

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I rise again today on behalf of people from my constituency who are really concerned about the state of Highway No. 49. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair Highway No. 49 in order address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth in the area.

The people that have signed this petition are from Kelvington, Lintlaw, and Yorkton.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition this afternoon are from the city of Moose Jaw and from the community of Tompkins as well, and I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my duty today to stand to present a petition once again on behalf of constituents from the constituency of Cypress Hills. It concerns the issue of Crown land lease renewals. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by residents of the communities of Cabri and Abbey.

I so present.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I have a petition with citizens that are very concerned with the deterioration of Highway No. 20. It's becoming extremely dangerous. 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 Strasbourg, Earl Grey, and Regina.

I so present.

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

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

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens of Estevan, Creelman, Saskatoon, and Prince Edward Island.

I so present.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents from the Moose Jaw area that are very concerned about the lack of a dialysis unit. And the prayer reads:

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

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Lafleche and Gravelbourg.

I so present.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise with a petition signed by individuals who are very concerned about the proposed changes to the lease policy for Crown land. And the petition reads as follows:

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

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens from Lacadena, Val Marie, and Kyle.

I so present.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of people from the west central area

of Saskatchewan concerned with their 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 that current specialty services are sustained to better serve the people of west central Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Kindersley and Loverna.

I so present.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition here with citizens who want improved dialysis in Moose Jaw.

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Moose Jaw.

I so present.

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure current Crown 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. Lorenz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I present a petition on behalf of the citizens on the concern of Highway 14.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to recognize the deplorable conditions of Highway 14 from Biggar to Wilkie and to take necessary steps to reconstruct and repair this highway in order to address safety concerns and facilitate economic development in rural Saskatchewan.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And the petitions are signed by residents of Wilkie and Scott.

I so present.

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

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, on this petition are from Leoville and Medstead.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received:

A petition concerning the repair of Highway 20 from Nokomis to Strasbourg;

A petition concerning the repair of Highway 43; and

Addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 12, 27, 36, 41, and 100.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 52 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation: how much money was Dominion Construction awarded in the year 2000 for the sound stage and what specific work did this group do?

Also, Mr. Speaker, I have a similar question to the same minister regarding the year 2002 and the firm Suer & Pollen.

I have similar questions, Mr. Speaker, for various years surrounding the sound stage construction, as well as questions for the minister of the Public Service Commission.

I so present.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day 52 ask the government the following questions:

To the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization: what are the names of the people currently employed in the office of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization; and for each person, what is their title and what is their annual salary?

Mr. Speaker, I have a number of questions for all the different departments, whether it's Culture, Youth, Recreation; Finance; Justice; and so on.

I so present.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 52 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: what was the number of personal income tax returns filed in Saskatchewan for the tax year 2000 with total taxable incomes in excess of \$500,000; and a second question, what was the combined total taxable income assessed for this group?

I so present.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 52 ask the government the following question:

To the Environment minister: what is the government policy concerning the . . .

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

Mr. Weekes: —

To the Environment minister: what is the government policy concerning the recycling industry purchasing burnt copper wire; also can the minister please provide the directive that has been given to the industry relating to this issue?

I so present.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and all members of the Assembly a group of Saskatchewan public servants who are touring the legislature and are now seated in your gallery. The participants are employees from the departments of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization; Justice; and Saskatchewan Environment.

This is the last public servant tour for this session, and I've certainly enjoyed being able to visit with all the various public servants that have toured and to discuss the future of a modern civil service. And I'd like to take this opportunity to thank visitor services for the hard work they've done in making these tours a huge success.

And I do look forward to meeting with them later this day, and ask all members to join with me in welcoming them and thanking them for the good work they do on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition I'd like to join with the minister on inviting the members of the public service that are touring. I hope they enjoy today's proceedings and I know that members of the

opposition will look forward to meeting with them as well.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I want to introduce three special friends of mine from Beauval. They travelled a long ways to be here. One is Robert Laliberte, and Robert is a process operator at McArthur River. And of course with him is Roger McCallum, who is also from Beauval and works at the Key Lake mine. And with them of course is Larry Roy. And Larry Roy has been doing an extensive housing analysis and study for me, and we're planning on meeting with the Sask Housing officials today or folks in the minister's office on some of his findings.

And I would ask all members of the Assembly to welcome these three gentlemen. They come a long ways and I would ask all members to join me in making sure they get a warm welcome to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, to all members of this Assembly, I am very pleased today to introduce not one, but two school groups from my constituency.

From the Weekes School I have 12 students in grades 3, 4, and 5, along with their teacher, Debby Tessmer, and four chaperones.

And from Porcupine Plain we have 26 students and their teachers, Annette Legare, Deb Zeleny, and Doug King. These are grade 8 students.

I'm looking forward to meeting with them later on and I hope you enjoy your proceedings here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

World Junior Curling Champions

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 10 I had the opportunity to take part in honouring the World Junior Women's Curling champions along with the World Junior Men's Curling champions at a social in Biggar.

A large crowd turned out at the Biggar community hall to thank and congratulate hometown girl, Teejay Surik, along with the rest of the team — Marliese Miller, Janelle Lemon, and Chelsey Bell; and the Steven Laycock rink of Chris Haichert, Michael Jantzen, and Kyler Broad for their achievements by giving us some exciting curling to watch, and for giving Saskatchewan and Biggar bragging rights to the best curlers in the world.

The women's team won the right to represent Saskatchewan in Ottawa after winning provincials in Meadow Lake. There they captured the national title of Canadian Women's Junior Champions and went on to the world championship in Flims, Switzerland. The rest is history.

I would like once again to congratulate Marliese, Teejay, Janelle, and Chelsey, as well as Steven, Chris, Michael, and Kyler on their accomplishments.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

World Catholic Education Day

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May 29 is World Catholic Education Day, the day on which Roman Catholic schools around the world engage in some activity that acknowledges their special presence in our educational systems — perhaps a special prayer in the classroom, perhaps a unique form of communication with Catholic schools in other countries. Obviously in this high-tech age, many schools will use an Internet hookup to say hello halfway around the world.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the role our 12 urban and 6 rural Catholic school divisions play in our communities and in the lives of our students. I think it is very significant and very wise that these schools take this one day to let their students know that they are, indeed, citizens of the world as well as residents of, say Saskatoon — something that we all should remind ourselves of from time to time.

Mr. Speaker, I know all members will join me in recognizing on this day the special role our separate schools play in the educational, social, and spiritual life of our province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Convocation at Saskatchewan Universities

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have the privilege to recognize two significant events taking place in Saskatchewan this week. I'm referring specifically to the convocations happening at both the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina.

Now wherever you travel across this country and around the world, you will find graduates from our universities working in top positions in all sectors of private and public endeavour. Saskatchewan graduates leave our universities equipped with inquiring minds, sound judgment, and reasoning skills, and ready to embark on careers or to further their studies to even greater degrees of specialization.

We are extremely fortunate to have two exceptionally high-quality universities in the province of Saskatchewan, both of which continue to demonstrate the importance of advanced education in the realization of our potential as individuals and as a province.

(13:45)

Now while placing significant emphasis on unique research, they also understand the importance of providing the citizens of this province with a well-rounded educational opportunity. The love of learning is alive and well in Saskatchewan, and we are proud of the opportunities provided to our students through the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan.

Congratulations to those students who are graduating this spring, as well as to the universities of this province that furnish them with well-rounded, world-class educations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Palliser Regional Library Wins LibraryNet Award

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to report that the Palliser Regional Library, along with its partners, recently won the LibraryNet 2002 Best Practices Award for the digital divide project.

The LibraryNet Best Practices Award recognizes the important role Canada's libraries play in encouraging innovative use of information and communications technology. The digital divide project, also known as the Internet Pilot's License, provided free, hands-on experience so users could develop basic Internet and computer skills. The project ran for five months and 340 people received their Internet Pilot's License.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Palliser Regional Library and its partners on receiving this prestigious award.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on May 15, Ms. Patti Sebestyen of Saskatoon was awarded the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence at the national awards ceremony in Ottawa.

Representing the Prime Minister at the national awards ceremony, the Hon. Alan Rock, Minister of Industry, presented certificates to national level recipients saying through their dedication and hard work and innovative teaching practices, these outstanding teachers have received exceptional results with students.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Sebestyen currently runs a program in Saskatoon called Opening Doors. This program was started three years ago to meet the community need for children not in school. This is the third alternative program that Ms. Sebestyen has operated during her 26-year teaching career with the Saskatoon Catholic School Division.

Congratulations, Patti Sebestyen. We are very proud and grateful for the work that you do with our young people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Métis Role Model Awards

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, this statement is a positive story of a Métis youth. A few years ago the Métis National Council instituted the Métis youth role model project as a way to recognize and celebrate the achievements of Métis youth.

Mr. Speaker, the 2003 Role Model Awards were presented

recently, and I'm proud to say that four of this year's seven recipients are from Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Jennifer Brown from Prince Albert received the award in the volunteer services category. Ms. Brown is active in all levels of Métis politics and holds the Aboriginal seat on the Youth Environment Network, an organization she helped created.

Christian Anderson received the award in the academic achievement category. He's also from Prince Albert. Mr. Anderson has a B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) and a M.A. (Master of Arts) from Queen's University and is working currently on his Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) at the University of Alberta.

Real Carriere of Cumberland House is this year's recipient in the culture and heritage category. Mr. Carriere is home-schooled on traplines and hunting and fishing in the Cumberland area. In 2000, he was chosen to attend Lester B. Pearson United World College of the Pacific. He has since graduated and is now studying at Simon Fraser.

This award . . . The athletic achievement went to Jacqueline Lavallee of Saskatoon. Ms. Lavallee excelled in both soccer and basketball while studying at the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) and played on the Canadian national basketball team.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all my colleagues to congratulate these outstanding young people and I would say to them in Cree: Keechiguskeetawuk. They have represented us with excellence.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

50th Anniversary of First Summit of Mount Everest

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Thursday, May 29 marks the 50th anniversary of the first summit of Mount Everest. As we all recognize the achievements of Sir Edmund Hillary and his guide five decades ago, we also recognize that this New Zealand native laid the groundwork for those that followed behind.

Since that day in 1953, more than 1,200 men and women have made the 27,000-foot climb to the top of the world's tallest mountain; nearly 200 people have died trying. Among those climbers who have claimed victory, Mr. Speaker, is Saskatchewan's own Dave Rodney. This Yorkton native who now calls Calgary home was the first Canadian to climb Mount Everest not once, but twice — first in 1999 and then again in 2001.

Mr. Speaker, Dave's second climb in 2001 also included a video camera, and this past week at the Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival, the world premiere of *Back to Everest: The Dave Rodney Story* was released.

Mr. Speaker, Dave Rodney's journey from east central Saskatchewan to the summit of the world's tallest mountain wouldn't have been possible without a substantial amount of courage and determination mixed with an equal amount of drive and ambition.

It's no wonder that Dave Rodney is a highly sought-after motivational speaker. The man who climbed Mount Everest has spoken to thousands about overcoming their everyday Everests.

Mr. Rodney's father lives in Yorkton, Mr. Speaker, and is justifiably proud of his son's many achievements. I ask all members to recognize the 50th anniversary of the first Mount Everest climb and all those who have subsequently shared in that victory. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Research Funding

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, as part of the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care, the provincial government is increasing funding for health research. Much of this research is carried out through the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit, whose many partners include the universities in Regina and Saskatoon.

I am pleased to say the research unit recently announced a number of scholarships to students from both universities through the new community and population health research training program.

Among the projects approved were Gloria DeSantis, who will study how non-profit voluntary organizations help to empower people. Allison Quine will look at the factors that influence health care services provided to Aboriginal persons with diabetes. Brandace Winquist will study the impact of stress in early life on the development of adolescents. Flavia Bianchi will research the health needs and challenges of First Nations children from birth to age five. And Dr. Lewis Williams will study various health-related issues in minority communities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all my colleagues will join me in congratulating these and the other scholarship recipients. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Federal Response to Distress in Beef Industry

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, has anyone in the government contacted the Prime Minister to tell him to keep his mouth shut?

Mr. Speaker, this province and other provinces, political parties and political leaders have set aside their differences to protect our beef industry. Meanwhile at this critical moment the Prime Minister of Canada seems to be going out of his way to insult the President of the United States and his administration, the very administration we need to reopen the border for the Canadian cattle industry and our beef.

Has he . . . Does he understand what is at stake here? The entire industry is at risk and the Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, is more interested in shooting his mouth off than solving the problem.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier be telling the Prime Minister to keep his mouth shut and stop insulting the US (United States) administration?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well as always, Mr. Speaker, I will treat the office of the Prime Minister with respect.

I have today on public radio in this province, I have moments ago on national television, pointed out my view and the view of this government of the inappropriateness in the timing of the Prime Minister's comments around US deficit measures. This is not a time for the national leader of Canada, in my view, to be engaging in debate with the President of the United States about their record or his record. It is a time for the Prime Minister of Canada, for the national Government of Canada, as it is time for all of us, to stand together, working hard, as hard as we can, to eliminate this border closing of the United States.

Let us work with the Canadian federation of food assessment here; let us work with the specialists; let us ensure our American neighbours that the Canadian food supply is safe, that our herds are safe. And let us work with our American political counterparts to get the border open.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, we all want the border open and we all need to work together. But it's going to take a couple of things for the US to reopen that border to Canadian beef. It's going to take a thorough investigation by the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) — and we have every confidence that that is and will be done — but it's also going to be a test of our relationship with the US. And right now our Prime Minister is failing that test. Instead of building bridges, he's burning them, Mr. Speaker, and the entire Canadian beef industry could wind up paying that price.

Right now in Saskatchewan there are real people with real farms, real jobs in the packing plants, in the feedlots, in the trucking industry, and real families, Mr. Speaker, all of which are having their livelihoods threatened by BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy). And the Prime Minister is making things worse.

Will the Premier be contacting the Prime Minister to tell him to stop damaging our relationships with the US?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I want to put on the record here today the appreciation that we've had of the work of Minister Vanclief and the federal agricultural officials. I want to put on the record here the support and appreciation we've had for the CFIA and the work that they've done. I want to identify that we've had a very, very good relationship with the Americans who have been in province and in Western Canada participating in the whole very difficult exercise.

I wish, Mr. Speaker, that, I wish I could say the same of Minister Jane Stewart in her response to our request that the two-week waive of unemployment be put in place. We've seen

that turned down.

And I am disappointed that the Prime Minister has chosen this time to engage in a verbal debate with the White House. I have expressed that very, very publicly today. I have written today to the Prime Minister to follow up on the letter written by the Minister of Labour on May 23 of this month, calling on the national government to waive the two-week provision for EI (Employment Insurance). I am extremely disappointed in the reaction thus far.

I am reminded that our Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Minister Lautermilch, this day has spoken to . . . The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has spoken to Mr. Goodale and Mr. Dion in Ottawa about these issues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Consequences of Occurrence of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I was shocked to hear this morning that the Government of Ontario is considering a ban on imported beef from Alberta because of the discovery of BSE in that province. However, because of the ties of the cow to our own province, one would assume that Ontario would be considering this action for Saskatchewan as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Ontario minister's comments echoed similar suggestions mentioned earlier this week by premiers of Quebec and one Manitoba . . . Maritime — sorry, Mr. Speaker — province. These sentiments and, in fact, possible actions of provincial bans on beef movement within our own country is a concern.

On another front, how will it possibly help us to remove international trading bans on Canadian beef when some of our own neighbouring provinces believe that there may be some threat to their own beef industry? This is a startling development, Mr. Speaker, and of huge concern.

Mr. Speaker, is the minister aware of the Ontario minister's comments and, if he hasn't already done so, will the minister immediately contact the Ontario minister — and in fact, all of his provincial counterparts — to stress the importance of supporting, maintaining, and strengthening the beef industry in our province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, the ministers of Agriculture, along with the federal Minister of Agriculture, have been in communication with each other every other day since Monday of last week. So we have lots of communication with each other.

The member opposite asks that I communicate a message to Ontario. I can report to this House, as I did to the media yesterday in our scrum, that all ministers across Canada believe that this issue is not a regional issue — that this is a national issue, that this issue needs to be dealt with and maintained at a national level, Mr. Speaker.

And this . . . The minister from Ontario, Helen Johns, was on the conference call yesterday when we had this very conversation. So, Mr. Speaker, there is no need in my view for me to communicate anything more with the minister from Ontario because on Monday, on Monday, Mr. Speaker, we are again on the conference call. We'll also be having that conversation again on Monday.

All of the provinces are on board that we're going to deal with this issue from a national perspective, Mr. Speaker, and it is not going to be dealt with on a regional level, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, could the minister please then explain a press release entitled, "Ontario considering banning beef cattle from Alberta over mad cow." And it reads:

Ontario might join other provinces in pushing for a ban on imported beef cattle and beef from Alberta in light of mad cow disease.

And it goes on to quite some extent quoting the minister from Ontario saying that this is indeed a consideration of her province.

Can the minister, who is in constant contact with the Ontario Agriculture minister, explain why he did not know that she's been saying this?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, what I said to the House is that we had a conference call yesterday morning. We're having a conference call on Monday morning again. We've been communicating with each other on a regular basis, Mr. Speaker, and we have a national resolution, Mr. Speaker. The national resolution is — from Ag ministers across Canada along with the federal minister, Mr. Speaker — that this in fact is a national issue and we're going to be working on it as a national issue.

We are not adopting, Mr. Speaker, we're not adopting the position that Mr. Charest took a couple of days ago. We're not taking the position, Mr. Speaker, of the minister from Ontario where she says that this is regional, Mr. Speaker, because we've all concurred, Mr. Speaker, that this will be an issue that will be dealt with at the national level.

And I ask the members of the opposition to not abandon this position at this point, Mr. Speaker, to remain with us. This is a national issue; we're going to deal with it as a national issue, and they should not waver on it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the CFIA did not sit around over the weekend and wait for someone else to look after things. They did their job over the entire weekend to address this issue. It's a serious issue. It's very serious for our province and for the country as a whole. They worked on it immediately.

Will the minister commit to phoning, picking up the phone and phoning the Ontario minister before Monday?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, my officials, my officials from across . . . in Saskatchewan are working very closely with the national officials. The position of Ontario, Mr. Speaker, is one that the national government or this province doesn't accept, Mr. Speaker. The minister from Alberta and I are in constant contact, as is the minister from Alberta, Mr. Speaker, or from British Columbia.

No one in Canada, Mr. Speaker, holds the position that this would be a regional issue at all, Mr. Speaker. And so as we work through this piece, we have the industry working together, Mr. Speaker, at the national table. I have the industry in Saskatchewan working together . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, we have a press release coming from the national meeting that's going on of livestock producers across Canada, of which our representatives are going to be . . . are at today, Mr. Speaker. I'll be briefed from them over the weekend and have an opportunity to hear the position that they're all taking.

And so we remain united in Canada, Mr. Speaker, where this issue will continue to be dealt with at the national table with all of the provinces and with the federal minister, Mr. Speaker. And I'm confident at the end of the day we'll get the borders open, because that's what it will take. It will take the co-operation of all of the ministers across Canada in order to reach that conclusion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. The discovery of a cow infected with BSE has had a serious impact on Saskatchewan's economy, not only to beef producers but also the spinoff industries of livestock such as sales, processing, transportation, and many, many others.

Mr. Speaker, last week XL Foods, a slaughter facility in Moose Jaw, announced a temporary layoff of employees as a result of the slowdown in the beef industry. But given that the temporary ban on Canadian beef imports by several countries, including the United States, may not be lifted for weeks, maybe even a month, Mr. Speaker, is it a concern that there may be so many people . . . it is a huge concern that there will be so many people out of work because of BSE.

My question to the minister: can she estimate how many people will be out of a job due to this disaster in our cattle industry?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I have said to the media and I've said publicly to people across this province and across the country that today we're examining, and have been now for

several days, what in fact the impact is, not only for a regional part of the country but nationally.

What is the impact of this particular disaster, Mr. Speaker? And what will it cost the industry in the area of primary production? What will it cost the industry in the feeding business? What will it cost the industry for those who provide feed to the industry, Mr. Speaker? What will it cost the industry, Mr. Speaker, for those who are in the trucking business, and in the plants, and in the processors, and in the employees who are not working today?

All of those assessments are currently being undertaken at the national level by all of governments across Canada, including Ontario, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we are able to make a representation for all of Canada in the days and the weeks ahead when we come to look at the issue of compensation, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we have recently heard that the federal resource minister, Jane Stewart, has said that she won't waive the two-week waiting period to apply for Unemployment Insurance for people impacted through the BSE findings. This is unbelievable given that the federal government has done exactly that for people in Ontario through the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) epidemic.

It is appalling that the minister would allow a double standard to take place in this country, allowing it in Ontario but not recognizing it here in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, workers in Saskatchewan are just as impacted through work slowdowns related to this beef industry situation.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier and the Prime . . . Mr. Speaker, will the Premier and the minister immediately take steps to raise serious concerns — not just write a letter, but raise serious concerns — with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Human Resources in Ottawa, to eliminate this double standard that seems to be forming in our country?

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to be able to stand on this issue and address the Labour critic's comments from the Saskatchewan Party. I'm pleased to do it, but a little surprised when these questions are coming from a party that has advocated for workers working for less than minimum wage — has worked for, has advocated for less than minimum wages . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite. The Moose Jaw plant, the XL beef plant, is on forced vacation. They are not laid off or were not given termination. They are currently gearing up again to have some of the herds from Alberta and BC (British Columbia) brought in there to be slaughtered.

Mr. Speaker, last week, on May 23, I sent a letter and made some calls to my federal counterpart requesting that the two-week waiting period for EI be done away with in this situation if it continued to escalate. And, Mr. Speaker, we will

continue to address this situation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that minister's arrogance and condescending attitude is exactly why people all over this province are calling for an election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — The arrogance of playing politics with this very issue is exactly why that minister . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, this is the exact reason why we hear all over this province that this government is soon going to be out of government and sitting on this side with only a few members, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, immediately following question period the Saskatchewan Party intends to move an emergency motion calling on the federal government to waive the two-week waiting period for applicants to Employment Insurance. Will the NDP (New Democratic Party) be supporting this motion?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — We have shown our support already by our early intervention on this topic by contacting our federal minister, sending the letters. Mr. Speaker, this party has supported working people across this province. It's one of the things that we stand for and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Speaker, when I was driving in from Moose Jaw this morning, coming in for the sitting of the legislature, the more I thought about this, the angrier I became. Mr. Speaker, here is a fund, Unemployment Insurance — Employment Insurance it's called now — that workers and employers contribute to. The federal government does not put any money into Employment Insurance.

So when workers in this province need that insurance fund and that support when this industry is going through some very difficult times, of course, Mr. Speaker, this party and this government will support that motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ethanol Industry

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this week during the Crown Corporations Committee hearings, we heard from the president of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan), of the Crown Investments Corporation, Frank Hart, on the fact that the NDP hired Scotia Capital last July to review the ethanol deal between the NDP government and the Broe group of companies. Then the . . . By the way, the Scotia Capital apparently was reviewing a deal that doesn't exist.

Then the NDP held a revival style news conference in Belle Plaine to announce the deal that doesn't exist. And then the minister announced last December that the ethanol deal that

doesn't exist and that the construction project that still hasn't started is running on time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, why would the NDP pay \$25,000 to any firm to review a deal that doesn't exist?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Crown Investments Corporation has spoken to this matter a number of times and has explained both to the opposition and to the public that the arrangements around the Broe, CIC proposal for Belle Plaine are a matter of arranging the financing. The terms of this deal, the conditions of this deal, are widely known publicly.

And of course it was the engagement of the third party to look at this proposal, to look at this option. And what have they concluded? That ethanol has great potential for the province of Saskatchewan.

Now why is it, Mr. Speaker, everything that has great potential for the province of Saskatchewan is criticized by the opposition? Yesterday — can you believe this, Mr. Speaker — the member of Lloydminster said publicly about Saskatchewan's future and Saskatchewan's opportunities, the member of Lloydminster said, quote:

What is there here to fundamentally interest the investor?

Well I'll tell you what's here, Mr. Speaker. Some of the hardest working, most creative people in the nation; some of the best resources; some of the best potential you'll find anywhere in Canada. That's what's here and we're working with partners to deliver that opportunity and potential.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to see the Premier stand up and attempt to answer the question because his contention that the details, the terms of this deal, have been made public is simply not the case, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, now that the Premier's involved in the debate, we would remind him of his words when he was in opposition in 1989, when he said the following. And I quote:

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

Mr. Speaker, that appeared in an article under the headline, "New Democrat wants all facts on Belle Plaine."

The article went on to say:

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

That's also the standard he has set for he and his government through the SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company) scandal. The truth of it is they haven't tabled the deal.

So the question to the Premier is this: will he live up to his own commitment? Will he live up to his own word and table the Scotia review of the deal and the terms of the deal itself?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, at the time I was asking those questions the member from Swift Current was right over here working for the Devine government cooking up some of those deals, cooking up some of those deals that got this province \$15 billion in debt. That's where he was, Mr. Speaker, and he will well know since he was right here in the Devine government — right here working for them — he will well know they would not, they would not . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have, we have talked about the details of the arrangement with the Broe group of companies and CIC; we are working on the financing package.

I want today, Mr. Speaker, to contrast the negativity that comes daily from the Saskatchewan Party with what we're seeing in today's press. Now these are some words from Nancy Southern, who is recognized as one of the prominent members of the Alberta business community. She, working with SaskPower, working with the Crown corporations, says of these people and our ability to work together, she says:

We've encountered open, hardworking, straightforward, visionary people with the highest integrity, dedicated to excellence for whom we have the highest regard.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ambulance Charges in Rural Saskatchewan

Mr. Hillson: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. The government claims to be against two-tier medicine and yet they continue, contrary to the recommendations of the Fyke report, to penalize those people who live in communities where the government closed their hospital.

The Fyke report recommended, and the government accepted, that they would cease charging different rates for ambulance charges and the mileage rate for ambulance charges as Fyke recommended, so that all Saskatchewan citizens would have equal access to ambulance charges.

Now last year I asked the Minister of Health when he was going to follow through on his promises to accept the Fyke report, and he said that as . . . I should contact my federal cousins and ask them to give more money, and if they did, he'd keep his promise.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I did, they did. What's he doing?

So I ask the Minister of Health. It's now a year and a half since Fyke. The government says they adopt Fyke. Fyke says we

should not discriminate against rural residents; there should be one charge for ambulance service standard across the province. When is he going to institute that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting. Today in the press, in the Liberal Party battles that are happening at the federal government, there's a discussion about Mr. Paul Martin's budget of 1995 which effectively gutted the health system in Canada and created many, many problems.

That member . . . That's the same point I made with that member last year about how we're dealing with this. We have had received some money and we are working carefully to deal with that, use that money in the broad way that is necessary in our province.

We have in our province for seniors been able to set a standard for transfer by ambulance services. We have not been able to do it for the total population because we have many demands on the things that we're doing. But it is our goal to continue to work towards that accessibility right across the province. We will continue to do that; we'll work with our Saskatchewan people to make sure that we have the best health care system in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

National Health Council

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister and Canada's premiers came together in February to discuss the future of our health care system, there were two important outcomes for the people of our province. The federal government agreed to increase health transfers to provinces over the next three years and we are using those dollars to implement our Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care, invest in new medical and diagnostic equipment, and make targeted improvements in drug coverage, home care, and primary care.

The federal ministers' health accord also contained measures that are aimed at improving the accountability of our system in putting a new national health council. Our government has supported the formation of the council from the very outset and we are working to make the council as effective, inclusive, and accountable as possible.

We see the health council as an important opportunity to demonstrate that our governments are accountable for the way in which we spend health dollars and for the results that we achieve. We also believe the council could provide a permanent vehicle for patients, providers, and governments to work together to improve health care for all Canadians.

Establishing the health council has taken longer than expected, partly as a result of the different views on what it will do and how it should be structured.

I want to share with the members of the Legislative Assembly

and with the public the position our government has taken in these discussions.

The mandate for the council is outlined in the First Ministers' health accord. It states the council will monitor and report on the implementation of the accord, particularly its accountability and transparency provisions. While our government could support a broader role for the council, we are prepared to work with this mandate and do not support any further limitations in its role.

To ensure the council is credible with the public and with the health sector, it must be objective in its work and have a majority of non-government representatives. There are many knowledgeable, credible people in the health care field who can bring a broad base of expertise and experience to the council. It is also important to have a strong health sector representation for the council to build support and confidence in its work.

Our government fully supports a review of the scope, mandate, role, and objectives of the council. However, we do not support a sunset clause that assumes the council will outlive its usefulness in five years. We take the view that the council has a valuable long-term role in building confidence in our health system. We believe the council could provide a permanent vehicle for patients, providers, and the provincial and federal governments to work together in the interests of all Canadians. That is what the public is asking us to do.

We welcome the improved accountability and we believe the National Health Council is worth doing and it is worth doing right. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to respond to the minister's statement in regard to the National Health Council and the accord that resulted from the First Ministers' discussions about the future of health care in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, everyone in this country, and certainly in Saskatchewan, understand that there has to be improvements to the Canadian health care system. Everyday we hear accounts from people who — in Saskatchewan and in other jurisdictions but particularly here — are forced to wait on longer waiting lists, are forced to leave the province in order to get essential imaging diagnostics and MRIs (magnetic resonance imaging) in Alberta.

And we are very concerned about the fact that our health care system really needs some major improvements, not only in Saskatchewan, but across this country. So we are certainly very pleased that there was an accord reached between the First Ministers of the country with the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, this health care accord provided for the potential establishment of a health care council, and we think that there is merit in this structure. However, Mr. Speaker, as many people across this country have said, what the health care system doesn't need is a bigger bureaucracy of administrators and people operating in a think-tank environment.

They need to have practical guidance and direction so that these waiting lists can actually be shortened right across this country, and in particular in this province, that pragmatic, concrete solutions are arrived at in order to improve the health care services of all of our citizens.

So, Mr. Speaker, we think it is very important that this council does exist in a very accountable and transparent way. Because, Mr. Speaker, what we don't need is another sort of think-tank environment where a great deal of hypothetical ideas are discussed and debated and nothing pragmatic is going to come out of it.

We understand that the government has said that there should be a review of this council on an ongoing basis and I think that's important. And it's important to make sure that the council stays on track, that it stays focused on providing very concrete and specific direction for the health care system in Canada. We agree that there shouldn't be an automatic sunset clause. But the review has to be strident, it has to be very meticulous, and it has to be able to give clear direction to this council of the needs and aspirations of Canadian citizens, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The member is requesting leave to respond to the ministerial statement. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues. In the wake of the Romanow report and the increased federal funding, it is desperately important and vital to the future of medicare that the increased funding flow through to actually lead to a difference that patients notice as opposed to health care professionals.

And I think we already hear some very, very disturbing rumblings that lead us all to worry that the increased federal funding could disappear into a bureaucratic black hole that still leaves us with eight-month waits for MRIs, three-year waits for hip and knee replacements, and two-year waits for eye surgery. If that does not change, then public confidence in a one-tier, publicly funded health care system will inevitably be eroded, if not destroyed.

And I mentioned just moments ago that the government committed itself to one-tier ambulance service, and yet in the wake of the new federal funding, that has not happened. So that we see in the city that some ambulance trips are free, the most they could ever pay is \$250. And in the rural areas they can get charged sometimes in the thousands of dollars for an ambulance trip.

The provincial government has promised to address this. They have not. We have to see, we have to see some changes that actually are noticed by patients. And this council hopefully will mean that there is a flow through of the funds and that the reforms flowing through from the new funding and from the Romanow Commission actually bring about changes that patients and people notice as opposed to the bureaucracy.

As the member for Melfort said, we don't need more health bureaucracy. But if the health council can make sure that these funds are actually used to bring changes on the ground, then obviously we have to be strongly in favour of them.

And that is what we are looking for. That there needs to be some control and some management to make sure that — as was said at the time of the Romanow Commission — that dollars buy change. But I think that this has to be where we put the initiative. And I think the government now with the increased funding they have, instead of talking about a budget 10 years ago, they have to start talking about the budget today and how they are going to use that money to make sure that residents of this province actually see some improvements in the treatments they're receiving.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Regina Auto Theft Strategy

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to advise the House of an announcement I was pleased to participate in this morning concerning the Regina auto theft strategy. I was particularly pleased to be at the Regina alternative measures program centre in north central Regina, to be joined by my colleague from Regina Elphinstone, the Minister of Justice, as well as the president of SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), and the deputy police chief.

The announcement this morning was to announce that we will be undertaking implementation of phase 2 of the Regina auto theft strategy. I was pleased to report to the House some time ago that in the first year of operation of the initial Regina auto theft strategy that we have seen a 37 per cent reduction in the number of car thefts in Regina. This brings the total number of car thefts to its lowest point in this city since 1995.

It was interesting this morning to listen to the deputy police chief also note that as a result of this strategy he believed there was an associated reduction of crime in this city, particularly as it related to breaks and enters and thefts under \$5,000.

This strategy, the Regina auto theft strategy, was built on a community-based partnership that takes a serious targeted approach dealing with those who commit auto theft offences. Today the announcement will build on that successful partnership. The Regina experience has led to us looking at other targeted approaches in other communities, Mr. Speaker, most notably among these is the recent announcement by the Attorney General, the Minister of Justice, that we would be undertaking in North Battleford — a crime reduction strategy.

(14:30)

Phase 2 of the Regina auto theft strategy takes a targeted approach aimed at adult offenders between the ages of 18 and 22. This strategy will involve cracking down on chronic, repeat, younger offenders through the piloted use of electronic monitoring devices, increase in the use of alternative measures for low-risk, first-time offenders, and providing education and prevention for at youth risk . . . youth at risk.

This older group of offenders in the age 18 to 22 are recently one of the leading causes of theft that we're seeing in the city today, rather than the younger . . . The traditional young offenders is, in fact, a slightly older group in the 18- to 22-year-olds that we are now looking at targeting. We believe that by targeting in this group and continuing with our existing successful interventions with young offenders, that we'll be able to see a successful expansion of this program and an improvement on our overall numbers.

Mr. Speaker, a critical element of phase 2 will be the evaluation process. Long-term evaluation of the whole strategy and a specific analysis of the electronic monitoring program are being planned. I am pleased to report to the Assembly today that these evaluations will be completed by Dr. Jeffrey Pfeifer from the Canadian Institute for Peace, Justice and Security at the University of Regina. Dr. Pfeifer had completed the process evaluation last October on our initial strategy, and his findings underlined the effectiveness of the initial strategy's innovative approaches and techniques.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce to the House today that Corrections and Public Safety is committing to this initiative an additional \$50,000 to expand the alternative measures program and to add a currently filled position for an adult probation officer to the team. The Department of Justice is providing funding to support the allocation of two police officers and one prosecutor to support phase 2. And SGI is providing funding to expand alternative measures and pilot an electronic monitoring program.

Mr. Speaker, we are confident that the number of auto thefts in Regina will continue to decline with the implementation of phase 2 of the Regina auto theft strategy. This year, in fact, we are targeting to see an additional 10 per cent reduction.

This is, Mr. Speaker, a successful program. It is a success story that we all should celebrate. Indeed it is a success because of the fact it is rooted deeply in the community. It involves a partnership with government, with local providers, and is very much the approach that this government favours in terms of developing a strategy to keep Saskatchewan communities safe. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to respond to the minister's statement. I can say we're extremely pleased to see that the auto theft is down 37 per cent in the city. It's unfortunate though, because my understanding that B and Es (breaking and entering) are up in the city at the same time which is something that maybe we have to look at.

It really is kind of interesting, Mr. Speaker, that we had to become the number one car-theft capital of the world — or Canada at least — before this government would intervene at all and try and do something. If they would be so active in other areas like our huge loss of the people from the province, if they would take the same initiatives becoming number one at that, if they would deal with those issues in the same manner, it would probably be very, very enlightening.

Mr. Speaker, there's a couple of items in here . . . The

alternative measures, I'm really looking forward to understanding and finding out what the alternative measures are. I know it's mentioned a couple of times in the minister's speech.

Mr. Speaker, there's another issue to deal with here also. The NDP government in 1999 promised 200 new police officers and that promise has never been fulfilled. And I think if they would spend a little bit more effort on the policing, that the crime — not only the auto theft but the other crimes — would also, also go down.

One other issue that I looked at in the minister's statement that I found kind of interesting, Mr. Speaker, is in the statement it says that we're targeting — targeting, if you can imagine — a 10 per cent reduction. Well I think it would be my understanding that we should be targeting 100 per cent reduction. I mean the target, I mean it's realistic that we maybe only achieve 10 per cent, but the target should be 100 per cent reduction. And I find that quite odd, but I think it's very typical of this government setting a very, very low standard for itself and still being not able to meet it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I applaud the initiatives of the strategy for reducing car theft in this city and also in the province. And it's nice to see the numbers going down, but I think that there's more that we could probably be doing. Thank you.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity under rule no. 46.

The Speaker: — Under rule 46, could the member take a moment and just explain the nature of the motion.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the recent comments made by our Prime Minister towards the United States, as well as comments made by the minister, Jane Stewart, the federal Minister of Human Resources, regarding the unemployment . . . waiving of the two-week waiting period for Unemployment Insurance, Mr. Speaker, I think I would like to move a motion that addresses those concerns.

Leave granted.

MOTION UNDER RULE 46

Waiting Period for Employment Insurance

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's I guess really unfortunate that we even have to get to this point and discuss such issues, such as comments made by the Prime Minister towards the United States, comments made by the minister, Jane Stewart, of Human Resources regarding Saskatchewan and how we would not apply for the two-week . . . qualify for the waiving of the two-week waiting period for Unemployment Insurance.

In light of all the issues and situations that are happening in our world and that directly impact us here in Saskatchewan — and so many of them are completely out of our control and we have people that are going to be suffering because of the consequences — and we have such a, really what I would describe as a cold-heartedness, a complete disrespect for what

we need here in Saskatchewan.

A lack of sensitivity comes to mind. There are a number of words that come to mind that would describe the reactions of the federal government with respect to both the comments made by the Prime Minister and also the comments made by Minister Jane Stewart of the federal government.

The first issue that I'd like to talk about is the unemployment issue and how in Ontario they are suffering the SARS epidemic which is devastating. It has been devastating to the Ontario economy. We've heard over and over again some of the situations that have happened in Toronto with people not travelling to Toronto; World Health advisory suggesting earlier in this year that Toronto was perhaps unsafe to fly in to. And the devastating affect that would have on a city and a province on its economy, Mr. Speaker, is unbelievable.

But fortunately enough for Ontario, the minister, the federal minister, realizes that there are people that are going to be affected by this, such as people that are quarantined and can't get out to work, and the federal minister has addressed that very situation by waiving the two-week waiting period for Employment Insurance and allowing these people to collect Employment Insurance much quicker, waiving the two-week waiting period. And really, I mean, being quarantined is of no fault of their own. Why should they be punished even though they are unable to get out to the job, and that's what the federal minister has recognized.

But if you travel about a couple of thousand miles west, it seems to be totally different. The issue and the sensitivity towards this issue seems to have vanished in those 2,000 miles.

We have people, through no fault of their own, that as we hear today are on forced vacation from different beef . . . from XL in Moose Jaw, a meat processing facility, and they're in forced vacation, Mr. Speaker.

Now if there was a light at the end of the tunnel, if we could say by the end of this week, tomorrow, that the borders will be open for beef shipments into the United States and across the world, it would be a different issue. But right now there is a real concern that that block of beef shipment is going to remain for possibly days, weeks, and months, Mr. Speaker.

And the effect on the industry is just hard to believe, the effect that this province will be seeing in the next couple weeks, in the next month or two, especially when you look at some of the statistics of the cattle that we slaughter here in Saskatchewan each day — 6,800 head of cattle are slaughtered each day in Saskatchewan; 15,000 in Alberta.

The impact of not having this industry operating, not having this industry exporting into the United States and around the world will be devastating. And there is no way that forced vacation time is going to in any way make up the difference of two months, three months into the future when these people are still unemployed, laid off or whatever.

Now I cannot see how a federal minister could look at Ontario and waive a two-week waiting period and then come to Saskatchewan and say, you're on your own; the two-week

waiting period is still in effect. That she would ignore that very plea, especially as was mentioned by the minister that the premiums, the whole issue is of no cost to the federal minister. It is of no cost to the federal minister whatsoever. The double standard that applies, in my eyes, between Ontario and Saskatchewan is absolutely unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm glad that the members of the government would agree unanimously with us to let this motion go forward to show our united concern and disgust with the federal minister and how the lack of sensitivity towards workers in our province and the need to be treated as equals in this country, as equals with people in Ontario, and it just doesn't seem to be there, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue that is of great concern and when you look at the national papers across Canada, and you hear . . . see some of the remarks that our Prime Minister has been making in a time where, as was said during question period, bridges need to be built and maintained — not burned — and statements that go against our hugest trading partner, that insult our hugest trading partner, who are at this time, quite frankly, are holding our cattle industry at ransom. They are quite frankly holding the economy of our province, the economy of Alberta, if this keeps going on, in the palm of their hand — we refuse to open up our borders to any shipments from Canada for however long.

Now personally I would think that if you want to deal with someone like United States and work with them towards opening up the borders so our cattle industry is moving again, so that our economy isn't as severely affected as what we're going to have, I would hope that the leader of our country would deal with the leaders of United States and other international countries that we have to trade with — but in particularly United States — I would hope that they would deal with some respect towards that leader, Mr. Speaker. And what we are seeing is the exact opposite.

It is by far our biggest trading partner. And when you look at some of the disputes that we are going through right now — whether it's softwood lumber, and the Canadian Wheat Board, some grain exports — all these issues of trade that are so vitally important to Western Canada, yes, they may be important to Ontario, the trading relations, but not to the same level as to what they are here in Saskatchewan.

When you look at our economies of Western Canada especially — and you look at the beef industry here in Saskatchewan and the grain industry and when you go into Alberta you look at the beef industry, the grain industry, and oil and gas, Mr. Speaker; when you look at BC, you're dealing with the softwood lumber issue as we do here in Saskatchewan — we are so reliant on United States and maintaining a good trading relationship.

And anything that jeopardizes that, even though it may be done by the Prime Minister of Canada, it directly impacts on us here in Saskatchewan and on our economy, Mr. Speaker.

(14:45)

And I guess a little bit in a way like the poor workers in the beef industry right now that are on forced vacation and are facing

perhaps layoffs into the future, it seems to be out of their control. But when the Prime Minister goes around the world and makes comments like he's made towards the President of the United States and we sit here and have to take the consequences, it almost seems out of our control.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think there are some things that we can do. And I think we need to stand up for our rights and make sure that comments made by the united . . . by the president . . . by the Prime Minister of Canada, comments made by the Minister of Human Resources, federal Human Resources, Jane Stewart, are unacceptable. They are absolutely unacceptable because the people that pay the consequences are our producers here in Saskatchewan and our workers here in Saskatchewan.

So it is extremely important that the federal government, both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Human Resources, realizes that their statements that they are making — whether they've thought them out in prior or not — have a huge impact as to the way our economy is going to function into the future, Mr. Speaker.

And so I think it is of utmost importance that we as a legislature, as a unanimous voice, voice our concern not just through letters but through phone calls, through pressure, through . . . Whether it's the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan had better stand up and show its concern with some of the statements that have been made because it has a huge impact on how our economy continues to work, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm pleased to move the motion, seconded by the member from Battleford-Cut Knife that we certainly express our deep concern with statements that are being made by the federal Liberal government of the day. And I would hope that all of us in this legislature — the government, the official opposition, and the lone Liberal member shows his concern as well, that these statements are unacceptable and cannot be tolerated because of the impact it has on our economy, Mr. Speaker.

So I would move, seconded by the member from Battleford-Cut Knife:

That this Assembly demand that the federal government immediately waive the two-week waiting period for Employment Insurance applications for persons whose employment has been affected by the impact of BSE on the Canadian beef industry; and that this Assembly further demand that the Prime Minister of Canada show greater sensitivity to our international trading partners, particularly the United States.

I so move.

Mr. Lorenz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's tremendously important that we support this motion, and we look forward that the members opposite support this motion as well.

We're talking about Saskatchewan real people. We're talking about people that are in the livestock industry. We're talking about some real jobs in the packing industry, in the feedlots, in the trucking industry — real families that are going to be affected in the sense of this crisis in that respect as well.

Are we having a double standard when we see that the Minister Stewart, the EI (Employment Insurance) minister, talks about I guess the lost opportunity that is happening in Ontario with the SARS situation and then we take a look at the lost opportunity for employment for people in Western Canada as well, and we can't appreciate the value of that situation, that we say that we can't recognize the waiving of that two-week period as well. Is it a double standard? We start to wonder and we start to question if the recognition of having that value there isn't being appreciated.

We also are starting to hear about some border closures as well, or proposal of border closures as well in Eastern Canada; the promotion of what Ontario is coming forward with and also encouraging some of the other provinces in Eastern Canada be recognizing the closing of the borders, of moving beef from particularly Alberta, and also we'll be probably hearing what's going to be happening with the movement of beef from Saskatchewan as well. There again it's going to be affecting employment. It's going to be affecting the whole industry as well in that respect. Is that again another double standard?

If we're in a country that we're working together to try and work with our entire industry of agriculture, and in particular the cattle industry, we need to work together as a country and not segregate ourselves from West to East in that respect as well. So we need to stand in unison and working through these situations and these problems that we have as well.

It is somewhat ironic I guess when you hear some people that have experienced the type of crisis that we're going through right now with the BSE situation. We have the European Union that's made some statements as the last two weeks have unfolded, that they recognize there is a way of dealing with this situation. And they recognize that we have some high standards of delivering our meat products.

And they're one of the areas, I guess, of the world that's identified the fact that the due diligence is being done in this country and they haven't closed their borders. They are still receiving the product, the meat products as such as well, as well in that respect.

So the world standard of providing that product is well been attained through the checks and monitoring systems that we have in this country as such. So we start wondering within ourselves, how can we start separating ourselves from West to East again and saying that we can't accept the fact of moving beef from the West to the East.

There also was some discussion through the noon hour. There was some news broadcast that came through, starting talking about allowing the borders to be opened in Eastern Canada, to be moving beef product into the United States, and still keeping the borders closed in Western Canada as well.

And again, why are we starting to talk and think in that type of relevance, in the sense of not working as a country any longer? So where is the standard, where is the double standard that's coming in here in that respect as well?

It's a huge impact that we have in the Western provinces. Saskatchewan definitely is going to be impacted in this respect.

It's impacted directly with the industry.

But as this goes on, we're going to be impacted through the spinoff industries that are related to the direct beef industry as well. We're not only going to see the feedlots and the packing houses and the trucking industry impacted, we're going to see our grocery stores, we're going to see our shopping malls, we're going to see other sectors of our economy impacted as well in that same respect.

So getting the borders open quicker and moving our product is going to be critical and essential.

But how do we deal with that situation with the people that are being affected? And again I think we need to go back and recognize that that's why Employment Insurance is there. It's to pick up these situations where you can identify the need and you can recognize the need and you're going to allow that need to be addressed and looked after as well.

And I guess when you hear a comment that comes forth that says the people that were in the SARS situation, they were quarantined and they weren't able to get out and find some other employment, how can you expect the people in this industry, in the beef industry, to start looking for other employment through the time that we've got the borders closed?

These people aren't just going to leave their livelihoods behind and leave their businesses behind and start looking for different types of employment and moving into a whole new industry and a whole new direction of their livelihood. It's almost ludicrous to think that people are going to start thinking and moving in that direction as well.

So you really start wondering, when a comment like that comes forth, what kind of value that has to Western Canada and particular Saskatchewan as well in that respect.

So again I think we need to appreciate that we need to put the pressure on, we need to put the feet to the fire, we need the ministers and the Premier here to be talking to Ottawa and saying, look we've got to work together, we've got to get this thing resolved as a team, as a country, but not as individualists. We're in this situation as a whole. So let's not segregate ourselves. Let's not go out and look after our own particular agendas. We need to appreciate this is good value for the entire country, not just for Ontario or not just for Alberta or Saskatchewan. We're into this situation for the betterment of all in that respect as well.

So on the basis of realizing that we have a real crisis here — we have a crisis of industry; we have a crisis of livelihood; we have a crisis of individual people in the sense of how they are going to maintain their ongoing family structure, as well as how they're putting the food onto the table and getting I guess the bills paid for at the end of the day — we need to recognize that EI is there for the purpose of providing them that ability that they can come through this bit of a hurdle that we've got to resolve.

And hopefully it will be resolved much quicker. And if we can work together as an entire country to resolve this problem,

we're always going to be better off at the end of the day.

So I support the motion and second it at this point. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to, I want to indicate that members of the government side of the House will be supporting the member, the opposition's motion that's been brought to the House this afternoon. In fact, we're very pleased to be a part of supporting it. And we anticipate that the Liberal caucus will stand in the House and speak in the House and support this motion as well.

I just, while I'm on the subject, I would anticipate that at some point today we may hear also from the Liberal leader, Mr. Karwacki, on this subject. I would hope so.

Mr. Speaker, not to dwell at length, on May 23, the day after government became well apprised of the issue that was to befall us here, recognizing that this may in fact have consequence for people who are working in the beef industry — particularly in the processing industry, the slaughter industry, and so on — that this may indeed have consequence to their work, the Minister of Labour communicated with her colleague in Ottawa, Ms. Stewart, requesting the waive of the two-week period.

We did that the day after we learned of the circumstance that was laying in front of us. We were pleased that the Government of Alberta some days later joined with us in making that same call.

When we made that call, it was our expectation — clearly it was my expectation — that this would be met with a very positive and early response.

It in fact, Mr. Speaker, hardly crossed my mind that the Minister of Human Resources Canada would not make that change because, as others have pointed out, the change was made to accommodate the very, very difficult situation in Toronto in SARS and the people who have been affected in that regard. And it simply did not cross my mind that this matter would not meet with the same favourable response.

As the Minister of Labour has pointed out today, in fact we are not here dealing with federal Liberal government funds, finances, or money. We are here dealing with monies that have been provided for Employment Insurance by workers and by employers for just this kind of circumstance.

No one here is asking for more money or greater financial support — simply a waiving of the two-week requirement. Why? Because we anticipate yet that we will see resolution to the border issue, that this will be hopefully a max of two-week kind of problem.

I was therefore more than disappointed this morning, Mr. Speaker, when I learned through the media that the Hon. Jane Stewart has in fact rejected this request to waive the two-week period.

I understand the argument being put forward by the federal minister is that the workers in Toronto or Ontario have been placed under quarantine and therefore cannot seek other

employment. Well I want to remind the federal minister that in fact what is happening in Western Canada is that herds are being quarantined and it is in that quarantine, it is in this circumstance that people are faced with losing their daily employment.

It's just as the member from Battleford-Cut Knife has just pointed out. Is it to be suggested that these workers who may find their employment disrupted should now go out and seek new employment for a two-week period? I mean, that is a silly argument.

(15:00)

And the argument is being made in Ottawa, I am told, that what this would do is set a precedent, set a precedent, and they don't want to set such a precedent. Well I say this is exactly the right precedent to set. Exactly the right precedent.

When you have a crisis, when you have people being displaced by issues certainly not of their own control, this is just the time that we need a national government that is sensitive, that is ready to act, and willing to act. Unfortunately we have seen neither in our request.

Therefore today we have very, very publicly — in communication with the national government and very, very publicly — have called upon the federal government and Ms. Stewart to immediately reverse this wrong-headed decision that they have made and provide the waiver. That is why, Mr. Speaker, given the first part of this motion, I and this government will be very supportive of it.

Secondly, on the second portion of the motion regarding the Prime Minister's unfortunate timing in his comments, there are occasions, Mr. Speaker — and I have supported the Prime Minister on occasion — when a Prime Minister of Canada is called to speak to international issues. There are the appropriate occasions.

There may be occasions when the Prime Minister of Canada may appropriately pass comment on other policy matters of a neighbouring nation. There may be opportunity for the Prime Minister to pass comment on decisions being made in Washington around budgets and so on. That's a debatable point, but there may be.

But I'll tell you what's not debatable. This is not the hour for the Prime Minister of Canada to be making inappropriate or harsh comment to the White House about their budget deficits or about his performance versus the President of the United States' performance. This is not the hour.

This is the hour that calls on the national leadership from the Prime Minister, the national government, from provincial governments, from industry, from all Canadians to work as hard as we can to find a solution to remove that trade barrier that is now tonight, today, at the American border. This is not the time for inappropriate comment.

This is the time for us to work together because we are all reminded I think in the Saskatchewan legislature today how significant an issue this is for the people and province of

Saskatchewan, how significant an issue this is for the people of Western Canada, and, Mr. Speaker, because this is a Canadian issue, this is a significant issue for all of Canada and now is the time for us to be doing what we should be doing.

I believe in Saskatchewan today we are doing what we should be doing. We're standing together. We're standing together in support of our producers. We're standing together in support of the industry. And particularly as we address this EI issue, we are standing together in support of the workers in the livestock and beef industry in our province.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, we will be very pleased to support the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — I'm pleased to rise to indicate my support for the motion before this House and to say that if we are a nation, then we are based on the belief that problems affect all of us and we are in this together. And I think we have adopted that view in this province when crises have hit other provinces.

As far as the Minister of HRDC (Human Resources Development Canada) being reluctant to create a precedent, well the fact is precedents have already been created when special rules around the Employment Insurance scheme have been adopted to deal with the collapse of the fishing industry of Atlantic Canada or the appearance of SARS in Toronto. In both cases, the rules of EI were set aside to meet the crisis of the time.

So it is frankly false and disgraceful for the minister to say she doesn't want to create a precedent because in fact the precedents have already been created; that where there are crises affecting a part of this country, the normal rules are set aside to deal with innocent victims.

So why would people in the auction marts, the meat-packing industry, the trucking industry, who are now displaced because of borders being closed to our beef, why would they not be able to access special provisions under EI?

And if we believe we're in this together this is not a time for one region of the country to separate itself off from others. This is a time for all Canadians to stand together to ensure, first of all, that the source of the outbreak is tracked down. Second, that it is eradicated. Third, that we satisfy our own consumers and our trading partners that Canadian beef is safe and high quality, and the borders are again reopened.

Now of course I hope I'm wrong, but I fear that it might be some time before some of the trading bans are lifted. And during that period of time the innocent victims of the present embargo of our beef industry deserve the help and support of their fellow Canadians. And the Government of Canada should be proud to back them up and support them.

This is not a time for the Government of Canada to cut these men and women loose, and I'm appalled that this would be considered. And I trust that on further reflection the minister will understand that what she has done is insensitive and unwarranted and a poor reflection not only on her but on the

Government of Canada.

I also want to say in regards the statements concerning the White House and the present administration in Washington, that I also share the mover's views that this is ill-timed and unfortunate. And I am not one who, like the Canadian Alliance, is of the view that the Canadian government must always be in agreement with whatever comes out of the White House. And I realize the people who moved this motion are of that view. I am not. However, however this is not the time.

When national interests are at stake, when national interests are at stake, there may be times when the Prime Minister of Canada is called upon to defend Canadian interests and to say, we are not in agreement with what our American friends and trading partners are doing. We find that what they have done regarding softwood lumber, regarding the Canadian Wheat Board, is fundamentally wrong. And the Prime Minister not only has the right, he has the responsibility to set himself apart from the American administration.

What concerns me though in these statements is that they appear to be, frankly, pointless and ill-timed. They do not appear to be a defence of national Canadian interests. They appear to be a purely gratuitous attempt to pick a fight with our largest trading partner. What possible good can come of that? And I do not see that we are benefiting our country to pointlessly and gratuitously pick a fight with our most important trading partner. So while . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. I wonder if the members would mind taking their consultation to behind the bar.

Mr. Hillson: — So I think it is important that while our Prime Minister and the national government defend Canadian interests and articulate those times when our policies are divergent from those of our American friends, that the comments that were made this week were, in my view, as pointless as they were unfortunate and certainly ill-timed.

This is a time for all members of this House, of all political persuasions, to come together to stand shoulder to shoulder with the front-line workers who are being penalized and thrown out of work through no fault of their own. This is a time, I suggest, for Canadians in other parts of the country too to say that we stand together in this present crisis. This is not a time to separate ourselves off according to region or of party. And I stand four-square opposed to anyone in the federal government who might be seen to do that.

So I am proud to support the motion before this House. Thank you.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to support the motion that has been put forward. It has been a very stressful, yes, and long week and a half.

Mr. Speaker, with the one case of BSE that was confirmed last week in Alberta, a series of events have really kicked into motion over this last week. And, Mr. Speaker, I remember the feeling that was in this Assembly when the comments were first made and when the Minister of Agriculture relayed the

information to the agricultural critic from the Saskatchewan Party. We all knew the seriousness of what had been told to us and that it could have devastating effects.

Over this past week and a half we've seen the depopulation of herds. And in many cases producers have put their livelihoods into building a herd that really is their pride and joy, Mr. Speaker. There is a real attachment and pride in a lifetime of work. And it's heartbreaking to see the depopulation that's occurred and it has been a devastating week for the industry.

This week has also brought in questions about our food safety programs, the tracking systems that we have. And I know as the Minister of Agriculture has said over a number of times, the food system and safety system in Canada is one of the best anywhere in the world. And we know by the CFIA, the work that has gone on over this past work in tracking . . . or this past week in tracking what may be potentially affected animals, the work has gone well, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, as we watch the events kind of unfold over this past few days, you start to wonder, well what else could be affected? And when you look at the industry within Saskatchewan, it's huge. Saskatchewan and Alberta, Mr. Speaker, not only producers directly but you start looking at the auction marts and the feedlots, meat processing plants — as we've discussed, the beef plant that is in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, of Moose Jaw Wakamow — meat wholesaling, meat brokering, both domestic and exports. It starts getting into feed companies, cattle and feed trucking operations, Mr. Speaker, rendering, other non-agricultural areas. And it has the potential to be devastating.

So while we hope for a quick resolve in the work that's currently going on and the testing that's currently going on, Mr. Speaker, no one can argue the fact that there is a cycle that takes place in the production of . . . from a young animal into a finished animal that is ready for market. There is a cycle and a system that is in place.

And there has been a disruption to that cycle. Now hopefully it will be short with the work that's going on now. And we're all hopeful of that outcome but, Mr. Speaker, there's no way of knowing.

So after discussions last week, I sent a letter on May 23 to the Minister of HRDC and made a request to her that the two-week wait period be waived for Employment Insurance benefits in case this does carry on for a longer period of time and cause disruptions and the ripple effect through the economy of Saskatchewan. And what we asked for in that letter was that the two-week waiting period be waived with respect to Employment Insurance benefits for any class of workers whose livelihoods are unduly impacted by BSE due to circumstances beyond their control.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that was a difficult request. And I feel, and our government felt, and obviously the opposition agrees with us, is that that was a reasonable request, that in consideration of workers that were being . . . were losing their livelihood due to circumstances beyond their control — which is a situation that is urgent within our province and outside and in fact right across Canada — that there be some

consideration given to these workers so that they wouldn't have the added stress of wondering about where their income would be coming from. Not a complex request. But, Mr. Speaker, I, along with the Premier and others, were surprised when the request was denied in the media last evening, Mr. Speaker.

(15:15)

So as I was thinking about this a little more last night and this morning as I was driving in for work, I started to think about Unemployment Insurance — Employment Insurance — and here we have an insurance system that is paid totally by employers and employees. They pay the premiums on this insurance; that's how it's paid, Mr. Speaker. There's no contributions made by the federal government. They administer the program but they do not contribute directly to it.

And, Mr. Speaker, I got a little more angry the longer I thought about this. Here was something, a situation where there was a need for some reassurance to be given to these workers in what is turning out to be uncertain times within the livestock industry and the beef industry. Here was an opportunity to give some assurance and a bit of stability to workers and take away a bit of the uncertainty that is surrounding everyone at this time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you look at the EI fund — it's not short of money. There is a substantial surplus within the fund. And when you look at the statistics that go with Employment Insurance, we are a net exporter of EI premiums. And when . . . All that is very simple, Mr. Speaker, is that more Employment Insurance premiums are paid from Saskatchewan than are paid back into this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a low unemployment rate and I mean it's a statistic, Mr. Speaker. There is no way they should have the opportunity to even dispute the fact that these benefits aren't deserved to the workers here in Saskatchewan that may lose their jobs because of circumstances beyond their control.

Mr. Speaker, Employment Insurance a few years ago went through some pretty major changes. Less benefits have been paid back into Saskatchewan. The federal government made the time shorter that you could collect unemployment for. They made the qualifying periods longer and in doing so, Mr. Speaker, they have taken millions of dollars that would and should have been paid into this province to unemployed workers, they have taken that money away from this province.

Mr. Speaker, the fund has a huge surplus. What we are asking for is some consideration to workers that deserve the support during this difficult time when the circumstances are beyond their control.

Mr. Speaker, another point of this that was . . . When we were denied, when Jane Stewart denied the request last night in the media, here we have employees and employers that are going through, like I say, very uncertain times but we are asking them to pick up their own costs for that two weeks.

Now compassionate employers that may want to help employees get through some difficult two-week wait period, Jane Stewart is expecting them to pay again. Employees who have already paid their EI premiums, Jane Stewart is expecting

them to pay again and to survive over that two weeks, due to circumstances beyond their control, with no help from the federal government. Mr. Speaker, it's appalling.

Mr. Speaker, when you need Unemployment Insurance, it should be there. And, Mr. Speaker, when I think of what kind of numbers are we talking about . . . Well the Minister of Agriculture has said we don't know for sure what kind of numbers, we don't know for sure how long this situation will be here.

But, Mr. Speaker, what this would be . . . It may just be a support and a token of support from the federal government of a sign that they are there, they understand the situation, and that they are willing to support the industry and the workers within this province.

Mr. Speaker, it is uncertain times but I would again call upon the federal minister to review her decision. And, Mr. Speaker, I will gladly support the motion put forward by the opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I feel this is an extremely important debate. I think there's a lot of things that need to be said and I think the motion is an extremely important one.

It's unfathomable to me that we have a leader of our country that can be so appallingly insensitive and seemingly uninformed of the magnitude of what the closure of the US borders is creating every single day that it continues, Mr. Speaker.

The comments that have been made by Jean Chrétien, and the decisions made by Jane Stewart are both totally unacceptable. And they are in . . . It flies in the face of the seriousness of the problem.

Beyond the impact that this is having on the producers — the producers that have to put their livestock down and see a lifetime, in some cases, of work destroyed in a very short period of time; producers who are still quarantined; producers who are concerned about prices falling — beyond that, beyond the feedlots who are losing an average of about \$50,000 per day every single day that they can't ship, there are a lot of families that are directly affected each and every single day that the border closures continue.

And it goes so far beyond the producers that it will take a very long time to estimate the total impact this is having. There are the ranch hands, the feedlot workers, the workers in the abattoirs, the meat-processing plants, the rendering plants, the auction marts, the trucking companies, and the list just goes on and on and on. And all of these people, all of these families, all of these individuals are being affected.

The public seems to have an understanding. Most people that I talk to have somewhat of an understanding of how serious and how far-reaching the effect of this trade action will be and is going to be the longer it continues.

And the provincial governments across our country seem to have an understanding and they have worked together and in a

sensitive and united, responsible manner in all of their actions and in everything they have said to date.

And yet we have a leader who has shot off his mouth in a totally unacceptable manner, quite frankly. And we have a federal Minister of HRDC who has no sensitivity to the western families and how much they're going to be hurt by her decisions. It's sad, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's appalling, and it's unacceptable.

And so therefore I shall be supporting the motion.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand and also support the motion before the House this afternoon, and also to support the decision to transmit the findings and the comments of this afternoon's debate on to both the minister, Ms. Stewart, and I expect to the Prime Minister of Canada.

I want to address my comment to the two remarks that have been made, or the two issues within the motion. First, when we take a look at the issue around how we're going to provide compensation to people who are injured by this issue, we look at this from two tracks, Mr. Chair . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker.

First we have established in Canada today a team of men and women who are looking at — at the end of the day, depending on how long this issue is before us — who in fact will be injured by the length of time that this issue sustains itself, and from where can you provide assistance to people while they're in the process of working this issue out.

And from the second perspective, looking at the human health side where you've had CFIA in Canada, all of the provincial governments participating today through their departments, people from the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) here looking at how in fact we can get this issue off the table in a timely way and then move on to doing business as usual in Saskatchewan and in Canada.

On the issue of compensation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we've been looking at is that the industry itself has been examining who has been injured. And they've identified a whole host of people who have been injured — from the people who are the primary producers, to people who are the feedlot operators, to people who are the truck drivers, to people who work in the processing plants and in the rendering plants, to people who are in fact working as labourers in the packing plants, to individuals who are involved in the meat industry overall.

That discussion is ongoing on a daily basis today to try and sort out what that piece should look like, on what timely fashion would you provide that kind of resources to people given the length of time that this matter might be before us, and at the same time examining what you can do immediately for workers and for those that are affected in the industry.

Well last week, in a timely way, the minister responsible for Labour in the province recognized that we could do something immediately for workers who are displaced because of the issue. And the Minister of Labour wrote a letter, our Minister of Labour wrote a letter to the federal minister outlining the kinds of changes that could be made quickly in order to ensure that

workers could be adequately benefited through the changes.

And after the Minister of Labour from Saskatchewan wrote her letter, two days later, the Premier of Alberta, on *NewsWorld*, along with the Minister of Agriculture are talking about the importance here of changing the labour legislation in order to provide the waiver of the two weeks so that workers can in fact be compensated in a way in which would be satisfactory. It was never a doubt on the minds of the Minister of Labour from Saskatchewan as she advised the cabinet and nor was it ever on the mind of any of us here that this recommendation or this change would not be made.

And it is surprising to hear today that the federal government was not prepared to move on this particular recommendation. This would be a recommendation that would be held, I expect, by all Canadian Labour ministers across the country, a position that would be held by all of the governments across the country. And so from that perspective, this debate is extremely timely in terms of sending to Ottawa our displeasure in the decision that was made here.

And as the member from North Battleford indicated earlier, that if there's concern here about the federal government establishing precedent, it is one, as the Premier indicated, that we were certainly proud to support, given the size and the value and the magnitude of this industry in our province and the importance of the people who work within it. And the fact that we can do some timely, make some timely decisions, we're going to be supporting this motion as it relates to the changes that should be made.

On the issue of the words of the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, I clearly adopt the words that were stated by the member from North Battleford. This is clearly an inappropriate time for the minister . . . for the Prime Minister of Canada to be taking the position that he has, given that we in Canada today are working collectively as ministers, led by Minister Vanclief, to try and find the solution to this very difficult issue.

And we're proud of the fact that as a nation we're working together on every front. The provinces are standing united and making decisions from a united perspective and are joined by our friends from the United States in helping us to find the solution to this very difficult issue. And this would be not the time that we would want to be entering into a debate or getting into a fight with our US counterparts, this would be a time for compromise and a time for searching for a solution in order to bring this particular issue to a resolve.

And so in the transmittal of our information to the Prime Minister, it would be certainly tempered in my view by the notion that this is a very, very untimely and unfortunate statement that the Prime Minister would be making to the United States.

We should keep in mind that we . . . that at least on this side of the House, I can understand what would bring people to the kind of frustration and the comment that the Prime Minister would make. We just need to recall what's happened in Canada over the last several months, in the last 18 for that matter, Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Deputy Speaker, where we've had placed on Canada some very severe restrictions.

The restrictions as they relate to the potato industry, of which PEI's (Prince Edward Island) potato industry almost was lost completely because of 72 tubers of which the United States wouldn't accept into their food chain, even though the scientific evidence showed very quickly that that industry should in fact be supported and that the PEI potatoes should make their way back into the US.

And so it took some months before that was resolved with the national government of Ottawa and PEI working together to get those borders opened into PEI. And so there was a great deal of frustration around that piece.

(15:30)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you only need to look at what happened in the tomato industry, where in fact Ontario and British Columbia . . . where bans were placed into the US by both of those two commodities for long periods of time, of where their horticultural industry was significantly affected by it, and the national government needed to stand by as they tried to negotiate some of the lifting of the ban and certainly created significant, significant frustrations during that period of time.

We only need to think for a moment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the kinds of dilemma that we've had on softwood lumber and the fact that our American friends, over a long period of time, placed a ban on our American lumber, and the kinds of tariffs and duties that we today are paying because of the situation that we find ourselves in.

And finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the issue around the Canadian Wheat Board, where we're in now our ninth challenge on the Canadian Wheat Board.

And then today to have the ban on our beef placed on our province and our country, one might . . . one should not assume here that there isn't a great deal of frustration that's on this side of the border because of the kinds of things that have happened over the past two years or 18 months in this country as we've struggled to keep our trade partnerships and our friendships and our relationships kind and open and working.

But to make a statement in the magnitude of which it was made in the last couple of days, or yesterday, by the Prime Minister. I can understand the rationale for making the statement in terms of the work that's been done over the last couple of years, but what I cannot understand is the timing of this particular issue. And to sort out the working relationship with the Americans . . . As we sort out our working relationship with the Americans today on this issue, the timing is hugely, hugely unfortunate.

And I join with particularly my colleague from North Battleford who expressed probably the words best, saying that this is a very inappropriate statement that's made by the Prime Minister today at a time when we're looking at not pointing the fingers at each other but should be looking for compromise and solution as opposed to getting into a confrontation which is certainly unwarranted and will . . . and could have a dramatic impact on our Canadian industry — our beef industry — at a time when Canadians are searching for solutions as opposed to looking for ways in which we might get into confrontations with one another.

So I too, Mr. Deputy Speaker, want to join with my colleagues who have spoken in the House today on the decisions that were made by Minister Stewart and the unfortunate comments that were made by the Prime Minister in yesterday's comment, and respect the fact that we'll be transmitting this information that . . . this debate today to the legislature . . . or to the Prime Minister and also to Ms. Stewart, and we'll be supporting the motion, Mr. Speaker, or Deputy Speaker, as it's been put forward.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have here a very serious situation involving all of Western Canada, all of Canada indeed, when it comes to BSE and the closing of the US border . . . and not just the US border but other nations around the world which have also banned imports of Canadian beef.

This is having a dramatic impact — particularly with those people and those businesses involved directly in the cattle industry, the families that raise the beef on the farm, Mr. Speaker, and those service industries that provide service and transportation to the cattle industry — when we have to keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, that we're talking about a crisis brought on by one single case of BSE.

And I think that is being somehow forgotten across Canada — that we're not talking about an epidemic. We're not talking about a wide scale eruption. We're talking about one single case of BSE that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the inspection agencies of Alberta picked up so that it did not go into the food chain, Mr. Speaker, so that there was no danger to Canadian meat supplies and food supplies that are being consumed both by Canadians and by people around the world, Mr. Speaker.

The agencies involved have done their job. They have . . . They apprehended that one animal before it became a danger to people, Mr. Speaker, and we somehow seem to have forgotten that in all of the media hype that has gone on around this particular issue.

But because that media hype has gone on, Mr. Speaker, because the concern that has been raised in the minds of consumers in Canada and outside of our borders, particularly in the US, Mr. Speaker, it has had a major impact on many parts of our society, many parts of our workforce, our industry — particularly in Saskatchewan as well as across the rest of Canada. And I think it would be interesting to take note on just what kind of an industry we're talking about, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We're talking about an industry that provides over 13,000 animals for consumption in Canada on an annual . . . excuse me, 13 million animals across Canada each year. Of that number, 2.4 million or 6,800 animals a day are slaughtered in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Chair — 6,800 animals. And that has a total value of, a conservative estimate of about 6 to \$7 million dollars a day of product that is produced in Saskatchewan — some of it for domestic consumption. But 60 per cent of all the animals in Canada that are slaughtered on an annual basis are exported. So it's a major export industry bringing revenues into Canada.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when that entire trade route is disrupted as it is being done so because of one single incidence of BSE, because the American border is closed, where the majority of our exports go to, it's having a huge impact. It's affecting people on the farms that raised this beef, Mr. Speaker. They cannot take their animals now and transport them to market. Those farms — there's only 17 of them, Mr. Speaker, that are under quarantine — are being very seriously impacted and a number of those animals have been put down so that tests can be made.

So it's had a huge impact on those families like the McCrea family up in the Cut Knife area, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whose entire herd has been eliminated, and now they have to start back in a process that has taken them 40, 50 years to develop to this point. It's a huge financial concern to them. But it's even greater. It's a huge emotional loss for them because they knew those animals as individuals not simply as a herd, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But you are also looking at the impact that it has beyond the farm gate. You take a look at what's happening in the auction industry, you take a look at what's happening in the feedlot industry, you take a look at what's happening in the Minister of Labour's own riding at the packing plants — employees are being laid off. They're being sent home. In some cases they're being forced to take vacation time at this time. Not all employees have that, Mr. Speaker. They may not have the time built up yet to take a week — already it's been a week to ten days of holiday time. If this goes on for another week, Mr. Speaker, they may not have that time.

And yet everyone is being impacted. The trucking industry is one of those segments of this entire process, Mr. Speaker, that is being greatly affected. We have a trucking company out near Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, that has 100, over 120 trucks sitting idle today because they can't be moving cattle. The BSE, BSE, Mr. Speaker, is having a huge impact just on that one business alone — it's the drivers, it's the mechanics, it's the people who help out, the staff involved.

So you're looking at a large number of people across Western Canada, Mr. Speaker, that are being hugely impacted by this.

Now we take the example of what's happening in Ontario, in Toronto, with SARS, a very serious concern, Mr. Speaker. Employees are being quarantined if they're suspected to have come into contact with somebody who may have the potential to have SARS. They're being restricted to home. They're not being allowed to go to their place of employment. In compassion, the Minister of Human Resources, Jane Stewart, has said, we will waive the two-week waiting period requirement for them to access Employment Insurance.

Employment Insurance is in place to provide this kind of protection. Through no fault of their own, people who are quarantined at home, who cannot go to their place of employment, cannot earn their livelihood will be supported by Employment Insurance.

And yet people in Western Canada who, through no fault of their own, Mr. Speaker, again because of a health/safety issue — SARS is a health/safety issue; BSE is a health/safety issue

— because these people, Mr. Speaker, are not quarantined at home, according to the minister . . . But they have lost their employment. They may not go to work because there is no work there. Their employer has laid them off either temporarily, permanently if that should happen, or being sent home on holiday pay. When that runs out, Mr. Speaker, in those particular cases, what is to be done?

The minister is saying there will be no waiving of the two-week requirement for Employment Insurance. And, Mr. Speaker, that's wrong. That smacks of a double standard. It smacks of a fact that in Toronto the minister is . . . there's a large number of votes for the Liberal Party and in Saskatchewan that's not the case.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the way to run a country. When there is a crisis, all of the country should receive the same considerations, not simply based on their voting patterns, Mr. Speaker. And yet that seems to be what's happening in the case of the federal Liberal government, and it's simply, did you vote for me last time or not; if you didn't, then we don't care.

Mr. Speaker, I think the federal Liberal government needs to show more sensitivity to the people across Canada that are affected by the impact of BSE, and in particular it needs to show more respect for those areas outside of the golden triangle of Ontario, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to dealing with issues that are having a very serious negative impact to the country.

Mr. Speaker, this entire issue shows how this current government, this current cabinet, and in particular this current Prime Minister is no longer in touch with the issues dealing with Canada and in particular no longer in touch with the issues as they relate particularly to Western Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has come out and made some very disturbing comments about our trading partners, our largest trading partner, and one that at a time when we are having trade difficulties with them that you would think that you would want to deal with as an equal, that with respect, and that you would want to enter into negotiations with them in a positive manner.

You don't start those negotiations by throwing a rock through their window, Mr. Speaker, just because you want to talk to them. And that's certainly what this Prime Minister has done.

You know, we take a look at the necessity to quarantine people in Ontario, in Toronto, because of the threat that they are . . . If they have come in contact with a potential SARS case, they become a threat to society, Mr. Speaker, so they're quarantined. Well I think in this particular case maybe we need to quarantine the Prime Minister's mouth because it's becoming a threat to the economy of Canada, and in particular the economy of Western Canada, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we don't always agree with the President of the United States as one of the members opposite seemed to indicate. In fact is we are in very much a disagreement with them on some of the very issues that he mentioned.

We disagree with them on the softwood lumber issue. The Americans are wrong on that issue and we have stated so.

We've moved motions in this House on that very issue, Mr. Speaker, that they are wrong. We have moved motions in . . . Not moved motions. We disagree with them, Mr. Speaker, on their wheat . . . they're putting duties on wheat that goes across the Canadian border to the US, Mr. Speaker.

(15:45)

And the Minister of Agriculture asks about the Wheat Board. We happen to believe that the Wheat Board should be a voluntary sale, not forced monopoly as is the case today, Mr. Speaker. And we're prepared to say so, not only on the floor of this Assembly, but on the campaign train as well, Mr. Deputy Premier.

We also disagree with them very much about the embargo on cattle. We understand completely why they would put this in place because of the health concerns. The question comes into play though, how does it come off? It will come off, Mr. Speaker, because science says it's safe.

But the question will be from the determination of the point in time that the decision is made scientifically it's safe, to the time the announcement is made opening that border up, will be a political decision as well. It simply won't be a statement by a Canadian representative of CFIA or an American representative of the USDA saying yes, we know all the answers now dealing with BSE in this single Canadian circumstance and the border is wide open. No.

The scientists will make their statement that they know and understand what has happened and that the food system is now safe. But a politician in Washington will make the decision as to when that border is open. And very much so, very much so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that determination will be made based on our relationship — Canada and the US.

And when and how quickly that happens, it'll be based on trust, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It'll be based on the trust that we have built up over years and decades. But as we all know it only takes one incident for trust to be lost between two partners. And our Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien today, is not building that trust, he is diminishing it because of his comments and his lack of respect, Mr. Speaker.

We also need to take a look at where the rest of the Liberals are at on this particular issue. The man who would be prime minister, Paul Martin, to my knowledge, has not yet made a statement dealing with this particular issue. He has not yet made a statement, to my knowledge, dealing with the comments made by the Prime Minister. So what is his stand on this particular issue?

Mr. Speaker, what about those other people that are seeking the Liberal leadership? What about John Manley? What about Sheila Copps? Where do they stand on this particular issue? Are they supporting their leader, their Prime Minister, on this particular issue? Do they support his comments about the American President and the American administration?

What about our own Liberal representative in cabinet, federal cabinet, Ralph Goodale? What statements is he making to defend the industry of Saskatchewan, the workers of

Saskatchewan, the farmers of Saskatchewan? Where is Ralph Goodale's statement? Does he agree with the Prime Minister? Those are the kind of things that I think the people of Saskatchewan need to know.

Mr. Speaker, where is the Leader of the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan, David Karwacki? And in fact is, where is the Minister of Finance and where is the member from Melville? They still hold, to the best of my knowledge, Liberal memberships, although they may not be running as Liberals in the near future. But, Mr. Speaker, what is their stand on the Prime Minister's statement? What is their stand on the statements made by Jane Stewart that in Ontario we will have one standard for workers, that they don't have to comply with the two-week waiting period, whereas the workers in the cattle industry and associated services do have to, Mr. Speaker? What is their stand on a double standard?

Mr. Speaker, we also have other disturbing news as well related to the BSE circumstances with the Minister of Agriculture, I believe it was in Ontario, coming forward and stating that perhaps it is time to look at a ban on Western Canadian beef going into Ontario. Mr. Speaker, I believe that is a totally irresponsible statement — totally irresponsible statement.

As well, there was an NDP member from the one of Maritimes provinces stating that beef going into the Maritimes should only be regionally grown, that beef from outside of the Maritimes should not be allowed. That's wrong, that's wrong, that's wrong . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . We'll get you the name; I don't recall it right offhand.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for us not to be pulling apart. It is time for us to be working together on this particular issue. And I'm very, very pleased to see that the government and opposition in Saskatchewan have generally agreed and worked together on this particular issue. There was unanimity the other day on the debate on this particular issue. And I believe, listening to the comments from both sides of the House, Mr. Speaker, that again we will be in agreement on this particular motion. We all understand how important the cattle industry is to Saskatchewan, how important it is to Western Canada, Mr. Speaker, and we need to work together to ensure the strength of that industry for the prosperity of all of us in Western Canada. And it doesn't help any of us when the federal government is not sensitive to those needs, Mr. Speaker.

Therefore I will be voting in favour of this particular motion, and encourage the Prime Minister and the Liberal government to recognize the sensitivity that is needed in dealing with this issue. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to *nemine contradicente*.

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, with leave to move a motion of transmittal.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that the speaker . . . I move, seconded by the Opposition House Leader:

That the Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, transmit copies of the motion and verbatim transcripts of the rule 46 motion to the Prime Minister of Canada, the federal Minister of Agriculture, the federal Minister of Human Resource Development, and the leaders of the federal opposition parties.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased this afternoon to stand on behalf of the government and convert for debates returnable questions 527 through 565 inclusive.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm extremely pleased to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions no. 566 and 567.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 8

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I'm extremely pleased to stand today to speak on Bill No. 8, the changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act as they're really consistent with some of the other work that government departments are doing when it comes to thinking outside the box with what's happening in many areas of government today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill recognizes after 17 long years of trying to work with an Act dealing with youth that has proven time after time not to be working for everyone, that there really is time for a change.

We can't use a cookie-cutter approach when it comes to dealing with young offenders. There is different needs and different circumstances with each one of these young offenders. The police and the court and the jails are not the only way to deal with young people involved in crime.

The new Youth Criminal Justice Act recognizes that . . . replaces the Young Offenders Act . The Act is emphasizing responsibility of community and society to work with young people to integrate them back into society.

There is no one single right way to help these young people just as there's no one single reason why young people are involved in crime in the first place. We believe that their search for their

own identity, recognition, peer pressure, and their perceived needs drives many to commit crimes.

There's learned behaviour, lack of family support and love, homelessness, and cognitive disabilities that also are leading towards these problems. For far too many years we've been dealing with these people by ostracizing them into our criminal justice system.

Mr. Speaker, the principles of the new Act focuses on shared social responsibility to address the needs of young people and to rehabilitate and integrate young people into society and to prevent further youth crimes. There is more of an emphasis on keeping young people out of custody and using measures outside the court process, encouraging . . . and encouraging involvement in the community.

The Youth Criminal Justice Act is the federal government's latest attempt to resolve the long-standing debate over which is the best way to deal with adolescent offenders — to try and get tough with them, or to try and rehabilitate them.

The law which comes into force is designed to take . . . to strike a very delicate balance. It makes it easier to impose an adult-style sentence on youth as young as 14 for offences such as murder, manslaughter, and aggravated sexual assault. But it also provides for out-of-court settlements, probation, community services, and other non-jail solutions for things like shoplifting, theft, property damage, breaking and entering, and drug offences.

Mr. Speaker, members on both sides of the House have heard me speak many times about the issue of FASD, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder . I attended a number of conferences lately in dealing with the issue and one of the speakers, Judge Sheila Whelan, spoke eloquently about the number of FASD-affected youth within our justice system.

Mr. Speaker, the number of FASD youth in youth justice courts are anywhere from the ages of 12 to 17 years old. There's very seldom that they have been diagnosed at an early age. They have multiple secondary disabilities and often there is very few supportive measures in place. They become both the victim and the perpetrator in many cases. They are vulnerable in the community and to custodial sentences. We have to balance the needs of youth and society when it comes to dealing with youth in our youth justice courts.

Mr. Speaker . . . Deputy Speaker, there are really only two doctors in Saskatchewan that are able to deal with diagnosis and neuropsychological assessments. The hard numbers aren't available yet, yet statistics from Dr. Blakely show uneven selection — 55 per cent of the youth in Saskatoon Provincial Court have FASD, 76 per cent ages 12 to 17 and 24 per cent of them ages 18 to 25; 86.5 per cent of these young people are males.

Mr. Speaker, there is . . . 63.1 per cent of FASD-affected youth in our youth justice courts have cognitive disabilities. The types of offences by these referred youth are property related at 39.6 per cent, system related at 27.1 per cent, violent at 18.4 per cent, and other at 14.9 per cent.

(16:00)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the bigger picture, Saskatchewan youth crime statistics are very alarming; 5.4 per cent increase in crime rate in the year 2000 and 2001. The national crime rate was only up by 1 per cent.

We have the highest . . . (inaudible) . . . in Canada for the last five years. We have the highest provincial custody rate and the Canadian custody rate is higher than the United States. And we have the highest proportion of persons under the age of 14 years amongst all the provinces.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a youth affected with FASD is a poor fit in the youth criminal justice system. They don't understand principles such as punishment, remorse, and rehabilitation. That has very little to no meaning for them. Procedures aren't easily understood and they don't accommodate cognitive impairments.

Advocacy models can conflict with diagnosis, and assessment and identification frequently occurs after the youth has acquired secondary disabilities. The assessment needs present difficulties because we need trained individuals. And we have to have the mother actually admit that there has been drinking while pregnant and this isn't something that is easy to attain in lots of cases. We really don't have the resources that are geared to FASD sufferers and the fitness process is a short-term measure.

The new Youth Criminal Justice Act promotes community responsibility for addressing the challenges of youth justice. It promotes community alternatives to criminal charges in custodial sentences, community consultation and discussion, and community participation and rehabilitative measures. We really do have an opportunity to have a new approach.

It addresses the underlying cause of youth crime. We can intervene and enforce in a timely manner, take measurements which are meaningful given the youth level of development. And we can respond to the needs of the youth with special requirements and specifically respond to the needs of our Aboriginal youth.

The Youth Criminal Justice Act provides for alternative measures and sanctions. It provides for youth justice committees, conferencing, and child welfare referrals.

The sentencing has changed. There's restrictions on remand in custody and we now have orders reserved for very serious offences, not just for what we consider minor offences. It's only going to be the repeat offenders who are dealing with the criminal system and incarceration. Judges in the criminal system must consider community alternatives, community supervision, and integration with every custody sentence, and individualized sentencing.

Aside from the other issues that have been identified by many of my colleagues, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that this Bill really is lacking a lot of answers, not just for us but for members of the public in general. The Bill doesn't talk about increasing funding or resources and we know that this is going to be a lot of money that's going to be needed to provide community resources and community services and supports that the youth are going to be requiring.

It doesn't give specifics about existing or new programs and it doesn't tell us how the police forces, social workers, community workers, victims groups, or educators will be better equipped to deal . . . to enforce this Bill. It simply leaves everything up to regulations and really we don't have any answers at this time.

There are a number of questions that need to be answered. What kind of preliminary work has already been done with respect to how various organizations and departments are going to work together?

We wonder if they conferred with other provinces to see what measures or actions are being taken there. Was there a way that things could be adapted to fit here in Saskatchewan that have already been worked out in other provinces? We wonder how soon the transition period this will be and what kind of measures have been or will be put in place to help these things along.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the minister brought forward this Bill he talked about the minister's authority to set up and operate custodial facilities. This really is a grey area and I'll be looking forward to hearing what the minister can answer on this issue.

He indicated that to assist in the implementation of this Act, they are committed to supporting community infrastructure or extrajudicial sanction and they're planning to increase provincial capacity by 10 per cent across the province.

The government has said they are going to staff another 15 positions to work with courts and community-based organizations to supervise youth in the community. They also believe that the key to the new policies and programs is risk management and case management. This means there must be support for victims, communities, and youth at large, using multi-disciplinary approaches.

Mr. Speaker, communities neither have the manpower nor the resources to implement any new programs at this time. What we require would be the funding as well as the actual trained personnel to deal with this issue.

There isn't enough police officers, social workers, or community aid workers to help young offenders under the old Act, so we really can't expect that there's going to be under the new Act as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Act is something that many people in the province and community have been waiting for, for a number of years, and what we have now really does have to be replaced. And I believe that anything is going to be better than what we have right now.

So there's a number of questions that will be asked later on, but at this time I'd like to move the Bill into Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 36

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour to get on my feet to speak to Bill No. 36. It's been, you know, a very, very long decade now that this NDP government has severely mishandled the Agriculture portfolio, and more recently the economy of the province as a whole.

And the result, Mr. Speaker, with three years of deficit budgeting and a debt that's increasing by \$1 million a day, the result is that even if they had the political will to do something meaningful for the farm families of this province — which they've demonstrated time and time again that they don't have the political will — but even if they did, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they ran the province's finances so far into the ditch that they can't do anything beyond crisis management. And they can't even do that very well.

So what do they do, Mr. Speaker? It's quite simple. They blame someone else. They blame the federal government. They blame the opposition. They blame the producers themselves. They give the public the false perception that the farmers of this province are just a financial burden to society. And then, and then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they turn around and they chastise the producers for having a bad attitude.

But they never, they never take responsibility for anything themselves. And they never admit that time and time again they dropped the ball. And sadly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the ones who pay the price for the lack of leadership shown by our Agriculture minister are the farm families of the province.

Mr. Speaker, the minister told us that Bill No. 36 is needed so that Saskatchewan can meet the parameters of the revised safety net stabilization account program under the agricultural policy framework; a program he said that he believes will be good for Saskatchewan. Well let's just explore that for a minute, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's the new NISA (Net Income Stabilization Account) or the super NISA, or more accurately what the Last Mountain-Touchwood member has deemed AIDA (Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance) or CFIP (Canadian Farm Income Program) with premium.

It has the producers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of this province very concerned and quite rightfully so. It leaves a lot of questions in the minds of the producers, and this government has done absolutely nothing to alleviate the producers' fears or to even so much as to keep them informed as to what their new risk management tool is going to look like.

And you know why that is, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well I think it's because the Agriculture minister doesn't have a clue himself.

He doesn't know how it's going to be linked to crop insurance. Now that the producers are going to be required to pay two premiums, he doesn't know if a claim under one program will

be considered income when calculating a claim on the second program, which would mean, Mr. Speaker, that the producers may have to pay two premiums for only one coverage. He doesn't know if it's going to be an advantage or a detriment to the producers to move from gross margins to production margins in the calculations. And he does not have a clue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if it's going to be an effective risk management tool or not.

But he says, he says that he believes it's going to be good for Saskatchewan. And in his explanation of the intent of the Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister pointed out that he viewed the directive of the new NISA to meet the need as a positive one. And in theory I agree.

But what if the formula, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is severely lacking in its ability to identify where that need is? And that's not unheard of. We've seen it in AIDA, we've seen that happen in CFIP, and by all indication we're going to see it again in the new program.

So one must wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if our minister's enthusiasm about the new NISA is in fact that if no one qualifies for a claim or if very, very few producers qualify for a claim, the province doesn't have to worry about coming up with the money to contribute their share of the cost. Quite frankly it would explain, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why the minister feels quite comfortable about slashing the agriculture budget year after year.

But you know whose fault it's going to be at the end? Ah, it'll be the federal government's or the opposition's or the producers' — someone, anyone — as long as the NDP government doesn't have to take any responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, when AIDA was first introduced in Ottawa, Saskatchewan initially refused to sign the agreement. The minister of the day, Eric Upshall didn't participate in the design of the program. The NDP had tore up the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) contract in 1992 and unlike the other provinces, with the exception of Manitoba, they never replaced it with another program. So they had no provincial risk management program, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they hadn't had one for a number of years, and they had no desire or no ideas of how to even design a program to suggest to Ottawa.

So what did Mr. Upshall do at the time, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well he went on holidays, and he waited for Ottawa to simply come up with something that would be designed by everyone but the province with the most arable land. And when that program failed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when AIDA sadly failed the farm families of this province, he blamed the Saskatchewan Party.

When CFIP was introduced, Mr. Speaker, the Agriculture minister of the day, Mr. Lingenfelter, he refused to participate in the design. He walked out of the meeting. To quote from an article that was written at the time — it was written on January 20 of 2000 and entitled, "Vanclief Gives Prairie Ministers Warning After Meeting Walk-Out," by Barry Wilson — and I quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

Federal officials insisted that unless opting-out provinces

develop Ottawa-approved provincial programs to distribute their required 40% of the cost, they would not get the federal portion of the funds. Dwain Lingenfelter said (that) he would be surprised if the federal government withheld from prairie farmers aid that . . . (flowed) to farmers elsewhere. A federal official said Ottawa would be prepared to negotiate with an opted-out province over what program design is necessary to trigger . . . federal funds.

That's a significant statement that Ottawa made, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because that was our golden opportunity right then and right there. It was our prime opportunity to develop a made-in-Saskatchewan safety net that would have been cost shared by the federal government, a safety net that would have addressed the industry as it looks here, and we let it slide through the fingers.

What did Mr. Lingenfelter do at the time? He says that the federal government was mean-spirited and he dropped the ball. He simply dropped the ball.

On January 15 of 2000, Bruce Johnstone wrote:

Are Lingenfelter and Wowchuk really "fighting the good fight" against Ottawa, or simply reneging on their responsibilities to do what they can for their own farmers?

Farmers and taxpayers need to know the answer to that question and soon.

So here we are again, Mr. Speaker — another program where the NDP Agriculture minister has refused to participate in the design, and the farmers and the taxpayers have a lot of questions that need to be answered once again, and once again we have a minister that has no answers.

It's ironic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in 2001 when Ipsos-Reid prepared a NISA review report for Agriculture and Agri Food Canada, it was stated that it was a fairly well-liked program nationwide and it suggested only a few minor changes in order to enhance it, in order to make it work better, in order for it to address some difficulties that it had.

(16:15)

It's ironic that the federal government would choose to scrap that particular program, for that is indeed what they're doing.

The only reason that the new program is being called NISA is to deceive the producers into thinking that it will be a good program because they liked NISA. But they have no idea how rare a program they had in their hands.

Kevin Hursh once said — and I don't have a direct quote, I just remember him making the comment — that pursuing a safety net program that would be generally liked by all, that would be simple to administrate and user-friendly, and that would work effectively for all the different sectors of the agriculture industry is similar to the quest for the elusive Holy Grail. And he's quite right.

Many agriculture economists will tell you that to design a program with a one-size-fits-all criteria is to plan to fail

especially when you are dealing with a land mass as vast as Canada and an industry as diverse as agriculture. You don't need to look any farther than Newfoundland quite frankly to know how diverse our industry is because the president of Newfoundland's Federation Of Agriculture is a fur farmer, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have a very diverse agriculture industry.

So how do you come up with a one-size-fits-all program that's going to work for all? But that's exactly what Vanclief intends to do. And we're going to throw away a program that was, rarely, very well-liked and was effective for certain needs. And we're going to pursue a program that's going to be designed after not just one but two programs that have proven to fail.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my fear and the fear of the families of the province is that we're going to see many, many more headlines such as those that we seen on Wednesday that said, "Farm incomes tumble."

So I have concerns. I know that the producers of the province have concerns. The different industry leaders have concerns about the new proposed risk management tool that's being proposed by the agriculture government or by the . . . sorry, pardon me, the federal government in the agriculture policy framework.

So there will be questions that we would like to ask and address in 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. 37

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the minister first explained the intent of Bill No. 37, he told us that the Bill would provide for the type of crop insurance programs being developed under the agriculture policy framework as well as ensuring that changes can be made to capture the scope of future enhancements.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't think that there is anything that demonstrates the serious repercussions of mismanaging the province's finances and the failing to grow this province as a whole than our crop insurance program.

It's a program that's been gutted of spot loss hail and variable price options by this NDP government. It's a program whose premiums have increased by 50 or more per cent for each of the past two years. And it's a program that for all real purposes has been the only risk management tool, quite frankly, that many of our producers have had.

I would like to quote from an article written on March 2, 2002 by Murray Mandryk. And even though it was written a year ago, it's just as relevant today in reference to our crop insurance program. It begins with a quote which is:

"I think everyone recognizes that when you have a tight

fiscal situation governments cannot always fund all the priority items,” said Hal Cushon, assistant deputy minister of Agriculture.

And he was referring to the concern that crop insurance coverage will be scaled back considerably. Murray Mandryk went on to write:

We are now witnessing a provincial government that is either oblivious to the real root cause of the province’s economic problems, like agriculture, or is simply too overwhelmed by the nature of such problems that it just can’t come up with a single creative idea of its own to effectively address it. Given the NDP’s penchant to blame agriculture as the cause of most of its problems, one should assume it’s the latter.

But the fact that we’re hearing a Department of Agriculture official suggest crop insurance is just one of many government priorities right now is all a little frightening. Maintaining a properly managed and funded crop insurance program in these economic and weather conditions isn’t just another one of the government’s many priorities.

This is Saskatchewan. Agriculture accounts for 11 per cent of the jobs and 9 per cent of the GDP, and there’s a drought out there.

Frankly, using a lack of money excuse isn’t just tiresome, it’s unacceptable. The thing is though, if the government took a bolder, more creative approach to problem solving, it might be able to preserve crop insurance without cutting elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, a good, effective, strong crop insurance program would go a long ways to alleviating the need for other risk management tools. But in order to have such a program, a government must be able to do two things — they must seriously view it as a priority, and they must have a strong overall economy so that they can deal with severe years such as what we’ve just faced for the past two years in our province. And sadly this NDP can’t do either.

And the real dilemma that the NDP face is: who can they blame? Crop insurance is, after all, a provincial government responsibility.

Oh but they do still find ways to blame the federal government and we need look no farther than the fiasco that occurred last summer, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Saskatchewan Party called upon the government to write off crops in a more timely manner so that the sparse fields could be used for grazing or cut for field . . . feed before they were rendered useless from lack of moisture. And the minister made excuses that he couldn’t do that because the federal government wouldn’t allow it.

But at the same time in Regina, Mr. Goodale was announcing that the federal government would allow any flexibility, that the provincial government needed, to crop insurance in order to address the severe drought problems. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister was blaming the weather and the extreme conditions for the extreme . . . sorry, increases to the premium.

And yet let’s just examine that as well. In Alberta they also suffered a severe drought and record levels of claims, and do you know what they did, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They wrote down some of that debt from the General Revenue Fund and they did not pass the total burden on to the producers who were already facing the financial challenges of a year of poor production.

And that’s what a province can do when it makes its number one industry a priority. And that’s what a province can do if it grows the population and the economy through well-thought-out and responsible policies. That’s what they can do if they have money to work with instead of destroying the economy and chasing people out of the province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to try to save face, our Agriculture minister has bragged about the enhancements that his government’s made to the crop insurance program. But quite frankly they’re a little bit of an embarrassment when you compare them with the enhancements that Alberta made to their program. And in fact, if the producers of this province put their numbers through the programs offered in any of the other provinces, they would find out that they would be far better protected anywhere else.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, an all-risk insurance program is fundamental to our agriculture industry. So let’s just hope the Premier will screw up the courage to call an election soon so that we can get this province growing, so that we can get our general revenue growing, and then we can afford to put the crop insurance program in place that the producers of this province deserve.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to move this Bill into Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 38

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I’m very pleased to speak to Bill No. 38, The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 2003 because it’s an important Bill and a Bill that has probably become even more important since it was first introduced by the minister.

Before I begin addressing specifics within the Bill though, I would like to point to an article or bring attention to the article entitled “Ban Alberta beef, NDP says”, because apparently there was questions earlier from the member from Regina Northeast and the member from Saskatoon Nutana concerning as to which NDP member had made statements. And the article goes on to say:

. . . the provincial NDP said Wednesday.

Agriculture critic John MacDonell said (that) he thinks a

ban would be wise until officials are certain where the infected cow came from and whether there might be other cases.

So in answer to their questions, that is which NDP made that statement and the article's entitled "Ban Alberta beef, NDP says."

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan is home to the largest cattle herd in Canada. And many statistics and comments were made on Tuesday from the members from both sides of the House as they spoke to the motion put forward by the member from Saltcoats. Comments were made in support of the industry in recognition of its importance to our province and to our nation as a whole.

Bill No. 38 makes changes that are being asked for by the feedlot sector of our cattle industry. And sadly, that is also the sector of the industry that's going to be most quickly impacted by the recent closing of the US borders because the cattle in the feedlots need to move in a very, very rapid and timely manner.

There was a CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) article that came out on May 28 that I would like to quote from:

"Basically the industry is on shut-down and that will probably stay until we (can) get some idea when the border will open," says Brad Wildeman, who runs Pound-Maker.

In the meantime, the cattle still have to eat and even though they get fatter, their value continues to drop. That extra feed isn't cheap.

"It's costing us about \$2 a day, or maybe a little more than 2 dollars a day to feed these cattle," says Wildeman.

Those costs add up and feed lot operators say they could lose up to \$50,000 dollars a day on the herds they're holding.

So with each and every day that this continues where the borders are closed, feedlots are losing on the average of about \$30,000 a day, and that's a huge impact.

So beyond this Bill and the changes that it's making that the feedlot industry would like to be made, I hope the minister is looking beyond this because the problems the feedlot industry is facing now is well beyond what this Bill is going to be able to address. So I hope the minister is putting, as we speak, putting together a committee, quite frankly, of invested stakeholders in the feedlot industry.

I hope that he's getting his head around what strategy are we going to have here in our own province to help save the feedlot industry that we have in our province. I hope that strategy covers what's going to happen if the borders are closed in the next week, in the next two weeks, in the next month, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because we're going to have to think ahead here. We're going to have to get a strategy. We're going to have to get our heads around what can be done.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to move this Bill into Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 27

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to debate and clarify some of the issues presented in The Condominium Property Act.

And, Mr. Speaker, right off I want to indicate for the record that as a condo owner and as a chairperson of a condominium association board, I come at this from two different points of view, of some of the concerns that I as a condo owner and our board as a condominium corporation have expressed for a number of years.

(16:30)

And I have had the opportunity to speak with a number of condominium property managers and tried to get an understanding of the kinds of things that this Bill proposes to ensure that the items that are being proposed are on track and will deal with the concerns.

So I want to thank the different individuals and groups that have forwarded information to my attention that will allow me to make some comments on the various sections.

A special thank you to Randy Heathcote who, Mr. Speaker, is the president of the Saskatchewan chapter of the Canadian Condominium Institute. Mr. Heathcote, through ICR Denro Property Managers, has made some comments on various sections of this Bill that will, I think, explain a number of the conditions and concerns that individuals may have about the Bill.

One of the first changes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the previous way of assessing a condominium was in an entire-building state, where the condominium would be assessed, market value based on the entire size of the building and then through unit factors. Depending upon whether an individual owner contained a one-bedroom or a two-bedroom or a three-bedroom unit, a unit factor would be applied to each owner. And as a result the assessment would be distributed in that fashion.

It's clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that way of assessing a value is not always accurate because not all condominiums that are in the same building that are rated as a two-bedroom are all going to sell for the same price.

And this new change has now implemented a system that will enable each condominium building to be assessed by way of an assessment on each unit. Hopefully I haven't clouded that definition, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I know that the members that are sitting near me understand this very well, and have an understanding of course that the

assessment will now be derived by market value of the individual unit, a request that has been before the condominium association for quite a while.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the other concerns of course is around the reserve funds that condominium corporations maintain. Newly created condominium associations or condominium associations that have relatively new property, the reserve fund accumulates on an ongoing basis, so as a result the reserve fund that is necessary to ensure that capital projects can be completed is there.

But what has been detected, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that not all condominium associations — or corporations I guess is the better word to use — not all condominium corporations have significant reserve funds to deal with problems that would occur in a need for a capital request.

The Act proposes that a study be conducted within three years of the actual putting in place of this Act, whereby a condominium association will be required to do a reserve fund study to determine what is an adequate reserve fund to be maintained by a condominium corporation.

I think this is an excellent plan and I'm sure that boards, condominium boards, are looking at doing exactly that because there needs to be a reserve fund that would be in place so that special assessments need not occur whereby individual amounts are again charged against the various owners.

And, Mr. Speaker, that individual assessment charge is probably the most significant part of this Bill. When condominium corporations make an assessment on a — what I'll refer to as a common expense — a capital improvement to all the properties of a condominium corporation, there may be a need to do a particular project that is significant in size and that is in its monetary size. So there is an assessment that is levied against each condominium owner if the reserve fund is not adequate to handle that.

So what has happened, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that certain individuals who own property have had an assessment levied against them. And by the way, all condominium corporation owners vote on that assessment according to the bylaws of the corporation. But the majority of course is what is needed to pass an assessment or a charge that is applied to each owner.

There have been instances in the province of Saskatchewan, in various condominium corporations, where owners have become delinquent in making payments. In other words, the assessment is now in arrears. What this amendment proposes to do is to place the special assessment or the special levy that is assessed against the condominium owner ahead of a mortgage that is at a financial institution. And this is what is necessary to ensure that owners . . . other owners within that same condominium corporation are not left with a balance that is unpaid by one particular owner.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is of course a concern with financial institutions and how financial institutions are going to react to the fact now that no longer is their mortgage the first thing as far as a lien; that indeed if there is an assessment charge that has become delinquent, payment has become

delinquent, the arrears that exist will now rank ahead of the condominium mortgage that the individual has at a financial institution.

I think what it will do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is allow — or not allow but it will ensure — that there is far greater discussion with the financial institution regarding a mortgage by a prospective owner or purchaser of a condominium. The prospective owner must be clear that a mortgage of whatever amount that is being applied for is indeed within the fiscal framework of that individual's capacity to pay.

And secondly, there has to be an assurance that the estoppel certificate that is provided by a condominium corporation that describes all of the plans of a condominium corporation — it talks about encumbrances that might be on the property — these are going to have to be much more clear and much more descriptive in terms of plans of condominium corporations.

Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a prospective owner now is going to have to be aware that a condominium corporation is planning a large project — and I'll use a number like \$1 million in size. If a project of \$1 million is being proposed, there will be an assessment on every condo owner. That condo association then must make that information available to a prospective buyer.

So a buyer will have the ability to not only look at what the current market value is of the property, what assessment may be levied against this property, but most importantly he's also going to have the ability to look at what changes will take place in the actual assessed value if the project is completed. In other words, is there value for the expenditure?

So there is a bit of a trade-off with the financial institutions and I note in the minister's comments that there has been consultation with representatives of the financial institutions who seem to be in favour of the proposals that have been put forward. So the lien that is described, Mr. Deputy Speaker, becoming first . . . ahead of a mortgage, I think will alleviate many of the concerns that condominium corporations have.

But one of the concerns that will require far greater explanation in Committee of the Whole will be a description of what the words "prescribed interest or claim" mean, in section 63.1(2)(b). Those are words that suggest that there may be an interest or claim by someone else other than the financial institution and other than the condominium corporation. So those will require clarification. Those kinds of concerns need to be looked at.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the property managers that I have spoken to have taken a good look at this Bill, have looked at some of the terms, have looked at some of the suggestions that are being made in this revision. And there is agreement with the kinds of things that are coming into force.

And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there will be a number of questions that we have regarding certain sections where there is a need to clarify the definition of a particular phrase, or the definition of what is meant by an interest rate that is applicable at the time. Those are words that will be clarified in Committee of the Whole.

And at this time, I would allow the Bill No. 27, An Act to amend The Condominium Property Act, to proceed to 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. 28

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 28 — The Health Information Protection Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's my pleasure to speak briefly on The Health Information Protection Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we know, one of the big, driving issues surrounding the providing of medical health records is the issue of confidentiality and privacy. And certainly that the original health information Act was not proclaimed because there were difficulties in ensuring that there was a proper balance between access to the information in a responsible way and also safeguarding individuals' privacy and confidentiality. Mr. Speaker, this Bill attempts to adjust those issues so that there is this proper balance of these two competing issues.

Mr. Speaker, as well I think it's important to say that we very much support the concept of the unified medical health record for every citizen in the province that uses the health system.

Certainly when I had the pleasure and opportunity to tour the Mayo Clinic, this was a cornerstone of the way that they provided their services, that there was a unified health record that was the property of the client and moved to the different departments so appropriate access to these files could be utilized.

Mr. Speaker, if the SHIN network, the Saskatchewan Health Information Network is going to do a job properly, that we all are committed to seeing happen, I think this legislation of reconciling these issues are very important.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is legislation that's in the right direction. We have some questions to ask in the Committee of the Whole and we would suggest that it proceed at that time.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to put some remarks about this Bill on the public record.

I want to initially say that it's important that we, as part of the Canadian health system, move to an electronic record whereby — regardless of where we live in this country — if it's required, that health providers will at our urging have access to our particular individual health file.

I do want to make this point — which I believe is an important point — that with the advances in information technology and with some of the cases that we've seen lately where health information has been used in the public domain because trustees have not provided the necessary safeguards, that there are some

issues we need to be concerned about.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to put on the public record that there may be some medical procedures or some medical events that happen in individual lives that that individual may wish to keep confidential and may not want to have entered into the health system in the first place.

And I'll give you a few examples. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the whole notion of having a therapeutic abortion in this country is a controversial issue and there are people that have divided views on this issue. There are people who believe that a woman has an individual right to choose whether to have a therapeutic abortion, and there are others that believe that abortion should not be a medical procedure that is paid for by our public health system.

(16:45)

We also know that we are not yet at the stage in civilization in this country where, if a woman . . . woman chooses to have a therapeutic abortion, that it is viewed on a societal basis as proper. And I have had individuals raise with me certainly, that they would like to have the right to have that kept from an electronic file. And so one of the things that I think the minister needs to consider is the notion that if a person wishes not to have a therapeutic abortion put into their medical record, electronic file, that they should be able to do so.

The other point I want to raise is the whole issue of drug and alcohol abuse. And as we know there are moments when employers or institutions may want to know whether or not you've had a history of drug and alcohol abuse, or have had some . . . have had the health system intervene on your behalf to deal with drug and alcohol abuse. And we know that not all employers have a positive outlook and view these two particular diseases, I will say, as diseases. They see it something . . . They see it as something else. And I would like to suggest that if an individual wishes to, they may wish to have their drug and alcohol abuse situation kept out of their medical file. And I would like the minister to consider that as well.

There are other instances, Mr. Speaker, such as mental health issues that individuals may not want to have put into an electronic record. Even though this legislation indicates that individuals will have the right to prevent that medical record from being shared, you may not want to have that information in the system in the first place.

And I wanted to put those few comments on the public record, Mr. Speaker, because I think in terms of where this issue of an electronic record and information technology is going, that it has broader societal implications for individuals. And I thought that it was important given that I have specific concerns about therapeutic abortions, drug and alcohol abuse, as well as mental health issues being part of a system, that my colleagues in the legislature might want to consider amendments to the legislation that would give the individual the right not to have those particular medical procedures or medical events placed on electronic record if the individual didn't want them placed there.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks and I

understand that members are ready to have this Bill proceed to committee.

Debate adjourned.

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

The Assembly adjourned at 16:54.

Bill No. 40

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Osika that **Bill No. 40 — The Rural Municipality Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've talked a number of times on this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the Bill itself kind of . . . it actually increases local decision-making authority for municipalities. It talks about municipalities working with other municipalities, and property tax changes to phase it in over four years, which would go along with the normal reassessment. SAMA (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency) wants sales verification forms used; it's talked about in this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We would certainly have questions on that. It also deals with truck weights on municipal roads, and we'll have questions on that.

But other than that, Mr. Speaker, we have no problem with this Bill at this point and would like to pass it on to committee.

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

Bill No. 39

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Osika that **Bill No. 39 — The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Some parts of this Bill we still have out to concerned groups out there right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so we'll be holding on to this Bill a little bit longer; adjourning this debate once more on this Bill.

It talks about the implementing of the funding, the new funding for municipalities, and I guess our concern is that . . . and the municipalities' concerns. And you heard the city of Regina and all the other cities talk about the shortage of funding from the provincial government for the problems that need to be addressed in the cities. And I think we heard the debate in the city of Regina, for an example, the controversy went on there about how much they tried to hold the line on taxes but had to increase their mill rate in the city.

That's happening all over the province, Mr. Speaker. So I think it boils down to, once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that from early in the 1990s till 2003 now, that funding has fell far behind the rate of inflation and the costs that have been passed on to local municipalities.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, seeing the clock, I think that we would adjourn debate on this Bill and talk to it another day.

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