizens from west central Saskatchewan concerned with the state of health care. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure continuation of the current level of services available at the Kindersley Hospital and to ensure the current speciality services are sustained to better serve the people of west central Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Glidden, Brock, Dodsland, Hoosier, and Kindersley, Saskatchewan.

I so present.

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

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

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

Signed by the good citizens of Biggar and district.

I so present.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have yet another petition to present on behalf of constituents concerned with the condition of a portion of Highway 22. 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 Earl Grey, Bulyea, and North Battleford.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional papers no. 12, 36, and 41.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee met this morning and they have duly examined the undermentioned petition for a private Bill, and find that the provisions of rules 65 and 68 have been fully complied with:

Of the Radville Christian College, in the province of Saskatchewan praying for an Act to amend its Act of Incorporation.

Now most members would probably know them as the Western Christian College and you will see that in some instances behind the Bill, but of the Radville Christian College.

In light of the suspension of rule 64 by the Assembly, your committee recommends that the private Bill now proceed.

Moved by myself, seconded by the member from Kindersley:

That the report of the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills now be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 51 ask the government the following question:

To the minister of Public Service Commission: in the year 2000 how many positions in the public service at level 10 classification or higher were filled by applicants from within the public service?

I have the same question for 2001 and 2002.

To the minister of Public Service Commission: in the year 2000 how many positions in the public service at level 10 classification or higher were filled by applicants from outside of the public service?

I have the same question for 2001 and 2002.

To the minister of the Public Service Commission: in the year 2000 how many positions in public service at level 10 classification or higher had degree qualifications removed to accommodate employment equity candidates?

2001, 2002 as well.

To the minister of Public Service Commission: in the year 2000 how many applicants with disabilities were hired by the public service at level 10 classification or higher from outside of and within the public service?

For the year 2001, 2002. And:

To the minister of SGI: is Don Cody still the chairperson of the SGI board; if so, what is his salary; if not, is he a member of the SGI board; if not, who is the current chairperson of SGI board and what is that person's salary?

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 51 ask the government the following question:

Following the three-day meeting of the Agriculture ministers in June 2001, how often has the Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture met with any or all other Agriculture ministers to discuss the designing of the agriculture policy framework; where and when did these meetings take place; and who travelled with the minister?

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on day 51 I will ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Highways and Transportation: during the 2002-2003 fiscal year, how many agreements were in place between the provincial government and private firms under the transportation partnership programs; what private companies were involved in these agreements; and how much revenue did each agreement bring to the government?

Mr. Speaker, I have similar questions that cover fiscal year '01-02.

Mr. Lorenz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day 51 ask the government the following question:

To the minister of Saskatchewan Housing Corporation: when a non-profit corporation submits a proposal to the centenary affordable housing program, who reviews the proposal and ultimately decides whether or not it will be accepted; if it is a board or review panel that reviews these proposals, what are the names of the people who sit on the board or on the review panel?

I so submit.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 51 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for CIC: is CIC sending a

representative to the Banff television and film festival in June 2003; and if so, for what purpose?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour for me to introduce to you, and to all my colleagues here in the legislature, in the east gallery, 31 students from the Lashburn High School. They're accompanied by two teachers, Tracy Doering and Alison Best, and there is several chaperones. And I don't think they need the chaperones, they're very well behaved people.

I'd like to welcome them again because Lashburn has had a tradition, Mr. Speaker, of having a class come from a great distance to tour the building and to be part of the activity, see what we go on here. And I'm looking forward to meeting with them again after question period.

Welcome to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the House, three very special guests that we have joining us on the east side of your gallery. Mr. Bert Royer, Bert is the business manager for the international brotherhood of ironworkers, Local 771 here in Regina, and with Bert today is his wife, Tina, and Tina's sister, Cheryl Gendron, from Kitchener, Ontario.

Cheryl is in Regina and in Saskatchewan visiting friends and family, and I hope she enjoys her time here. And they're all down here to tour the legislature, which I think they already have, taken some pictures, and they're going to take in some of the happenings of the session here this afternoon.

So I wish all the members would offer them a very warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to introduce 10 students from grades 7, 8, and 9 who are visiting us from Swanson Christian School. They're in the east gallery, Mr. Speaker.

We had a very enjoyable MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) visit earlier and they asked many interesting questions. And please join me in welcoming the students from Swanson Christian School to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, 56 grade 8 students seated in the west gallery from the White City School.

Mr. Speaker, there's also a student who is seated on the floor of our Assembly, accompanied by Ms. McFarlane. With them are teachers, Kelly Ireland and Chris Beingessner, and chaperone,

Mrs. Dubois.

White City School, I'm sure you would all know, is a school that's noted for a wonderful kind of celebration called Random Acts of Kindness. And I've been there to see students handing out warm cups of morning coffee and muffins to parents, but also known for wonderful random acts of kindness — I think something we could all enrich our lives with, following in their example.

I'm looking forward to meeting with the students after they've had a tour and a photo. And I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming the students, teachers, and chaperone from White City School.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Convocation at Saskatchewan's Universities

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a total of 4,614 Saskatchewan university students have successfully completed their education this year.

Starting today and carrying through to Friday, both of our universities will be convocating their graduates for 2003. For these students, of course, graduation is not the completion of their lifelong education, but it is a major stepping stone, and I know we all wish them well as they enter the next phase of their lives.

At the University of Saskatchewan, 3,017 degrees, certificates, and diplomas will be presented, as well as three honorary doctorates. At this morning's ceremony, graduates were privileged to hear the convocation address by Dr. Buffy Sainte-Marie, Saskatchewan's universal songstress. Also honoured will be Bernard Michel and Douglas Baldwin.

At the University of Regina, 1,597 students will convocate. Three honorary degrees will go to Judge Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, Dr. Edward Busse, and Dr. Michael Ignatieff.

Mr. Speaker, these students are from Saskatchewan and from several countries from around the world, indicative of the reputation of our universities. These young people, and not-so-young, are our future. And I congratulate each of them on this significant accomplishment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

National Transportation Week

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, May 28 to June 6 is National Transportation Week across Canada, a week set aside to recognize the hard work and dedication of the thousands of men and women involved in our nation's transportation industry.

It is also an excellent opportunity to look at ways of increasing efficiencies within the transportation network, as well as

bringing increased focus on such areas as industry safety, technology, energy conservation, and environmental impact.

(13:45)

Whether it's by road, rail, air, or water or pipeline, Mr. Speaker, the transportation industry is connected by one main goal: to ensure that goods and services are delivered effectively and efficiently to destinations across the country.

And, Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan all levels of government and all sectors of the economy are very much aware of the importance the transportation industry plays in furthering the economic and social development of our province. With our immense geographical challenges we all know how much we rely on the province's more than 26,000 kilometres of road, 800 bridges, and nearly 2 dozen airports and 12 ferries.

Mr. Speaker, it's fitting that this Sunday during National Transportation Week, the Saskatchewan Party's recommendation to increase speed limits on twinned highways will be formerly adopted by this NDP (New Democratic Party) government. This will allow goods and services to move quickly and effectively through the province. And we're very pleased to see the NDP agreeing with yet another Saskatchewan Party initiative that will grow the province.

I would ask all members to recognize National Transportation Week in Canada and more importantly here in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

La Ronge Receives Insurance Bureau of Canada Award

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, the Insurance Bureau of Canada recently launched a new national program called Foundation for the Future that recognizes the efforts of communities to better manage risks associated with natural disasters, extreme weather, and weather-related events.

It is my pleasure to report that the town of La Ronge was chosen as one of the five communities ever to be recognized by the program for improving its capacity to combat forest fires.

Mr. Speaker, following a forest fire in 1999 that threatened the town, a report from the Saskatchewan Water Corporation suggested that La Ronge required a booster station upgrade in order to better be prepared for the future. Town council made this a priority and with a combination of local, provincial, federal funding the project proceeded. The upgrade involves construction of a new reservoir and pumping station that will markedly improve the ability of firefighters to minimize property damage and potentially save lives.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure all members of the Assembly will join me in congratulating the town of La Ronge on being recognized by the IBC (Insurance Bureau of Canada) for their care and their foresight.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Consul Student Wins Essay Contest

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you well know, the constituency of Cypress Hills has long been known for the amazing talents of its residents. But this time it's the writing talent of a young constituent from the community of Consul that I want to recognize.

Last fall the grade 5 and 6 classes of Consul School, taught by Ms. Tami Reynolds, entered a Canada-wide essay contest titled Shooting for the Gold sponsored by Esso Canada.

Mr. Speaker, there were a total of 85,000 entries and the classes from Consul were recently notified that the essay of one of their classmates, Cody Reamer, was chosen, placing the Consul grade 6 class in the top five in the whole country.

Mr. Speaker, Cody Reamer's brief but winning essay is titled Red, White and Gold, and I'd like to read it into the record.

I have never been happier to be a Canadian than I was in 2002! Men and women's hockey teams both won Gold! I love hockey and the Olympics. When Canada won the gold I could hear all of Canada cheer. I know for sure that in 2006 Canada will win the gold again. We may have thought there were only two colours in Canada; (but) there are three — red, white and gold.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of the Legislative Assembly join with me to offer our congratulations to Cody Reamer on his winning essay and to the Consul grade 6 class for placing in the top five in Canada.

This is an outstanding achievement for the grade 6 class and a credit to Cody's writing talent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SaskEnergy Community Spirit Award

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to rise and tell the Assembly about a young woman who exemplifies the volunteer spirit that we are so rightfully proud of in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, on May 23, Carrie-Ann Smith of Abbey, Saskatchewan was presented with the SaskEnergy Community Spirit Award for her outstanding contributions as a volunteer in many areas.

Carrie-Ann has won numerous awards for her extracurricular activities at school and with the 4-H club. She travels to schools in the Southwest talking to children about farm safety and has been involved with other community safety projects such as the production of educational videos. Carrie-Ann also plays guitar and takes her musical skills to church and to seniors homes.

Mr. Speaker, as a recipient of the Community Spirit Award, Carrie-Ann receives an engraved plaque and a cheque for \$500 to donate to the charity of her choice. Carrie-Ann has chosen Camp Shagabec in Cypress Hills where she has been a counsellor for four years.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Carrie-Ann Smith and wishing her much more joy in the future. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Candidate Nominated

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the initial work here in Regina is complete. Last night the 11th candidate for the Saskatchewan Party was nominated here in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, in a room at the Travelodge where standing room only was available, Rob Bresciani was nominated for the Saskatchewan Party in the Regina Dewdney constituency.

Rob Bresciani is a well-known resident of the city of Regina. For the past nine years he's served on the separate school board, a number of those years as Chair. Not only being involved in the community, he owns a number of businesses also and is well known in the community circle.

However Rob may be best known for his years with the Saskatchewan Roughriders. Rob was a member of the 1989 Grey Cup winning Saskatchewan Roughriders. Prior to those years with the Roughriders he spent a number of years in Calgary and Ottawa. And in his speech last night he said one thing that was always on his mind was to get back to Saskatchewan, to grow up in Saskatchewan and play his football career in Saskatchewan.

One of the reasons Rob decided to run in this ... for the Saskatchewan Party, because he knew they would form the next government. But he wanted to see his parents ... his children, pardon me, grow up in this province, Mr. Speaker.

One thing that Mr. Bresciani said to me when I was leaving the meeting last night, he said, would you ask the Premier to screw up the courage and call an election?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Team Saskatchewan Launched

Ms. Jones: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report that the Team Saskatchewan initiative of the Our Future is Wide Open campaign was launched in Saskatoon today.

Team Saskatchewan brings together leaders from the private and public sectors that have the common goal of promoting the province as a good place to live, work, and to do business. Mr. Speaker, Team Saskatchewan members include business leaders in Saskatchewan's six key economic sectors as well as business and cultural association representatives and civic leaders.

Team Saskatchewan members will take part in trade missions to major markets in Canada and the United States to promote investment and business opportunities in Saskatchewan. They will also promote our cultural and tourism industries.

Team Saskatchewan's first trip will be BIO 2003 in Washington, DC (District of Columbia). This is the largest

biotechnology conference in the world and here Team Saskatchewan will have the opportunity to showcase our achievements in biotechnology research and make contacts with the international biotechnology community.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure everyone who believes in the future of this province will join me in wishing Team Saskatchewan good fortune. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Lorenz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) announced this morning that three herds in British Columbia quarantined in relationship to the BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) case will be depopulated and as so will two other Alberta herds and the Saskatchewan herd of Baldwinton, related to the trace-backs of the infected cow's life. This will bring to a total eight cattle herds across three Prairie provinces that have had herds totally depopulated as a result of BSE infestation.

Mr. Speaker, the question is to whether or not these producers will be able to restock their farms with ruminants following depopulation. The producers of Baldwinton have spoken with George Luterbach of the CFIA today and was not given conclusive answers to this question.

Will the minister contact CFIA to confirm whether or not the CFIA will allow these family farms to restock the land and facilities and find out in what time frame restocking might be allowed to occur?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, in our press conference just about half an hour ago, our provincial staff member, Dr. Greenberg, indicated that in all likelihood — and we don't have a definitive answer from this from CFIA — that there would be no restrictions here at all on any one of those producers re-establishing their herds again on exactly the same farm sites of which the animals that are currently being destroyed could be relocated on again.

And we can confirm that with CFIA, but it's the view of our provincial folks that there not be a cause for concern here about repopulating any of those farms again with new stock.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lorenz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister commented during his media briefing that the federal Minister of Agriculture told his provincial counterparts today that the US (United States) beef import ban would not be lifted until late next week at the earliest. He also said that he did not know specifically what would satisfy the American officials that Canadian beef would be safe.

The CFIA is also commenting that they have never been able to conclusively determine the sources of BSE infection in the Alberta cow. This is a concern, giving the number of countries

who have banned Canadian beef imports and the significance of those sales to our beef industry.

Mr. Speaker, how will the CFIA and the federal government be able to satisfy the Americans that our beef is safe and BSE-free? If we don't know what they are looking for and we can't pinpoint the source of the disease, is the minister concerned to these points of concern?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I did confirm for the media this afternoon that — in fact, in a conference call with the federal minister — that he is having some difficulty ascertaining from the US Secretary of Agriculture what it is that would exactly be the criteria that would need to be met.

And I think partly some of the difficulty that the US government will experience is that of course today they don't have any criteria within their national system. And so it'll be very difficult for them I expect to set criteria of what they would want us to meet when in fact they don't have any of their own.

And so what we're hoping will happen here, Mr. Speaker, is that we'll be able to show unequivocally in the next few days that in fact our system is safe; our system can prove that our food system is safe. And at the end of the day the American government will then lift the ban.

They have today, working in our province and in our country alongside our investigators, a team of their specialists. Their specialists I expect are reporting back to the US government. And it will be through them I expect that the federal government will recognize that our system works and that our trace-back system is safe.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Call for By-election in Carrot River Valley Constituency

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the people of Carrot River have been without representation now for nearly four months. And certainly because of the tragic circumstances that led to this vacancy, it was responsible for the Premier to hold off on calling an early by-election.

But now that we know that there's no spring election, it's time for the people of Carrot River to be represented in this legislature. Mr. Speaker, this is the last week that the Premier has to call a by-election if the election is not to be held in July. Will the Premier be calling a by-election for Carrot River?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I will be certainly giving this matter some attention over the next several days. The member is correct that a by-election call that would come sometime this week would put that by-election in the month of June.

Mr. Speaker, I was in Tisdale last night where the New Democratic Party nominated a Mark Pitzel.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, putting up Mark Pitzel, whose roots are deep in that constituency against a candidate named Mr. Allan Kerpan, who represents the Saskatchewan Party, who I understand comes from Kenaston, who I understand used to sit as a Reform member of the House of Commons, I am looking forward to this by-election, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well the Premier's not the only one who's looking forward to the by-election. Our candidate, Allan Kerpan, is more than ready to face their Mark Pitzel, Mr. Speaker.

But the Premier seems to be pretty reluctant to face the voters. He himself has never yet been elected Premier. He doesn't want to call the election. He doesn't want to call the by-election. Mr. Speaker, what's he afraid of?

(14:00)

The people of Carrot River deserve to be represented and I don't think that they want to be going to the polls in July or August, Mr. Speaker. They want a representative in this House to speak on the floor of this Assembly, to bring forward their concerns before the next election, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Premier commit to holding a by-election before the end of June?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I repeat to the member and all hon. members, I'm going to give this some considerable attention over the next several hours and several days, and the member should just stand by for an announcement.

I repeat, Mr. Speaker, I'm very much looking forward to this by-election because I learned last night, I learned last night, believe it or not, Mr. Speaker, believe it or not, members, that the candidate for the Saskatchewan Party in this upcoming by-election is none other than Mr. Allan Kerpan.

Would this be the same Mr. Allan Kerpan, I ask, the same Mr. Allan Kerpan who ran for the Eastview nomination? Would this be the same Mr. Allan Kerpan who sat as a Reform member of the federal parliament? Would this be the same Reform member that won kind of an award from *The Hill Times* . . . (inaudible) . . . Is this the same Mr. Allan Kerpan, I ask, that was involved in some movements towards Western alienation and separation?

Mr. Speaker, I tell you, when I look at Mr. Mark Pitzel, a man whose roots are deep into that constituency, a family man, a well-educated man, Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to the contest in Carrot River Valley.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ethanol Industry

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party is looking forward to that by-election that will pit an experienced

legislator on . . .

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party's looking forward to pitting our experienced legislator against the personal assistant to the minister . . . former minister of SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company), Mr. Speaker. That is going to be the campaign up in Carrot River.

Mr. Speaker, this morning when I pulled up to the legislature, I saw a large group of children here on the lawns of the legislature and I was a little worried. I was happy to hear that they were here for a daycare event because for a while I thought the government was making another ethanol announcement here in the city of Regina. Because a year ago, Mr. Speaker, or rather in last October, the NDP drove busloads of school children to Belle Plaine to announce the ethanol plant there.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the Crown Corporations Committee, Frank Hart, the president of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) confirmed that still today there is no ethanol deal to report.

Mr. Speaker, the question to the minister is simple: why would the NDP government put on such a big show — circus tents, busing school children in — to announce a deal that didn't exist then and still doesn't exist today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all before I answer that question I'll answer the first one. In reference to the by-election, Mr. Speaker, in personal conversation and quiet conversation with that member from Swift Current, I understand he would like us to win that riding, Mr. Speaker, because if Mr. Kerpan were to win that he would be contested for the leadership of the opposition. And I know that causes him some difficulty, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the position of the government, Mr. Speaker, is exactly the same, as it pertains to ethanol, Mr. Speaker, as it was before. We will work with the private sector, Mr. Speaker, to develop a responsible ethanol industry here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, in 1989 in the Moose Jaw journal there was a headline regarding the Belle Plaine announcement there by the then Devine government. It says, "New Democrat wants all facts on Belle Plaine."

And here's a quote from the article. It says:

The opposition New Democrats say the government should have released the complete funding details of the project when it was originally announced.

And here's a quote, Mr. Speaker:

"It's very strange the deal would be announced without the

details in place," says Lorne Calvert . . . (MLA for Moose Jaw Wakamow for the NDP.)

Mr. Speaker, that's what he said when he was in opposition — why would they announce a deal without there being details in place.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we found out that not only are there still no details in place for this deal they've committed the taxpayers to, but we found that they hired Scotia, Mr. Speaker, Scotia Capital for \$25,000 last year to review the deal that doesn't exist, Mr. Speaker.

The question to the minister is this: will the minister commit to table whatever deal is out there and will he table Scotia Capital's review of the deal that may or may not exist?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, this is almost laughable. Well in fact, it is laughable.

Mr. Speaker, for that member, for that member to suggest that there was some great revelation yesterday, Mr. Speaker, about ScotiaMcLeod's review of the ethanol industry, any particular project, is laughable as I said.

Mr. Speaker, ScotiaMcLeod reviewed the ethanol project, Mr. Speaker, and as I've said before many times publicly and in the media, Mr. Speaker, they have confirmed that the ethanol industry has tremendous potential here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Again the position of our government has not changed, Mr. Speaker. It has absolutely not changed. We will work with the private sector to develop an environmentally friendly, Mr. Speaker, form of fuel here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — You know, Mr. Speaker, the Premier of the province was wading in on issues like this in 1989 when the government of the day announced a deal at Belle Plaine too, coincidentally enough. And once again, here's what he said. He said, and I quote:

"It's very strange the deal would be announced without the details in place," says Lorne Calvert (NDP-Moose Jaw South).

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year the Premier also said in the wake of the SPUDCO scandal that the government would hire third parties to review any deals in the future. And now we find out, we know that they did a review of this particular Broe deal, Mr. Speaker, but we also know that there is no deal to review, by the admission of the officials and the minister himself.

So to allay all the concerns that taxpayers would have in the wake of SPUDCO, will the minister commit today to lay the Scotia Capital review on the table and also make public any terms of the deal that he says is now in place for this deal?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well we have been very clear, Mr. Speaker, that the concern about the ethanol was that we do not have the senior debt in place yet. We've been very open about that.

In terms of the specifics of the deal, we've also been very open and accountable about that, Mr. Speaker. And the analysis by ScotiaMcLeod, we said, and responsibly have done, Mr. Speaker, we've asked them to review the ethanol industry here in Saskatchewan, opportunities . . . some opportunities for export, Mr. Speaker, and the structure of the deal which we talked about, Mr. Speaker, a 60/40 partnership.

They've reviewed that. They've confirmed that there is absolutely a market here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker; that there is tremendous potential for ethanol here in Saskatchewan. They were supportive. We are supportive, Mr. Speaker, and we will work with the private sector to develop that industry, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Provincial Finances

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions this afternoon are for the Minister of Finance.

According to a report issued by the Dominion Bond Rating Service last week, the province of Saskatchewan is on course to rack up a massive \$450 million deficit this year. And yet the Finance minister and his NDP government have been parading around Saskatchewan bragging that the budget is balanced.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP's Finance minister telling the people of Saskatchewan the budget is balanced when the Dominion Bond Rating agency says the NDP is on the way to a \$450 million deficit?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well as usual, Mr. Speaker, the opposition Saskatchewan Party gets up and they tell part of what some people say, including the bond rating agencies, but they never tell the whole story, which is very interesting.

What the public knows, Mr. Speaker, is that since 1995 the credit rating agencies, including the Dominion Bond Rating agency, have raised the credit rating of the province of Saskatchewan 10 times in a row, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — And what most reasonable and thoughtful people, as distinct from the opposition, know, Mr. Speaker, is that: why does your credit rating go up? It goes up when your debt is better than it was before, Mr. Speaker. And what the opposition isn't telling the people is this: this province has gone from having the worst debt situation in the country, Mr. Speaker, the worst, thanks to them, to the third best per capita debt situation in the country, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — So it doesn't get much better than that. But you'll never hear that from the opposition, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, the news from the Dominion Bond Rating agency only gets worse for this government. This year's budget is the third — third, Mr. Speaker — provincial budget since the member from Moose Jaw was appointed Premier by a few members of the NDP. And according to the Dominion Bond Rating Service, over those three budgets the NDP will have racked up three straight deficit budgets.

They have piled up nearly \$900 million, Mr. Speaker, in new government debt. Mr. Speaker, that government debt is the GRF (General Revenue Fund) debt and unfunded pension liability debt. It even excludes Crown corporation debt, and that has grown by a massive amount.

The report also notes Saskatchewan has posted two straight years of negative economic growth. Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP misleading the people of Saskatchewan by grossly inflating provincial economic growth estimates and hiding a massive deficit?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well as has been pointed out in this House many times, Mr. Speaker, the reason that the debt of the province will increase for the last fiscal year is because we took in about \$500 million in crop insurance premiums and we will pay out more than \$1 billion, Mr. Speaker. And that is financed over time; that is financed over time. And if those members believe, Mr. Speaker, that the crop insurance payments should not be made to the farmers, they can say so. So, so much for that argument, Mr. Speaker.

Now that member gets up, Mr. Speaker, and he talks about the economy of this province. I want to tell that member that the private sector forecast, the latest one, says that Saskatchewan will have the fastest growing economy in this country in 2003, Mr. Speaker.

The economy of this province is poised to grow, according to the private sector, by 5.8 per cent; faster than Alberta, Mr. Speaker, which will grow by about 3 per cent. And all they can do is harp and complain instead of celebrating the success of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Three straight deficit budgets tells us that this is mismanagement by this NDP government.

Not only, Mr. Speaker, is the government, the NDP government, on course to pile up another \$513 million in new provincial debt in this fiscal year alone, the NDP plans to rack up an additional \$113 million in new Crown corporation debt.

Mr. Speaker, after three years under the unelected leadership of the current NDP Premier, Saskatchewan debt is not only higher than it was when the NDP took office in 1991, the NDP has

now plunged Saskatchewan deeper into debt than in any other time in Saskatchewan's history.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP claiming a balanced budget when the Dominion Bond Rating Service is saying the NDP is to run a \$450 million deficit and pile up an additional half a billion dollars worth of debt?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, really. Will you listen to that. We have a straight A credit rating — straight A credit rating. The fastest growing economy in the country, Mr. Speaker, the fastest growing economy in the country but they don't recognize any good news in Saskatchewan.

But I want to say to the people of this province, who do they believe? Those doom and gloomers over there or the chartered accountants of this province, Mr. Speaker? Because according to the report of the chartered accountants of the province, between 1992 and 2001 the debt of Saskatchewan, the taxpayer-supported debt to GDP (gross domestic product) ratio, Mr. Speaker, went down by 49.4 per cent. That went down in relation to the economy because the economy is growing at a good pace, Mr. Speaker.

And there's only one group of individuals, Mr. Speaker, in this province who do not want to celebrate the successes of Saskatchewan people because of their lust for power, and that negative group is sitting right over there, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

Mega Bingo

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Liquor and Gaming keeps telling us one of the reasons that the NDP started mega bingo program in Saskatchewan was because of how well it was doing in Alberta.

The problem is the NDP did not follow the Alberta model at all. Satellite bingo in Alberta was set up at absolutely no cost to the Alberta taxpayers. The entire system was financed through the sale of partnership units to non-profit organizations. Every one of those partners has now seen a significant return on their original investment, and it did not cost the government one dime.

Mr. Speaker, why did the NDP not follow this model, and instead go ahead with their own scheme and lose \$8 million?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I'm not sure that all the facts are being expressly stated by the member opposite. I mean this is another particular aspect of not having all the details.

And I've told this House before, Mr. Speaker, we've been totally up front. The Western Canada Lottery Corporation, Mr. Speaker, the agent for SLGA (Saskatchewan Liquor and

Gaming Authority) requested . . . issued a request for proposal for software development.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure if that well-recognized, well-respected organization had received an offer of free sources of facilities and services, who would turn that down, Mr. Speaker? I'm not sure where the member is getting all that kind of information.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, let's just compare these two bingo systems. In Alberta, satellite bingo is run privately.

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order. Order. Order, order. I invite the member to start over.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, let's just compare these two bingo systems. In Alberta, satellite bingo is run privately.

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, let's just compare these two bingo systems. In Alberta, the satellite bingo is run privately at zero cost to the taxpayers and they have raised over \$120 million for charities. In Saskatchewan, the NDP decided that they had to run their own mega bingo scheme.

And let's look at their record: no business plan, no cabinet approval, no ceiling on expenditures, lost \$8 million, bingo halls lost money, and absolutely not one dime raised for charities in this province.

Mr. Speaker, sadly this is typical of the NDP. They take a business that the private sector could run; they decide to run it themselves; and they run it into the ground.

Mr. Speaker, why did the NDP give this contract to Wascana Gaming? What was the real reason that they awarded this contract to Wascana Gaming instead of going with the satellite bingo system?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Well, Mr. Speaker, thank you. I guess once again the member opposite has indicated that I need to speak slower and repeat what I've said in this House.

And I'm prepared to repeat over and over: a request for proposal was asked for by the Western Canada Lottery Corporation — a well-respected agency in Alberta, Mr. Speaker, who takes care of a lot of business throughout Western Canada. WCLC received and evaluated the proposals. The WCLC presented SLGA with its evaluations of proposals to develop software to meet the RFP (request for proposal) specifications, Mr. Speaker. The WCLC identified two potential suppliers. The Alberta satellite system was not one of the two potential suppliers.

Isn't that surprising, Mr. Speaker? That member, if she's going to ask questions like that, should know what the answers are because they're there — wide open, Mr. Speaker, and available.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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 convert for debates returnable questions 484 through 522 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Questions 484 to 522 have been converted to orders for return debatable.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions 523 through 526 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to 523, '24, '25, and 526 have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 17

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 17 — The Land Surveys Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be able to speak on Bill No. 17, The Land Surveys Amendment Act. Of course, Mr. Speaker, this Bill brings up really the disaster that the government has with ISC (Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan).

As we know, Mr. Speaker, this ISC was only supposed to cost less than \$20 million to implement, and now we know that it's cost over \$107 million of taxpayer money, and this is quite a tragedy to the people of Saskatchewan. This is money that's been wasted on a system that does not work properly as we know. We've had many people phone about problems with ISC.

We have many concerns. Examples of the problems that this system has brought on people is: people with the same name, even the same middle initial, and the government has forced these people into applying to get their name off certain titles, off caveats, and having those people pay for the cost of doing that — really paying for the cost of a government error.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's tragic in many ways because this system has cost so much of taxpayers' money and now the rates for transfers has gone up dramatically. And, Mr. Speaker, this continues to be a grave concern.

As we know, Mr. Speaker, this amendment is, more specifically defines a legal land definition and requires the surveyors to re-establish lost monuments in certain situations. Now we hope that these amendments will help out with some of the failings of the ISC.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, Mr. Speaker, that we've — the caucus office and the MLAs and the opposition side — has had

many complaints concerning ISC, and we hope in the future that the government will do a better job of trying to straighten out this mess. I'm not sure if it's possible to straighten out ISC, at the end of the day.

We certainly know, Mr. Speaker, that the plans of the government to sell this system to other jurisdictions has fallen flat. Of course no one wants a system that has gone over budget by 500 per cent. And so, Mr. Speaker, it's certainly a sad situation where the government's spent that much of taxpayer money, having a product that can't be sold to another jurisdiction.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have talked to the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association and these small amendments concerning this Act, they find acceptable.

There's one thing that the Land Surveyors' Association is expecting, is another Act to amend The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Act. And we have not seen this come forward and that brings up a number of questions why the government hasn't proceeded with that Act that the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association expects to come forward, Mr. Speaker.

I believe the critic will have many more questions in the upcoming days and so we will let this go to Committee of the Whole, and where the opposition will ask more questions, the critic will ask more questions that have been brought forward from people that have concerns over ISC.

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

Bill No. 31

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Osika that **Bill No. 31 — The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2003/Loi de 2003 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard** be now read a second time.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill No. 31, Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker, there are certainly a lot of concerns around this whole Bill because it is actually giving self-regulation or moving towards self-regulation of on-reserve gaming by First Nations. And, Mr. Speaker, there's been an ongoing debate in Saskatchewan about the whole idea of a 25-year agreement that was signed last year with Saskatchewan Indian Gaming and Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming and FSIN actually representing . . . SIGA, representing FSIN.

And, Mr. Speaker, at the time that this was introduced there was grave concern expressed by the Saskatchewan Party on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan about the time frame and the length of time of this gaming agreement. And at that time the issue surrounding the Dutch Lerat scandal was still not settled. It was still in . . . at the Department of Justice. There are several outstanding concerns that had been raised by the auditor; recommendations that he had made that had not been met. And

yet the government, the NDP, felt it necessary to move ahead and to sign a 25-year agreement in light of the fact that these issues had not been addressed. And it certainly is of grave concern to many people.

At the same time as Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming decided to move ahead with the 25-year agreement, Mr. Speaker, there was still concern that was raised as recently as December 2002 by the Provincial Auditor that there was still improper use of funds — in specific, Mr. Speaker, \$400,000 that went to the FSIN in order to help them negotiate the framework agreement.

So when we look at this, Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan paid for Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming to negotiate the agreement and they also paid for the FSIN to negotiate the agreement. It seems like a very strange deal and certainly is not something that would be common in the real business world today, Mr. Speaker.

Also the government determined that they would give \$150,000 to Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Licensing in order to help them towards reaching status of being able to license on-reserve gaming.

And, Mr. Speaker, under the framework agreement and under the Casino Operating Agreement signed in 1995, according to the Provincial Auditor, both of these are using public funds improperly.

And under the Criminal Code of Canada, they have the authority to license gaming in the country of Canada. And by leave they allow the province to administer gaming in their own province. The only way SIGA can operate gaming in the province of Saskatchewan is by agreement with the provincial government. And the only expenses that SIGA is allowed to charge back to the province of Saskatchewan are actually the fees that it cost, the expenses that it costs them to operate the slot machines in their casinos.

(14:30)

SIGA also, at their casinos, runs table games. They have food and beverage outlets and they also have gift shops. All of the three that I just mentioned, Mr. Speaker, lose money.

So the only profitable part of a SIGA casino are the slot machines which they can only operate under the Casino Operating Agreement signed with the provincial government. So they are losing money and they are deducting those losses off of the profit from the slot machines.

So as this occurs, Mr. Speaker, at the same time those are the only expenses that are supposed to be deducted, the expenses that are actually directly related to slot machines. But we see that the expenses that are incurred by the table games, the food and beverage, and the gift shops are also being deducted, therefore less revenue coming back to the provincial government to then in turn give to First Nations, to community development corporations, and to the people of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming went ahead and deducted the \$550,000, allowed these expenses to be incurred, and according to the Provincial Auditor they were not

proper expenditures because they were not directly related to an expenditure that was necessary in order to operate the slot machines at SIGA casinos.

And so, Mr. Speaker, it is very concerning to the Saskatchewan Party opposition, as well as I'm sure to many people across Saskatchewan, that now the NDP government is moving ahead and planning to give more regulation in the hands of First Nations on-reserve when in fact there has not been compliance with all of the recommendations given by the minister . . . or by the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming.

And it is, I guess, alarming that they are going to move forward and give them further authority when they have not met the recommendations so far.

At the time of the . . . the 25-year agreement was reached, Mr. Speaker, there is a clause in the agreement that talks about full jurisdiction. And at that time we repeatedly questioned the minister about what does full jurisdiction mean.

And at that time the minister said that it meant they would get a second opinion, I believe; I'm paraphrasing but essentially a second opinion from the federal government. But Mr. Perry Bellegarde, who is the chief of the FSIN, made the statement that full jurisdiction to him and to First Nations meant the jewel in the crown.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, we have yet to hear a full explanation from the government about what full jurisdiction means and what they actually envision at the end of the day should First Nations in this province receive full jurisdiction and what the implications will be to all people in Saskatchewan. Because under the Casino Operating Agreement and the framework agreement, 37.5 per cent of the revenue generated from SIGA casinos goes to First Nations, 37.5 per cent comes back to the General Revenue Fund and therefore for all taxpayers in Saskatchewan, and 25 per cent goes to the community development corporations.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is very, very important that all people in Saskatchewan have a full accounting of the dollars that are generated at the casino level, and also to ensure that undue expenditures are not being incurred and that those funds actually that are owed to the people of Saskatchewan and to First Nations actually do flow to them. And to date, Mr. Speaker, this has been something that has not been adhered to in its entirety by Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming.

There are many unanswered questions as to how the dollars are generated at the casino level, if the expenditures are appropriate, and also the expenditure of those dollars once they are into the General Revenue and passed on to the First Nations, to the FSIN, and to the First Nations trust fund.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to speak with several First Nations people over the years. And there is a great concern about the dollars that are to go to First Nations and to whether they are actually receiving the dollars at the reserve level and off-reserve level that they are entitled to because of the dollars generated through gaming at the SIGA casinos.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I believe . . . Until the Saskatchewan

Liquor and Gaming comes to terms with the accountability that they are entrusted with today, why would they be now moving to give away the regulation portion and to be returning the regulation of Liquor and Gaming on SIGA on reserve land to another entity?

And, Mr. Speaker, if we're going to look at it from an economic point of view, what is the rationale for having two separate licensing bodies in the province of Saskatchewan? We already have people that work in Liquor and Gaming that do this very job, and there is the whole administrative level set-up. What we are looking at here is duplicating what is already in place.

And I know if you go back to 1992-93 when gaming was first started in Saskatchewan, at that time the proposal was to operate Indian gaming out of the same offices and under the same administration as Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming was operated. And now we see that the government is moving to separate these two entities, and it causes great concern of what the real purposes of doing this, and where will the dollars be saved.

And for every dollar that is not expended properly in the province, where the expenses are out of control, where there is not accountability — that translates into less dollars for the general taxpayers of the province, for First Nations, and for community development.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen this government continue to fail the charities of this province because of the mega bingo scheme. Mr. Speaker, I questioned this morning in Public Accounts and asked the CEO (chief executive officer) of Liquor and Gaming: what was the purpose of mega bingo? And she answered by saying it was to generate more revenue for charities in the province, when in fact it did everything but. The charities were the big losers. They did not receive any additional funds and on top of that, it cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan \$8 million.

And, Mr. Speaker, we now see the NDP failing the First Nations in this province because they are willing to turn a blind eye and not to hold accountable those in authority that have the dollars at their disposal, and they are not ensuring that these dollars actually flow to where they're intended to end up, Mr. Speaker, which by and large is to the benefit . . . they are to benefit the First Nations in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have a copy of an article that was in the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* last year, written by Randy Burton. And I would just like to quote a few of his comments because I think he clearly describes what the majority of the people in Saskatchewan feel about the whole issue of the 25-year gaming agreement and the lack of accountability for gaming in Saskatchewan. And I quote:

All of which raises the question: if jurisdiction doesn't mean anything, why is it in the agreement?

From the FSIN's point of view, the answer is plain.

It wants complete control of casinos on reserve, wherever it should choose to put them.

The government's motivations are less clear, but it's pretty

obvious the NDP would like to benefit on both ends of the equation.

Facing the growing probability of defeat in the next election, one of the NDP's emerging electoral strategies is to court the Native vote at every opportunity.

Anyone looking for proof of the government's strategy need look no further than the debate in the legislature over the past few days, where (Minister) Osika has equated any opposition to a 25-year . . . (gaming) agreement with anti-Indian sentiment.

(Minister) Osika's use of racial . . . (policies) and murky definitions constitutes a new low-water mark in the government's handling of the gaming file.

Based on this performance, it's easy to believe that jurisdiction is just another word for giving away the farm.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like it to go on record that the Saskatchewan Party and their opposition to some of the issues that are being put forth in Liquor and Gaming, and in particular the 25-year agreement, the lack of accountability, now moving away from scrutiny of Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming over gambling and gaming on-reserve. We are opposing this because we believe that there should be accountability — not only for the taxpayers of this province, but especially for the First Nations people who are dependent on this revenue, and who time and time again have tried at the band level to receive accountability to have an understanding of where these dollars are going. They are wanting answers.

And the Saskatchewan Party is committed to accountability at the casino level and at the level where the dollars are distributed — whether it be First Nations, community development, or the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we will have many more questions on this Bill, and I move to adjourn.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 35

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Osika that **Bill No. 35 — The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again this Bill is moving the First Nations Fund to the First Nations trust. And, Mr. Speaker, again we have concerns about this Bill because of the whole issue of accountability.

The minister in his . . . When he was speaking to this Bill, when it was originally introduced, indicated that it will improve accountability. And, Mr. Speaker, I fail to see in the Bill how that is going to occur, and so we will be asking the minister to give us details of how accountability will be improved.

Mr. Speaker, for several years the First Nations Fund has been under criticism by the Provincial Auditor because of the lack of

scrutiny and the lack of identifying where the dollars flow from the First Nations trust and . . . or Fund, sorry, Mr. Speaker.

And if this new trust fund is indeed to ensure further accountability then it is a good thing. And when we question the minister about this when we have the opportunity in Committee of the Whole, I'll be very interested to see if indeed this is where the government is moving because First Nations people have been asking for a long time for more accountability so that they have an understanding of where the dollars from gaming actually are going.

Mr. Speaker, it's not only on-reserve First Nations that are concerned about this, it is also off-reserve First Nations who are entitled to a share of the gaming profit and who, by and large, are not seeing any of the dollars flowing to them.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we have serious, serious social issues on-reserve — we have people living in poverty, we have serious concerns around drug and alcohol, we have the fetal alcohol syndrome issue. There are countless ways that the dollars from gaming could be used to enrich the lives of First Nations people.

And, Mr. Speaker, the whole purpose of the First Nations Fund is to improve the lives of First Nations people. And it's the Saskatchewan Party's position that we want to ensure that in fact the dollars are flowing to the people on-reserve and that they are being used for the said purposes.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is not only what the Saskatchewan Party believes we should do, it is the duty as legislators to ensure that all dollars that are public funds are spent wisely and are spent where they are supposed to be spent. And so, Mr. Speaker, it is very alarming that over the course of years that the NDP has chosen to turn a blind eye and not to insist on proper accounting of the First Nations Fund.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that is very concerning for all residents of Saskatchewan, but it certainly is something that the First Nations people themselves are very concerned about and are looking to a government that will be accountable and so that they can be assured that the dollars that are rightfully supposed to be for their use on-reserve and off-reserve are indeed flowing to them. And, Mr. Speaker, we have watched how the NDP has made the decision in the past to drag their feet, to not enforce the accountability standards that the First Nations people deserve.

(14:45)

And, Mr. Speaker, we will have many more questions for the minister when we go to Committee of the Whole to ask him how this Bill, how the changing from a fund to a trust is indeed going to make the dollars that flow to this fund more accountable. And so, Mr. Speaker, at this time I would adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 34

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Ms. Crofford that **Bill No. 34 — The Film Employment Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into the second reading debate on Bill 34, An Act to amend The Film Employment Tax Credit Act.

Mr. Speaker, members of this House will know that the original tax credit was passed into law in this province in 1998. It provided a 35 per cent tax credit on eligible Saskatchewan labour costs for film and television. The amendment . . . The legislation we're dealing with today is an amendment that would indeed extend the deadline, the original deadline to apply for the tax credit which was December 31, 2003, this would expand it to December 31, 2004.

Now, Mr. Speaker, a number of my colleagues have had the chance to speak to this Bill prior to my own intervention today — and not only in this session but in previous sessions when similar pieces of legislation have been introduced — and I think we made it pretty clear, Mr. Speaker, again in the interests of being as constructive as we possibly can, we've been making it pretty clear that this sort of targeted tax incentive is precisely what our own Saskatchewan Party plan for growth is all about in the province of Saskatchewan.

The member for Kindersley, I believe, spoke to this piece of legislation most recently and did a very eloquent, fine job of outlining for members of this House exactly the reasons why the tax credit idea that's embodied in this Bill is the right thing to do. Conversely I think he also demonstrated, as have other speakers, that while the tax credit is an excellent tool to try to ensure economic development in the province of Saskatchewan, that direct government intervention — especially as regards this government's record in direct government intervention — can be simply an unmitigated disaster both for the industry itself and for taxpayers.

And the film industry in Saskatchewan affords us a chance to test the theory put forward by the member for Kindersley, by several others who spoke to this Bill, and as you will see, by my own intervention here today. The theory being again that while targeted tax cuts, tax credits if you will, can in fact lever economic growth and investment in the province, direct government intervention has done two things historically in Saskatchewan. One, it has driven away private sector venture capitalists. It's created an environment not conducive to investment into growth in the province of Saskatchewan, and puts at risk millions of taxpayers' dollars.

How is the theory then tested by this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker? Well the theory is tested because we can see that for most of the film industry in our province that aren't the benefactor of government funding, direct investment — most of them — they have been able to use the tax credit to their benefit and to the benefit of the economy and to the benefit of the industry.

Conversely, the 4.5 million taxpayers' dollars that have been put into this, into one particular company, Minds Eye, is now valued, Mr. Speaker, if you can believe it, short years later, valued at half a million dollars. Taxpayers have lost \$4 million.

So on one hand the tax credit that this Bill speaks to helps grow the industry. On the other hand the \$4.5 million invested in Minds Eye has now been reduced to a half a million dollars; the money is lost, and you have a situation where even those in the industry are concerned again that the government has picked winners and losers to the detriment of the film industry in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now we believe in the potential of this industry in Saskatchewan, there's no question about it. I can recall in my previous life as an economic development officer for the city of Swift Current, I recall having conversations with SaskFILM.

And one in particular conversation I remember. I believe it was Universal was looking for a place to cast . . . I beg your pardon, to shoot *The Mummy*, which most of us will remember, and its sequels, especially if we happen to tune in from time to time on Monday nights and see *The Rock* in action. You'll know that he was a star in those series, Mr. Speaker.

And we had a chance, apparently we had a slim chance of getting *The Rock* to come here to Saskatchewan, and the rest of the cast of that movie and that huge production because they were looking for a location in Canada. They were particularly interested in some of the sand dune environments that we have in the province of Saskatchewan.

And I recall as the economic development officer for Swift Current dealing with SaskFILM officials who were very professional and indeed very aggressive and interested in trying to attract films to the province of Saskatchewan. They talked a little bit about different options for Saskatchewan in terms of attracting the movie, this movie, *The Mummy*, needing a sand environment.

Now for good reason, environmental concerns and others, it didn't happen in the Southwest. And there may have been other reasons as well I'm not aware of.

But the point is this, Mr. Speaker, that SaskFILM, the office was doing a good job of promoting Saskatchewan. Now that's to an outside studio. This Bill, this Bill seeks to assist any particular investor in the industry, but primarily I think focuses on our own film industry here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Compare that, compare that with the record of direct investment in the film industry by the NDP — \$4.5 million a couple of years ago, taxpayers' dollars, invested in a company now worth, according to their own financial statements, the government's own financial statements, now worth a half a million dollars.

A \$12 million sound stage, Mr. Speaker, that by all accounts is very much underutilized, partly we understand because of the cost, of companies that would like potentially to use a sound stage, Mr. Speaker.

That is the record of tax credits versus direct government intervention.

And what causes us concern, Mr. Speaker, grave concern, is the response we get from the government and from the minister sponsoring this Bill, and specifically when we ask questions about the track record of this government investing directly into

film production companies. The \$4.5 million was a specific point we raised.

Well here is what the minister responsible said, and this is on the CBC Arts News Web site when she was asked the same question by the media about the \$4.5 million invested in Minds Eye and the approval for another \$2 million, and I'm quoting here, Mr. Speaker:

Crofford would not say if this additional investment was part of Minds Eye's first business plan.

And this is a quote.

"It is not my job to ask a business every detail about what they plan to do in the future," said Crofford.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if that is not the job of ministers of the Crown who are putting in harm's way millions of taxpayers' dollars into risky business adventures — in this case the film industry — if that's not their job, then what is their job, Mr. Speaker, if it's not their job to ask tough questions?

Mr. Speaker, this particular Bill today, Bill 34, speaks to the fact, underscores the fact that we wouldn't have to worry about any of this — we wouldn't have to worry about ministers not asking the right questions, ministers losing 4 million taxpayers' dollars, other ministers losing 28 million in SPUDCO, 8 million in bingo — we wouldn't have to worry about any of that if the government recognized the strength of Bill 34, a tax credit measure, instead of, instead of direct government intervention.

But, Mr. Speaker, the problem is, is that this government doesn't realize that. This government doesn't get it. This government continues to put taxpayers' dollars in harm's way in a big way, not through tax credits but through direct government investment.

The member for Kindersley asks a good question: why would they do that? The record is clear. After six decades of doing this and three different political parties in government doing the same thing, it hasn't worked. It's really betrayed the potential of Saskatchewan. So why would they do that then? The answer must be, the answer must be ideological, that that is their ideological belief.

And every once in a while they tinker on the edges of sound fiscal and economic development policy with Bill . . . with something like Bill 34, the film employment tax credit. They get close to it, Mr. Speaker; they stumble on almost blindly to what will work in the province of Saskatchewan.

But the heart and soul of their plan isn't about tax tools; it's about reaching into taxpayers' wallets, putting money in harm's way, and chasing away venture capitalists, in this case in the film industry.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will be supporting the principles of Bill 34. However the critic involved has a number of questions that are best asked in Committee of the Whole as the Bill is considered in a clause-by-clause fashion.

And with those remarks then, Mr. Speaker, the opposition's

pleased to inform the House that we believe this Bill is ready to go to the Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 11

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Melenchuk that **Bill No. 11 — The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments to make on Bill No. 11, Municipal Employees' Pension Act this afternoon.

The first comment, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that this Bill has been delayed a number of times after its introduction and there was never an explanation from the government opposite as to whether or not the people who are affected by this Bill had problems with it, or whether or not it was just a bureaucratic nightmare that was tying it up. Nevertheless we finally see the Bill come forward today and believe that in our consultations with various people that the Bill proposed this year is a bit of a compromise.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that The Municipal Employees' Pension Act, amendment Act, of a couple of years ago was introduced by this government and, after seeing that draft proposal, there was a tremendous outcry from a number of different groups involved within this plan. And as a result, the government withdrew that Bill. It was I believe the only Bill that was withdrawn that year.

Now there seems to be a compromise that has been put forward. I understand the government had an individual travelling around the province and consulting with the various stakeholders.

By stakeholders, Mr. Speaker, I mean the Saskatchewan Urban Municipal Association, the Saskatchewan Rural Municipal Association, and the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, and of course the various employees that are affected by this particular change. Those employees of course represent various business associations and officials of various associations, as well as of course firefighters and police officers and the various trade unions that are represented primarily through CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees).

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, when we take a look at the Bill it is a significant Bill in that it has at least six significant components to it where there are a number of changes. The first one, Mr. Speaker . . . And I note the minister's comments contained in *Hansard* of April 14 where the minister said that, of course the introduction of the Bill was necessary to improve benefits to plan members and to create a new structure and composition for the Municipal Employees' Pension Commission.

With regards to the first half of the minister's comments, Mr. Speaker, of course the very first change that is being implemented is that employees with a pensionable service on a

10-month year, for those people employed that way, they will now receive credit on that basis.

And of course that is significant because there are a number of people employed, especially in the education sector, that are employed for a 10-month basis. Teacher assistants, bus drivers, and the like, Mr. Speaker, are employed on a 10-month basis and this now will address some of the concerns that those people have been putting forward.

(15:00)

The second concern or the second improvement as indicated, or in the Bill is where the members who will work a portion of an academic year, they will be credited on a pro-rated basis. So that is also very important because there are half-time employees, and those will be credited based on a pro-rated basis.

One of the more important changes in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is that there will be retroactivity for receiving credit of pensionable service on that 10-month basis. So it will address concerns that have been put forward in the previous years.

Another point is that excess contributions that will be contained in the plan will be used to either improve the plan, or they will have the ability to improve the pension benefits with the interest and of course the contributions made by the member that are in excess of what is required.

One of the other changes is that the excess contributions will be used to enhance the member's pension. And that is a significant change as well to that, to improving the pension benefits that a member will be able to obtain upon retirement.

But, Mr. Speaker, one of the, I think the most important changes that is being proposed by this amendment is that there will be a new structure to the Municipal Employees' Pension Commission.

If we take a look at the existing condition which was circulated, Mr. Speaker, in the explanatory notes, we note that of course the commission contained a representative of the Government of Saskatchewan appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council who shall be the chairperson of the commission. Mr. Speaker, that entire section has been withdrawn in that the commission members will not be selected, none of the commission members will be selected by the government.

There will be a process in place where the 10 members who will now make up the commission will select the chairperson and the vice-chairperson from within that group. And I think that's a very wise move because the commission members will recognize who the position is best filled by, a particular member, and they will choose that chairperson accordingly.

Mr. Speaker, I note also that the makeup of the commission is in sort of two sectors. The first sector as indicated is going to be persons who are deemed to be employer representatives.

And I note, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipal Association, SUMA, will have one representative; the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities will have

one member. There will be one member appointed by the associations that represent regional college; and there will be two persons appointed by the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, of course because education playing such a key role in this number of employees involved. So we'll see five individuals who will come from the employer side.

The second category in this commission, Mr. Speaker, is that persons will be representing the employees and there will be one person who will represent or be appointed by — I'm sorry, I shouldn't say represent — they will be appointed by the Rural Municipal Administrators' Association. Another individual will be appointed by the Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials. A third individual will be appointed by the Urban Municipal Administrators Association.

A fourth person will be appointed by the trade unions that represent employees who are members of the plan, and a fifth person will be appointed by associations that represent firefighters and police officers who are members of the plan.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, in looking at that composition, it's a much different proposal than we saw in this Legislative Assembly a short, I believe, two years ago, two sessions ago, when we saw an amendment. It looks like it has been fixed up. According to the member from Swift Current, yes, it seems to have been fixed up because, as I stated earlier on in my remarks, the government chose to withdraw that initial municipal employees' amendment Act.

This one seems to have had much broader consultation. It seems to have arrived at a compromise that is acceptable to the participants in the plan, not only from the point of view of employers but also from the point of view of employees.

There are a number of technical questions that we require clarification on, Mr. Speaker, because there are reference to a certain number of dates and different terms that need to be clarified, but those will be best dealt with, Mr. Speaker, in Committee of the Whole, where we will have the opportunity to question the minister and the officials on a clause-by-clause basis.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, the opposition would best be served and the people of Saskatchewan would best be served if the Bill proceeded to Committee of the Whole.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Bill No. 29

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hagel that **Bill No. 29 — The Non-profit Corporations Amendment Act, 2003/Loi de 2003 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les sociétés sans but lucratif** be now read a second time.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to rise in the House and speak to this Bill, Bill No. 29. The essence of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, addresses

something very important and near and dear to all Canadian and citizens of Saskatchewan to their hearts, Mr. Speaker, and that is the community service performed by very many volunteers throughout our great province.

I know that at all our cities and towns, rural communities, we have volunteers and they really hold our communities together.

Specifically what this amendment protects, Mr. Speaker, is directors and officers of non-profit corporations from civil action from losses suffered by persons as a result of carrying out his or her duties within a charitable organization.

I know that this legislation is very necessary and somewhat overdue because the lack of it arguably could have led to a detriment and a falling off of a number of volunteers participating in charitable groups.

An example comes to mind, Mr. Speaker, where a charitable organization in a small town in Saskatchewan, a number of years ago, held a poker rally. And through no fault of the charitable organization and the directors involved, there was a snowmobile accident. It's my understanding that there had been some alcohol involved in this and unfortunately a member on a snowmobile was very badly injured.

But what came from this was a long and drawn-out lawsuit which threatened all the volunteers that were trying to raise money for their communities. And I know from experience, Mr. Speaker, that situations such as these have caused individuals sitting on volunteer boards to assist and request directors insurance, which is an extra cost to a charitable organization. And this piece of legislation will be a good way of redirecting those funds to better uses.

It's become necessary in the last number of years that if you're sitting on a volunteer board, to make sure that this sort of insurance was in place, and now this should largely replace that.

And it should be noted, Mr. Speaker, that the monies used to pay those premiums are taken out of operating budgets, otherwise would be going for the many good and charitable causes that many of our non-profit, volunteer corporations participate in.

This legislation, Mr. Speaker, will also protect a director or officer from non-profit corporations seeking to recover damages that may be awarded if the director or officer is not liable.

Mr. Speaker, again this is important. The tone of the Act is to ensure that our volunteer sector in Saskatchewan remains vibrant. We currently in Canada have a . . . 47 per cent of our population over the age of 15 report participating at some level in volunteer work. And I can't emphasize enough how all members of this House appreciate the work that volunteers do in all of our communities and constituencies from, be it church organizations, charitable organizations, service groups.

At the end of they day they accomplish a great deal of work, often at the community level but sometimes right across the province. And we're glad to see that this piece of legislation is going to aid in stopping the deterrence of people becoming involved, not only at just giving an hour or two of their time,

but at the busyness required at the executive level of many of these volunteer organizations.

Saskatchewan culture volunteers provides over \$35.4 million of unpaid labour to maintain cultural activities in this province. And that's estimated, Mr. Speaker, only at a minimum wage of \$6 an hour. And this is according to a 1997 national survey. So we can see what a great contribution volunteer capacity in the province contributes fiscally as well, because had volunteerism not been taking place and providing these services, these services either (a) would not be performed; or secondly, they would have to be paid for. And they'd either have to be paid for at the municipal level or by a provincial government or a federal government. So again, I can't emphasize enough the nature that . . . and appreciation we have for our volunteers in Saskatchewan.

And to end, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to say that we are in support of this legislation and its overall intent in what it . . . the direction that it's going to allow for volunteer organizations, and specifically their executives, the freedom to participate without worry about recriminations from litigation from problems which from time to time may arise but wouldn't be the fault of volunteers per se.

Mr. Speaker, it's the feeling from this side of the House that we would have no more further questions and that anything further that needs to be answered could be answered at the Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

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

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Kelvington-Wadena on her feet?

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

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all hon. members in the House, I'd like to direct your attention to our east gallery. We have 39 students from Wadena Elementary School, grade 4 students.

With them is their teachers, Denise Nelson, Helen Argent, Myrna Daviduk; and we have a chaperone, Shannon Hoffart and Dale Achtymichuk; and our bus driver, Gerry Griffiths.

I have had the opportunity to meet with these students earlier today, and we had a long discussion on the workings of the House and the role of the Speaker and the mace. And they decided to come back again this afternoon to see the House in operation. And I really thank them for that. I hope you learn a lot this afternoon and go home with many fine memories of the Assembly.

So welcome, and thank you for coming back.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 30 — The Pawned Property (Recording) Act

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Pawned Property (Recording) Act. Mr. Speaker, this Bill is being introduced at the request of our Saskatchewan police services to enhance crime prevention initiatives in our communities by improving the speed and accuracy with which information is provided by pawnbrokers to our police services.

Under existing city bylaws pawnshops are generally required to provide to their local police services a written description of what items have been pawned in their stores and by whom. This information is then provided to the local police service on a periodic basis.

In some communities this process has not changed significantly in decades. Once received, the information then awaits data entry by the police service. As a result, the information is frequently out of date and inaccurate.

(15:15)

Mr. Speaker, this is not the case in Regina and Moose Jaw. Since 1999, when an item is pawned in these cities that same information is entered on a secure computer at the pawn shop and simultaneously — simultaneously, Mr. Speaker, in real time -- transferred to the municipal police service where it can then be incorporated with the police CPIC (Canadian Police Information Centre) system. So right away the property — what it is, who it came from — is put into the system and the police are made aware. As a result, Mr. Speaker, stolen goods that are sought to be pawned on the same day they are stolen can be better identified and returned.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to pause here to say we should be concerned about the victims of crime. We should be concerned about people whose houses have been broken into, whose property has been stolen. We should be concerned about them, Mr. Speaker. And those individuals have the right to expect that when their property is stolen, that we will use all the tools that we can to tell the police where that property is and from whom it came. That is our responsibility, Mr. Speaker, surely, as legislators, to make sure that we give the police the very best tools possible to fight crime and, in particular, property theft.

Mr. Speaker, the success of this project in Saskatchewan has resulted in our police community, led by the Regina and Saskatoon police services, asking the government to provide a legislative framework for the implementation of the system throughout the province. Simply put, this Bill does just that. It creates a framework for the implementation of computerized registration throughout the province on a community-by-community basis.

And, Mr. Speaker, I pause here to say it's time we came into the 21st century. We have computer systems. We have high-speed Internet in our communities. We should use that system to fight crime and we're going to do that with this Bill.

Under this Bill, a pawnbroker will be required to obtain and

record information about an item being pawned before accepting goods for pawn. And it is a simple fact, Mr. Speaker, that some goods that are pawned are stolen. And we're going to keep track of them. This information will then be provided to the police by way of a computerized registration system.

The Bill also provides for standard regulation and inspection powers to ensure that pawnbrokers are complying with the Bill. Offence provisions are also included for those who do not comply.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to point out that this legislation seeks to work with municipalities by giving them the option to proceed with electronic reporting when their own pawnbroking community and police service are prepared for it. Ongoing consultations will be required prior to implementation in a given municipality to ensure that the system is properly in place, training has occurred, and that pawnbrokers have been properly notified of their responsibilities.

The Bill does not dictate the type of computer reporting system a municipality and its police services may choose to use. I'm going to pause and repeat that, Mr. Speaker — I think it's important. The Bill does not dictate the type of computer reporting system a municipality and its police services may choose to use. But it will provide, through the regulations, for the basic requirements with respect to operational capacity and security.

Mr. Speaker, I would also note that this Bill will impose on our police services a specific requirement that the personal information they receive under this process be held strictly confidential and used only for the delivery of policing services. This requirement on our police services is in addition to the existing responsibilities on other municipal officials under The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Mr. Speaker, in seeking to introduce this modernized reporting requirement, every effort should be made to respect the legitimate business needs of our Saskatchewan pawnbrokers. Interested municipalities and their police services will have to work with their pawnbrokers during the implementation process to make this transition as smooth as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, our municipal police services, the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), and those pawnbrokers who have already been voluntarily working with this system, for their efforts in bringing this important initiative to this stage. I would also like to thank them for their ongoing commitments with respect to implementation.

Mr. Speaker, our police community has told us this is an important tool for crime detection and prevention. We are advised that similar initiatives are being considered in the provinces of Alberta, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and British Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to be the first jurisdiction in Canada to respond to requests to pass this type of legislation. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, there will be those who will criticize this legislation from a variety of perspectives. But I say to them,

Mr. Speaker, this government is making a choice. Our choice, Mr. Speaker, is to come down on the side of victims of property crime whose homes have been broken into, and on the side of the police who need the most effective tools to fight crime. We are on the side of the victims of crime, and the police, Mr. Speaker. And we will remain so regardless of the noise that may come from the opposition benches.

And so I want to say, Mr. Speaker, in closing, that we ask all members of this Assembly to support crime prevention in our communities by supporting this Bill. Stand with our police. Stand with property owners. Stand with the victims of crime. And, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of An Act respecting Pawned Property.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a very interesting Bill and has some good points to it and some points perhaps that are less positive for some sectors of the community, Mr. Speaker.

The idea that there is a method to track and to determine which property being sold to pawnbrokers has been stolen is very, very worthwhile, Mr. Speaker. And fact is this system, if put in place as the minister describes it working . . . Although I have a bit of a queasy feeling about it that it might be like gun control and be all administration and no action, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — How about land titles?

Mr. D'Autremont: — Or, or as my colleague says, like the land titles system that absorbed \$107 million and still can't get a land title correct. Well, Mr. Speaker, you have to wonder about this.

If it actually does work though, Mr. Speaker, and provides for the recovery of stolen property, if it helps to prevent property from being stolen, then that will be a benefit to SGI, Saskatchewan Government Insurance. That in turn, Mr. Speaker, should reflect positively in lower insurance rates for people in communities that actually pay a surcharge because of the number of thefts that are occurring in those jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker.

So if this whole Bill and project were successful, then I'm sure that the members opposite would ensure that the people of the province get the benefits of this through lower insurance rates, Mr. Speaker. But we've seen that it is very, very difficult to get any reduction out of this particular government, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to either utility rates, when it comes to insurance, or especially when it comes to taxes, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — They reduce service.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, they do reduce one thing, as my colleague points out. They reduce service, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan pawnbrokers association, while supporting the concept, Mr. Speaker, does have some concerns with the way that the government has laid this out. They're concerned that they're going to be forced to deal with one agency, Business Watch International, in providing the communications between the pawnshop and the police, Mr. Speaker.

Now you have to look at the ownership of that. Again, Mr. Speaker, it comes down to the government in one hand supporting the other hand. Business Watch International is wholly owned by SaskTel, Mr. Speaker. No free enterprise allowed, Mr. Speaker, in this province.

Mr. Speaker, you have to look at . . . The government is saying that Business Watch International is going to be in a positive, cash-flow position in 2005. This is how the government's going about ensuring that at least one, Mr. Speaker, of their investments is going to make a profit. It's going to make a positive cash flow by forcing all of the pawnshops to deal with them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if this program is to be successful, then the pawnshops are going to have to be allowed to make the connections between their shops and the police computer which will be providing . . . collecting this information in a manner of their choosing, Mr. Speaker, not because of the government forcing them to deal with another Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the government does not like the idea that people have free will and the ability to choose for themselves in this province. The government is always believing that they are the elite and know better than everybody else, Mr. Speaker, and that's wrong. And the people of this province will clearly state that in the next election.

Mr. Speaker, the idea of collecting the information and protecting people's property from being stolen and returning it to them when it is, the concept of apprehending the criminals that have stolen this property is well and good, but the idea of forcing the pawnshops to deal exclusively with one organization is wrong, Mr. Speaker.

And I know the minister stood up and said we're not going to force them to deal with one organization. He said that the cities, Mr. Speaker, will choose — not the pawn owners — the cities, Mr. Speaker, will choose.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that it would be better if the pawnshop owners and businesses chose their own connections, negotiate the best deal possible for themselves, rather than simply having to pay whatever fees SaskTel Business Watch International wants to impose, whatever charges and fees this government wants to impose.

And you know, you look back on what SaskPower, as an example, imposes a \$14 fee on every power connection for a reconstruction fee — and we're not seeing any reconstruction — and yet they don't even want to claim it as income to the company. That's the kind of things that this government wants to put forward, Mr. Speaker, in dealing with Business Watch International and dealing with Bill No. 30, dealing with pawn property, Mr. Speaker, and how it's recorded.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the way to run a business. This is not the way to run a government. Therefore, I move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 20 — The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2003

Clause 1

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chair, I'm pleased to introduce Darcy McGovern from Saskatchewan Justice, who is here to assist as official on consideration of Bill 20.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, I mean. Mr. Chairman, this is a very interesting Bill that allows for compensation to be paid to various officials, people around the province such as coroners, Justices of the Peace, notary publics, to members of the legislature in their official capacities, Mr. Chairman.

I'm just wondering when this Bill will come . . . when it comes into effect, will it apply immediately or will it come into place when the new rules that also deal with a number of these changes come into place? How will that work?

(15:30)

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chair, in response to the hon. member's question, as he'll know from clause 7, coming into force, the Act comes into force on proclamation.

But in terms of the actual timing of the proclamation, I think that's a matter that we'll want to be coordinated together with the Board of Internal Economy in order to ensure that compensations and positions that are referred to here are accurate, related to the timing of the implementation of the new rules that have been approved by the House previously, Mr. Chair.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 7 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 20 — The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Amendment Act, 2003

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

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Community Resources and Employment Vote 36

Subvote (RE01)

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm very pleased to introduce the officials to members of the committee.

With me today to assist in responding to inquiries are the deputy minister, Bonnie Durnford, to my right; to my left, the assistant deputy minister, Darrell Jones; immediately behind me is assistant deputy minister, Shelly Hoover; and to her right is the executive director of finance and property management, Don Allen.

Behind the bar, Mr. Chair, a number of distinguished officials including Phil Walsh, executive director, employment and income assistance; Jan Morgan, operations manager, employment and income assistance; Marilyn Hedlund, the executive director of child and family services; Betty West, the acting executive director of community living; Dorothea Warren, associate executive director, child and family services; Larry Chaykowski, executive director of housing operations; and Debbie Bryck, director of child care.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good afternoon to the minister and to his officials.

Mr. Minister, I would appreciate if you would outline for us the relationship between the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, in terms of providing housing to residents of northern Saskatchewan, particularly in the northern administrative district.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the question from the hon. member.

There's two parts to the answer to the question asked regarding the relationship between CMHC (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation) and Sask Housing as it relates to housing in northern Saskatchewan.

Currently there is the centenary affordable housing program which exists throughout Saskatchewan, including northern Saskatchewan. And there is monies — I'll keep my comments just to the northern housing portion because that's the context with which the question was asked — there is \$3 million of federal monies that flows through CMHC to the centenary affordable housing program. And this will be matched then by \$3 million in total which will come from the province of Saskatchewan and the local municipalities for a total of \$6 million intended to be invested then in the construction of affordable housing in northern Saskatchewan over the course of the centenary affordable housing program.

So that's the most recent and the current housing program that links the two bodies together. There is also in addition to that then, there has been an historical relationship of funding between CMHC and Sask Housing for the social and affordable housing stock in northern Saskatchewan. That is historically done there. It's now currently under the Social Housing Agreement which was reached in, must be 1993 . . . 1997, when the federal government, after the federal government had removed itself from the world of social housing. Then there was a management agreement related to current stock that the department . . . sorry, that Sask Housing arranged. And so that

becomes the current now mechanism for managing the social housing in northern Saskatchewan.

The majority, the substantial majority of the housing in northern Saskatchewan then, is managed locally through the local housing authority. So that would be the outline of the relationship between those bodies in northern Saskatchewan.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, in reference to the historical agreement that you just described, is that, is that agreement, or does that agreement provide for the purchase of housing by individuals that would qualify for this or are they subject only to rental agreements?

(15:45)

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chair, in response to the question, there was an historical program that was referred to as rural and Native housing in northern Saskatchewan which actually has discontinued some number of years ago.

But under that rural and Native housing program, there was a combination of opportunities to own and rental units. And of those who were renting, then many of those people of course are still renting. And of those who came into an ownership position, some of them have converted to rental at some point over the years.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, currently is there provision for individuals to own rather than rent those properties?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I appreciate the member's questions, and as they're fairly specific it's taking a bit longer than I wish we needed in order to pull together the ability to respond.

In response to the question about ability for people who are renters to become owners, there are two programs. One is the remote . . . what has been, was introduced a small number of years ago, referred to as remote housing program, which will now become a component of the centenary affordable housing that I referred to just a moment ago and will provide within that program the ability for people to become owners, to build and become owners. They may be renters now, but it provides a grant for people to establish a new circumstance and become owners.

There is also a program entitled rental purchase option which is made available to people who have been long-term renters and recognizes their long-term rental payments and enables them to transition to ownership.

So those would be, I think, the two programs that respond to the member's particular interest, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I would ask you, in both of those programs, what is the criteria that the individual would have to meet in order to get the grant that you're speaking of? And is there other criteria that would have to be met in order to own rather than rent? And if you could outline that criteria for me, I would appreciate it.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. In order to be

eligible for both programs . . . I'll deal with what's common to both and then what's different between the two of them.

First of all, in the centenary affordable housing and then the renters, the rent-to-own. In both cases, to be eligible the household would have to be in what is defined as moderate income, which is a maximum of \$49,500 gross family income, gross household income. And so for income there is an income criteria.

In the centenary affordable housing there is a criteria which targets that the housing should be directed as high priority, to families as a high priority.

The centenary affordable housing provides a grant up front to reduce the amount of money that would have to be there for mortgage. And what would also be necessary then, of course in both cases, is that the individual or individuals then would need to be eligible to obtain the financing that they would make through their own arrangements.

So that will depend on their personal circumstances in the same, in the same circumstances that . . . Sorry, we were distracted by somebody's phone call there, Madam Chair. And I would say the hon. member is in definite running for Olympic eligibility the way that she scooted out of here.

But meanwhile back at the ranch here, the individuals will have to qualify for the financing on their own, on their own merits. The financing is not done through the public sector.

For the rent-to-own, then in addition to those things, the household will have to have had an established track record of being a good, responsible renter in terms of payments and that sort of thing.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, why was the sum of or the figure of \$49,500 as a minimum income between people in the household requiring . . . Why was that amount established?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The forty-nine five was a number reached to define, in the North, a moderate income. Somewhere along the line you have to reach a definition that justifies the contribution of public of funds to assist people who would otherwise not be able to find themselves being able to afford a home. And that has to be balanced together with the, obviously with the ability for people to be able to therefore manage the responsibilities that they are taking on.

And so that particular number was reached through a combination of analysis of the marketplace in the North, the impact of that, the amount of financial institutional involvement that would be available there, the amount of equity that it would take in order to get the finances into a manageable range, and all of this in the context as well of what would be . . . seem to be the pattern of incomes in northern Saskatchewan.

So it was no one thing. It was a combination in summary to try and find a manageable balance between what the market would suggest, balanced with the ability to afford, and all of this is then, is also in the context that the higher the income the lower

the grant that's available. That pattern holds true no matter where it is, including of course northern Saskatchewan.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, for those individuals who would be in a situation where they'd have to stick with rent, is there a standard rental rate that is required of them or do their rental rates vary according to their income?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — In the North, as in all of Saskatchewan, there are two categories of rental rates that will be set by the . . . And the rates themselves were set by the local authority. There will be what's called affordable housing, and the centenary affordable housing program is in that category, affordable housing.

And affordable housing will have as its criteria a set rental rate that's the same for anyone regardless of their circumstances, and is decided by the local housing authority to be put at a place that the low end of the market costs for the locale. And therefore, obviously it makes sense, that that's determined by the local housing authority. So that's affordable housing.

There'll be another category then called social housing, and the social housing rents then will be a factor related to household income. And so the exact amount of rent that an individual household would pay will . . . For example two identical units in the same building for example may be different because of the household incomes varying between them.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, how many local housing authorities are there in the northern district?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I don't have the exact number here. There are 285, I believe, is provincewide. In the North, the number is either seven or eight. I think it's eight authorities that are in the North.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, I don't imagine that you have in front of you or with you today, or possibly your officials don't have with them, the rate of rent that is required from each of those housing authorities. If you have that, I would appreciate it; if not, I would appreciate receiving the rate that has been set by each of those housing authorities in the North at some time in the near future. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — The hon. member is quite correct, Madam Chair; I don't have that level of detail here, but happy to provide it. Could you just clarify — is it the affordable housing rates for each of the authorities or is it social housing that you're asking for?

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'd appreciate from both of those . . . having information on both of those. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — We'll provide that, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Minister, I'd just like to move my line of questioning into a subject that we have discussed many times in this House. And I discussed to some degree some of the measures that are necessary for children that have been abused on the streets and have been exploited through the sex trade, some of the measures that are necessary for their ongoing recovery.

(16:00)

Mr. Minister, when I spoke with you the last time we had estimates, I asked you about what kind of provisions are in place for youth that have been exploited and it has been determined that these youth in fact do need to have drug or alcohol-related recovery assistance. You, at that time, mentioned to me that there were 26 spaces, I think, that have been allotted and had been set aside specifically for youth exploited in the sex trade.

And so I guess there's a little more detailed questioning that I need to do regarding the nature of those spaces. After the committee recommendations were looked at and subsequently legislation was brought forward in this legislature to deal with the deterrence of johns or people that would exploit children, we had some questions and some discussion regarding the other part of the issue which would be measures that are ongoing for the recovery of young people. There are many different and varied needs, I guess, for youth that have been through this.

But in reference to the 26 spaces again, if those spaces are to provide for drug and alcohol rehabilitation and counselling related to that, what's the nature of those spaces, Mr. Minister? I don't know exactly where these young people would end up going, because at one time earlier I understood the 26 spaces were foster care homes. If they're not, then where are the spaces, because we only have a limited number of spaces and certainly for drug and alcohol rehab for youth. So I'd be interested in learning whereabouts that may be taking place.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chair, in the interest of clarity it may help if I just tell you exactly what those 26 places are that I'm referring to.

If the hon. member got the impression that I said last time we spoke that these were 26 drug and alcohol treatment spaces, that's certainly not what I was saying. Perhaps if I go through them what the hon. member will recognize, Mr. Chair, is that some of these will be agencies that have drug and alcohol counselling as part of their programs, and they will all have connections to drug and alcohol treatment services in their area.

So these are not identical spaces and actually none of these would fall into the category of foster homes.

So perhaps if I just go through and put on the record where these 26 spaces are. And these are 26 spaces that are held as priority for young people who have been exploited as a result of . . . sexually exploited. And so that we've set in our system that these 26 spaces will be held. They're not exclusively for children who have been victims of sexual exploitation but that if a child comes to the attention of our system and they're in that category that they're a victim, then this becomes a priority space that puts them to the front of the line.

And here's where they are. Ten of the spaces are at Ranch Ehrlo Society. And I'll go maybe relatively slow; I see the hon. member is making notes here. One space is at the Prince Albert Grand Council Child Care and Education Centre, that'd be in Prince Albert. One is at the Denholm therapeutic group home. And so those are in the category of residential children's services.

Then Dale's House here in Regina has two that are priority spaces. The Saskatoon Children's Shelter has two priority spaces. And the Saskatoon safe house has five spaces.

Then in the category of community-based organization adolescent group homes, there are five. One here in Regina at Gemma House. Sorry, that's two, two here in Regina at Gemma House. One at Bridge House in Saskatoon; one at Sundance in Prince Albert, and one at Gamin-Abet in Moose Jaw. So you'll see when you look at those facilities they're spread around the province.

And these spaces are incorporated as priority spaces within programs that are obviously much larger than that, and these will be, as I . . . just to again give the hon. member the assurance that drug and alcohol attention is being appropriately dealt with because I know that's the basis of the question.

Some of these will have, they'll have varying expertises in terms of on-site counselling but . . . And when you look at the list you can see that these are all agencies that have good, strong local connections to services that, to which they can refer kids who . . . refer young people who are, who may need something more than they are able to provide themselves directly.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, I'd like to just take this apart a little bit. Your reference to . . . I forget how many spaces you said at the Saskatoon children's crisis centre, I believe it is . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Shelter, I'm sorry. There's two? Generally what is the age of children that are given services at that centre?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — The age range would be from 10 to 16.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you. Mr. Minister, I know that throughout Canada and throughout North America for sure, there has been a real dilemma, I guess, about providing proper counselling services and proper drug and alcohol rehab services as well as trauma . . . attention to trauma of many kinds for children exploited in the sex trade, or that have been and who have, you know, have or could have had sexual abuse as part of their childhood in their homes.

The whole issue has been the topic of discussion at many conferences, the issue of not really having proper therapeutic counselling in place for this specific trauma.

So I recognize that the Government of Saskatchewan has outlined the initiative that you have taken and you have provided spaces or you've seen to it that these are priority spaces, albeit when spaces come open. And that's not really, I would say, dealing with the immediate need. But nonetheless, I recognize that you have designated these spaces.

But is there any ongoing work on you . . . from yourself as minister or from any department of your government to try to work with people who have been therapeutic counsellors, who recognize that this issue of children that have been sexually exploited along with all the other components of physical abuse, etc., that this issue be looked at separately to see if something can be developed within our country that would be specifically targeted to this kind of traumatic experience, rather than just have a modified drug and alcohol treatment program?

Just a lot of . . . a lot of people, experts out there, say that they don't believe that we have developed, at this point, proper programming specifically for youth, and their family also that have had such a multiple trauma in their life. I mean, there are many things that happen to these youth on the streets.

And so I think that's . . . When we had the youth treatment centre at Yorkton, one of the good things about that was — and I recognize that that whole program was very costly — but one of the good things about it was that it dealt with families and youth that were looking for rehabilitation due to drug and alcohol abuse and that kind of thing. And so it dealt with the families. It was targeted for drug and alcohol rehab and then went back into . . . some of the counselling had to do with dysfunctional families and that was good in itself.

Now if you take, if you take drug and alcohol recovery and look at how important it is for the entire family to be working on this recovery along with specialists, and you know what a great work that is. I mean it takes a lot of input. It takes a great deal of dedication, knowledge, and experience and professionalism to deal with this. But there was a pretty positive outcome from White Spruce, from the White Spruce program.

So if you take that component, then when you look at the other trauma associated with sexual abuse, I just maintain that to this day we don't have proper programming in place to deal with this, this issue. It is an issue of great magnitude in reference to the trauma that's caused.

And I'm wondering if your government has seriously looked at trying to work with other agencies and other governments across this country perhaps, or in North America, to have a specific recovery program for youth that have been sexually exploited through the sex trade and are suffering from major traumatic experiences?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The hon. member raises, I think, in her question the very important factor that the children who are coming to the resources that we provide, as victims of sexual exploitation, will have many needs and among those needs will be the fact that many of them will have addictions.

(16:15)

And it is . . . In responding to this I don't want to leave the impression that the approach to trying, to responding to the needs of these kids is stovepipe. I think one of the things that we will all agree is that it is important in many ways, and we've seen many examples and we won't go there, in other ways, but in programs — we can if you want — but that as we deal with these young people, these children, that we respond in a way that is holistic and recognizing that they come with a combination of needs.

In the process of responding to the needs of kids who are sexually exploited there are, and we can go into more detail if you like, but there are funds that are dedicated to other community supports that are very sensitive to the needs of young people who have been sexually exploited. In that mix will be child and youth services in the mental health services of the health districts, who have advised that they consider this to

be a priority area.

I do want to point out as well that, reflecting back on those 26 spaces that I outlined where they're located, you will recognize that these are some of our most capable programs and workers in the province of Saskatchewan dealing with troubled youth, and who will have a broad knowledge of resources available as well as a fairly high level of expertise themselves.

And in addition to that, one of the structures that was put in place in the response to the children who are victims of sexual exploitation are the local intervention committees, which also bring expertise from a broad range of social and health responders within the local community to come together to input as well into what is . . . you know, what kind of program plan best responds to the needs of this young person.

I think we will all recognize that — I think the hon. member used the word traumatized, and I think that's probably a pretty accurate description in a number of cases — and that it can be, it can be a complex plan which has many facets to it to provide a holistic response to the needs of the kids.

So it will be that attempt to be realistic and therefore holistic in developing plans that will be . . . attempted to be provided as close to home as possible because I think it's also accurate to say that there's a strong bias that kids can . . . people will respond when they're receiving services as close to home as they can possibly be.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I don't approve of and nor do I think that, you know, stovepiping is the way. I mean, it's a very simplistic view on things and we all recognize that there is complexity to treatment because there's complexity to the traumatic experiences that the child has had.

My concern and my hope is that there has been some effort made to provide ongoing . . . or a strategy, I guess, that has been developed by your government to have ongoing services when in fact the first services that a child would receive at any one of these agencies or places may be some drug and alcohol treatment and an effort towards rehabilitation. But the rehabilitation would also include, you know, possibly treatment for venereal diseases. It would require more an ongoing counselling for the child and their family.

There are a number of things I could add to that, Mr. Minister, but the ongoing support and recovery are rather necessary for recovery . . . is really very important also. Because we recognize that it's important to have these first steps taken so that these 26 spaces serve a good purpose. There's no doubt that they do.

But if after this initial treatment the youth are basically back on the streets or returned to an environment that has been detrimental to their health and well-being, that is no good either. And so we need to ensure that there is an ongoing recovery and stabilization of their lives.

And I'm wondering if your government has done due diligence in that area?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Well, Mr. Chair, I think the hon. member

will find some assurance in understanding how the process works. When a young person comes to one of the facilities I've referred to, it will be standard procedure that one of the first things that will occur is there will be an assessment that will be determined . . . used to determine the physical, the mental, and the emotional damage and needs that the person will have.

And when he or she leaves that particular facility, without exception, they will always leave with a case plan as they return home. And the case plan will always then include necessary follow-up procedures and activities, again related to the needs — be it physical, mental, or emotional — and there are periodic reviews of those case plans.

So it is not seen . . . it should not be seen and it's certainly not intended that these 26 spaces that I refer to are seen as the be-all and the end-all of the response to them. They're a good, solid, credible resource for a young person to come to, to have their needs determined, and at which the case for rehabilitation or recovery, whatever . . . in whatever ways are approaches . . . sorry, whichever ways are necessary, that those will begin and that that will continue and enable the young person hopefully to be able to develop the strengths physically, mentally, and emotionally to become capable adults.

I think I'm getting the signal that the hon. member has finished her question in this regard, Mr. Chair, and I do know that . . . Am I accurate? Yes.

And I do know that the Community Resources and Employment critic is here and that enables us to be in position to move to consideration of the Bill that we want to consider today. And therefore, Mr. Chair, I'll move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The committee reported progress.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 3 — The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2003

Clause 1

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I would like to introduce to members of the committee today officials who are here to assist me. To my extreme right is, well to my immediate right is the assistant deputy minister, Shelley Hoover. And then seated behind her is the executive director of child and family services, Marilyn Hedlund. And directly behind me is the associate executive director of child and family services, Dorothea Warren.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, thank you. Mr. Minister, just a few questions regarding the Bill before the Assembly.

And as we've all discussed to date, something that I think in the past we've talked about a bit before — certainly an issue that I've raised on a number of occasions; I'm not sure how many times my colleagues have — about family care. And really making every effort possible, when a situation develops where a family situation arises where it's deemed necessary to remove a child from the home, of utilizing some of the family care out

there.

And I think you've probably had many, possibly grandparents, or aunts, uncles, or people of fairly close kinship relationship talk to you about it. I know I've had a number of individuals do the same.

And so this, as I see it, this piece of legislation that you've brought forward that we're going to be addressing today is something that I think is certainly worthwhile and it's a time . . . being brought forth in what I would consider a timely fashion considering the debate we've had over the past number of months and years.

And well some would say, well why wasn't it done sooner? I guess the facts are, let's accept the fact that it's here today, we've arrived at that point, and let's move on and deal with the issue so that we can address the situation of children in care.

Now, Mr. Minister, you talk about identifying kinship care, caregivers. And I guess first of all, can I ask you exactly what you mean when you talk about kinship care? I think I have a pretty good idea, but I think it wouldn't hurt to give us a bit of details of how this process will unfold should it be determined that a child must be removed from the home of their parent or legal guardian. And will parents have any say who the kinship caregiver or givers will be?

(16:30)

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. It is a very important question that the hon. member asks, Mr. Chair. When we talk about kinship care then what we're wanting to achieve . . . and just to summarize that, I think to put it into context and then describe who, because I think the question in essence is who is that kinship care provider then and whether the parent of the child, parent or parents of the child, have input.

Clearly what we're looking at here is a circumstance where for safety of the child, the child has to be removed from the home for some period of time. And the intention is to have the safe place that that child goes to be as loving and caring and familiar as it can possibly be. So therefore in thinking about who will be the people to provide the kinship care, I think it's probably summarized by referring to extended family, which can include things like brothers and sisters and uncles and aunts and godparents and grandparents and that sort of thing.

It can also include what will be formally referred to as a person of sufficient interest, who may not have the status that you'd call extended family, but there is some established relationship with that child. It might include for example a band member, for example, who is not a relative, or someone who is closely involved with the family; maybe it might be a coach, for example, or something of that nature. But someone who has an established kind of relationship and caring.

And the intention then is for that child, for the period of time, the objective will always be, if at all possible, if the child can be safely returned to their home, that's the end objective that we seek to achieve.

And in the period of time when the child cannot be there for

their own protection, we want them to be as close to home as you can be without being home I guess is probably a colloquial way of putting it.

Can the parents have a say? The answer's definitely yes, and it is . . . In fact the kinship care process systematizes that to ensure that a parent who is not in a position to care for their . . . to provide the caring for their child right now will be asked, who would you suggest is the best person to take care of the child now? And that will be taken into consideration in the decision. Ultimately the decision about location would be made of course by the court.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, when we talk about kinship care and the last part of that question that I had asked was regarding the parental involvement.

When the decision is made to remove a child from a home because there's fear of violence or some other abusive situations, and even as that child is removed from that home, what steps are taken to talk to the parents about the reasons prior to removal about the fact that there's a very serious concern about the safety or the well-being of your children?

What steps are taken with that parent to relay that message and then to work . . . Well I shouldn't say just that parent. Some cases it'll be that parent; some cases it'll be those parents — there'll be a father and mother relationship. In many cases unfortunately there might be some just single-parent relationships.

But what steps are taken to relate to those parents, or that parent, the reasons why a child would be removed from the home, and then to indicate what process would then need to be followed for that child to be again placed back in the home?

And then in the meantime, as you had indicated, well there's this period of removal, inviting the parents to offer some suggestions of some kinship care or close friends that may be available, because, like you're right, some relatives, the grandparents, might be in another province or miles away and it just would be inappropriate.

And I think at the end of the day as well, the other thing we need to be careful and try to address as much as possible is making sure that there's at least access so there's still some bonding between parent and child.

And so I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, what avenues you're following or how you're addressing those circumstances.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The attempts by the department officials, the workers who are involved, will be to do two things — to make it . . . to meet obligations of law, because it's a very serious matter under the law. We have The Child and Family Services Act which entitles authority to remove a child for their protection. And so that's in law and the formalities of that must be honoured. At the same time, there must be the realities of attempting to reunite family and parents together.

And so what happens is that following an investigation, when

it's concluded that a child is in need of protection, then the social worker is required to notify the parent in writing of their conclusions. And that's probably very helpful both for reasons of legal obligation but also in the interest of clarity. Because as we can all understand, in those circumstances there is a ton of trauma that's going on and it's oftentimes in reality pretty difficult to hear things accurately that are being said to you. So I think it's not only legally helpful, it's also in program terms helpful because it puts into, quotes, "into black and white" what the concern is.

And then from that what happens is that there is the discussion and plans are then put into writing as well, as to what kinds of supports will be made available to the family, with the objective of enabling the — when I say to the family, to the parents in this case — to enable the return of the child that's been removed to come back.

And in that plan it can involve certainly counselling services. There may involve other forms of supports that are identified as appropriate in order to enable that parent to adequately care for that child and also to offer the hope, both to parent and to child, that they can be reunited without going back to the same circumstance that existed before.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, another question that arises is one set around the fact, when a complaint comes forward, what efforts are taken by the department to first of all look at whether or not they could address the situation, without even removing the child from the home? Are there efforts done that would look very carefully at whether or not we can deal with the complaints and address the issue while the child still remains in the home and help the family overcome this?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chairman, I think the hon. member may be somewhat encouraged to know that in fact . . . Here's the process. A complaint is made. When a complaint is made, the worker has no choice — by law an investigation must occur. And that's sound law that I think all of us would agree.

The reality is that from that point forward . . . In fact, it's the majority. About two-thirds of the . . . Following the investigation about two-thirds of the cases never do result in the removal of a child. That what happens is that it's the complaint which brings the investigation and then the obligation to provide support services, if possible, to enable the child to continue to live safely in that circumstance. And I'm pleased to say that in the majority of cases that's in fact what does occur.

It's also worth noting as well that sometimes as a result of this process, it is permitted under law as well that a child . . . On occasion a parent will voluntarily give up custody of their child temporarily without it going to court. Because they recognize that there's some issues that need to be addressed and dealt with in order to be a safe and supportive parent and will give custody, without the courts being involved with them, on a temporary basis with the, with the initiative of the family.

So it will always be the case that when we come to the circumstance that it seems to be necessary to remove the child in the interest of the safety of the child, which then becomes a matter for the courts, that in the judgment and the work of the

worker who's involved you've tried to not get there. But, you know, the bottom line is you have . . . The obligation is to, is to support the safety of the child.

And then with this Bill if you do get there, then when you go to the courts, if that's where we're going, then the first, the very first thing the courts will consider before transferring custody of the child to the minister would be transferring custody of the child to a kinship care arrangement which would be then someone who is by definition close to the child in a meaningful kind of way.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, thank you for the comment because I think it's important that we make every effort prior to. That we . . . When a complaint is raised, and in some cases it's basically an accusation, that's taken very seriously. But at the same time, I think we need to be careful that we seriously look at where it's coming from, why it's coming, rather than rushing in and entering into a situation that, down the road after investigation, it may be determined that maybe that action shouldn't have been taken.

And I think it's important that we do take the time to carefully look at how we assess this. And I think your comments indicated that your department certainly does attempt to look at these cases very carefully before a movement is made to even remove a child, or indicate to parents that we believe at this time for the safety and well-being of your child we will have to place them in alternative care. And I think that's . . . it's very important that we establish that.

(16:45)

I want to address another issue. Mr. Minister, in your second readings speech you commented about home study. And I'd like to just quote from that speech:

To ensure the best interests of the child are protected, we have included a provision which requires that a home study must be filed with the court. The home study will outline the safety and adequacy of the caregiver's home.

I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if you'd give us a little more detail about what this home study is, who would conduct the home study, what requirements must be fulfilled if a home is to be deemed safe and adequate.

For I think we all recognize when we're dealing with a situation like this, it's in the best interests of the child that we work quickly; and must the home study therefore be conducted, completed, and filed within the court under strict guidelines? Are there guidelines as to when this home study is to be completed?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — The hon. member will recognize by the time it takes for me to get the list, it is fairly extensive. The problem with asking a complex question is that you get a complex answer, and we seem to do a fair amount of that I'm afraid.

But to cut to the chase here, the home study is done by the child and family services worker, and the development of it is not finalized at this point in time yet. It's still being worked on and

will be finalized before the Act is proclaimed and put into place.

But the home study will include things of this nature: we'll look at the family makeup, who's living within the family; we'll do criminal record checks. We'll do an assessment of parenting skills and experience; we'll look at the management of children, experience with the management of children; the relationships with children, of those who are in the home. They'll look at the ability to manage safety issues, also the disciplinary practices that are used within the household, and also supports for the children to be involved in things like education, recreation, those sorts of things.

So that will be the nature of what takes place. As you can see, it's a fairly comprehensive and detailed look at the life that's going on within the home.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, I guess one of the concerns I have when we talk about the home study, and one comment you made perked my ears — discipline. And I'm not exactly sure where a lot . . . I know where some people are coming from when it comes to discipline, and I know there's some discipline out there that people say, no, that's kind of cruel, it's after the fact.

And fortunately maybe in that case I'm a little old-fashioned. Even my daughter thinks that a spanking once in a while doesn't hurt if it's done at the appropriate time. And with the consequences being known at . . . prior to, if you cross the line, whether it's a spanking or a talking to or go to your room or whatever. There's so many different forms of discipline.

My concern is in one case though we have almost ruled it out to the point that it's almost abuse, that you may spank your child as a form of discipline. And I have a major concern if that is one of the aspects that we look at now and consider. If you're beating your child it's one thing, but a reasonable form of discipline certainly is not. And if we had a little more of it we may have fewer, less people to deal with at the other end of the day.

However, having said that, when we look at the home study as well, going to the home study, one of the questions that came, and it came in the Karen Quill situation. The grandparents raised the question about the fact that they had asked if this child could have been placed in their care. It was a loving, caring relationship.

However, what we've been informed is their house didn't quite. . . some of the structures of their house didn't quite meet the requirements. And I'm not exactly sure if that's . . . if you were talking about structural requirements of a home when you talk about the home study and some of those issues, if they become an issue, or exactly what you were talking to.

Because I think at the end of the day, we're talking about individuals who lovingly care for a child, be it a grandparent, be it aunts, aunts and uncles. They may not have all the means and as a result their house may not be as neat and tidy as a house down the street. But I think we need to be careful how we address that and I'd like your comments just to get a better understanding of where you're going with this home study.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thanks, Mr. Chair, and I deeply appreciate the questions the hon. member is asking. Let me say three things. First of all, the objective here, the context is to assess and determine that there is a loving and caring and safe and secure environment. That's what this is intended to do.

In terms of the physical layout, this is not a circumstance that is equivalent to licensing a home, meaning we're not looking at the neatness or that sort of thing.

But I do want to perhaps just . . . I think the member raised the sensitivity about the matter of discipline, and it is a sensitive one. And we need to differentiate between discipline and physical abuse.

And this is one that has to have some sensitivity because keep in mind that what we're talking about, when a child is removed for their own safety is they're coming from an environment in which they've experienced abuse. If that had not been the case, they wouldn't be being removed from the environment. And so there needs to be a sensitivity to the way that a child will relate to means that are used for discipline because that's the healthy . . . it would be unfair to do otherwise.

For a child who may very well for example — and we have to keep in mind these are all done on an individual basis so you can't sort of paint a single brush and include all circumstances — but if a child has come from a circumstance where they have been physically abused for example, it may be very, very traumatic to be in a circumstance, where use of physical force to discipline may be very inappropriate for that child at this point in their life.

So therefore it's part of the assessment. It's also I think part of the sensitivity to the home that the child is going to, to know what kinds of things, given that child at this point in their life, what does it take to be the kind of caring, loving environment that you want to provide.

So perhaps that gives some comfort to the hon. member when I make reference to that as one of the criteria and the potential for it to be very significant in terms of the ability for this to be a good place for the kid to be right now.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister. And, Mr. Minister, I agree wholeheartedly that we certainly don't want to put a child in another situation where there might be aggressive discipline — if I can use that word type — if that's the trauma they've come out of, like an abusive form versus just an appropriate disciplinary action to confront a wrong.

But on the . . . Having said that, Mr. Minister, as well I think it's . . . We've talked at length about the caregiving and the well-being of the child, and that's certainly appropriate and important. One other thing that possibly will arise — and the Bill does indicate that — is the fact that a caregiver, while it may be a very loving and in many cases a person with a close relationship, may not always be of a financial well-being to meet all the requirements should they have to provide care for that child for a period of time.

And the Bill talks about providing some financial assistance, and, Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could clarify exactly what

you mean by the level of financial assistance that would be available to caregivers providing that care?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chair, and from my point of view this in many ways is one of the highlights of the Bill, is that it brings the responsibility and the authority for the province then to bring financial means to the circumstance. The details are still being developed. Again that will be finalized before the Bill is proclaimed.

But the intention here is to recognize that there will be costs involved for a household to take a child in a kinship care circumstance, and the Bill enables then the provision of finances to support that.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I'd just like to revert for a moment, if we could, back to the discussion between you and the opposition critic regarding the home study.

Mr. Minister, in the event that a home . . . or part of the home study was to look at the condition of the physical structure that say a grandparent, an aunt, or an uncle, whatever kin it was, wherever the child was going to go into this home of their relative, and the condition of the physical structure was the only prohibitive factor to that child being there, would your government consider financial assistance to assist in getting the home up to standards to a certain degree, or is the financial assistance specifically targeted for the ongoing day-by-day maintenance of the child?

(17:00)

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — I'm not sure exactly what the hon. member is thinking. The finance is not intended to upgrade homes. But, for example, if the home didn't have a baby gate and you needed a baby gate in order for it to be safe for the child to be there, then that sort of thing could certainly be responded to.

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Minister, I bring this up because again looking back at the Karen Quill case, it came to my attention that the grandparents of Karen Quill had offered to keep the child, and they were refused that child. And the child was put into the care of Social Services simply because the home of the grandparents was not up to standards as far as the physical structure of it. And I deem that a terrible shame in view of what happened.

So in the event that that kind of a situation would happen again, if the physical structure, the condition of the physical structure is the only prohibitive factor to a child living with their grandparents or another sibling or aunt, uncle, whatever it may be, I would think that the department is going to have to look into how they're going to handle that kind of a situation. And I'd ask you how you would.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chair, this may be a circumstance where the reorganization of the department comes very helpfully into play because the same department that is responsible for child and welfare and this . . . enforcement of this Bill, is also the same department responsible for all our housing programs, including the administration of things like the residential rehab program and the like.

And it may be that in circumstances where that's appropriate that there could be the ability referred to, to take advantage of some program in order to meet the needs of a household.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister. Just a couple more questions and comments regarding the Bill. I think we all recognize that this is in some ways breakthrough legislation.

I think it's, we've indicated certainly a positive and right way to go and it's going to no doubt impact Community Resources and Employment as to . . . And you've already indicated some of the comments you made in the second reading such as the home study, you're still working out the details of what that will mean at the end of the day as to how you address these circumstances.

I'm not exactly sure, Mr. Minister, if the department of . . . there may not be some changes in the Department of Justice as well as we look at this legislation and bringing it forward and changes in some of the ways that the Department of Justice deals with these circumstances and . . . which means that there will need to be significant changes even for your department and personnel as to how they now proceed.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if you can tell this Assembly how the staff of your department, the Department of Justice will be trained to adapt this new legislation or if indeed this is something that's ongoing at the time, and which staff will be trained, and why, and how.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chair, some of that has already been occurring and will continue to. Training will be done, including the Department of Community Resources and Employment, Justice certainly, Indian and Child Family Service agencies certainly as well, and the Act will not be proclaimed before the training has all been completed.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, thank you, Mr. Minister. So I guess at the end of the day, when do you anticipate that the Act will be proclaimed? I think in the past we've seen Acts come forward and we've seen proclamation actually take place a number of months down the road. I think the Act is certainly the right way to go. We've talked about that and I'm wondering if you can give us a timeline as to when you anticipate to have this new Act fully enforced.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chair, we'll be proceeding as soon as we're ready, and I can't give you an exact date but I expect it'll be this fall.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I think this is certainly appropriate. I want to thank you and your officials for having come forward, for bringing forward these ideas. I think we're moving in a direction that is appropriate and as we look at the needs of children, and I appreciate the fact that Indian and family services is part of the discussion that's taking place as well because I know my colleagues and I have been approached by Indian and family services and they've made comments about the fact that they'd like to be a little more involved in view of the number of First Nations children that are dealt with as well. So having said that, thank you to you and your officials.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chair, I also highly value the input of

the First Nations Child and Family Service agencies who have been a part of the process of developing the legislation as well, as I know the hon. member is aware. And I want to thank the hon. members for their questions. They've been thoughtful, important. And I think at the end of the day, it will be vulnerable kids in Saskatchewan who will be the benefactors of this legislation and that's as it should be.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 9 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 3 — The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2003

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

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, with leave to move a motion regarding the composition of Public Accounts Committee.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

Substitution of Member on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Moosomin:

That the name of Brenda Bakken be substituted for that of Carl Kwiatkowski on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 17:11.

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