

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of people from my constituency who are concerned not about Highway 49, which I'm sure everyone is aware is in atrocious shape, but Highway No. 23.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair Highway No. 23 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth in Porcupine Plain and surrounding areas.

The people who have signed this petition are from Porcupine Plain and Weekes.

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the dangerous and deplorable condition of Highway No. 43, and the prayer reads:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Ponteix, Gravelbourg, and Lafleche.

I so present.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of mine who are very concerned about the horrible 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 residents of Frobisher, Lampman, Colgate, and Estevan.

I so present. Thank you.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand again on behalf of residents of the Southwest who have a constructive solution for the need for a brand new CT (computerized tomography) scanner for the Southwest. And the prayer of their petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to reconsider its plan to allocate the used CT scanner to Swift Current and instead provide a new CT scanner for the Southwest.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from two communities: the city of Swift Current and the town of Cabri.

I so present.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again with a petition on behalf of residents of southwestern Saskatchewan who are extremely concerned about the condition of Highway 43. And the petition reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by folks from Vanguard, McMahan, Swift Current, and Pambrun.

I so present.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan concerned with the state of health care in the area. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure continuation of the current level of services available at the Kindersley Hospital and to ensure the 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 is all signed by the good folks of Kindersley.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition from citizens opposed to the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance 2003 premium increases to farmers. The prayer reads:

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

Signed by the citizens of Biggar and district.

I so present.

**Mr. Lorenz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition for citizens concerned on the

condition of Highway 14. And the prayer reads:

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

And as duly bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The petition is signed by people from Wilkie and district.

I so present.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present on behalf of citizens of the province who are very concerned with the inability of this government to resolve the issue in the Qu'Appelle Valley. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to do everything in its power to work with First Nations people and the federal government to bring a prompt end to the dispute so that the water level of the Qu'Appelle River system can return to its normal level and end the economic harm and uncertainty this dispute has caused.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from Pasqua Lake and Regina.

I so present.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the education tax the people in the province pay. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from Birch Hills, Prince Albert, Shellbrook, Holbein, and Mullingar.

I so present.

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by Saskatchewan people who are concerned that deregulation and privatization in the electrical industry is causing electrical rates to increase dramatically in other jurisdictions. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government of

Saskatchewan and the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to assure the people of Saskatchewan that deregulation and privatization of the electrical industry in Saskatchewan, including SaskPower, will not be allowed.

And this petition is signed by people from Regina.

And I so present, Mr. Speaker.

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Clerk:** — The following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received and tabled as addendums to previously tabled sessional papers nos. 12, 13, 116, 120, 124, 140, and 141.

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 69 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation: under the Saskatchewan film employment tax credit, whom received payment for the production of the TV show *Designer Guys*?

I so present.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 69 ask the government the following question:

To the Environment minister: which native bands have taken possession of land being critical habitat and wildlife land; further to that, how many acres and where; also, have any bands applied for outfitting licences on these lands; and have any been approved?

A second question, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day 69 ask the government the following question:

Also to the Environment minister: which Act is your department introducing an amendment to, dealing with critical habitat wildlife land; further to this, when was this change made and was it done through cabinet or legislation?

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Goulet:** — Mr. Speaker, I am going to be introducing international guests from Chiapas, Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I would like of course to say welcome to them, and hola, and also in Cree, Ta wow. Ta wow in Cree means you're welcome; this place is wide open for you.

We have over at your Speaker's gallery, Mr. Speaker, George Ordóñez Ruíz, who is the president of the University of Chiapas. We have George López Arévalo, the vice-president of the university.

We have Guadalupe Castillejos, coordinator of the masters program of indigenous education. And we have George Coello Trejo, who is the director of graphic design for the government

of Chiapas. And we have Gabriel González, the assistant to the president of the University of Chiapas. And along with them we have the interpreter and entrepreneur, Ruth Bleau who lives in Regina.

Could I have all members to please welcome these international guests who are here, Mr. Speaker, to see not only the education and interchange that takes place between the democracies but also the historic opening of the First Nations University of Canada.

Welcome.

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

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member from Cumberland and on behalf of the official opposition welcome our honorary guests.

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

Nice to see you and I hope you enjoy the proceedings today.

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

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

##### SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival

**Mr. Forbes:** — Soundtrack for summer in Saskatchewan is brought to us this week by SaskTel — it's jazz and it's sizzling.

I'm once again happy to announce to the Assembly and to the public at large that jazz has arrived on the riverbank in Saskatoon and throughout Saskatchewan. And I'm even more pleased to say once again, as the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) of jazz, that beginning on the 20th, this past Friday, and carrying through to this Sunday, the SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival is underway again.

I'm happy to be the MLA of jazz as most of the venues for the festival are in my constituency. But more importantly I make this claim for, like all jazz lovers, I love a bit of syncopation and the spirit — the wonderful spirit — of improvisation. Jazz, Mr. Speaker, is a music that can make your spirits soar, and at the same time, you're feeling the blues.

Mr. Speaker, there is jazz and blues and gospel aplenty all day, every day. There are concerts by internationally recognized musicians like Joshua Redman, the Downchild Blues Band, and Holly Cole last night put on a fantastic show. And there are performances by many excellent homegrown musicians we have right here in Saskatchewan. There are university and collegiate bands, proving that jazz is the music of youth. There are performers like 80-years-young Ray Dahlen, who has been a fixture on the Saskatchewan music scene for more than 50 years, and he's played at all 17 festivals.

Mr. Speaker, if you can snap your fingers and tap your toe, check out the 17th annual Saskatchewan SaskTel Jazz Festival this week. Thank you.

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

#### Romanow Commission Expenses

**Ms. Bakken:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It appears that the Canadian Senate has something to teach Roy Romanow about fiscal responsibility. According to the *Ottawa Sun*, the Romanow Commission spent a whopping 3.2 million taxpayers' dollars on media relations. We are told the commission hired 42 separate firms to do this work. Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable — \$3.2 million is almost a quarter of the \$14.2 million total cost, a cost that is still rising.

The Senate conducted a similar study, travelled the country, and published a five-volume report for less than \$400,000. We have also learned that the Romanow Commission spent more than \$1 million on travel, meals, and accommodation. How is this any different than the unacceptable spending practices of Privacy Commissioner George Radwanski? Mr. Speaker, both have shown total disregard for public dollars and appear to have milked taxpayers for all they are worth.

The whole point of the exercise was to improve Canada's ailing health care system, but what has changed? Has the health system in Saskatchewan or Canada improved as a result of the Romanow Commission?

Mr. Speaker, this is the same Romanow, Premier Romanow, when he was premier of Saskatchewan and when he stepped down as premier, left behind him a legacy of the longest surgical waiting lists in the country, chaos in the workplace, a shortage of nurses, overtime out of control, record number of nurses on stress leave, doctors and specialists leaving, and frustration by the general public because their loved ones were unable to access timely appropriate care.

Is it any wonder when \$14 million later we have nothing to show for this abuse of taxpayer . . .

(13:45)

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

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

**The Speaker:** — I would ask members to allow members' statements to be heard.

#### Community Initiatives Fund Grants

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning it was my privilege to present two Regina community groups with grants totalling over \$7,000 from the Community Initiatives Fund to support their youth related summer programming.

Mr. Speaker, the Rainbow Youth Centre received \$3,200 for staffing their teen help centre. This centre will set up at the Regina Buffalo Days celebration to provide assistance to kids in need. Services that will be available at the teen help centre include immediate crisis intervention, counselling, agency referrals, and general information.

Also, Mr. Speaker, Sacred Heart Community School received almost \$4,000 for their summer fun zone program. This program will consist of morning reading and discussion circles

with the opportunity to invite guest readers and speakers from the community. The program will also promote healthy, active lifestyles for the kids, providing cooking lessons, arts and crafts, recreational activities such as swimming and biking, and field trips to Wascana Park, the Science Centre, the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) depot, public libraries, and other fun and interesting locations.

Mr. Speaker, this government views supporting these kind of programs as investing in the future — the future of our children, the future of our families, and the future of our communities.

I'm sure all my colleagues will join me in wishing the Rainbow Youth Centre and the Sacred Heart Community School every success with their summer programming and a summer filled with fun and learning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### 100th Anniversary of St. Peter's Colony

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this year, 2003, marks the 100th anniversary of the settlement of St. Peter's Colony near Humboldt.

A major celebration to mark this event will be held at St. Peter's Abbey in Muenster the week of August 1 to 3. Civic and religious dignitaries will be invited, as well as people who used to live in that area.

The main celebration will be Sunday, August 3, 2003. A mass will be celebrated in the morning with bishops and visiting abbots present, as well as many local parishioners and visitors. And a choir from Minnesota will sing at the mass as well as at an evening concert.

A parade will be held in the afternoon and over 50 organizations and businesses from the area will be part of this jubilee parade. A display of vintage machinery, an old-fashioned threshing demonstration, a display of artifacts from each community, musical groups, and visiting will be a vital part of the afternoon. On Saturday, August 2, an alumni reunion for St. Peter's College will be held.

Mr. Speaker, St. Peter's Colony began in 1903, two years before Saskatchewan became a province. Benedictine monks from St. John's Abbey in Minnesota accompanied settlers to Western Canada in 1903 to act as their pastors. And by 1906 there were 6,000 new settlers in St. Peter's Colony. Many of them came from Minnesota.

Mr. Speaker, 100 years of successful growth is a significant achievement. Congratulations to St. Peter's Abbey on reaching this most noteworthy milestone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Ile-a-la-Crosse's New Multi-use Facility

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I rise today to share some more good news from this government and for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

This morning my colleagues the Minister of Health and the Minister of Learning and I were in Ile-a-la-Crosse, and we were very pleased there to announce a \$300,000 investment for the planning stage of a very special multi-use facility that'll combine both a health care facility and a high school facility into one, Mr. Speaker.

This is a very exciting project. I am told that there's no other community in the country that has both a high school and a hospital all in one building. This concept is another Saskatchewan first. The efficiencies and savings that'll be achieved by building only one facility instead of two are obvious.

But, Mr. Speaker, this project is more about cost saving. It's about innovation, community spirit, and above all else about co-operation.

The community leaders knew that Ile-a-la-Crosse needed a new school and a new health care facility. More importantly, Mr. Speaker, they all understood that people in the community are better off if the elderly people were in one health care facility and the young people in the school could spend more time together into one facility, sharing companionship, guidance, and caring, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, they set about to make that happen in the design of one facility to do both.

The people of Ile-a-la-Crosse should be congratulated for the innovation, Mr. Speaker. We recognize their great efforts at bringing so many community partners together on a project such as this. It is no easy task. It is much about co-operation. Mr. Speaker, the residents of Ile-a-la-Crosse and the surrounding communities have demonstrated the true spirit of Saskatchewan co-operation by working together to ensure that the needs of everyone are met in this new multi-use facility.

Mr. Speaker, we also announce a commitment . . .

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

### Frenchman River Valley Gospel Music Jamboree

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Speaker, over this past weekend I had the privilege of participating as an emcee for one of Saskatchewan's longest-running gospel music events, the Frenchman River Valley Gospel Music Jamboree. This . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. Order. The member for Cypress Hills, but start over, please.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Speaker, over this past weekend I had the privilege of participating as an emcee for one of Saskatchewan's longest-running gospel music events, the Frenchman River Valley Gospel Music Jamboree.

This was the 12th annual weekend for this jamboree which featured a variety of musicians from all four Western provinces and drew people from every corner of Saskatchewan and well beyond our borders.

Located in the expansive and beautiful Frenchman River Valley south of Shaunavon, this jamboree has provided music of outstanding quality and variety for many thousands of fans of

gospel music throughout the years.

Starting at 6 p.m. Friday and running late into the night each day and through to Sunday afternoon, attendees were treated to the sounds of Southern gospel, bluegrass, traditional and contemporary genres, and even some ska music for younger fans. It came from soloists, trios, quartets, and even a choir; big bands and small groups, professionals and amateurs alike, all drawn by one unifying factor — a love of gospel music.

And one of the strengths of this jamboree is the audience's enthusiasm for good local talent, and once again this year we found that there was a real wealth of musical talent in the southwest part of this province.

Now over the past 12 years, the Frenchman River Valley Gospel Music Jamboree has seen nearly every kind of weather situation. This year the rain stayed away. The skies were overcast and a strong breeze blew, but nothing dampened the spirits of those who had come long distances to take in this wonderful weekend.

From the late night jam sessions to the home-cooked meals and even to new friendships, every fan got what they were looking for at this year's event. My congratulations to the organizing committee and every one of the dozens of volunteers who helped make this annual gospel music event such a memorable and wonderful experience.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Consequences of Occurrence of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, Alberta's Premier will be arriving in Washington today for several days of meetings with American politicians and officials and he has publicly stated that he will be lobbying the Americans to lift the trade restriction they placed on Canadian beef. He will specifically be meeting with the vice-president of the United States, Dick Cheney, to present our case.

The province of Saskatchewan should publicly applaud Premier Ralph Klein for his efforts to lobby the United States . . .

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — . . . on behalf of the beef industry and on behalf of our province's economy.

Today Saskatchewan's Industry and Resources minister is in Washington at a biotechnology conference. Mr. Speaker, is he also taking the time or making the time during his trip to meet with American officials and politicians to lobby on behalf of our beef industry?

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

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, when the member asked her

question she made the comment that Premier Klein is in the US (United States). And I think her words were, to present our position. And that's exactly correct.

Because in the meetings in Kelowna, of which I had the opportunity to sit into as well, Mr. Speaker, the Western premiers, the Western premiers, Mr. Speaker, agreed that when Mr. Klein, Premier Klein, goes to Ottawa, it was the objective and the responsibility of our Premier to talk with Ontario and Quebec to get them onside respecting a national strategy on compensation — of which our Premier was able to do — and then articulate to Mr. Klein the position that we as Canadian provinces would take to the US.

Mr. Klein is articulating accurately. He's articulating the position of Canadian premiers as it relates to the BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) and the importance of opening up the boundaries, Mr. Speaker, and the borders. Because it was Mr. Klein, Mr. Speaker, who said that what will not be required here or necessary is for all of the premiers of Canada to begin the lobby. This will be done through one individual person, Mr. Speaker, and it's being done by Mr. Klein.

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — I'm pleased to see, Mr. Speaker, that the premiers picked the premier that shows leadership most often.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan beef industry is about to enter its sixth week since the discovery of one cow infected with BSE. The price to the industry and to our economy is growing as the borders to some of our biggest international trading partners remain closed to Canadian beef.

It's my understanding that scientists from Japan are in Canada reviewing CFIA's (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) investigation into the disease and that the international panel of scientists may release their complete written review of the investigation this week.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister provide an update as to the status of the international panel's review and when the Japanese scientists may provide reaction on their findings?

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

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, I didn't get an opportunity to answer the latter part of the first question that the member asked me because she asked me what it is that Mr. Cline, Saskatchewan Mr. Cline would be doing in Washington when he's there.

Mr. Cline will be meeting with the other parts of the industry, Mr. Speaker. He'll be meeting with Mr. Boyle from the American Meat Institute. He'll be meeting with Dick . . . Mr. Newpher, who's with the American Farm Bureau, Mr. Speaker. He'll be meeting with Mr. Terry Stokes, who's with the National Cattlemen's Association, Mr. Speaker. And he'll also be meeting with some of the staff, Mr. Speaker, from Veneman's shop, we're told.

Now when the member opposite speaks about how it is that we're coordinating the efforts in the opening of the border, it's

done in this fashion, Mr. Speaker. Through Mr. Vanclief we're dealing directly through our national government on the trade issue. Through Mr. Klein, the Premier, we're dealing directly on the representation of the premiers across Canada to put that position forward on behalf of each of the provinces.

With the cattle industry we have the Canadian cattle association, Mr. Speaker, that are dealing with the cattle associations in the US, monitoring and coordinating from that perspective. And, Mr. Speaker, from the Western provinces we met last week, of which I couldn't attend because I was sitting in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, but Alberta and Manitoba met with South Dakota and North Dakota and with Montana to coordinate the movement of the border from that perspective. Four fronts working, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, the Japanese market is also very important to the Canadian beef industry and it also is significant what their decision will be as to whether or not the borders will close. There's implications there, Mr. Speaker. So does the minister have any thoughts on my last question, when the Japanese scientists may provide reaction to their findings?

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — I don't know the specific answer as to when the Japanese scientific community are going to prepare . . . and make the recommendation, Mr. Speaker. I know this, though, Mr. Speaker, is that our CFIA, our officials have provided all of the technical data that's required for Canada to the US. The US is reviewing our data today to make a decision about the opening of the borders.

The US government is having conversations today with Japan and with Korea regarding the scientific evidence that Canada has provided. The outcome of that decision yet, Mr. Speaker, has not been made because we've yet not had a decision from the US on Canada's situation in terms of the movement of beef into the US. I expect that in short order as we've hoped for now for several days — 10 to be precise — that we would have had a decision out of the US yet. We don't have a decision out of the US yet.

I know that Mr. Vanclief is talking to representatives from Japan; I know that Mr. Vanclief is talking to representatives from Korea. But our biggest issue today, Mr. Speaker, is to get the borders into the US open. That's what we're working on, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, by all reports the CFIA's BSE investigation was extremely thorough and it is expected that the international panel of scientists will report favourably. But ever since the case of BSE was publicly announced, the minister has raised expectations that the trade restrictions, particularly those imposed by the US, would be lifted in very short order. He's repeated it numerous times, Mr. Speaker. That hasn't been the case, and there is still no indication at all from the United States that the lifting of those restrictions is even imminent.

Mr. Speaker, it's time for some realism. The beef industry needs to know where the negotiations with our international

trading partners are at. And will the minister tell us if the borders to the US will open to the beef by July, or July 1, July 28; is there any indication whatsoever? Realistically, when does the minister expect to see Canadian beef begin moving across the American border?

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

(14:00)

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, I have said continuously what the Minister of Agriculture from Canada has said — that he's in the midst of negotiating with the US government the opening of the borders.

The decision about the opening of the border is not in the hands of the minister from Saskatchewan, nor is it in the hands of the minister from Ontario, or nor is it in the hands of the minister from British Columbia or Alberta. It's in the hands of the US government, Mr. Speaker.

And it will be the US government who will decide, in its own timely fashion that they will determine, Mr. Speaker — that they will determine. Not that the minister from Saskatchewan will determine or the member from Watrous or those others on that side of the House who pretend that they have some new information about agriculture or trade — that's not where it will be determined, Mr. Speaker.

It will be determined at the end of the day by the US government when they are assured, Mr. Speaker, that their evidence is complete and they are then prepared to do that.

Our hope, Mr. Speaker, is that it will open very quickly. And we are looking forward to that opening as quickly as it can be.

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, the situation in the beef industry is the most serious issue facing our agriculture sector and our provincial economy. Now that we know that there are a lot of NDP (New Democratic Party) MLAs on that side of the House that don't believe it is all that serious because they have repeatedly said it is a waste of taxpayers' dollars for this session to be continuing.

However, the Minister of Agriculture was quick to chide the federal government for adjourning parliament last week in the face of this crisis. And the Premier, in response to questioning last week from the member from North Battleford, also correctly stated that there is still work to do on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow the Saskatchewan Party is presenting a private member's motion that if this session adjourns, the Standing Committee on Agriculture be directed to meet weekly to monitor the issues related to BSE; and should the United States border not be opened to Canadian beef by August 1, that this Assembly reconvene August 5 for a report from the committee.

Mr. Speaker, will the government support that motion?

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

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, I can say to this House today and to the people of Saskatchewan that the Standing Committee on Agriculture, of which the members opposite would have an opportunity to sit if we were to proceed with this kind of an option, would be the last thing that I would give consideration to do at this point in time, with the inclusion of the standing committee, because to date, Mr. Speaker, the representation to any issue, in particular this one, from those group of men and women over there on one suggestion, Mr. Speaker, from one suggestion, Mr. Speaker, has not been evident anywhere.

We already have, Mr. Speaker, today, we already have today in Canada on this issue, Mr. Speaker, a public policy. We have a public policy, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, in Canada today we have a public policy on our approach to deal with this issue. We have a public policy, and the public policy includes today not only the Saskatchewan beef industry, it includes the Canadian beef industry, of which the Saskatchewan industry is fully engaged. Our public policy, Mr. Speaker, includes every province in Canada today to be called back on short order. Our public policy includes today the federal government's intervention at the federal level with the national government and all the premiers.

**The Speaker:** — Time has elapsed.

#### Water Levels in Qu'Appelle Lakes

**Mr. Hart:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority. Mr. Speaker, six weeks ago the Saskatchewan Party raised concern about a dispute between a number of First Nations and the federal government over flooding of First Nations land in the Qu'Appelle Valley. According to the provincial government news release dated April 17, failure to resolve the dispute will result in a serious decline in water levels this summer on Pasqua Lake, Echo Lake, Crooked Lake, and Round Lake.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister advise the legislature what progress has been made in resolving this dispute?

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

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There's no question that this is a very serious matter, and I can advise the Assembly that we have been on top of this matter from day one. We're working very closely with all the parties involved. We've made a number of statements in the Assembly. But, Mr. Speaker, what I want to point out is . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, is that the important part of governing is you want to make sure that you're sitting there with all the facts before you. And we would ask all the people involved that are in the opposition not to interfere and to allow due process to unfold and to allow the . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — And to allow the respect to flow between all the parties involved, Mr. Speaker. I think that's very crucial and that's exactly what this provincial government is doing, Mr. Speaker.

We are sitting down with all the affected players. We're sitting down, discussing all these issues with all the different Indian bands that are involved. We have a series of meetings, Mr. Speaker. We're on this issue on a daily basis. There is telephone calls that are made on a regular basis, Mr. Speaker. We're on top of this matter. We're going to continue working very hard to try and resolve this matter, Mr. Speaker.

And I would ask the members of the opposition, that if you have no solution then get out of the way. We'll govern and we'll make sure we govern fairly, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hart:** — Perhaps the minister should take his own advice and have the facts before him when he's dealing with this issue, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a letter to the editor of the *Fort Qu'Appelle Times* last week seems to suggest that there's absolutely no progress being made over this dispute. Todd Peigan, a spokesman for the Qu'Appelle Valley Indian Development Authority says the province is not participating at all in negotiations over the water structures at Echo Lake, Crooked Lake, and Round Lake.

And Mr. Peigan also says, and I quote:

(The) ultimate decision by the Qu'Appelle Valley Indian Development Authority and (the government of) Canada is to decommission the control structures if the province is unwilling to negotiate.

Mr. Speaker, what is this NDP doing . . . government doing to ensure that those water control structures are not decommissioned and that the water levels in the Qu'Appelle Valley lakes are not devastated as a result?

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

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, what I view across the way, Mr. Speaker, is an opposition party that's sitting back saying, h'm, now this is a good government; they have done the largest income tax history . . . cut in the history of Saskatchewan; they're fixing the roads . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Now they're investing the largest investment in health care history, Mr. Speaker; they're balancing this ninth consecutive budget, Mr. Speaker. Now how could we compromise that government, Mr. Speaker — that's what they're thinking. Now they're scurrying around their backrooms; how could we make some trouble here, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'll point out that what they're trying to do

today, they're trying to say, hey, we'll make them pay the federal government's bills, that's what we'll do; we'll try and compromise them some way, shape, or form; or we'll try and make trouble between the First Nations people and other people throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, that's not the way you govern in Saskatchewan. You find a common ground, the right ground in which you want to build a relationship on, to build a partnership with and to find resolution. You don't go out there looking for trouble, Mr. Speaker. And that's exactly what the opposition member is doing.

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

**Mr. Hart:** — . . . could take a lesson in governing from that member, Mr. Speaker, because this issue seems to indicate that that minister has done absolutely nothing on this issue, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the lakes along the Qu'Appelle River system play a critical role in the economies of local communities like Fort Qu'Appelle. And Pasqua Lake, Echo Lake, Crooked Lake, and Round Lake are major summer tourist destination spots. If this dispute between the First Nations and the provincial and federal governments are not resolved soon, water levels in the lakes will continue to decline and the local economy of Fort Qu'Appelle and surrounding area will be devastated, Mr. Speaker.

This is a huge problem. Why is this NDP government taking the position that it doesn't care about the water levels and the future of the economies of this area, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious matter. As I'd mentioned to that member, we're on top of this issue. We're meeting on a daily, regular basis to try and find a solution, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue moving forward.

But what's amazing to me, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we're going to find a resolution. We're going to work very closely with First Nations, with the people of the Qu'Appelle River Valley system . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. I've asked members a couple of times to not to be hollering out. So I ask again for a third time for members to restrain themselves a little and wait for their turn.

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to point out that the . . . we're also going to work with the federal government; we're going to work with the Indian bands that are affected and the people of the region. We'll find resolution to this challenge, Mr. Speaker.

But what I'll point out, Mr. Speaker, is across the way, is all they're trying to find is trouble, Mr. Speaker. And shame on them. Because out here we're trying to find some resolution to the challenge and we shall, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hart:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to that minister that what we are doing is we're presenting the concerns of those residents in that area who are very concerned about the level, water levels in those lakes.

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

**Mr. Hart:** — And, Mr. Speaker, at the rate that that minister is handling this issue, there won't be any water left in those lakes, Mr. Speaker. So I would ask, Mr. Speaker, what other initiatives is this minister willing to take besides making excuses?

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

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, it's so very important to point out that across the way there's no solutions whatsoever to any of the challenges we face. Zero, Mr. Speaker; a big fat zero in terms of effort across . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order.

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Again, a big fat zero when it comes to finding some solutions to the challenges to the people of Saskatchewan, and that's right across the way, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll point out the important thing is to make sure you talk with all parties, Mr. Speaker. And I know those guys across the way have not talked to any party involved. All they stand up and they doom and they gloom and the world is ending, Mr. Speaker. The answer is no, the world is not ending. And we will find a solution, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll point out, Mr. Speaker. If you want to be fair, be fair to everyone. And I would ask any member across the way, last weekend we had in Saskatchewan, we had a great celebration, opening of the First Nations University. And not one of those members was there, Mr. Speaker. They should be there celebrating Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Telephone Service in Rural Saskatchewan

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question's for the minister responsible for SaskTel. One of Saskatchewan's . . .

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, my question's for the minister responsible for SaskTel. One of Saskatchewan's challenges over the next 10 years will be to grow the economy of rural Saskatchewan. And one of the necessities of business growth in a competitive global economy is access to reasonably priced telecommunications services, services like additional telephone lines to facilitate the growth of rural businesses.

And yet SaskTel told Donna Carpenter, the manager of Green Hills restaurant at Greenwater Lake, that a second telephone line into her business would cost nearly \$18,000.

Mr. Speaker, what small business in Saskatchewan can afford to



pay \$18,000 for a second phone line? Why is the NDP charging \$18,000 to install a single telephone line into Green Hills restaurant at Greenwater Park?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question because it gives me the opportunity to explain I think an issue that's difficult for a lot of people of Saskatchewan to understand.

The truth is first of all, Mr. Speaker, the truth is first of all that in all of Canada there isn't any telephone company other than SaskTel, Mr. Speaker, other than SaskTel, that subsidizes the first instalment, Mr. Speaker. After that, Mr. Speaker, after that it's the full cost.

Mr. Speaker, if the Sask Party opposition wanted the situation that we have, that is deregulation and open competition, Mr. Speaker, you've got it here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. This is exactly the scenario that our government, Mr. Speaker, described would happen, would happen under a deregulated, competitive environment. That's the circumstance that we have.

Having said that, SaskTel still does subsidize the first installation which no other telephone company in Canada does, Mr. Speaker.

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

(14:15)

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, it's bad enough that SaskTel is charging \$18,000 for a second business telephone line into rural Saskatchewan, but it's \$18,000 for a third line. And it's \$18,000 to install a fourth line. In fact, it's \$18,000 for that company for every single time they want to install another business telephone line. All businesses need additional telephone lines as they grow, but \$18,000 for an additional phone line makes it impossible for businesses to grow in rural Saskatchewan.

This is a hospitality industry. They're working on the margins of coffee and of meals; they can't afford \$18,000. Mr. Speaker, how can the NDP justify claiming the future is wide open when their policy is to charge \$18,000 every time a rural business needs another phone line?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well of course we try and encourage as much economic development in all parts of Saskatchewan as we can.

Mr. Speaker, let me say this if the members in the Sask Party want to listen, Mr. Speaker. If the members opposite want to listen, if you had exactly the same scenario as she just described, Mr. Speaker, as that member just described, in Alberta — their beloved Alberta — you know what the cost for the first line would be? It would be \$18,000 as well for the first line, Mr. Speaker. And that's exactly what happens right now in Alberta.

They have a different scenario but, Mr. Speaker, given . . . if

you took exactly the same situation, three lines in Alberta, three lines in Saskatchewan, the difference is — and I want them to listen carefully — the difference is that SaskTel subsidizes for the first line, unlike what happens in any other jurisdiction in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, the only way they can have the exact same scenario is if we got rid of this NDP government.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — This government has no idea what it's like to operate a business or to facilitate businesses in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker . . .

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, I noticed the minister didn't mention what would happen in Manitoba either.

Mr. Speaker, Prairie Truss at Anaheim has three lines into their business right now. They've had that for a number of years. They need an additional line and so when SaskTel came to give them a quote, they found out the line was already there. The only thing they had to do was connect two wires. Do you know what it cost them for that, Mr. Speaker — \$3,250 to connect a wire.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if people in Saskatchewan realize that there is a cost to operate this type of business in Saskatchewan, and this NDP government doesn't realize that they are a detriment to business in rural Saskatchewan.

What are you going to be doing to help this province grow?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well isn't that . . . Wouldn't that be lovely, Mr. Speaker? That member says if they got to be government, Mr. Speaker, they would fix this. I'll tell you how they would fix this, Mr. Speaker. Do you know what they would do, Mr. Speaker? They would do as I've said many, many times — they would sell SaskTel, Mr. Speaker, and then they would have exactly the circumstance that exists in every other province, that is where there is no subsidization of any one of the installations of those lines, Mr. Speaker.

How can you possibly criticize, Mr. Speaker, a telephone company that provides — as described, Mr. Speaker, in *The Globe and Mail* of Saturday, May 24 — the lowest telephone rates in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker? How would they fix it? They would sell it and everybody would pay as you go, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Point of order.

**The Speaker:** — Order, members.

### POINT OF ORDER

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During question period the minister responsible for SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management) rose in his place and said that there hadn't been a single person from this side attending the First Nations University. That is incorrect, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition was there . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please, Order, please. That is not a point of order. That would be a debatable item.

Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please, members.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today once again to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions no. 753 through 758 inclusive.

**The Speaker:** — Responses for 753 through 758 have been submitted.

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 43

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Belanger that **Bill No. 43 — The Forest Resources Management Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to stand in the House today and speak on the Bill No. 43, the amendment to The Forest Resources Management Act.

And I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that after my speech that I will be delivering, I am going to move this Bill into Committee of the Whole. The reason I am going to do that, Mr. Speaker, is because my hon. colleague, the member from Saskatchewan Rivers, did a remarkable job in speaking for some three hours on this Bill; and that was a feat I don't know many people could do, especially in forestry.

Mr. Speaker, to the people involved in the forestry industry, everybody knows that this industry is an industry that is much welcomed in the province. We do have some difficulties regarding the forestry industry because of the trade laws that's been in place now. The softwood lumber issue is a huge issue and the forestry people, the forestry sector, is suffering immensely from this.

And I think for the most part in regarding this Bill, Mr. Speaker

. . . And this Bill is kind of like twofold; there's 60 per cent of this Bill that is good and then there's 40 per cent of this Bill isn't worth the paper it's written on. But this Bill is subsequently just like our present government, the NDP government. When something comes out and they do have a good reason for a Bill and it's a good thing for the industry and the province, they always got to put something in that's going to hinder and hurt our resource areas in the province. And that's why, being that this Bill just came up not more than 10 days ago, right away we as the opposition, and as the member from Athabasca resort us to as lemon-sucking opposition, that's why . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. I've already ruled once on that, on the use of adjectives of that type, and I prefer members do not repeat this item even if they are quoting it. And I would just ask the member to continue and try to keep in mind that all members in the Assembly are hon. members and all members should consider each other as hon. members.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the reason I use those adjectives is the fact that the minister from Athabasca in my questioning on Thursday stated those very same . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. I've just ruled on it and that should be sufficient. Let it stand at that, please.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. From that I'll go on. In regarding this forestry industry, this opposition, the first thing we do is when a Bill comes up this late in the session, the first thing is the red flags go up because there's got to be a reason why it came up.

And by talking to the forestry industry in this province, we know why, and there's good and there's bad. And I will be the first one to say that at any time somebody, whoever it is and from whichever party it comes up and says it's good, then we applaud that. But, Mr. Speaker, when they put things into Bills that only satisfy their own political agenda, then it's time to put the red flags up and stop it. And that's exactly what this opposition has done.

And that's why the member from Saskatchewan Rivers got up and spoke so long, because it was not a Bill that should be moved forward in a hasty manner like they thought it should be.

Mr. Speaker, 60 per cent of this Bill — 60 per cent of this Bill, Mr. Speaker — talks about the trade problems in Saskatchewan and Canada with the United States with the softwood lumber issue. And we know from the industry perspective, from the Mistiks, the Weyerhaeusers, the Carriers, the L & M Wood Products of Glaslyn, Zelensky Brothers of La Ronge, that they agree that 60 per cent of this Bill has to go through. We need it and we need it now.

But it's the other 40 per cent, Mr. Speaker, of this Bill that there is problems. And those problems are in the area of regulations. And that's where this government, this NDP government, is so good at putting in regulations that gives back to the province the total control of everything. Everything we do in this province has to be controlled by the government — control, control, control. And isn't that the way the socialistic government of

today operates.

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

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Why couldn't they just bring in a Bill, just bring in a Bill for the good of the people of this province, for the good of the industry in this province? That's all that they ask. That's all that the industry asks for. And that was good. But no, they've got to stick it into the people of Saskatchewan by bringing in more regulations.

Well, Mr. Speaker, people in this province have had enough of this. And when the Premier gets the courage to call an election, whether it be this fall or whether it be next spring, the people are going to vote on this and they will remember this. And I guarantee you the forest industry of this province is going to say we are tired of that government.

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

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Mr. Speaker, everybody knows how this forestry industry in the province needs this Bill . . .

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

**Mr. Allchurch:** — I thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I must have hit a nerve over on that side.

Mr. Speaker, the forestry industry, everybody knows, has hardships right now — real hardships. You talk to the L & M Wood Products of Glaslyn and they're having it tough. You talk to anybody in this province . . . It's just like the farmers. It's just like the farmers in this province having a real tough time with making a living in this province. The forestry people of this province are having the same . . . (inaudible) . . . And it's this softwood lumber issue that's hurting them.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we talk of the Mistiks and the Weyerhaeusers, the two big holders of FMAs (forest management agreement), when they look at this they say hey great. You know the government put something forth good. We agree with it because it's going to affect us but it's also going to help us. And they applaud that part.

And you know, the member from P.A. (Prince Albert) Northcote, I remember talking to him and him saying that we'd better get on line with this because the forestry industry people are going to write letters of recognition saying that we need this. Well did they get any letters? Was there any letters sent out stating that? There was letters sent out, Mr. Speaker, and I know because I've got copies of the letters. The letters stated that yes, this Bill we need.

But we do not need the regulation reform that is put into this Bill by this NDP government. That's what they're scared of. They are scared about that issue. And we don't need to listen to the forestry personnel as saying . . . as government, trust us. We'll look off on your behalf. Trust us. This government of today, Mr. Speaker, hasn't shown any trust to the forestry people. And that's why the forestry people of this province are upset with the wordings of the Bill, especially when it comes to regulations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina is talking that the member from Saskatchewan Rivers is done. But I want to go back to the member from Saskatchewan Rivers in his three-hour deliberation of this Bill. He pointed out good and he also pointed out bad in this Bill. And he went on and on about the forestry industry in this province and what it needs, and what it takes to move this industry forward, and what it needs to help solve the problem we have with the softwood lumber issue.

And, Mr. Speaker, he did an eloquent job. But I fail to say that . . . I hope the members on the opposite side listened to what he said. Because what he was doing was stating the facts. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want to go down that road that the member from Saskatchewan Rivers had mentioned because we don't have three hours to debate this Bill. We need to move this Bill forward and we need to move it in a timely fashion.

(14:30)

And in order to move that in a timely fashion, today we need to move that into COW, which is Committee of the Whole. When we move it into Committee of the Whole, I know that other members of this side have many questions regarding this Bill, especially on regulations. And at that time, Mr. Speaker, I will be questioning the minister in those regards.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, at this time I will close debate and I will move this Bill on to Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

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

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

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### General Revenue Fund Culture, Youth and Recreation Vote 27

#### Subvote (CR01)

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

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you very much. With me today, to my left, is Angie Gelinis, deputy minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation. To her left, Twyla MacDougall, director of finance for SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network). Directly behind Angie, Dylan Jones, executive director of policy and youth. And behind myself, Chris Martin, acting director of corporate services.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Madam Minister. And I would like to welcome your officials here as well this afternoon.

Madam Minister, last year following the passage of The Status of the Artist Act, you appointed an advisory committee to focus on artist equality. Essentially, this committee was to study labour and social equity issues for artists, and I was wondering if you could give me an update on this committee's activities to

date.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — This is a very large area really that the Status of the Artists Committee is looking at. One of the reasons, I think, is because the whole field of artists and performers and producers — all the cultural workers — there's a lot of differences from one area to the other in how they work, how they're employed, and what their conditions of work are, so I think we will see this process going on for a while.

But they have produced an interim report; it's on the Culture, Youth and Recreation Web site. It's up there for public discussion and discussion with the various art sectors. And we could download it and print it and provide you a copy, but you can also go to the Web site directly. We didn't actually bring a copy of it with us today although we could get someone to go out and print it and bring it back in.

But I'll just let you know that what the committee's doing in the first phase of their work is they're consulting quite broadly with people at what you would call both the management and employer end of the spectrum as well as the employees, contractees, performers that work in this area.

Some of the main issues that they've encountered so far is whether there is a possibility to extend collective bargaining rights to some of the workers in that sector, issues around conditions of work, occupational health and safety standards in some of the areas where there's safety and health issues, and as well as their first preference, looking at government's practices as an employer of artistic and creative people.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Madam Minister, you mentioned the collective bargaining rights, and I was just wondering if you could tell me what sort of discussions have occurred in that area; and also with whom and what recommendations, if any, have been brought forward?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — In this area we'd have to say that the committee is moving extremely carefully because in the absence of a collective bargaining framework a lot of people have made their own agreements. I guess in the modern age what we'd call gentleman's agreement about how they're going to work together and how they're going to set standards and set wages and whatnot.

So it's been like a bargaining model but without any legal endorsement. It's more by the power of agreeing mutually to do that.

So people are very conscious of the desire to not upset those things that are working well, and I would just have to say that they're moving extremely carefully in this area. There's no predetermined view certainly on the part of the government that this is where we will end up or want to end up. There's a view that they're exploring in what way the people who work in that sector have a voice with their employers.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Another issue, Madam Minister, the advisory committee was studying was the application of workers' compensation legislation and occupational health and safety legislation to artists. Again, could you just tell me what the committee has heard and what suggestions it has made?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I think if we look at it from the full spectrum of what's being discussed, on the one hand there's people who feel that better education, so that people who are working with hazardous chemicals and substances in the arts area and whatnot, have a full understanding of, from an educational strategy point of view, of what it is they're working with.

I guess the other spectrum is if, once you get into a workers' compensation plan, there has to be someone who pays both the employees' part as well as the workers' part. And in some instances the distance of employment is so short that there's no way really to identify who the employer would be. So it may be as they go into it that they're . . . the only thing they may be able to do in a lot of areas is to provide an educational approach.

If there's a way to give people a way to opt into the system by virtue of identifying who would pay both the employee portion and the employer portion, where it made sense to do that, they would also look at that as well.

But again, there's no predetermined view of how that will happen. Just the notion is that quite often when workers in this area have accidents or get sick, they're poverty-stricken and they really have no way to support themselves or their families while they're going through that period of disability. So again trying to take a practical approach to what could actually work in this area.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Adequate pension plans are always a major issue with working individuals, including artists. This is another area that the advisory committee was studying. Could you tell me what has come forward as a result of that?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I think in this area of pension plans, everybody agrees that it's very important to figure out some way to help cover people in this sector.

I know that . . . if the member will indulge me in a couple of quick anecdotes.

I was visiting some folks when my husband was having his liver transplant in Ponoka. And they're people who all their lives they've worked at places like, you know, Bazaar and the other fairs and sold their goods, but neither one of them has ever worked in any area where they could accumulate any pension; and that would include Canada Pension Plan because in order to get your Canada pension, you have to have worked for — what is it, at least four years — for an employer who's registered as a Canada Pension Plan employer.

So again it's how to look at an innovative way of how these folks might become connected to a pension plan because typically they don't have enough surplus income to buy RRSPs (registered retirement savings plan) or anything like that. It's possible there are some areas that have voluntary agreements on how they're going to handle pension and sometimes, as happens in the non-government sector, an employer will pay into an RSP (retirement savings plan) for an employee.

Again, as we go down this road, it may be educating people as

to what their options are and then leave it up to them to make an arrangement with their employer. Or it could be that groups of employers may decide that as a group of employers, they would pay the employer portion of pension and that the artist would pay the employee portion. But at least trying to figure out, is there a way to make sure that these folks have access to a pension?

I don't know if you know, but only 50 per cent of people in Canada actually have access to pensions, so this isn't a problem just for this sector; it's a problem for other people as well.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I understand, you know, that a problem could arise, as you stated, that a lot of times that these people don't have enough to invest in RRSPs, and that's true not only in the arts but also in many other occupations that people have.

Madam Minister, could you elaborate on . . . a bit on the issue of education, professional development, and training programs for the artists. Given the nature of the work they do, it is somewhat of an ongoing thing for this group.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — We've gone through a big transition in thinking about cultural industries over the last, let's say 10 to 15 years. People were much more just individual artists out on their own, but now as culture has become a part of, a stronger part of tourism and a stronger part of economic life in the province, it would certainly be true that they need to understand better how to get the maximum return from their efforts in the commercial world.

(14:45)

And quite often people don't have any business training, any business background, so quite a lot of the emphasis at industry training sessions . . . For example, the Saskatchewan recording industry has a conference once a year that moves between Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan where the artists get together and they look at things like marketing, touring, developing your promotional packages, your product, getting your product to the marketplace.

And this is just all ways to help artists take what they already do but get the extra commercial benefit from it.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Not everyone has access to these types of program, be they public or private sector workers. Is the advisory committee looking at some kind of compensation for artists in this area, or a levelling of the field per se?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I can tell you that if, for example, if a person's a member of one of these associations, they get on their mailing list and then they get information about the various development grants that are available, grants for marketing kits, for promotional, for touring. Sometimes there's support for touring.

And as well you'll find that Web sites are quite developed in this industry because a lot of the folks are very technologically oriented. And so there are a lot of ability for people to access it no matter where they live, and to access market opportunities.

But certainly if they're a member of the relevant association that they participate in, whether it's a craft person, a music person, an arts person, they would be regularly informed of all the opportunities in their area.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Madam Minister, when you talk about the taxation of artists, what specifically are you referring to other than what already exists? Are you planning on setting up a different tax regime for them; or will they be paying taxes differently than others, and if so, in what way?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Actually interesting enough, there's a tax issue here that's very similar to the tax issue for hockey players in the province, and that's the question of whether you're an employee or not. Because if you're an employee there's an expectation then that you have to pay certain sums on behalf of employees. If you're an employer, self-employed, then you have a different status.

And the federal government has recently gone through a process where they've clarified the tax status of some of the workers in this industry; for example, if you're employed by a symphony or a regular performing company, a ballet company, something like that. So really most of the examination in this area is around the definition of whether you're an employee or considered self-employed, and that would be the same of our provincial committee as well.

**Ms. Eagles:** — So have the advisory committee brought forward the same details that you just outlined? Have they come up with that same conclusion or have they come up with something else . . . or have they come up with anything else, Madam Minister?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I would have to say that the first, I guess, round of discussions by the Status of the Artists Committee was to identify the range of issues for the different types of artists that fall into this sector.

And now that they've identified a series of issues including pensions, tax status, occupational health and safety, whatever, what they're really doing now is starting to do the more detailed work to look at what other provinces are doing, what other countries are doing, and to start to develop some models for what the best way might be to do these things. And it's not always the best way. As you know, it's also the way that would be acceptable to people, keeping in mind that there's both employers and workers in this sector.

So like I say, we're working in an area that's relatively unexplored but where there is some traditions of how things have been handled. And so I think it's going to be a while before we see actions that move beyond the educational or beyond making sure that people are better informed about what their options are to anything that might fall into the realm of changing either federal or provincial practices regarding some of our major safety net programs in this country.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, one of the concerns that the advisory committee had was that the professional artist had yet to be defined in the legislation. Has that definition been determined yet and, if so, what will be the legal definition of a professional artist here in

Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Well I wish I could tell you that I had the answer to that one, but this is similarly still being discussed. They're looking at what's in the artist . . . the Canadian Artists' Code and looking at different possible definitions.

And at the end of the day, you know, I don't know what the outcome will be but certainly you'd have to look at everything, including whether a person has self-declared themselves as a working artist in their own tax forms that they submit. So there's a number of ways of looking at how this declaration occurs. But it's not a done deal yet.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Madam Minister, I assume that the advisory committee has went out of province and perhaps out of country to get the definition of a professional artist from other jurisdictions.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again, because this is fairly leading-edge work, even in the world, to look after this sector . . . because again the sector itself is changing; they're going from people who used to work in a certain way to people who are more of a cultural industry sector now where they're more involved in tourism and economic activity. So the actual status of artists themselves is changing.

I guess in previous centuries they would perhaps be the patron of a wealthy person who would look after them, and because of the kind of society we live in today, that's not as likely to happen.

So we're . . . I would have to say that Saskatchewan is on the leading edge of looking at how to do some of these things, and that the federal government has done some work in this area, Quebec has done some work in this area, but there's not a lot of places where a lot of work has been done.

Now even while I say that, I met with the ambassador from Austria a couple of years ago and they, for example, 100 per cent fund their opera there because it's very much part of their tourism. So there's different ways that different places handle this. But we don't have any of our cultural groups here who are 100 per cent funded.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman of Committees. And if I can, Madam Minister and officials, I have some questions as well — and appreciate the opportunity to post them here in the legislature — specifically around the relationship or the work the department does with SRIA (Saskatchewan Recording Industry Association) here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Talking to some of the members of that organization and some of the bands that are actively involved in that organization, I've heard a concern from them about their ability to access, not so much provincial resources even, but what they would deem to be our share or a fair share for the province — for Saskatchewan — of federal resources, especially when it comes to maybe making a video or assisting with an album project.

And I wonder if you could comment generally on that and what steps the department's taken, maybe the minister has, if there is

a federal minister's . . . a ministerial federal-provincial meeting or a committee process in place. If you could just generally comment on that issue.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I think that the question you pose is an important one because it doesn't just affect SRIA, it affects all parts of our cultural sector. And I do think, if I might just give an opinion for a moment, that setting up the department was a key part of having someone who had the clout to have that discussion with the federal government as well as with the various funding councils that operate at the federal level.

One of the first meetings that I had in fact was the Canada Council came to town and I spoke to the Chair about our concerns with funding.

And what they've done as a result of that discussion, they identified one of the problems that they don't get as many applications from Saskatchewan because people here are not as well versed in how to access that money. So one of the things they've done is brought some workshops to Saskatchewan to help people in that sector to have a better idea of how to access that money.

As well, our deputy has been in Ottawa several times discussing with them the need to have Saskatchewan have its share of resources on that and other matters, but also at the federal-provincial territorial meeting to have the ministers in Canada get more proactive in addressing what kind of a funding relationship there should be out of the pool that exists for Canada.

You know again I step out on kind of slippery ground here, but I would say that in the sports sector there's a more predictable relationship. And that doesn't always guarantee you get your share but the discussions have maybe gone to a more advanced level of arguing that point.

And I think in the arts area sometimes what happens is a federal-provincial territorial meeting won't be called for a few years which means that then you don't have an opportunity to raise the issues you want to raise, and have to raise them one at a time. And I think provinces generally find that in dealing with the federal government you're usually more successful if the provinces have a united view of what they're trying to accomplish and then there tends to be a better response from the federal levels.

So unfortunately because the House was sitting I didn't get to attend the last ministers' meeting. Maybe we should have gone together and then we would have evened out the numbers. But at any rate, this is an issue we're very conscious of and are specifically working on. And the Canada Council has acknowledged it and is co-operating with us to try to improve that.

**Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank the minister for that response. And along the same vein, although probably in a little different subject matter, is maybe other things that the department has looked at doing or can do with the appropriate resources for, for . . . I'm thinking specifically of some bands.

I'm thinking specifically of one band actually — a band I'm a

fan of— the Touchtone Gurus of Saskatoon but there are many others that would fall in the category; but I talk mostly to them. My brother-in-law's a drummer so we can chat about these issues.

And I wonder . . . I'll ask this other question then along that same vein. You know the . . . I think this particular band I think is on their . . . This is their second CD (compact disc) release now.

And you know they have invested in their . . . they're treating this like a business. They actually do some other work as a band to pay for the . . . to raise funds to be able to produce a CD, try to support it best they can. They go on cross-Canada tours. They have agents trying to promote their records, the releases on radio across the . . . You know they're trying to do it all as an independent. And I know many others are — not just them.

(15:00)

Is there anything, Madam Minister, that your officials have looked at doing to help them with radio play here in their own province? Because I hear from them and I think it's exemplary of what happens maybe for some of the other bands is that for some they find it very, very difficult for radio play.

Obviously radio's a private industry in the province of Saskatchewan and the Government of Saskatchewan or SRIA or anybody else can't and ought not to try to force certain radio play, but I think it's a very healthy beginning for some of these bands that are very close to some significant commercial success. And I note they seem to be having trouble getting radio play and so I think of things like if the department liaises with Saskatchewan radio.

Of course some of our radio chains have investments in stations elsewhere as well. There might be some attendant spinoff benefit to that.

So has the department looked at working hard with our radio in the province? And I'm not . . . I was in radio in this province so I'm not beating up on radio at all. I think they get a blizzard of requests for radio play and they do the best they can, and in many cases they sort of are the platform for groups, whether it's Wide Mouth Mason or others, that get started here in the province and then have a greater appeal nationwide.

But is there anything else over and above, or anything at all I should say, that the department has thought about doing with these radio stations to promote obviously not just one band and not just one genre but as much as possible with these stations for Saskatchewan radio play?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Being that this is a developing industry . . . I mean it's within my recent memory, the initial funding for SRIA. So they didn't have an industry representative in the province before SRIA existed; everybody was just individual performers competing with each other to get whatever limited gigs they could get at bars or whatever.

But it's developed a lot since then and like the oil industry, like potash, like mining, it is important for these musicians to work through their industry association because it's through that

association that they then articulate to government how they would like us to support their efforts.

And certainly we do support the CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission) on its Canadian content initiatives. But what you're speaking to, other than what you might do to urge, and certainly if SRIA wanted to get involved in doing a joint urging of the use of Saskatchewan artists on both radio and in other types of media activities, certainly that's something we could have a bit of a partnership on.

But there's nothing in mind in terms of setting quotas or anything like that for content, as what we have hoped is that the extra resources put into things like being able to produce a CD, being able to have a marketing kit, being able to be informed on how to do it more effectively would help the bands create some of the openings for themselves.

But I think it's always very important to work through your industry association because it's those industry associations that meet with government and articulate what help it is they think they need in order to make their industry grow.

And aside from that, that's one of the reasons I support, personally, community radio because community radio does do a lot more airplay of local music.

**Mr. Wall:** — That's a good point, Madam Minister. In fact I think to the . . . This particular band has had some success with respect to promoting their singles on college radio which would be similar to and in some case synonymous with community radio.

So the point is well-taken, and I also agree that the advent of an association is — an industry association — is probably their best hope for getting . . . making the case with Saskatchewan radio.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — A bit of a supplementary answer.

SCN has in the past year and a half been refocusing on some of the niche market opportunities provided by having a publicly owned station. And some of the program they've been doing has been bringing to the front Saskatchewan talent, Saskatchewan movies, Saskatchewan issues, Saskatchewan environment.

And certainly again that would provide opportunities for the kind of band you're talking about to be seen in the Saskatchewan marketplace, especially as people come to understand that if they're looking for something to do with Saskatchewan that that's a very logical source for them to turn to.

And there's the high school program that's done . . . that involves the students. There's the cultural shows and whatnot that are on that network now, as well as the reinforcement of the Saskatchewan news that is carried.

**Mr. Wall:** — Well thank you. It leads to actually the next question that I have regarding SCN specifically, and it's a discussion that we've had at the Standing Committee of

Communications of this Legislative Assembly and the rebroadcast of proceedings from this Legislative Assembly.

And the minister will know that throughout rural Saskatchewan and indeed in the cities as well, the proliferation of these small dishes as an alternative to cable television or just an alternative to no cable or no other channels has really taken off in popularity.

And the advantage of course . . . One of the advantages of various kinds of technology, cable TV and the small dishes, is that you can pick up the legislative proceedings. On cable, you can on a regular channel in most cases. And on these small dishes, you can if your dish picks up . . . can pick up SCN. As is the case with most small dishes, they will be able to access SCN.

Now I think it was last year, and it might be even this year, there's that replay of question period, for example, from the proceedings. And believe it or not, Madam Minister, there's a number of people, an amazing number to me and to others, would watch that replay — people who have access to those small dishes.

And I think we've had this discussion at the committee as to whether or not that can be expanded, whether or not SCN can provide some sort of regular time on its system for the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly.

I understand it could have consumed all of its program times, so I'm certainly not asking that. I wouldn't . . . I don't think any of us should want to . . . I don't think any of us would want to force that on the people of Saskatchewan. But I think that there's a . . . there might be a reason for SCN to look at further expanding the broadcast here, just so that the whole province has more equal access to the proceedings of the legislature on television.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — One of the things that has happened over the past year is to add ExpressVu as a carrier of the legislative channel which means it gets out more broadly than it did previously when it was restricted to cable.

The other thing I guess is, as legislators we have the opportunity to, through our Board of Internal Economy or through some other mechanism, to suggest improvements to the legislative service. So I think it would be a bit incumbent on us to articulate what we think our constituents would like in this area and then to move that request through to SCN.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I'd like to ask some questions if I can about the sound stage and I guess the involvement of SaskFILM with it.

Can the minister provide for us today the date . . . that since the facility opened, the total number of companies or productions that have made use of the facility?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — In 2002 there was five productions that used the sound stage involving three different production companies. And in 2003 there's four different productions and actually four different production companies that have used the sound stage and there's a fifth that will be announced shortly.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I guess you've already alluded to this other one that will be announced shortly which answers the question, the subsequent question was: what, how many projects were on the horizon? You've indicated there's the one on the horizon to be announced. So unless there's an additional number that you want to provide, I'll move on to the next question.

Could you provide for the Assembly a breakdown of the sound stage itself in terms of the percentage of the facility that is office space, production, post-production, audio or video facilities; what's being leased out maybe to somebody else for their purposes, office or otherwise? Do you have just a general breakdown of a configuration of the sound stage?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — This particular part of the sound stage operation is SPMC's (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) and I don't know if you've completed your chance to ask questions of SPMC yet, but certainly if that opportunity doesn't exist, we could get some information for you. But if you're able to ask SPMC directly, you'll get much more thorough and complete information.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Actually I think we have voted . . . I'm not too sure, but I think we voted SPMC off. But if the officials — and no, in no particular rush — could provide that breakdown, that would be appreciated, Madam Minister.

The film industry in general, and I guess I just want to ask a few questions, or at least this one about Minds Eye. And not exclusively about Minds Eye because I understand that's a Crown Investments Corporation investment. We've asked questions about it at CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) and would continue to do so.

But we know, we know that Minds Eye is having some difficulty. We know the government recognizes the difficulty they've had because they have written off their investment from four and a half million to five. We also know though that the government continues to — that CIC I should say — continues to, to offer this additional funding, assuming it could be matched by some other source, for Minds Eye.

Our understanding is that the many other player . . . other film companies, some based in Saskatchewan — well the ones that we would speak to are based in Saskatchewan — they do have concerns about this one particular company continuing to access considerable support and assistance from the public sector, from the Government of Saskatchewan.

And I guess I'd ask the minister to . . . And I'm sure she's done this. I'm sure she, too, has had meetings with these same companies who have had concerns, or phone calls, or correspondence from them.

So how does she allay the concerns of those other important players in this industry who feel like the government seems to be perhaps too focused on one particular company? What would she say to those who have that concern and who feel that the government has picked winners and losers in this case and isn't maybe treating everybody fair?



**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I'm just trying to go from memory. I actually had the answers to some of this in my House book for question period that I sent upstairs. So I'll go from memory here.

In actual fact every company has the same ability to, based on their business plans, to apply for resources, depending on what it is their company is into doing.

Now under SOCO (Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation) there used to be some film companies that access specific project funding. And we haven't been doing that kind of investment under SOCO any more. But certainly under that, a great diversity of film companies actually had equity financing through there. I think in my recollection there was at least six different film companies, including Minds Eye, that got funding under the SOCO funding.

(15:15)

The difference, the main difference you'll find between Minds Eye and the other companies is they're not as large of companies and they aren't involved with such breadth across the Canadian landscape on film production. So it is a different size of company. I guess it's like the difference between the big oil and gas companies and the little mom-and-pop operations. There is a difference in the size of the companies, which means they access different funding envelopes.

But right now we're in the process of trying to determine what is the best route to establish some kind of a proper infrastructure for this industry in terms of financing because we would rather not be in the position of making one-off decisions. We would like to have an industry decision on how this industry is funded and grows. And the department is working on an analysis of the industry, how it's funded in different provinces, what correlation that investment has to growth of the industry. And we'll be bringing forward recommendations on how we should handle the further development of the industry in this province.

But at this point we have mainly had more ad hoc investment tools. But I will just say to come back to the original question, that under the previous SOCO mechanism, at least, at least six different film companies had accessed financing. And I could get those names for you.

**Mr. Lorenz:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, through to the minister. If the minister could give us a brief outline on the cultural assistance program and the multicultural initiative fund. There's different components that make up that fund. If the minister can give us a bit of a, I guess, an understanding of what that fund is composed of and what the purpose of the fund is there for as well.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — What we were discussing is to make sure that it's clear how the funding structure works in Saskatchewan.

All of that money is under the Sask Lotteries Trust. And under the trust, as you would know likely, there's three globals. There's Sask Sport, Sask Parks and Recreation, and SaskCulture. SaskCulture then has under it multiculturalism. So all the decisions about that are made at that level, flowing from

Sask Sport trust to the three globals and then down to the organizations they fund. We really don't get involved at that level nor do we have that kind of detail. Now we could get an annual report of SaskCulture that would outline the funding in that area, but they provide us with an audited report and we don't actually get involved in the management of their sector.

**Mr. Lorenz:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Chair, to the minister . . . And I guess my questioning was going to go into that SaskCulture component of the funding. And there is a training and travel allowance component that's in there as well and I don't know if the minister's familiar with the way that component functions and how that is funded.

I guess I've got a situation here where there was a children's choir group that was recognized for the province to be going to Ottawa and they were asking for some funding, travel funding, and they're . . . and they were totally denied in the sense of that funding. And it's put quite a hardship on to that group. There's about \$10,000 in there for funding that they required for the travelling expense and we've got 21 children now that are wanting to leave on June 26 that are having some problems putting that funding together. So I guess I . . . If the minister wants to comment on that I guess that was the area of questioning that I was going to go into.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — This is an area I do have some familiarity with because quite often people send the letters to our office as well and we likewise don't have a fund. But you know, because this province is so active and we have so many skilled athletes, musicians, artists, writers, we get hundreds of requests for support for travel — hundreds. And I suspect if I get hundreds, I suspect they may get more than hundreds. And really there isn't a funding envelope for this.

Every group, unless perhaps the . . . Let's say the federal government was having a big celebration and they paid for someone to come, but I think they don't even do that usually. I think people come for the honour of it all.

And quite often groups are involved in doing their own fundraising for travel whether they be individual artists and athletes. Certainly this issue was raised by the elite athletes in Canada who feel they're undersupported in terms of their costs of participating in elite athletics.

But as you know, there are more good and reasonable ways for governments to spend money than there is money. And the funding of individual travel, if one was really to go into that area, it would be . . . I think you'd be talking millions of new dollars. And that's no reason to not have that discussion, but there isn't an established funding for that kind of travel because there are so many people in choirs and everything else that it applies to.

**Mr. Lorenz:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Chair, through to the minister. I have a form here that is an application form that talks about training and travel, so there is money made available for travel as well. And I guess I would be appreciative if we could maybe get a list of the people that did . . . qualified organizations that did qualify for this part of the component I guess as far as the training and travelling aspect is concerned, to see what type of organizations, what type of

individuals may qualify for, you know, for this type of funding.

Because it's somewhat ironic I guess when you get a children's choir which does all kinds of fundraising and that's the only way they function is through donations in the sense that when they have an opportunity of such and they're recognized to represent the entire province, it's not something that they're going . . . taken their own initiative on to try and find a way of getting to Ottawa for the sense of their own need or their own interest, it's something that the province itself have asked them to represent them on behalf of.

I guess it's a little disappointing that you find in an organization like this could be turned down flatly. Even if they would have got half of their funding, I think it would have given them the ability of send all the children, you know, to the . . . to that opportunity on July 1.

Other than I guess that list or that informational package on that, I guess on the funding that's made available, I have no further questions.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — I'll just respond that although we don't make those decisions, we will request that information for you and get it and then pass it along. But I will say I suspect a lot of these things, it'll be that their funding is capped at a certain level and once they've given away what funding they have . . .

And the other thing I might add is quite often we don't pick the people who are representing Saskatchewan. They're either picked through their, perhaps their choir association or maybe the federal government contacted them directly. So it's not that we picked them to represent the province and then didn't support them. Somebody has picked them, and I'm sure they're very good. But I remember last year a Regina ladies' choir sent the same request in.

And so there is a big need in that area, a big legitimate need both in sports and in culture, but it's an area that we would have to think about how we would prioritize who would get that. And I'm certain if SaskCulture were granted more money to do that, they would think of how they would do that. I'm sure they're not opposed to the idea.

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

Madam Minister, I was wondering if the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation provides funding for the support of Batoche Days?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Interestingly enough we met with them not very long ago on some of their . . . But they were mostly talking to us about the prospects of centennial capital so we weren't really discussing the operation side as much.

But just from my knowledge of this event over the years, I know that they do receive money, I think directly, from the lottery system. I'm not 100 per cent sure of that but I'm pretty sure that they would receive some money from there.

They do receive some money from Intergovernmental Affairs through the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat. Through the casino

revenues they receive 2 million for the Clarence Campeau Fund to support economic development. And I know that they use some of that for the tourism and economic development around Batoche. And as well they receive 120,000 to participate in the sport and culture sector. And I don't know if they direct any of that to Batoche.

So they have some, what would you call, global funding that they may in fact then redirect some of that money to Batoche. But the department per se does not give a grant to Batoche.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Madam Minister, I just have a few questions here regarding the SCN.

And I note that this is the second year SCN has conducted targeted fundraising activities consisting of on-air and direct-mail campaigns. This fiscal year the first campaign ran for 10 days last month. And what was the total collected from that pledge drive? And what was the targeted amount?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Okay. Now we're addressing this May. The target was 17,000 and to date 10,000 has come in. But the experience with this has been that the money continues to come in over time, so that it would be a while before one would know whether the target of 17,000 is met or not.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Madam Minister, were all these public donations or did some come from the corporate sector? And if so, how much?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — It would all be public individual donations.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. What is the approximate cost of an on-air and direct-mail campaign, the average cost?

(15:30)

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Right now the actual cost of the campaign is 20,000 but that was expected, that as the campaign started that people weren't used to the notion of a Saskatchewan public broadcaster. If you remember the history of SCN, it started off in 1989 just as an education network and really more internal to schools and whatnot. I think in '91 it started actually doing rebroadcasts of existing programs but didn't have a particular Saskatchewan focus or a particular niche market in Saskatchewan programming.

So what's happening is, I guess, a parallel development of the Saskatchewan marketplace along with the people who support having that kind of programming available. And as well, while doing the fundraising, it also is marketing for the station itself so people can help understand what the purpose of SCN is and what kind of programming people can expect to see there at the same time as requesting their support. So it's kind of a two-birds-with-one-stone kind of marketing.

But it was fully expected that people wouldn't leap from having no notion of direct support to SCN to a notion of becoming supporters. And I think it's largely the membership of SCN, because people can subscribe and become members and get the program booklets and whatnot, I would think that a lot of the

people who provide direct donation right now would be people who are also members of the member-subscriber list.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Madam Minister, you know, I understand the advertisement, the marketing, and that for SCN, but at the same time when one is spending \$20,000 and is only bringing in \$10,000 to date, is that . . . How is that justifiable?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Actually from my long experience with fundraising — because nobody ever gets elected without being involved in fundraising — I find that the first year of a campaign often it'll be 2 or \$3,000 you make and that's maybe even fairly good, but over time if you work on it and develop it, you will increase that amount with each subsequent time that you are consistent in the event that you're running.

So I don't think any organization that raises money would have ever hit their target in the first year or even second year that they did their fundraising. It's after it becomes established and accepted and becomes known to be a priority. So I think we'd have to wait a little bit longer to really see where this will go, but I suspect it will follow the path of a lot of other fundraising efforts, that it takes time to establish both the awareness and the customer base, etc., in order for it to really pay off for whichever organization is involved in fundraising.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, you're right, we all have been involved in our own campaigns. And I've been involved in quite a few election campaigns — one of my own — and my first target I reached and exceeded. So I guess I . . . okay.

And, Madam Minister, I understand that there are two more campaigns planned for the upcoming fiscal year. And could you please give us some details on to how long these campaigns are slated to run, when they're slated to run, and what is the targeted amount for each?

And while you're seeking the advice of your officials I'll take this opportunity to thank you and to also thank your officials. That will be my final question.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — There are three of these 10-day segments over the year. We've had one already. There's one in the fall and then another one in early December. For the year, expenditures of 60,000 have been approved and the actual projections of revenue are at 50,000 — again referring back to the development of a funding base for the future.

I think you would agree with SCN's objective in this as they are trying to work towards more independence from government funding and they're hoping to build their base. Now if we keep going on this for a while longer and that doesn't seem to be growing then we would have to re-evaluate. But as long as we see growth in the donations that are coming in then it would seem that that idea is working.

And to then say that I thank the members opposite very much for their questions, and thank my officials for being here today to answer them, and with that, Mr. Chair . . .

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Chair, I move the committee report progress on the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation,

and proceed to estimates related to the Department of Learning.

### General Revenue Fund Learning Vote 5

#### Subvote (LR01)

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

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. On my left is Dr. Craig Dotson, the deputy minister of the department. Farther to Dr. Dotson's left is Brady Salloum, executive director of student financial assistance. Behind him is Dr. Michael Littlewood, executive director school legislation and administration. And behind Dr. Littlewood is Kevin Veitenheimer, acting director of university services. Next to Kevin is Nelson Wagner, executive director of facilities. In front of Mr. Wagner is Dr. Margaret Lipp, executive director of Saskatchewan Learning. Directly behind me is Gillian McCreary, executive director of the department. And behind Ms. McCreary is Don Sangster, executive director of school finance. To his left is Kevin Hoyt, director of finance. And directly in front of him and behind Dr. Dotson is Wayne McElree, assistant deputy minister of the department.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And good afternoon to the minister and her officials today. We look forward to the next hour and a half or so of opportunities to question and have responses to some of the issues that arise from the provincial budget as it affects the Department of Learning.

Since this is known as estimates, I think maybe we should deal with some of the numbers that we can manage to get some explanation for some of the changes that happened in this year's budget and maybe dispense with that first and then get in to some other issues, related matters.

Madam Minister, I refer to page 92 of the budget in which it talks about subprograms, operational support, and I notice the number for this year is down about \$257,000. Would the minister provide an explanation for the drop in that particular category?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. The operational support basically has been maintained year over year despite the apparent reduction. The major reason for the reduction, the transfer of information technology related costs to the student support program has resulted in the lower overall funding required for the subvote.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Then is there a point, Madam Minister, in the budgetary documents that would show a corresponding increase?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you. On page 94 of the budget document under student support programs (LR13), the subprograms under operational support, you can see about a 600,000 increase from 2002 to 2003-04.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, we'll move to another category, and I'll try and do the arithmetic a little later.

The universities, federated and affiliated colleges, and educational agencies are the next item detailed under subprograms. Madam Minister, I'm wondering if you could give us for the \$229.564 million that are listed there for those particular areas, can you give us a relative percentage breakdown for the different categories within that subprogram?

(15:45)

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you for the question. We don't have the percentages, but I'll give you the figures. For the universities, the subtotal in 2003 and '04 is 211.869 million; in 2002-03 it was two thousand . . . two hundred and five million, six hundred and twenty-two, one thirty. In federated colleges for the years 2003-2004 it's eight million, five hundred and six thousand . . . four hundred thousand; in 2002 and 2003 it's 8.046 million. Affiliated colleges, subtotal in 2003-2004 is 618,520; in 2002-03 it's six thousand and one, four hundred. Aboriginal and northern education in 2003-04 the subtotal is 8.255 million; and in '02-03 it's 7.585 million. Miscellaneous, in the subtotal, is 315,000; and 2002-03 it was 368,970. For the two totals in '03 and '04 is 229.564 million. In '02-03 it was two hundred and twenty-two thousand, two hundred . . . 222.224 million.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Through the Chair to the minister. Madam Minister, I'm trying to make notes as quickly as I could, but you detailed I think one of the educational agencies. Could you give us an indication in a little more detail of what other agencies might be part of that educational agency's component?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Which exact total were you wanting more detail on?

**Mr. Elhard:** — Just the educational agencies . . .

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Under each category you want them listed?

I gave you the headings of the categories, the universities, federated colleges, affiliated colleges.

And the two that I think you're interested in are the Aboriginal and northern education ones which is Gabriel Dumont Institute, Gabriel Dumont Institute with SUNTEP (Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program), Northern Teacher Education Program, First Nations University of Canada, northern health access program, and NORTEP (Northern Teacher Education Program) student lease costs.

And the miscellaneous is the Council of Ministers of Education and the Sask Institute of Public Policy.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you for that breakdown, Madam Minister.

Let's move to the urban parks. What is the Department of Learning's relationship with and agreement for funding of urban parks?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — As the minister responsible for the Meewasin Valley Authority, I can tell you that the grants that we give to the Wascana Authority and the Meewasin Valley

Authority go to the U of R (University of Regina) for Wascana and to the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) for the Meewasin Valley Authority.

And the U of S and the U of R both have members sitting on the Meewasin Valley board and the Wascana board respectively.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, can you give us the benefit of your experience? How did that particular role for the universities, the two universities, come into being as part of those various parks authorities? Is it just because of their location or is there some other factor that's involved in that?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — I'm just going to give you a brief history. The Wascana Centre Authority was the first authority to form in 1961 or '2 and this was a group that comprised the city, the province, and the university — and at the time the university was on College Avenue — and this was to look at a large urban park with a vision to have some green space in the city, in the centre of the city.

Twenty years later Meewasin did the same thing with the same type of partnership for Saskatoon.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Is there some rationale though, Madam Minister, other than the location of the two institutions, for their ongoing participation with this park arrangement? It seems to me that the cost isn't significant but when we're looking for as many dollars as possible to go into the educational needs of the province, is this a priority area?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — This is a historical arrangement. I think . . . I'm hoping I don't hear what I think I heard you say, is that you don't want . . . you want somehow Meewasin Valley Authority and Wascana Centre Authority to not get the money that's in the budget for them.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, I don't think that's what I said at all. I think I asked if it was a priority item in terms of the realities with educational funding. I mean I expect that parks are an important part of landscapes of the two urban centres we're talking about. But is there some other mechanism by which these parks can be funded other than taking money out of the Learning department?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The short answer is there is only one provincial budget. The money for Meewasin Valley Authority and the Wascana Centre Authority, we've committed ourselves to supporting that, those two parks, and the money would have to be taken from somewhere else. If you have ideas about that you could perhaps share those.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Well, Madam Minister, I'd be happy to share those ideas if your government was willing to entertain ideas from the opposition. But one day they ask for our suggestions and the next day the minister tells us to keep out of it. So I don't think that that's really a satisfactory arrangement.

We are here to ask questions about education. What I'm asking about is the money that your department has committed to urban parks. And if you have a long-standing agreement that you don't feel you can renege on, say so. But if it's not an educational priority maybe there is a better and more

appropriate area for that money to come from. And I think that it's up to you to defend this particular budgetary decision.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — This funding arrangement is long-standing. The Department of Learning is merely the vehicle that the government supports the major urban parks, and it is a priority for us to have those parks. And like I said, it is just the Learning department is where the money flows through. The government has a commitment to fund those two.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, we're looking at an increase in expenditures in interprovincial agreements of approximately \$100,000. Can you tell us what agreements are involved here and why the cost increase?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. The programs — the interprovincial agreements programs — are optometry in Waterloo, occupational therapy in Manitoba, occupational therapy in Alberta, orthotists and prosthetists in BC (British Columbia), denturists in NAIT (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology), nuclear medicine technology at SAIT (Southern Alberta Institute of Technology), respiratory tech . . . therapy at SAIT, and our interprovincial agreement co-ordinator here at SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology).

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, to the minister. For the programs that you've just mentioned to us, does this amount of money help pay for the actual cost of Saskatchewan spaces in those programs, or any other administrative cost that might be associated with it?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Yes, that is the cost of providing the . . . or paying for the seats in those programs.

**Mr. Elhard:** — What is the minister's impression of that amount of money? Do you think we're getting good value for that? Is that a bargain by your estimation, or is it money that you'd rather not spend on these programs? Let me . . . I'd just like your opinion on that.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — I think this is very good value for our money. We don't have the critical mass of students to support all these programs ourselves and we do need those human resources in the province. Much like Alberta, BC, and Manitoba send their students to our western veterinary college, we do that sort of sharing. And we think we do get good value for our money, and excellent students.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I noticed also, as we proceed down the page, the various items under the subprograms. I noticed that SIAST and SPMC have \$1.59 million more provided for their needs. And that represents about a 10 per cent increase over last year's budgetary allotment. Could you indicate how that increase was necessary, where was it used, and why?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, before I continue with the answer, leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

(16:00)

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. In the Speaker's gallery we have today some visiting scholars, and the University of Regina International Liaison Office has given us information on these people that are with us today. And I'd like through you . . . introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, Amir Zarrati.

And I'm just going to give you a little bit of information on these people and their very interesting backgrounds. Mr. Zarrati's background is in civil engineering, hydraulics. Maybe he could stand. Oh, he's not here?

All right, then we have a Ms. Huanzhaoh Wang. Not here either? Okay.

All right. How about Linkun Tan? Very good. Mr. Tan arrived in Regina in April of this year as the recipient of the Wan Li Visiting Scholarship.

The Wan Li Scholarship was established in 1991 by Dr. Donald Wells to celebrate the honorary degree that was conferred upon Wan Li, then chairman of the National People's Congress. The Wan Li scholar is appointed from the state administration of foreign experts affairs.

Mr. Tan is studying in the Faculty of Administration and is interested in public policy analysis, government financing, human rights development, and human resources development. Welcome.

Do we have ZhiWu Liang? Good. Mr. Liang is the dean of the chemical engineering department at Hunan University in the People's Republic of China. He has come here as the recipient of the Hunan University Visiting Scholarship. Each year the U of R provides support for two Hunan University faculty members to spend a six-month period here to do research. Mr. Liang is doing his research in the Faculty of Engineering.

Dr. Deliang Han? Hello. Dr. Han is the vice-director associate professor in the geology department at the China Ocean University. Previous he acted as project manager of the scientific research division at Ocean University in Qingdao where he worked on international co-operation and exchange programs. Since arriving at the U of R in April, 2003, he has been working as a researcher in the department of geology.

And Mr. Jose Roman Torres Solis. Mr. Solis has taken advantage of his sabbatical from his responsibilities as dean of the Graduate School of Business at the National Autonomous University of Mexico to come to the U of R as a visiting scholar in the Faculty of Administration.

Dr. Torres is the author of three books and several articles in the area of human resource management. He's currently studying the labour market in the petroleum industries in Canada and Mexico. He has been honoured with the 2003 faculty research program award from the Government of Canada.

Did I miss anybody? Very good.

I'd like to welcome them all on behalf of the Government of

Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, with leave to respond to the introduction.

Leave granted.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. And on behalf of the official opposition, I too would like to offer our words of welcome, and hope that our guests enjoy the proceedings this afternoon. This is a much more informative part of the day to attend the House. And we hope they will learn something from these few minutes of visitation here and that they'll be able to take some good news back to the respective jurisdictions they have come from.

We appreciate the opportunity to play host — not just in this legislative Chamber but in the province — to our visiting guests and dignitaries. And we appreciate it when they take the time to come see us here. Thank you.

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

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### General Revenue Fund Learning Vote 5

#### Subvote (LR01)

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The increased operating cost at SIAST: the grant is up 1.982 million and the increase in SPMC costs is 1.589 million increase.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, I appreciate the numbers but I guess the bigger question is why were those numbers necessary? Why were those increases required? And where were those expenditures made?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The increase in the operating grant to SIAST is to reflect the increase in operations to deliver the programs that SIAST does at all four of their campuses.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Well let's go to the second part of the question, Madam Minister. What about the increase of expenditures to SPMC then?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The increased numbers of the SPMC is to directly reflect the increase in energy costs.

**Mr. Elhard:** — That's a fairly significant number, Madam Minister, and if we have those kind of increases on a yearly basis we're going to be hard pressed to meet them I would think.

Would you be able to give us any indication of what efforts might be undertaken by SIAST and Sask Property Management Corporation to keep those energy costs in check? Have they undertaken energy audits of all their buildings, and have they done everything possible to make sure that they're using energy

as efficiently as possible?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — First of all I'd just like to say that this was an unusual year for energy costs to go up. It was reflective of the world market; they don't usually go up that much in any given year. And SIAST is currently engaged in a process of energy audits and energy management.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Let's move down to the post-secondary capital part of the document. We see that last year there was about \$3.5 million set aside. This year we're talking about 23 million, 313 or 314 million. Now I understand that with the corporation that the provincial government put into place — the Education Infrastructure Financing Corporation — last year, and dismantling it this year, it's going to throw those numbers into disarray.

But would the minister please give us an explanation as to why the decision was made to abandon the financing corporation on such a short term of reference? The corporation was introduced with much fanfare a year ago and then 12 months later it's abandoned. Would the minister be able to give us an explanation for that?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — When we entered into the education infrastructure financing committee ... commission, we had consulted with the universities and with the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), the school trustees, and had agreed it would be a one-year pilot. The Public Sector Accounting Board in October, around October of this past fall, made a recommendation that we no longer do it that way and we have then adjusted our way of going forward for education financing.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Is this, Madam Minister, in effect a recognition of the fact that summary financial statements are a reality for the future of the government?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The way the province does summary financial statements is a question best addressed to the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, I think that summary financial statements are most satisfactorily answered by the Minister of Finance. But this is your department and this is part of your documentation for the budget. And it indicates that you have gone to a different way of financing.

You drop the — as a department and as a government — you drop the approach that you had been taking earlier of financing post-secondary institutions and now we've gone to a more realistic and more transparent approach. And I'm hopeful, Madam Minister, that having seen this particular change or reversal of position, a change back to what the government had been doing previously, that we can count on seeing this type of accounting in the future.

I guess if there's anything that will obfuscate or confuse the situation is when you bounce from system to system; and I don't think that anybody in the post-secondary sector, or even in the K to 12 (kindergarten to grade 12) sector, can afford to not know exactly where they stand when it comes to capital financing issues. That's a very problematic area for individuals

in this province and we have a lot of projects of great need. And I'm certain that people who are making decisions for the well-being of their students, either on the local basis or at post-secondary institutions, need to know exactly how it is that they're going to finance their obligations on behalf of their students and their campus superstructure.

Madam Minister, moving to expenditures by type, I see we have an increase in salaries of \$331,000. And that, I assume, is salaries strictly within the post-secondary sector of your department. Could you give us a clear indication if that's what it is; and if so, what particular groups are covered by those salaries?

(16:15)

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Just before I answer your question, I just want to mention with respect to your last question about post-secondary financing and the unclear atmosphere that we may have created among post-secondary institutions, they are very clear about how they're going . . . how they will access funding. They are not confused.

We do have a . . . This salary one you were talking about, it's a 2.5 increase in salaries is to reflect the collective bargaining agreements and those increases that occur year by year.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, they're salaries for staff within the department only?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Yes.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, I hate to jump around like this because it confuses us as well.

But we were talking about that infrastructure issue and it appears to me that there is some confusion. We've had long discussions, apparently, with the Minister of Finance over this. And it appears that the program that was put in place for infrastructure spending in the program last year has somewhere in the range of 32,000 . . . I'm sorry, \$32.4 million left for expenditure in this year and years forward.

Can you tell us how that's accounted for and where it's accounted for? And maybe the breakdown between post-secondary and K to 12 projects.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — On page 16 of the Estimates, in Education Infrastructure Financing Corporation, it's 32,400 and . . . 32 million, sorry, 400 left. That breaks down to a carry-over for K to 12 of 15.41 million and post-secondary, 16.964 million.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, thank you. The money that's dedicated for post-secondary, the figure you just gave me of 16 million-some-odd dollars is not reflected, I assume, in the budgetary figures on page 92 of \$23.314 million. If I understand it correctly, Madam Minister, the \$23.314 million that is budgeted for this year for post-secondary capital expenditures includes \$4.714 million in interest expense on money that was advanced previously, plus about \$18 million, eighteen six in fact, in new capital money that is being transferred to post-secondary institutions for this year.

So the 16 million you talked about just in your answer previously must be money that was carried forward from the financing program that was established last year, the Crown corporation financing initiative that was undertaken by your government last year, for projects for this year and into the future. Could you define for us what projects, and how much money?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The carry-over of 16 million is not in the 23 million. It is all, though, fully committed and it has been committed to a list of 16 projects, the names of which we can supply to you.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair . . . Deputy Chair, and to the minister and to her officials, welcome. And I'm pleased with the opportunity to speak, to ask questions again today.

Madam Minister, we'll look forward to your list of schools and projects that are going to be covered under last year's education infrastructure Crown corporation, and as . . . also the list of projects that are going to be looked at this year.

Madam Minister, there was an indication that there wasn't really any concern or any mix-up that . . . between the two systems now that you've gone back to it being totally funded under the Department of Learning.

And I can tell you one thing that is a problem is to school divisions that see that there's actually less than . . . way less than half of the money spent on capital construction this year that there was last year. And it is impacting a lot of school divisions, so it's not something that's gone unnoticed.

Madam Minister, what I wanted to speak to you about was a number of issues. First of all, the questions that I asked last week on mathematics and writing skills, one of the questions was what we were going to do to ensure that there was . . . students would exceed accepted provincial and national performances. Madam Minister, your answer at that time was that you were going to be working with department . . . with partners to address the results on a yearly basis.

And then, Madam Minister, you went onto a rant about the Saskatchewan Party but never really answered the question. And I've had e-mails, and I'm sure you have had too, from people who were very concerned that you'd rather talk about politics than talk about the students of this province and talk about the math and writing skills.

I'm wondering, the *Indicators* report used to be based on a yearly . . . came on a yearly basis and now they're on every two years basis which of course gives people of the province less of an opportunity to know what's happening. Can you tell me specifically what your department, now that you've had a couple of days to look at this issue, what you're going to be doing to ensure that our children have the skills in writing and math that they need to enter into the global economy?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, the department and myself take these matters very seriously but so does the whole education community. So we are doing specific things with our partners in the community, in the education community.

There's a curriculum and instruction team that is examining the report to look for the causes and some useful strategies to address the issues.

There's also the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) Subject Council which is looking at the issue. We've also got special recruitment financial assistance to recruit specialists, and in particular math specialists. We have an assessment for learning which is classroom specific. We have done grades 5, 8, and 11 in nine pilot schools last spring.

And we do take this very seriously and we do have ongoing approaches that are almost too, too many to list.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Madam Minister, and it is very important that we do hear the words that it's important to your department.

But at the same time, we remember that it's been five years since we've had the first report saying that we were behind in our mathematical skills in this province. So whatever we've been doing in the last five years hasn't been good enough.

So I guess there has to be some more initiatives or more . . . another approach that has to be taken to ensure that our children are equipped the way they should be in order to compete in the global economy.

Madam Minister, there are a couple of other issues that I'd like to deal with. And I don't know how many more times we'll get to be up in the next month, but I think I'll ask you some of them right now.

One is on the property tax commission that is going around the province, and I've had the opportunity to have been at a meeting and was very impressed with the work that they were doing. But in the long run the people that . . . the comments that were made at the meetings I was at and some of my other colleagues were at, it wasn't just a matter of how we're going to divide the money up between different assessment areas, but also if the government actually has a commitment to further funding of education.

(16:30)

I was concerned the first time we had an opportunity to speak in estimates and I asked about the covering teachers' salary and you'd indicated that the salaries would be covered for the calendar year 2003 but nothing had been committed for 2004. And now we have this commission that's working on the whole idea of who's going to be paying for education.

So I'm waiting to hear that your department actually has a desire to ensure that education is going to be paid for more from provincial coffers than from property tax; not just the ongoing daily operations but teachers' salaries and the other issues. Minister, I know that you're aware of the saying that education may be expensive but ignorance is a lot more expensive. So we have to ensure that this department looks at the issue.

So can you tell me, can you promise the people of the province that education is going to be looked at with a lot more priority in the next budget, if your government is here, and that you're

going to ensure that the students are going to be ready to get into the workplace by your commitment to education?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. When our government comes back to make the next budget, we'll continue to build on what we have demonstrated is a major commitment to education — \$1.2 billion.

When we talk about the portion of the education funding that comes from the property tax, that's in excess of \$600 million. The commission is looking at where do we best see that money coming from, not where it can be taken away from. Like we still need \$600 million in education. So there is only one taxpayer in the province and we need to find out how best we distribute the money.

The commission will give us recommendations, but we still have our government's commitment to funding education. It's our second top priority after health and we demonstrate that year after year and we'll continue to do so when we put the next budget together.

**Ms. Draude:** — Madam Minister, there are \$660 million that actually is taken in on property taxes in this province — that's people that are living not only in urban centres but in rural centres. And that's how much money we're expecting these people to pay for education. I don't think they're minding it, but what they are wanting to ensure is that we have the same type of commitment from the province that we have from the property owners.

Madam Minister, the issue . . . One other issue in the area of facilities that I'd like to address is the Yorkdale School Division and the fact that Theodore School has made application or is making application to look at its own school division. And one of their concerns is the school at Theodore.

I am wondering where your department stands on this issue, if you've had any contact with Yorkdale School Board or the committee, the ratepayers who are interested in having this school transferred to a new school division. What kind of input does your department have and are you going to be giving this school the support it needs to ensure that our children are educated in the way their parents want them to be, that their parents actually have some choice in education? And that is basically what the School<sup>PLUS</sup> issue was about and the Community Schools — having parental input — so can you tell me where you're standing on this issue?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Theodore has voted to establish . . . The Theodore electors have voted to establish a Catholic school division and the next step is a minister's order to establish that division. The Catholic electors will then elect their own school board and when that school board is elected we respect the autonomy of school boards. It will be up to them to decide how to deliver school services to their students.

**Ms. Draude:** — Madam Minister, through the cost-sharing agreements for building schools and for operating schools, the department has put a significant amount of money into the Theodore School over the years so there would be some . . . I would imagine you would agree that the department feels they



have some share or some responsibility for that school. So my question to you is: do you have any input or any say in where this school will go if the new school division is established?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The legal owner of the school is the Yorkdale School Division and it is up to them to decide what they do with that school.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. There's one other issue I'd like to touch on before we go . . . one of my colleagues asks questions, and that's the whole issue of FASD (fetal alcohol spectrum disorder). And I am very interested in hearing what your department is doing in this area.

I do know that it's an area where there's been some agreement between six departments to work on the issue. We know that there's two sides to the story, both the preventative side and the diagnostic side. And the education issue in the school system is something that I'm very, I'm very in tune to and I'm interested in your views on it.

Could you tell me how much money Learning is spending on the issue of educational promotional for FASD, and if you're spending any money on the diagnostic side of FASD?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Having had the FAS/FAE (fetal alcohol syndrome/fetal alcohol effects) file when I was the associate minister of Health, I do want to say that the promotion material that goes out about FAS and FASD is largely under the purview of the Department of Health and the Minister of Health, as is the diagnosis. What Learning does support is special education. And depending on the severity and intensity of the needs of the students, we have different levels of funding per student for that in our operating grants.

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, Madam Minister, which department takes the lead in looking at and handling the whole issue of FASD?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — There's different components to FAS and FASD and the approach to dealing with it, so we have an interdepartmental committee where each one of us brings our specific interests and expertise to the table.

There is also a western and northern provincial and territorial protocol agreement that has a specific subcommittee dealing with FAS and FASD. As is in Health, it's the western . . . started off with the Western provinces but now includes the North and it is also pooling resources across the provinces to deal with it from the health angle and also from the education angle.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. I would imagine though for an initiative to go ahead somebody has to take the lead and someone has to call the meetings and someone has to be the one that says, I'm in charge of this issue. Can you tell me which department that is?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Health actually is the lead department that chairs the committee. What I didn't get to mention when I was up answering is that the Kids First program, which is housed now under the Department of Learning, is an assessment and screening tool for children and families in need and that's also

where we deliver some of our programs, through those targeted resources.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Can you tell me when in the education system, from what grade, do students start learning about the issue of FASD, and can you tell me how many students have been diagnosed with this disorder within the school system?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — This is part of our curriculum — the health curriculum that's in Learning — and in grades 2, 3, and 4 the students are exposed to discussions about choices and lifestyles. And in the higher grades, like 7 and 8, they start getting into the risks associated with some of the addictions and some of the choices that they make and the effects on fetuses and children.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. The other part of the question was can you tell me how many students are considered or diagnosed with FASD in the school system?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — I'm just going to give you the number of the high-cost students that we finance and that's 4,552. There's varying degrees and different diagnoses included in that. We don't have a specific breakout of FAS or FASD or FAE; it manifests itself in so many different ways. We just have it captured under high-cost student support.

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

Madam Minister, I just wanted to ask, at this point has your government made a determination on whether there would be continued funding to the Bruno Campus, extension division of the University of Saskatchewan?

(16:45)

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The Bruno campus has not been historically directly funded through the Department of Learning; it's the U of S that determines its funding.

**Ms. Julé:** — Well thank you, Madam Minister. I thought there may be some information coming from your officials in regards to the determination that had been made, because there was some deliberation going on as to whether or not the Bruno campus was a viable campus right now. And of course the community and the surrounding district have made very good use of that campus and are certainly hoping that there will be a positive consideration given to continuing the education that has been provided there in the last while.

Madam Minister, I'd like to just move to a different line of questioning. I'd like to know what the relationship is of the Department of Learning to the newly named First Nations University of Canada.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I was very, very honoured to partake in the ceremony on Saturday at the naming of the First Nations University of Canada — the magnificent ceremony, a historic ceremony.

And our relationship is the same with this entity as it was with SIFC (Saskatchewan Indian Federated College). Nothing has

changed with the name change. We are a minority funder; the major funding comes from the federal government.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, does your department or was your department asked for any help or information in the compilation of the MLA guest list to the grand opening of the First Nations University of Canada?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — As far as we were aware this was the SIFC's event, a third party event. They organized it and they had their own guest list.

**Ms. Julé:** — Madam Minister, could I ask you when you received your invitation and whether you received that invitation . . . whether you received the invitation to your office here at the legislature or was it to your constituency office?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — I'm not absolutely sure which office it came to. It's in my minister's office because I was . . . I think it came there because I was participating or asked to participate in the opening of the doors, so I was there in an official capacity.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you very much, Madam Minister. Madam Minister, was your department asked for any assistance in the compilation of the guest list for the grand opening?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — My same answer, as I just said, is no. It was their own event and they set . . . they established their own guest list.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Now, Madam Minister, we want to move back to some of the other specifics concerning education available through the auspices of SIAST in the province.

One of the interesting approaches the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology has taken in its delivery of programs, and they've done it with some pride over the past number of years, is a competency-based approach to learning. And I don't think I have to explain that to the minister or her officials.

But it seemed to me that that was an approach taken with considerable enthusiasm and reasonably good results. But on two or three separate occasions lately, I've had representation made to my office by students at SIAST who are fearful that the approach is going to be dropped — the competency-based method of learning is going to be eliminated and the approach will return to the more traditional classroom method. Can the minister confirm for us today that that is indeed the intentions of SIAST?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Each program at SIAST has its own advisory committee made up of, specifically, with industry support and participation. And those committees advise SIAST of what would best be the approach for that particular program.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Can the minister confirm for us today how long the competency-based approach has been employed at SIAST and what comparative relationship there might be to the results of that approach versus the traditional classroom approach?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — It's difficult to describe the history of the

competency approach since some programs have never had it. And the approach for delivery of a program is determined by the committee, the advisory committee, and it is based on the needs of industry at that point in time.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, I would think that if an industry advisory committee was making the call on this type of program, they would want a program that would provide them the very best, well-qualified candidates for employment in the private sector. And I'm not sure that that would necessarily eliminate the competency-based approach.

I'm wondering, Madam Minister, if there isn't a financial reason for making this decision. It seems to me that competency would provide a better, more well-rounded, and maybe a more efficient result in terms of the educational process for the individuals than the traditional classroom method. And I'm not so sure that industry would really want to make this particular recommendation. There must, I think, be some other reason for it.

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — As I said in my previous answer, the decisions about how the programs should be made are done on . . . in consultation with the advisory committee, which are . . . have industry representatives sitting on the advisory committee. And they make their recommendations according to what their industry sees as needed from the program.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, we've had this same concern brought to us by at least three different classes at SIAST. The most recent one, and I'm reading from a letter that was actually sent to you and a copy provided for me, this is from the Wascana machine shop program. We've also heard from automotive mechanics. We've heard from a couple of other mechanical specialties and I believe also automotive, I'm sorry, auto body specialties.

And it's apparent the students think that this is a much superior approach. And if they believe it's a superior approach, it gives them a better basis for employment opportunities and it trains them more thoroughly and completely, what is the push then to move to the traditional classroom-style approach to training people in these areas of specialization?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — I'm not sure how much clearer I can be. I'm not aware of any push for any one way or another. As I've said before, the decisions on how to deliver a program are done with the advice of the advisory committee. And that committee is comprised of industry representatives who will have their say in how the program should best be delivered to serve the needs of the students and the industry.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Madam Minister, has the industry given your office any indication of why it's requiring these changes, then? Have they been in touch with the department, in any respect, to say, we're unsatisfied with the program the way it's been?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — Traditionally the advice from the advisory committees goes to deans of the different programs and the program heads. They do not come to the department or to the minister.

**Mr. Elhard:** — I think that that's an issue that's going to have

to have further discussion at some future date, Madam Minister. Because, you know, I think if the results are in and the preference by the students for this approach is clear, I'd really have to hear from the industry that they do not want this before I could accept the fact that it should be changed.

And if there is a financial constraint on SIAST or other similar types of institutions that compels them to make a change, I just need to know about that. But if the industry is saying they want a change, we ought to know about that through this discussion today. And I would be surprised if you have not heard specifically from the industry as to why they would ask for a reverting to the previous type of approach.

Madam Minister, we're running a little short of time today, so I do want to ask one other specific area of questioning. It had to do with a press release that was made by the union that represented instructors at SIAST where they cried foul about a government decision to provide three-quarters of a million dollars of job training money directly to a call centre that was indicating an interest in relocating to Regina.

The unionized employees said that they could have provided that training through SIAST quite readily. The Minister of Industry and Resources, I think, said that he thought it was more propitious to give the money directly to the company involved and there was quite a disagreement between the minister and obviously the union on this particular issue.

Madam Minister, may I ask why was not SIAST given an opportunity to provide this training and why was the \$750,000 given to the applicant directly?

**Hon. Ms. Junor:** — The training that was involved was proprietary training for the company's own staff and SIAST will be involved in the evaluation of the outcomes of the program.

And I understand this is our last question, so I would like to thank the members for their questions and thank my officials for participating today.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Chair, I move the committee report progress on Department of Learning and proceed to estimates on Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization.

**General Revenue Fund  
Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization  
Vote 1**

**Subvote (AG01)**

**The Deputy Chair:** — It now being near 5 o'clock, the committee will stand recessed until 7 o'clock p.m.

The committee recessed until 19:00.

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