

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present on behalf of residents of the Prairie West Health District concerning acute care. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to abandon any plans to reduce acute care or close any more hospitals in the Prairie West Health District.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from the communities of Dodsland, Kerrobert, Luseland, Macklin, and Unity.

I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have petitions to present on behalf of Saskatchewan disenfranchised widows. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to have the Workers' Compensation Board Act amended whereby benefits and pensions are reinstated to disenfranchised widows and whereby all revoked pensions are reimbursed to them retroactively with interest to April 17, 1985.

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

These petitions come from the Moose Jaw areas, Mr. Speaker, and from Cabri in the southwest.

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions to present on behalf of the farm crisis in Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to demand that the federal government work with Saskatchewan to put in place a farm aid package that provides real relief to those who need it and that the provincial government develop a long term farm safety net program as it promised to do when it cancelled GRIP against the wishes of farmers.

The community involved in the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are the community of MacNutt.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as well to present petitions to the Legislative Assembly. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to have the Workers' Compensation Board Act amended whereby benefits and pensions are reinstated to disenfranchised widows and whereby all revoked pensions are reimbursed to them retroactively with interest to April 17, 1985.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the petitions I have and I'm presenting to the Legislative Assembly are signed by individuals from the Regina, Lumsden areas of the province.

I so present.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of citizens concerned about the level of royalty taxes on new drilling in Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Whereas your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reduce the royalty taxes on new drilling in Saskatchewan, to stop job losses, and create new employment in this sector.

Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Gainsborough, Carnduff, Glen Ewen, and Carievale. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition to present today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to abandon any plans to reduce acute care or close any more hospitals in the Prairie West Health District.

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

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this are from Dodsland and Kerrobert.

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I too rise to present a petition and I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to abandon any plans to reduce acute care or close any more hospitals in the Prairie West Health District.

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

And these are all signed by the good people from Kerrobert. Thank you.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise again today on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan to present a petition. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to call on federal and provincial governments to dedicate a significantly greater portion of

fuel tax revenues toward road maintenance and construction so that Saskatchewan residents may have a safe highway system that meets their needs.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by the good folks out in Montmartre, Fillmore, Creelman, and Osage.

And I so present.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of citizens that are concerned with respect to the budget for highways they'll see tomorrow, that perhaps highways won't be given the priorities that they should, and as a result we need to put more money towards highways.

The petitioners pray as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to call on federal and provincial governments to dedicate a significantly greater portion of the fuel tax revenues for road maintenance and construction so Saskatchewan residents may have a safe highway system that meets their needs.

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

Mr. Speaker, those who've signed these petitions are from communities across the Thunder Creek constituency — Gravelbourg, Gouldtown, Morse, Rush Lake, Main Centre, Herbert.

I so present.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are very concerned about children with specific learning disabilities. It's my pleasure to read the prayer as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide essential funding and ensure the delivery of scientifically proven diagnostic assessment and programming for children with learning disabilities in order that they have access to an education that meets their needs and allows them to reach their full potential.

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

The signators today, Mr. Speaker, are from Prince Albert and Montreal Lake.

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, I present petitions, a prayer of relief, which reads as follows:

That your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to relocate Highway 40 in order to alleviate the congestion at the entrance to the city of North Battleford.

Your petitioners this afternoon come from the communities of Gallivan, Richard, Cochin, North Battleford, and Mosquito First Nation.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions to

present on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to call upon the provincial and federal governments to immediately take steps to end unfair world subsidies and provide farmers with prompt relief from declining income and act as watchdogs against rising input costs which are harming the rural economy.

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

Mr. Speaker, numbers of people from one end of the province to the other, from Humboldt to Rockglen, Lebret, Fort Qu'Appelle, Whitewood, Broadview, and many other places, Mr. Speaker, are represented in these petitions.

I so present.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning, Mr. Speaker, I have from the rural municipality of Longlaketon, No. 219, a petition, and I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately start work on the rebuilding of our secondary highway system to provide for safe driving on what are becoming known as pothole roads, to enter into negotiations with SARM and SUMA for a long-term plan of rural road restoration reflecting future needs, and to provide safety for all drivers as the new trucking regulations changes safety factors on these roads.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will every pray.

These come from Earl Grey, Mr. Speaker, as well as other communities around that area, and I'm happy to present them today.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the petitions presented at the last sitting have been reviewed and found to be in order. Pursuant to rule 12(7) these petitions are hereby received.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 14 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Social Services: how many Social Services recipients have been in contact with your department regarding repayment of the overpayments that were made to beneficiaries in January because of a bank error?

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on the 16th day move first reading of a Bill, The Highway Traffic Amendment, 1999; and I also give notice that I shall on day no. 14 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Energy and Mines and Minister of Highways: how many open dumping sites are there where radioactive materials mixed with salt water or tailings from

fracing of crude oil and natural gas wells are there in the province; are exemptions from road bans provided to transport these materials to separating plants in the springtime; if not, why not.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature somebody who doesn't need an introduction to this place, and I'm talking about Jan Baker who is going to be appointed our Chief Electoral Officer this afternoon.

Jan Baker has worked since 1979 in the electoral office for the province of Saskatchewan. For the last almost two years, she has been the Acting Chief Electoral Officer. And before that, she was the assistant Chief Electoral Officer. She's worked with many elections. And she also worked on the various electoral boundary committees as technical support. She also was a Canadian observer and worked in elections in Namibia in 1989, Ethiopia in 1992, and Peru in 1992.

I would ask all members of our legislature to provide a warm welcome to our new Chief Electoral Officer, and I would ask that she would stand so we can acknowledge her.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As part of the official opposition we would also like to welcome Jan Baker to the Assembly today and we look forward to her officially taking over the role of Chief Electoral Officer of Saskatchewan. We look forward to working with her in the very near future both at our campaign school and during the election time.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce some other guests that are in your gallery, members of the Saskatchewan disenfranchised widows. I would ask these people to stand as I call out their name.

I'd like to introduce you to Rose Polsom, who has been in the House many times; Patricia Lang from Saskatoon; Helen Kazuska from Saskatoon; Ruby James from Saskatoon; Margaret Diener from Saskatoon; Opal Barkman from Saskatoon; Eleanor Berg, also Saskatoon; Grace Munro from Saskatoon; Daphne Bergen from Saskatoon; and Lois Lanning, also of Saskatoon.

Also up there in the gallery, Mr. Speaker, from Moose Jaw are Dorothy Davies and her husband Bob Davies, and Shirley Rolfe.

I would ask the Assembly to welcome both Jan Baker to our Assembly and the members of the disenfranchised widows of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to add the voice of the Liberal caucus in our welcoming Jan Baker to the Assembly today, and I will be making some further comments later this afternoon.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to welcome to the Assembly some friends, Cal and Noreen Mills, who are seated in the east gallery. I welcome them to the Assembly as well. It's nice to see them here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to introduce Cal and Noreen Mills to you and through you to all of my colleagues in the legislature. They're dear friends of mine from Fleming, Saskatchewan, and they most certainly have had an avid interest in the workings of this Assembly as well as politics throughout Saskatchewan.

So I ask everyone to please give them another warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I invite the members to become comfortable — this is going to take a while.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of Labour, and all members on this side of the House extend a very warm welcome to the Disenfranchised Widows Action Group. We welcome their participation in the democratic process and we welcome them to this Assembly today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I should like to draw the attention of the members and yourself to a group of young students who are seated in your gallery. They are from Wilfrid Walker School in the constituency of Regina Victoria. They are 21 grade 3 and 4 students. They are accompanied by their teachers and a couple of pre-interns: Renée Quinlin, Jeff Symsniuk, and Kristina Potter.

I look forward to meeting with this group shortly after question period to see if they have any questions, recognizing they can't ask them in here but to see if I can answer those questions for them, Mr. Speaker. And I would ask all members to extend them a warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — And, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, there's another group in your gallery that are here today and they are concerned about issues for children. They are youth, families, and youth workers who have provided information to the Department of Social Services and other agencies about services needed for at-risk youth and families and they are keenly interested in issues related to the exploitation of children and youth. And I would ask them to stand as they are introduced.

First, Delora Parisian. Delora is the co-ordinator of the action committee for children at risk in Regina. Ashley Kyle-Tyndale who is the co-facilitator for the Rainbow Youth Center, peer helper program. Valerie Racette. Val is the outreach support worker with action committee for children at risk in Regina. Jamie Johnson who is a peer helper. Louise Bananish, Candace

Bitternose, Kristy Littlechief, Michelle Bananish, Katherine Bananish and William Goodpipe. They are accompanied here today, Mr. Speaker, by Denis Losie who is a program manager with family youth services for the department in the Regina regional office and I would ask all members to make them feel very welcome here today.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Shillington: — I want to . . . I was going to say introduce, but I want to . . . I think it's unnecessary to introduce this person to anyone except perhaps the pages. I want to acknowledge the presence in the House of a former Speaker of the Assembly, Herman Rolfes. He was in addition a 20-year veteran of the House, had the — I wouldn't say pleasure — but he had the honour of being the minister of Health — I'm not sure being Minister of Health has ever been described as a pleasure — but the honour of being Minister of Health, Social Services, Continuing Education during the Blakeney years and that comes on top of a distinguished career as an educator. So I'd invite all members to join me in acknowledging this distinguished Saskatchewan citizen.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Minister of Social Services and the other colleagues in the House to welcome the people here today from the family youth services. I'm sure there's going to be lots of information to gain today and I hope you come back very often to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Junor: — I'd like to add my welcome and introduce to you again a distinguished constituent of Saskatoon Eastview, Mr. Herman Rolfes, and add my welcome as well as everyone else's to Herman again.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce from northern Saskatchewan, but first of all with a northern Saskatchewan greeting — edlanetey and tansi — and it means how are you and very welcome to the House of this legislature.

And up in our gallery, in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, we have Max Morin, also Joan MacDonald — Max is from Ile-a-la-Crosse; Joan is from Stony Rapids — Wilf Boychuk from Creighton, Margaret Aubichon from Patuanak. Mr. Speaker, these are the members of the New North, and also with them is Audrey Aubichon and Marcel Piche. I would like all members to give them a warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join my colleague from Cumberland to also welcome the people from the far north. And I know the hon. member does do the Cree introduction now and then, and I want to do the Dene introduction to these people. I do want to point out that it is

Audrey's birthday today and her mother is one of the top bingo players in northern Saskatchewan, so . . .

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

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Goulet: — I forgot, Mr. Speaker, to introduce as well deputy minister of Northern Affairs, Mr. Alex Campbell.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Show and Sale of Bulls in Lloydminster

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Energy and Mines and myself attended and spoke at a chamber of commerce luncheon in Lloydminster yesterday. And the folks are optimistic and enthusiastic about our future.

Recently the Lloydminster Agriculture Exhibition Association hosted the 80th annual Pride of the Prairies bull sale and show. It is the biggest bull sale in all of Canada and a major one for Saskatchewan breeders. Eighty years, Mr. Speaker, of hard work, determination, tenacity, and a special brand of tender loving care on the part of Saskatchewan cattle producers has ensured this show's existence and success. It's also ensured the success and existence of the Saskatchewan breeders.

And the Lloydminster Agriculture Exhibition Association and its manager Mike Sidoruk deserve recognition on a job well done. More than well done, actually, because sales from the four-day event this year were \$1.2 million, Mr. Speaker. Free enterprise and hope are alive and living in Lloydminster, and that's no bull, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Meetings Held in Hafford and Rosthern

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two issues this afternoon I'd like to briefly speak on. It is my pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to give an up-to-date version to all the members on the health meeting I attended in Hafford on Tuesday evening.

Mr. Speaker, there were approximately 80 people in attendance and it was a very lively debate. I'm proud to make known to all members that the resolution the Saskatchewan Party brought forth to the people of Hafford was enthusiastically passed with only about a half dozen people voting against it. Unfortunately, the three-year plan could not be released as the Minister of Health is holding it tight.

The people of Hafford are intensely proud of their facility. They want to keep it but there is a definite fear that the frequent and eloquent pleadings of the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) from Redberry, together with the acute and intense attention he pays to all proceedings, may not be enough to save the hospital.

On another front, Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon I attended a

meeting in Rosthern where the whole plan for the debranning plant was presented. The hall was packed with enthusiastic farmers and supporters. Their wish is to all someday soon be able to market their products for cash and without a quota book. Some are already doing this. It is an exciting venture in an exciting constituency. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Community Volunteers Honoured

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past Saturday I was pleased to attend a special event at the Normanview Shopping Centre in my constituency — the 10th annual volunteer wall of fame induction ceremony.

The event was sponsored by Harvard Developments Limited with the help of the West Zone Community Association Board.

The wall of fame, Mr. Speaker, which is on permanent display at the shopping centre, honours those who volunteer their time and talent to enhance life at the community level. As nearly is always the case, Mr. Speaker, three new people honoured for volunteering their spare time are already leading active, full lives. I have the time only to mention their names, not in the many ways which they serve our community.

Judy Zawyrucka is a licensed practical nurse at the Pasqua Hospital and was named outstanding community leader for her years of service with the Rosemont-Mount Royal Community Association. Carol Biberdorf has been a volunteer on the Dieppe Community Association for more than 20 years and was named outstanding volunteer. And Ian Stavness, a grade 12 honour student and student leader at O'Neill High School was named outstanding youth for his work in athletics, music, and in his church.

My congratulations, and those of all in the Assembly here, to these three outstanding volunteers for being honoured last Saturday. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

University Funding

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the NDP came to power in 1991, funding at both the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan has been cut seven times over eight years. Yesterday the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) said that it's going to be forced to increase tuition next year and in some faculties tuition may even double.

The Premier often talks about his government's desire to invest in our future. But this is the same Premier that has allowed a nursing shortage, a potential teacher shortage, and now has the universities talking about doubling tuition in many of the professional fields we need the most.

When the budget is tabled tomorrow, I hope the Premier can assure the future doctors, veterinarians, and all the other students in professional faculties across Saskatchewan that they will not be forced into any further debt to finance their future.

The Government of Saskatchewan has already cut post-secondary education funding to the bone. More and more students are forced to take out student loans for their education and the amounts just keep growing. The average university student is borrowing \$7,000 per year. That's close to \$30,000 over the course of a degree.

The Premier isn't investing in our future, he is mortgaging our future. Mr. Speaker, this isn't the Saskatchewan way, this is the NDP way. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Cheerleading Competition

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to tell you about a cheerleading competition I attended at Riffel High School on Saturday, March 13. After watching the timing, the athletic ability, and the total sense of rhythm that these wonderful groups of young people had, I can certainly appreciate why cheerleading is now officially recognized as a sport. Lifts, basket tosses, dancing, tumbling — I saw it all and then some.

It was certainly clear to me that a great deal of skill, practice, and concentration went into each of these performances. And to my delight, Mr. Speaker, the junior team from Winston Knoll Collegiate had boys on their squad, some of whom I am told also play on football and soccer teams. It's my understanding that this co-ed team is new to Winston Knoll and, to my knowledge, Regina as well — way to go boys.

I would like to congratulate Riffel High School for hosting this second annual cheerleading competition, and to Riffel High School cheerleaders for their third place finish in the competition. I also extend my congratulations to the Lumsden High School cheerleaders for taking home the gold in the small varsity competition and to the Winston Knoll Collegiate senior cheerleading squad for taking home the gold in the large varsity competition.

Coaches have done a fantastic job of working with these young people to create an amazing entertainment package. Your schools are so fortunate to have the talent you bring to their staffs. They must be proud of you and their cheerleading teams.

What delightful young people and what wonderful talent. I am so tremendously proud that you attend schools in the constituency I represent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Swift Current Health District

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to take a moment to talk about the progressive and necessary things happening in the Swift Current Health District, the birthplace of medicare, and the home of health district number one.

We have a new chemotherapy outreach program so that residents of the great Southwest no longer have to make the long trek to Regina or Saskatoon for treatment. The program manager is nurse Debbie Unger, and her team leader is Fern

Nevard.

Our wellness programs which provide health monitoring, foot care, and health education are really catching on. We began with five locations serving an average of 350 people in 1994. Last year programs were held in 11 locations a month and served 2,251 people per month. Barb Luchenski, our home care case manager, coordinates the program.

Wellness works, Mr. Speaker — an argument lost on the members opposite.

We have initiated a pilot project at the Swift Current Care Centre — a zero lift program — to help eliminate workplace injuries and increase the quality of care for residents, run by Nurse Shannon Reaves.

And we have a traumatic response team at the ready to respond to the stress caused by farm accidents, vehicle accidents, or community emergencies or suicide — coordinated by Swift Current District mental health staff.

A few examples, Mr. Speaker, of the excellent health care provided by excellent doctors, nurse, and staff people in Swift Current where good health is our byword.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Charity Foundations

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

Mr. Premier, the Saskatchewan Party has discovered another one of these NDP (New Democratic Party) charity foundations, the foundations that were overcharging taxpayers. From 1989 to 1992 the Churchill Heights Assistance Association collected over \$41,000 from the expense accounts of the NDP MLA for Coronation Park.

Mr. Premier, did any of this money ever go to the NDP?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated yesterday that as far as anyone knows — although the records of political donations are public, any donations over \$100; if the member opposite was concerned he'd go and check — but as far as anyone knows there was absolutely no money going to the NDP.

But one thing I do want to say to the member opposite, I was reading in the *Esterhazy Journal* about members of the opposition, and in the editorial, Mr. Bruce Penton says:

I still maintain those Sask Party reps, while working vigorously on our behalf in a number of areas, are still serving in a rather fraudulent (fraudulent) way.

And he does go on to be critical of the Bill.

An Hon. Member: — Said what a wonderful guy he is . . .

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well the member says that what a wonderful guy he is; he also says:

Our MLA, Bob Bjornerud, still doesn't appreciate my repeated calls last year for the Sask Party MLAs to resign and seek election under their new Sask . . . banner.

Now if you are what you say . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Next question.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Deputy Premier said the MLAs had nothing to do with running these charity foundations. Let's just go down the list of the Churchill Heights Assistance Association. The NDP member for Coronation Park was one of the original directors. So was Mike Dalrymple, the president of Tommy Douglas House; Donna Wytrykush, the member's 1991 campaign manager and constituency secretary; Scott Gray, the member's 1991 election fundraising co-ordinator; Larry Scheffer and Gail McKay, two more campaign workers; Larry Deters, former chief official agent to the provincial NDP. And the list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Premier, will you admit that the member for Coronation Park and the NDP were running phoney charity foundations?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Nothing could be further from the truth. Nothing could be further from the truth. You list out a number of directors of the non-profit organization, all of them who I think are honourable people. And what you're trying to do, as I said yesterday, is cast a wide net, cast mud and see if anyone will stick to anyone else to try to cover up for your friend Mr. Berntson.

And I want to say to the member opposite, on his credibility, which he is testing again today, I want to quote from the newspaper, *Star-Phoenix*, November 21, '97, where Mr. Krawetz says:

Liberals should always wear . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Now the hon. member recognizes of course that other than within a quote he's not going to make reference to proper names of members of the House and I'll ask him to guide himself accordingly in his remarks in the House.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am quoting from the article and I want to make that clear. It goes on to say that:

Although he had been a party member for only four years, Krawetz . . . assured supporters throughout (the) . . . campaign . . . he was a man of commitment and a man of his word.

And what did he say? He said:

" . . . I want to bring back that sense of trust in a politician that what is said by me is what I stick with," Krawetz told

reporters.

He later went on in the interview and said:

... his rural upbringing taught him that "if you committed yourself to be part of a team ... (then you should stick to the project.)"

That's what he said.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Premier, during the first year of operation the NDP member himself was one of its directors. During that year, the NDP charity foundation had expenses of \$12,600, but it charged Legislative Assembly the maximum amount available for constituency expenses, \$15,700. This NDP charity foundation overcharged by about 20 per cent and ended the year with a \$3,000 surplus. Your NDP member was one of its directors and he was signing the requests for payment forms. Mr. Premier, do you think that's legal?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — The member is going back over information he delivered to the House yesterday but yesterday it was a \$10,000 surplus, today it's a \$3,000 surplus. So they're backing away; they're backing away.

But I want to say to the member opposite that what was done with the money on the wind up of the corporation is it went to a fund, a scholarship for young people at the universities in Saskatchewan. That's what happened to it. It's clear, it's obvious; and compare that to the boys and girls in the backroom dealing out thousand dollar bills. Eric, a thousand for you, a thousand for you, do you want another hit over here. The thousand dollars going around. And trying to compare the people in this organization to the Eric Berntsons and the others, to try to do political support for your Tories because you're embarrassed about your position. You should be ashamed of yourself.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate if the Deputy Premier would listen to my question because the comment today was regarding the Churchill heights association; yesterday's questions were about North Broad. Totally two different foundations.

Mr. Deputy Premier, I'd like to read paragraph 98 of Justice Gerein's ruling. And I quote:

... several things are clear about ... the constituency office and services allowance. The first is that there must be an expense incurred. A Member cannot simply requisition the allowance ... advance payments are not possible.

A \$3,000 surplus means the member was either requisitioning for expenses that were not incurred, or he was getting advance payments. Either way, it's against the rules. And he can't blame someone else because he was one of the board of directors.

Mr. Deputy Premier, do you think these payments were legal?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite, yesterday in the House when he made allegations of illegality here in the Assembly, and when challenged by reporters out in the foyer, said, no, no, I don't mean it. Trying to be protected by accusations here in the House, and then walking outside and changing your tune you know isn't fair, but it doesn't surprise me when you're part of the Tory caucus. That shouldn't surprise anyone.

What Mr. Wally Coates said, who was president of the Regina community development fund, he said that there was no reason to return the surplus to the legislature when the organization was wound down when it was. That was their opinion. Now if you have evidence that Mr. Wally Coates or any members — any members of the non-profit organization — did anything wrong with the money, benefited themselves or anyone else, then you should follow the process that you and your Tory friends — Joan Duncan, Eric Berntson — know so well; ask them how to do it, they will know the process of what you should do with that information.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know it's very clear that none of the NDP members' expense allowance was supposed to go to the NDP. However, on the 1992 financial statement, there is an entry of \$1,559 paid to the Albert North medieval feast. The Albert North medieval feast, Mr. Deputy Premier? That's an NDP fundraiser. In fact, I have a lovely picture of the Albert North medieval feast right here. This picture contains Doug Archer, Bob Lyons, and other members from Moose Jaw. And here's the member, the NDP member for Coronation Park, standing next to what looks like an executioner, Mr. Speaker. It seems kind of appropriate.

Mr. Deputy Premier, do you think it's appropriate that money from an MLA expense allowance was funnelled through this NDP charity foundation to the NDP Albert North medieval feast?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — What I won't accept on that member's advice and his words here in the House that what he's saying is accurate.

But what I do say, if the member opposite has any accusation or evidence that he believes that there was wrongdoing, that there was wrongdoing — you know the process.

But I want to say to the member opposite that the money, when the group dissolved, was put to a scholarship fund. And I have here from the University of Saskatchewan 1998-99 undergraduate awards, a guide for entering students, all students in the province, the scholarships that are listed — one, two, on the next page ... oh there it is, the Allan Blakeney Entrance Scholarship. A public document from the university that the member will know about.

So I say to you, if you believe or if you know that there's evidence that any money, any money that was used inappropriately, you know the process and what you should do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Deputy Premier, this NDP charity foundation was struck from the corporate registry in 1994 for failing to file financial statements. I should note that it only filed financial statements for three years. And every year the so-called auditor's report was signed by directors of the corporation, including the member's constituency secretary. Not exactly an appropriate accounting procedure, Mr. Deputy Premier.

Mr. Deputy Premier, the financial statements show they ran a surplus every year. And the last financial statement shows an accumulated surplus of \$6,564. Mr. Deputy Premier, where did that money go? Did any of it go to the NDP?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — First of all I say to the member opposite, obviously the members who were on the board of directors and the board of the organization will have made decisions that they made with the money that they charged to the MLAs. My point is here is that the directors who have been interviewed say that it was all used in an appropriate manner.

The question is, Mr. Speaker, why this panic in the Tory ranks this week. Why is that?

Well *Maclean's* magazine of March 29 says, "Prairie Titan falls." And there's a nice picture of Mr. Berntson and the headline is, "A Saskatchewan senator may face a year in jail." That's why you're panicking.

And the article goes on to say:

Screaming aside, Romanow's NDP now completing its second term appears in good shape for a June vote. A Liberal-sponsored poll to be released this week has the NDP as the first choice at 54 per cent of the decided voters, and leading in all areas of the province. The Saskatchewan Party trails at 22 per cent.

So the old hockey gloves come off. Throw off the gloves, throw off the gloves, let's have a fight and see if we can't accomplish something. You know you not going to win the election.

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Next question.

Salaries of Chief Executive Officers of District Health Boards

Mr. McLane: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP is telling the health care workers to settle for 2, 2, and 2. But just like anything else the NDP does, it's not do as I do but do as I say.

Your government, Mr. Speaker, is offering workers a flat 2, 2, and 2. However, if you are an NDP-appointed health board pack, forget those guidelines and write your own salary increase. And, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what they did.

From freedom of information requests obtained, we have learned that over two years, the CEO (chief executive officer) of North-East Health District gave himself a 14.4 per cent salary increase. The North Central CEO gave himself a 13.3 per cent increase. The CEO of the North Valley Health District thought he deserved a 16.4 per cent increase. And the poor, poor CEO of the Prince Albert Health District felt he needed a

17.6 per cent increase on his \$95,000 a year salary in order to make ends meet.

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the ministers, how come the salary guidelines apply to the desperately-needed and overworked health care workers in this province, but not to your political-appointed hacks? Why is there one rule for NDP appointees and another one for your hacks?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the member may not know, the majority of people on district health boards are in fact elected through a ward system and a majority of those people on the health district boards are appointed through a nomination process. Ads are run in the paper and various people in the community can ask for people to be nominated and those names are submitted to the Department of Health, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's not the Department of Health or the ministers of Health that determine the remuneration for the CEOs.

And just as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, which I think is really important in this discussion, as you know we have had the Dorsey report, we have indicated to the health workers and the employer that not only do we have the mandate available, but because of Dorsey and because of some of the inequities, there's additional money available to do equal pay for equal work. And on top of that, Mr. Speaker, we are applying the pay equity policy to the health sector.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As far I know, Mr. Speaker, health board CEOs are not elected. And as usual, the NDP are trying to convolute everything so that they don't have to fess up to what they've done. Mr. Speaker, on June 21, on June 21, 1990 a former backbencher, now Deputy Premier, said and I quote:

And I just don't know how you can expect the public to believe that some, who are making an area of \$100,000 a year deserve a 10 per cent increase, while people on the front line are being told there is no money for increases.

That's the Deputy Premier, Mr. Speaker. It's funny how being in government for eight years can change one's priority.

Mr. Speaker, the government for the past two years has had no money for front line care workers but has had enough for their appointed hacks in the district health boards and others. Mr. Minister, why are your priorities so wrong? Why was there no money for health care workers or much needed services but buckets for your hand-picked CEOs?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to tell the member that I'm a girl not a boy; I'm Madam Minister.

Mr. Speaker, what I can say to the member opposite is that in the province of Saskatchewan we are the only province that has gone to a majority of the people being elected on the district

boards. All other provinces have government-appointed boards. That's point number one.

Point number two, Mr. Speaker, it is the boards that determine who is appointed CEO for their district.

I might also add, Mr. Speaker, that we were the first province to go towards an integrated, coordinated approach to health services. In the old days we used to have over 400 independent boards. And we didn't have an integration between long-term care, home care, mental health services, addiction services, acute care, respite, and palliative care along with all of the other services, Mr. Speaker.

We do not want to go back to the past as the members just announced in their platform. We want to have an integrated approach to health delivery. Health is a continuum of care, Mr. Speaker, and that's what we're doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Highway Maintenance

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Highways. I wonder if the Minister of Highways would care to share with this House the logic behind your department paying Quest Communications over \$6,000 to measure customer satisfaction with Saskatchewan highways, while at the same time your department's paying out over \$4,000 for damage claims on Highways 334 and 339 alone in the Thunder Creek constituency. Now how many potholes did Quest Communications tell you to repair? How can you ever repair customer satisfaction considering these damage claims paid out to Saskatchewan drivers?

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say in response to that question on communications is that this year in our communications that we actually are down in our spending, about \$40,000 down. But part of our communications program has certainly been on knowing on customer satisfaction. One of the programs that we're very proud of is the Highway Hotline, which is a great service for all people that are using our highways and transportation system right across this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Mr. Speaker, it's funny that the Highway minister would mention her communications budget. I wonder if she knows what it costs to twin a kilometre of the Trans-Canada Highway or a kilometre of highway. I suspect . . . You know it costs about \$500,000 per kilometre to twin a highway. Well that could easily be done within your \$620,000 a year communications and public relations budget for '98-99. You'd still have a hundred and twenty thousand dollars to spare.

With the highway maintenance budget not expected to increase in tomorrow's budget, why is the minister squandering money in her department instead of ensuring money gets to where it's most needed on highway maintenance and construction.

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the communications at the Department of Highways has done is

exemplary for the people of Saskatchewan. Putting in the Highway Hotline is one of the many services that helps; and we have got compliments from the people right across this province to do it toll-free, to do it for the safety of ambulance service, for school bus services, and for everybody that are utilizing the transportation system across this province. It not only tells them about road conditions, about weather conditions, about ferry crossings — this is important information that the people of Saskatchewan need.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Dispersal of Funds from Charity Foundations

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have one supplementary question for the Deputy Premier this afternoon.

Mr. Deputy Premier, given that all monies used for MLA allowances are taxpayers' dollars, why wouldn't any surpluses be returned to the Legislative Assembly or in some way to Saskatchewan taxpayers so they can choose whether a particular charity or scholarship should benefit?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the organizations, the non-profit organizations that were established more than 20 years ago had a certain set of principles and number of people who were members of the board, and I can't speak for the discussions that went on during that period of time.

I think the other thing that's important to know and the, Mr. Speaker, you will know, that the changes that occurred to these allowances — and this will be borne out by anyone who cares to find out from the Clerk's office — many changes occurred during the period of time from the formation of the allowances to the period we're at today. And what might have been okay at one period wasn't at another. And you would have to go back and take specific issues and deal with them in light of the regulations that applied that given day.

So for me to second-guess what the board was doing at any particular day is very, very difficult. But what I can say is that Mr. Wally Coates who was president of the Regina community development fund said there was no reason to return the surplus to the legislature when the organization was wound down. That was his opinion.

Now if you're saying Mr. Wally Coates and others did something wrong, then there's a process in place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Support for Farmers

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm intrigued by all of the partisan politics that's going on but I'm worried that agriculture might be forgotten as we go through these days to the budget.

I want to ask a question therefore from the Minister of

Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, twice in the past week and a half this government has refused to debate agriculture on an emergency basis and we do have an emergency in agriculture.

The forms have come out now for applications for the new program, the crisis program, and people are so frustrated and so angry with those forms that they tell me — and I've heard through the media — that farmers across the country are demanding the resignation of Ralph Goodale, and of Vancilief the federal minister. All the federal ministers involved in this program they want to be rid of.

My question to the minister is: do you support those farmers in their demands for the resignations of these federal Liberals?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to answer an agricultural question because at least somebody's getting around to policy, and not other things.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — I think it's maybe a bit of a fear of debating their policy. I thank you for the question.

Yes at the Regina farm rally . . . if you were at the Regina farm rally, it was quite noticeable that there were no federal representatives. Especially, especially, especially Mr. Goodale. Especially Mr. Goodale who's from Regina — he's the member of Parliament, the cabinet minister from Regina — to not show up at a farm rally to at least listen to the people . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well I know the Liberals get upset about this, but they should be embarrassed and I'm sure that's why they get upset.

Now, farmers calling for their resignations — they have every right to do that. I think that the Prime Minister has to put forward, put down his foot on Mr. Goodale and Mr. Vancilief and demand that they come out here and talk to these people who they're putting in this position.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplemental to the Minister of Agriculture. Minister, most farmers I think, believe that there will be some money for some hog producers and they desperately need that, there's no question about that.

But the truth of the matter is that most of the farmers do believe that in spite of their needs they're not going to get enough to be able to keep on going from this federal program. And I'll get to that part a little later.

But here at home what can we do? That is my question and the gist of where I want to go. Can we reduce the costs of farming in the province of Saskatchewan to try to offset some of the neglect we're getting from Ottawa?

Can we now look for you to bring about, perhaps in the budget or in days to come, some reduction in the costs of farming, and not just costs that the government can provide?

Can you also provide some reduction in costs by examining things like fertilizer costs which I understand now that you can bring in from the United States cheaper than from buying it in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a very important area and we've done a lot in Saskatchewan. In fact on a per capita basis, Saskatchewan contributes to agriculture four and a half times more than the average of all the provinces in this country. And we are continuing to do that.

Just last year we exempted the E&H (education and health) tax from intensive livestock operations. In the last three years we've cut the price of premiums of crop insurance by 40 per cent.

We are leading by example. Even though the members opposite and the opposition — and the opposition, the Liberals and the Tories — even though they just say, oh spend more taxpayers' money, spend more taxpayers' money, when 40 per cent of the taxpayers get their income from agriculture. That mentality will take us to the bottom.

I appreciate the question and we're going to do all we can to be leaders. On the input cost side, we've also addressed this situation with Ottawa and are working with other provinces.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 214—The Saskatchewan Property Rights Act

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill No. 214, The Saskatchewan Property Rights Act.

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

Bill No. 21 — The Coroners Act, 1999

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 21, The Coroners Act, 1999 be now introduced and read the first time.

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

MOTIONS

Appointment of Chief Electoral Officer

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my remarks I will be moving a motion that Janice G. Baker be appointed as the Chief Electoral Officer by this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, as you will recall in the spring 1999 session of the Legislative Assembly, The Election Amendment Act, 1998 was passed providing for the establishment of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer as an independent officer of this Assembly.

While the operations of the electoral office have for many years been conducted on an independent basis, this final step was an important confirmation of this long-standing practice.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to note that a co-operative approach was adopted in the selection process for this important position.

A search committee was struck with representatives from all three party caucuses and a national search was conducted.

Following receipt of over 70 applications and conducting interviews with nine candidates over the summer months, the search committee made its recommendation to the Board of Internal Economy. Its unanimous recommendation was that Janice G. Baker be appointed as the Acting Chief Electoral Officer. The Board of Internal Economy accepted this recommendation and appointed Ms. Baker as Acting Chief Electoral Officer on September 28, 1998.

Since that time Ms. Baker has been very busy administering a northern by-election, as well as commencing preparations for the first general election to be held under the new legislation.

Mr. Speaker, Janice Baker has a long and distinguished career with the electoral office in the province of Saskatchewan. From 1979 to 1991 she served as director of operations for the electoral office. From December, 1991 to June, 1997 she served as the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer. And finally from June, 1997 to her confirmation in that position by the Board of Internal Economy this September, she has served as the Acting Chief Electoral Officer.

Ms. Baker is obviously well acquainted with the operations of this office and with its crucial role in ensuring the demonstrable fairness of the democratic process in the province of Saskatchewan.

(1430)

Mr. Speaker, we are indeed fortunate to have had a person of this calibre with such long-standing commitment to the electoral process to serve as the Acting Chief Electoral Officer to this point.

I am pleased to propose her appointment as the province of Saskatchewan's Chief Electoral Officer.

I would like to conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker, by making the following motion, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Canora-Pelly:

That this Assembly hereby appoint Janice G. Baker of the city of Regina, in the province of Saskatchewan, Chief Electoral Officer pursuant to section 4 of The Election Act, 1996.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to second the motion presented this afternoon formally appointing Jan Baker to the position of Chief Electoral Officer.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think we should underplay the procedure that was put into place for the first time in selecting Saskatchewan's new Chief Electoral Officer. For the first time, an all-party committee came together with equal representation from all sides to make this selection, and through open

discussion and a sense of co-operation that we just don't see in this legislature often enough we were able to come to a consensus on the best candidate for the position.

I'm happy to report that the interview and selection process was done in a non-partisan way. That is only appropriate when we're dealing with an office like that of the Chief Electoral Officer. This is a position that must not only be fair and unbiased, it's got to be perceived to be fair and unbiased at all times.

The electoral process is the foundation of our democracy. And it's always struck me a bit odd that up to this point this position was technically at least an employee of Executive Council. So I congratulate the government side for recognizing this problem and doing something to rectify it.

The position of Chief Electoral Officer is now an independent officer of the legislature and that's the way it should be.

Mr. Speaker, I think the all-party committee made an excellent choice in the appointment of Jan Baker. She has a great deal of experience at the electoral office and was clearly the most qualified to step in and fill this important role.

Ms. Baker was selected after a nationwide search. I think it says a lot about her when she emerged as the top candidate from the 76 applications that were received. And it's a little wonder, Mr. Speaker, Jan Baker has been at the electoral office for two decades. For the past year and a half she has amply filled the role as Acting Chief Electoral Officer after the retirement of Mr. Kuziak.

In that time she has overseen the Saskatoon Eastview and Athabasca by-elections and in both cases she has proven very helpful to our party, and I'm sure to all parties, with any questions we had or clarifications we needed. And as we of this side of the House were going through the task of establishing a new party in 1997, Jan Baker was most helpful in explaining the rules and regulations to us as was her duty.

I am confident that Miss Baker will prove a very effective Chief Electoral Officer. And I look forward to working with her and her staff as we move towards the next election. It's a lot of work for the electoral office but I know they will be up to the challenge that a general election brings.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party caucus is very happy to support the appointment of Jan Baker to the position of Chief Electoral Officer. And I am proud to second this motion here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to add welcome on behalf of the Liberal caucus to our newest Chief Electoral Officer who is here today. I would like to preface my comments. A lot has already been said by the Government House Leader and by the Leader of the Opposition. I'll keep my remarks brief.

However, I would like to say that it was indeed a pleasure to work with other members of this Assembly and their staff in

this very vital and important process. Ms. Baker, as has been already said, has been with the office over 20 years, an acknowledged expert in her field. Jan has probably seen just about everything that can happen in an election campaign. I'm sure of that.

She was an integral part of the provincial Electoral Boundaries Commission, seconded from the electoral office to serve in the role of technical adviser to the chairperson at that time, Justice Ted Malone.

For the past 22 months in her capacity as Acting Chief Electoral Officer we have seen her make every effort to both educate and facilitate both current members and future candidates on the role that . . . on the rules, pardon me, that govern the electoral process.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise on behalf of the Liberal caucus to congratulate Jan Baker on her official appointment as Chief Electoral Officer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to *nemine contradicente*.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Before orders of the day I ask leave of the House to move a motion of condolence.

Leave granted.

CONDOLENCES

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, before I begin my comments I just might say that this motion will be moved by myself and seconded by the member for Rosthern who I understand will say a few words as well. And on the conclusion of my remarks I will actually read the motion, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to rise today to pay tribute to the passing of a former member of this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Isaak Elias. Mr. Elias was born on April 27, 1912 in Rosthern, Saskatchewan. And he leaves to mourn his daughter Ruby, his son Clarence, 6 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, his sisters Margaret, Anna, Mary, Katharina, and his brothers John and Jake, and a host of nieces and nephews.

Mr. Elias was predeceased by his wife Annie, his brother Peter, and his sisters Sarah and Helena. Isaak spent many of his working years teaching in rural schools in the province of Saskatchewan. And he was also manager of the Hepburn Co-op for eight years and he enjoyed meeting people in the store and in the community. And obviously being a member of the Legislative Assembly, this fit very well.

Mr. Elias was also a store keeper in Langham for four years, and it was during these years, the period between 1956 and 1960, that he served as an MLA with the Social Credit Party representing the constituency of Rosthern.

Isaak spent his last years working with Touche Ross & Co. and

during his final years he lived at the Bethany Manor Senior's Complex. And Isaak used his time and talent to reach out to others throughout a long and productive life.

Mr. Speaker, Isaak will be remembered for his beliefs and for his service to the people of Saskatchewan while a member of the Legislative Assembly. His contributions to important social changes of that time helped make Saskatchewan a more caring and compassionate place to live today.

His daughter says of her father, and I quote:

. . . a sensitive man, an excellent caregiver to his wife. He was genuinely concerned with the well being of others. He was an honest business person, and he enjoyed meeting people.

Mr. Speaker, on that note, I would move, seconded by the member for Rosthern:

That the Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing of a former member of the Legislative Assembly and expresses its grateful appreciation of the contribution he made to his community, his constituency, and the province.

Isaak Elias, who died on May 1, 1998, was a member of the Legislative Assembly from 1956 to 1960, representing the constituency of Rosthern for the Social Credit Party. Mr. Elias was born April 27, 1912 in Rosthern. He was married to Annie Epp on October 2, 1934 and together they had a daughter and a son.

Mr. Elias was an active participant in affairs of the communities in which he lived. A teacher by training, Mr. Elias devoted many years of teaching in rural public schools and subsequently served as a school trustee. Mr. Elias was also a merchant, and ill health in 1946 prompted him to leave the teaching profession and he turned his attentions to the retail business.

He managed the Hepburn Co-operative Association for eight years and was employed as a bookkeeper in Langham for an additional four years. In later years he was predeceased in his retirement . . . or preceding his retirement, Mr. Elias worked for Touche Ross & Co. in their department which related to bankruptcies.

In recording its own deep sense of loss and bereavement, this Assembly expresses its most sincere sympathy with the members of the bereaved family.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to second this motion of condolence, and on behalf of my caucus I would like to speak to this motion since Mr. Elias was the MLA for Rosthern which I have the honour of representing today. While I did not know Mr. Elias personally, I am certain I can vouch for his character since he was elected by the people in the best constituency in the province.

Prior to entering politics, Mr. Elias spent many years as a

school teacher in the Rosthern constituency. Another thing that I have in common with him, Mr. Elias was a very community-minded individual.

As manager of the Hepburn Co-op and storekeeper in Langham, he had a chance to meet and greet many of the people who lived in the areas, something that must have left a good impression because in 1956, Mr. Elias was elected as a Social Credit member of the legislature for the Rosthern constituency. Mr. Elias spent the next four years ably serving the good people of Rosthern, something which is a great honour I'm sure he carried with him for the rest of his life.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Saskatchewan Party caucus I would like to express our sympathies to Mr. Elias's children, Ruby and Clarence, and to the rest of his extended family.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to, on behalf of the Liberal caucus as well, extend our deepest respect and sympathies to the families. Thank you.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I have to apologize for not having a motion that would send this message off to the family. I wondered if I could just take a minute and have a moment to do that.

The Speaker: — The Deputy Premier requests that the Assembly recess just momentarily to provide for the crafting of a motion to have the condolences sent to the family. Does that meet with the approval of the Assembly?

Leave granted.

The Assembly recessed for a period of time.

(1445)

The Speaker: — Our House will come to order and before orders of the day, I'll recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I would move, seconded by the member from Rosthern:

That the resolutions just passed, together with a transcript of the oral tributes to the memory of the deceased, be communicated to the bereaved families on behalf of this Legislative Assembly by Mr. Speaker.

And I so move.

Motion agreed to.

Ms. Murrell: — With leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Murrell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to this House a former colleague and member of this legislature who represented the constituents of North Battleford as a cabinet minister, an MLA, and who served them with honour. I ask that this Assembly please welcome Doug Anguish.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Leave to introduce a guest please.

Leave granted.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the members of the Assembly I would like to introduce a person seated in your gallery who is very important to my constituents, and particularly to myself personally. Her beauty is only exceeded by the excellent work she performs.

I would like all members to extend a warm welcome to Margaret Campbell, my CA (constituency assistant) in Swift Current.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Johnson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With your assistance, I'll get the hang of this at some point or other.

Mr. Speaker, holding with the open and accountable government policies, I table the answers to three questions: question no. 14, question no. 15, question no. 16.

The Speaker: — The answers are provided for item nos. 1, 2, and 3.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 1 — The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 1999

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 1999.

Mr. Speaker, someone once coined the phrase, it shouldn't hurt to be a child. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I think we would all agree that childhood and adolescence should be as free as possible from pain and hurt.

As parents, as grandparents, neighbours, friends, aunts and uncles, we try to ensure that those we love and care for experience no more than the normal disappointments and frustrations which are a part of growing up. By providing structure, love, and protection from harm, we try to ensure they have the best possible chance for success and happiness in the future.

But, Mr. Speaker, not all such children are so fortunate. For some, family dysfunction, poverty, racial prejudices, abuse, or other problems leave them vulnerable. Some have little or no consistent and reliable support to which they can turn. They are young, in pain, and often very naïve despite the tough, streetwise image some portray.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there are those within our society who do not hesitate to take advantage of this situation. There are those who do not hesitate to exploit those children and young people for their own purposes.

Every day these children are victimized and abused by pimps and other individuals who sexually abuse children and youth through prostitution, particularly in the cities of Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, in a caring and compassionate society, this cannot be tolerated.

In 1997 we introduced a five-point strategy to address the issue of children and youth who are sexually exploited. Since that time, Mr. Speaker, we have, with the enthusiastic support and assistance of a number of community and service organizations, distributed nearly 90,000 informational posters across the province. These posters identify the exploitation of a child for a sexual purpose as both child abuse and a criminal offence, and make it clear that those who engage in such behaviour will be treated as criminals.

I am pleased to tell this House, Mr. Speaker, that my department has provided funding to assist with registration costs to enable members of the community to attend the Street Symposium 1999 to be held in Saskatoon later this spring.

The focus of the symposium, which will bring together representatives from the western provinces, is children and youth who are on the street, many of whom are sexually exploited through prostitution. It is being hosted by the Saskatoon Tribal Council and the Saskatoon Police Service and will build on the success of a similar conference held in Calgary in 1998.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, over the past two years we have allocated nearly \$1 million to communities to address issues related to street youth and children who are sexually exploited. The bulk of this funding was targeted to Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon, the cities where the problem has been identified.

Other funding partners, including Human Resources Development Canada, SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), and some civic administrations, health boards, school divisions, and community associations have contributed financially or in kind to various local service initiatives.

To further enhance our ability to deal with these problems and to provide services to our children and youth, Mr. Speaker, we will amend The Child and Family Services Act. I am pleased to report to this House that the changes we are making at this time are based on the opinions expressed by Canadian children and youth at the International Summit of Sexually Exploited Youth held last year in Victoria, British Columbia, and on discussions with a network of community representatives to determine their perspective on and support for legislative reform.

These amendments will serve to protect and provide support to victims of this crime and facilitate the prosecution of those who would commit such offences against our children and young people.

Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that all of our young people are afforded protection under The Child and Family Services Act. As it currently exists, section 11(iii) of the Act identifies a child who has been exposed to harmful interaction for a sexual purpose as a child in need of protection. While not stated, this was intended to include a child involved in prostitution.

Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure there is no confusion on this point. We will therefore amend section 11(iii) to include the term "including involvement in prostitution" to make it clear that a child involved in prostitution is considered to be a child in need of protection and that such a child is entitled to all of the protections and services available under the Act.

Mr. Speaker, in some cases, a protection hearing is required to determine whether a parent or parents may be unwilling or unable to protect their children from abuse or neglect. Depending upon the circumstances, children may be extremely reluctant to testify because of fear of reprisal. Clearly in situations like this, it would not be in the child's best interest to testify.

We will therefore amend the Act to allow for the admission of hearsay evidence at a protection hearing if, in the opinion of the court, the evidence is credible and trustworthy. Such evidence may include statements made by the young person to police, doctors, social workers or others. This amendment will help protect victims of sexual abuse while still allowing the court to attach the appropriate weight to the evidence, including recognition that the evidence is not subject to cross-examination.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, this amendment is in keeping with the spirit of amendments to the Criminal Code and The Saskatchewan Evidence Act to encourage protection of the victim in prosecutions of sexual abuse.

Mr. Speaker, where there are reasonable grounds to believe that contact between a child under the age of 16 and a certain individual or individuals would cause the child to be in need of protection under section 16 of The Child and Family Services Act, an application may be made to the court for a protective intervention order which would direct the individual named in the order to refrain from any contact or association with the child. Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that 16- and 17-year-olds can also benefit from a protective intervention order where it is considered to be in their best interests.

Therefore we will amend section 18 of the Act to include 16- and 17-year-olds as young people on behalf of whom a protective intervention order may be requested.

(1500)

Mr. Speaker, those who sexually abuse or assault children and youth rob them of their childhood, destroy their self-esteem, shatter their innocence, and darken their futures. We believe that as a society we must send a strong, clear public message

that this kind of behaviour toward our children has no place in our society.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we will amend The Child and Family Services Act to clarify that the offences of abuse includes allowing or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution. Furthermore, we will increase the penalties for those found guilty of exploiting our children and youth, including those guilty of sexual exploitation.

The amendments result in a substantial increase in fines and is intended to reflect the seriousness of these offences. These offences will give police and prosecutors another option as they charge and prosecute offenders. These amendments are based on a legislative framework that includes both The Child and Family Services Act and the Criminal Code in addressing the protective and supportive needs of victims and the successful prosecution and conviction of offenders.

Mr. Speaker, we do not believe that stand-alone provincial legislation is adequate to meet these objectives. This is a problem which knows no provincial boundaries and we need strong and effective federal laws that will help protect our children and youth.

The Criminal Code remains the most effective legislative tool available for the prosecution and conviction of persons who sexually assault and exploit children and youth through prostitution. In Saskatchewan this is the legislation of choice used by prosecutors.

I'm sure that all of us in this House are keenly aware that government at any level cannot solve social problems single-handedly or in isolation from the community where the problem exists. Experience has repeatedly demonstrated that if a problem resides in the community, the ideas and commitment needed to solve the problem very likely reside there as well.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, when we were faced with the serious problem of children and youth being sexually abused through prostitution, we turned to the communities where this problem exists. We discussed these issues with First Nations and Metis representatives and with groups across the province, including youth who had been actively engaged in finding solutions to this problem.

We discussed the option of providing for the detention of children and youth and were cautioned about moving in this direction. In addition to the constitutional and human rights concerns involved, we were told by the community groups including youth, that because of the complex issues faced by youth leaving the street, including issues of trust and independence, the prospects of being detained against their will could potentially drive youth further away from help. As victims of abuse, children and youth need support. Forcible confinement feels too much like punishment.

The use of authority could result in very short-term benefits, whereas a co-operative and voluntary approach might be more successful in engaging youth in longer-term planning and an exit from the street. And the risk that it would be primarily First Nations and Metis youth who would be detained could lessen the resolve to develop and deliver culturally-sensitive programs

designed to address the underlying problems.

Mr. Speaker, I want to express my gratitude to the community leaders and agencies in the cities of Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert, who have given so much of their time and effort in addressing problems associated with the sexual exploitation of children and youth.

Mr. Speaker, taking services to where these people spend their time, being it a mobile support program, a youth activity centre, or a safe residence in the neighbourhood, are examples of how the community is responding to the needs of these children and youth and better connecting them to other support services. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, that for a variety of reasons in Saskatchewan, First Nations and Metis children and youth are overrepresented among those young people who are sexually exploited on the streets of our cities.

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, directors of First Nations child and family service agencies, and the board of directors of Metis Family and Community Justice Services Incorporated have a significant role to play in addressing this problem. In our discussions with these First Nations and Metis organizations and other community groups, we have been urged to take a planned and focused approach that has the approval of all parties. Mr. Speaker, we have taken that advice to heart. These issues are varied and complex, and unfortunately do not lend themselves to single, simple, or speedy solutions.

In considering the direction we should take, we have adopted a balanced approach and we have kept our options open. We have consulted with individuals and groups who have the expertise, the knowledge, and the experience needed to successfully address these problems, and we have heeded their advice.

We will continue to support the development of outreach programs and establishment of safe shelters for children, contingent upon the advice of our community partners. We will continue to support strict law enforcement initiatives. We will use the authority granted to us through The Child and Family Services Act and the Criminal Code to respond to the needs of children and youth and to see that offenders are held accountable.

And, Mr. Speaker, we will monitor the outcome of efforts taken in other provinces to deal with the problem of the sexual exploitation of children on the streets of Canada's cities. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that should our continuing discussions with those most knowledgeable about these issues conclude that additional legislative reforms are needed, we will certainly give any such approach very serious consideration.

As the government, we will continue to work in partnership with First Nations and Metis organizations, communities, and community agencies who are committed to addressing the issues in order to prevent the sexual exploitation of our children and youth.

Mr. Speaker, we will be making several other minor amendments to The Child and Family Services Act. These amendments are of a housekeeping nature and do not change either the nature or intent of the Act.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 1999.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a few comments before I move to adjourn debate regarding this piece of legislation that's been introduced.

I can you assure you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that my colleagues and I have a number of concerns in regards to the issues that the minister has raised — certainly the fact that children would be considered one of the most vulnerable and innocent of our society. And we certainly need to do everything within our power as legislators to reach out to young people, and in many cases even to families, and come to grips with some of the problems that face us. And certainly our Justice critic is looking forward to entering the debate as well as the Social Services critic in regards to this specific piece of legislation as they have some suggestions and ideas.

And I'm pleased to hear that while the minister has already had groups that have been coming forward with the ideas and putting forward suggestions that are part of the piece of legislation before us, has left the door open for further suggestions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that would enhance and indeed give the Department of Social Services not only the tools but an opportunity to determine and make sure that they are indeed meeting the needs of disadvantaged and abused children, while at the same time respecting the rights of families.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, certainly we look forward to getting into full debate, but in view of the fact that we have just nicely re-entered the Legislative Assembly, we have a number of Bills that have been certainly presented to us. And it's appropriate for us, as well, as a caucus to — now that we have the Bills before us and have more of an opportunity to see what the government is proposing — to even take the time to discuss a number of the issues and get responses back from concerned groups in our communities whether they be in the large urban centres such as Regina or even outside of the city of Regina, to make sure that when we are debating fully this piece of legislation we are well informed and more better informed and more able to ask the type of questions and respond to determine exactly where we should be going with this piece of legislation, to see whether or not the amendments the minister is suggesting are appropriate or whether or not there should be some minor changes.

And so in view of that fact, and as the process of ongoing discussion and debate, I would move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 2 — The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 1999

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 1999.

The municipal employees' pension plan provides retirement benefits to municipal workers, school board employees, and

designated police officers and firefighters. Currently more than 9,000 active and inactive members participate in the plan. About 2,700 members are currently receiving pensions from the plan. The plan is administered by the Public Employees Benefits Agency in Saskatchewan Finance.

The proposed amendments to the Act will allow the plan to improve service to its members and comply with other statutes to which the plan is subject. In order to comply fully with the Income Tax Act of Canada, the plan will require employer contributions in an amount determined by an actuary, while at the same time maintaining the responsibility of employers to share equally in the funding of their employees' pension benefits. Maximum contribution levels will be amended to ensure members do not make contributions to the plan from which they will derive no benefit.

The definition of spouse under the Act will be amended to correspond to the definition of a spouse under the Income Tax Act of Canada. This will eliminate the potential for conflicts with Revenue Canada especially in the event of assignment of benefits to surviving spouses. Benefits under the plan will be improved by allowing members to continue to contribute to the plan during periods of maternity, parental and adoption leave as mandated by The Labour Standards Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are currently some members of the municipal employees' pension plan with money standing to their account under a former pension plan. These employees will be given the option of transferring these monies to the new plan with approval of this Bill. The administration of the Act will be improved by updating the names of participating employers and organizations with representation on the commission contained in the Act.

Finally the commission will no longer be required to report the names of members receiving a pension or the names of pensioners who died during the fiscal year in its annual report. This amendment protects members' rights to privacy while not impairing the accuracy or relevancy of financial statements tabled before this legislature.

These proposed amendments to The Municipal Employees' Pension Act allow the plan to provide improved benefits while adhering to the scope and meaning of other legislation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Municipal Employees' Pension Act, 1999.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1515)

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I listened with interest to the Minister of Finance talking about this Act and the amendment to The Municipal Employees' Pension Act. We know that there are a number of 9,000 individuals who are affected by this Act with 2,700 active ones at this time. And anything that will improve service and added benefits to employees without costing additional money is something that everyone is interested in.

I also noted with interest that Revenue Canada is involved and

I'm sure that again that's something that employees are going to be interested in as it will affect their future.

The amendment that will recommend removing names of the employees is something that I imagine that you've explored with the people that will be affected. But as official opposition we know that it is our responsibility to make sure that we check with everyone and make sure that this is something that's going to benefit everyone. So I ask then that we adjourn debate at this time.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 19—The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 1999

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 1999. This Act pertains to the following defined benefit pension plans: the liquor board superannuation plan; the Power Corporation superannuation plan; the Workers' Compensation Board superannuation plan; and the public service superannuation plan, which encompasses the Anti-TB league superannuation plan, and the Saskatchewan Transportation Company superannuation plan. That's a number of superannuation plans, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And there are approximately 5,200 active and inactive members participating in these pension plans. Each of those plans has a board that oversees the operations of the plan. Except for the SaskPower superannuation plan, the defined benefit plans are administered by the Public Employees Benefits Agency in Saskatchewan Finance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the proposed amendments to The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act, are intended to clarify certain provisions, remove redundant provisions in the legislation, and comply with the federal Income Tax Act.

The definition of spouse under the Act will be amended to correspond to the definition of spouse under the Income Tax Act of Canada. This is consistent with other pension statutes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the provision to deem past service in the municipal justice system as provincial service will be repealed because all persons to whom this section applied have accessed the benefit available to them and there are no other employees who can benefit from this provision.

To comply with the Income Tax Act of Canada, Mr. Speaker, the refund of contributions to members in excess of Revenue Canada maximums will now be given without interest. The opportunity to retire early due to ill health will be clarified in the Act. The option to have dependants as joint annuitants will be eliminated and the practice of paying refunds on an instalment basis will cease.

Certain provisions pertaining to restricted early retirement need to be clarified for the purpose of paying benefits promised to members under the legislation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the amendments being proposed to the Act

serve the purposes of clarifying plan benefits for members while adhering to the scope and meaning of other legislation.

So with that, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act, 1999.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I can hardly contain my excitement about speaking to this superannuation plan supplementary provision Act amendment, Bill No. 19. But when I recognized there was 5,200 people that this involves I guess there was a large number of people out there who will have a direct benefit and this will impact them directly.

Removing redundancy and working with Revenue Canada is always a large step, so I imagine that's taken a considerable amount of work to get this Bill this far. But I heard that there was going to be . . . there would be without . . . some refunds would be given without interest, and of course that's something that will affect people and they'll probably have a right to give us their opinions on that. A refund will no longer be refunds by instalments, and I guess that we'll have to ask the minister on what basis that was done.

So I guess at this moment then we'll ask if we adjourn debate on this Bill and come back to it later.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 14 — The Urban Municipality Amendment Act, 1999

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bill No. 14 amends The Urban Municipality Act, 1984. Bill 14 introduces amendments to adjust the property assessment and assessment appeals processes to make Saskatchewan's system more equitable and more effective. It addresses a number of concerns raised by appellants and others over the past two years.

A review of the 1997 reassessment experience has been completed as well as a review of statutory property tax exemptions. These reviews and consultations with stakeholders such as the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, the Department of Education, and the Saskatchewan Municipal Board point to a need for a change.

The government will be introducing further amendments to The Urban Municipality Act, 1984 in the subsequent session of the legislature.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the changes proposed in this Bill are ones that need to proceed now. They include adjustments and new provisions that will streamline the process for assessment appeals. These amendments come as a result of the government's ongoing commitment to ensure that our systems work for people as well for municipalities.

We are pleased to provide a number of improvements to the existing system. As our communities change, so does the need to continually improve the systems which help our communities

stay strong. Constant improvement of our legislation and urban municipal system is an imperative that the Government of Saskatchewan has recognized and responded to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Each year administrative and operational issues are brought to our attention by municipal administrations, local government associations, other stakeholders, and my own department staff. The amendments proposed in this Bill contain changes to some administrative procedures and are in keeping with our ongoing efforts to ensure Saskatchewan citizens have user-friendly legislation and municipal administrative practices.

This Bill helps to ensure that the process of completing property assessments is transparent and accessible to the property owner. Further, it ensures that the property owner is in the know and treated fairly throughout the appeal process. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like now to briefly describe the key provisions of this Bill.

First, the addition of a new provision allowing assessment appeals on like properties in multiple jurisdictions to be consolidated and heard directly by the appeal board. This will allow for more expedient and consistent appeal decisions. Examples of this would be railroads and oil companies and elevator companies that have properties assessed in a large number of municipalities throughout the province and will relieve them of the responsibility of the local appeal in each and every case.

Second, we are adding new provisions allowing complex commercial or industrial appeals to be heard directly by the appeal board when the appellant, the board of revision, and the municipality agree. This provision could remove some of the burden of very complicated appeals from the boards of revision and streamline the administrative process.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the third provision I wish to mention clarifies the acceptable methods for delivery of notice of appeal available to an appellant and provides several reasonable alternatives for delivery of notice.

Fourth, the addition of provisions requiring fair and just assessments for lands and improvements within school divisions as well as within municipalities addresses a very important equity issue. The current Act requires equity among assessments within a municipality. These provisions propose to extend the requirement for equitable assessment to school divisions, or a school division which may be part of a municipality. These changes call for a greater amount of co-operation and in some cases collaboration between city assessment staff and the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency.

In some cities where school and municipal boundaries are not coterminous, assessment methods will also have to be reviewed to be consistent with the new provisions. For these reasons we have proposed that these provisions not come into effect until the date of the next reassessment, January 1, 2001. They will have no effect on appeals currently in progress.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill also includes a fifth provision that removes all potential perceptions of bias in the constitution of local boards of revision. The committee examining the 1997 reassessment experience identified a concern that appellants to local boards of revision had a perception of bias when members of the council or school board were also members of the board of revision.

This Bill recognizes that there is no statutory requirement for a council to be represented on the board of revision. To eliminate any possible bias or any perception of bias, council or school board members should not be eligible to sit as members. This provision is also consistent with the Supreme Court decision which called into question the institutional independence of boards of revision when council members serve on the board.

An amendment has been introduced, Mr. Deputy Speaker, providing the Saskatchewan Municipal Board with some discretionary power to proceed with an appeal where there has been substantive but imperfect compliance with procedure. This amendment responds to concerns expressed regarding what may seem an onerous and complex system of appeals, particularly for less knowledgeable applicants.

This amendment should give appellants full assurance that no minor procedural detail will stand in the way of their appeal moving forward or erode their appeal rights.

Another amendment proposed in this Bill clarifies that all parties to an appeal have equal duty to file written materials 10 days prior to a board of revision hearing. This includes the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency, and the assessor in the case of an urban municipality which completes its own assessments.

In addition, appellants will be assured of receiving assessment field sheets and an explanation of their assessment no later than this time, that is 10 days prior to the appeal.

This Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, responds to three significant concerns. One, equitable assessment of similar properties within both municipal and school divisions; secondly, the appeal process regarding appeals of assessment on like properties in multiple jurisdictions and regarding complex commercial or industrial appeals on property; and finally, the accessibility and transparency both of the information and process regarding assessment appeals, helping to make the appeal process easier to use.

The provisions enunciated in this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, address all of these concerns. These provisions ensure that property owners, municipalities, and school divisions receive fair treatment and are part of a transparent and equitable process in order that all may have confidence in the system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these amendments should be supported by all members of the legislature. They are in the best interests of municipalities, their communities, and all Saskatchewan residents.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore move second reading of Bill No. 14, The Urban Municipality Amendment Act, 1999. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's very interesting and timely that the urban municipalities Act is indeed amended, especially following all the difficulties that this province experienced in the latest assessment and renewal process.

The minister mentions that this is a part step in terms of addressing some of the issues and concerns that were raised by property owners, municipal governments, school boards, and many people who felt that the process was flawed in many areas. I certainly think that we as the official opposition would share those concerns about the need for many amendments to make the process fairer, more transparent, more efficient.

I'm a little concerned, however, that when the minister says this is only the first step, that perhaps the other steps have to be taken into account as well because we don't want to get into a situation where all of this is happening at the eleventh hour, and as a result many inconveniences and mistakes are made.

I think it's very important that the whole process is improved, and that when the process fails the property owners or indeed the municipal authorities, that the system of appeal and mitigating some of the wrongful decisions that potentially fall into the system is streamlined so that it's very user-friendly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the official opposition has begun to circulate this legislation to people that have asked to be consulted on the process, and we certainly look forward to their comments and their reflections as to if this legislation meets the needs that have been expressed and the concerns that have been expressed. And we look forward to their input following this consultation process.

And so as a result, while we await that information, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1530)

Bill No. 3 — The Intestate Succession Amendment Act, 1999
/Loi de 1999 modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur les successions
non testamentaires

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Intestate Succession Amendment Act, 1999.

The Intestate Succession Act sets out the rules for distributing the estate of someone who dies without a will.

In 1960 the Act introduced for the first time a preferential share for the surviving spouse. When the Act was amended in 1978 to increase that preferential share, it did not clearly reflect the entitlement to the preferential share. The Act states that where a person dies without a will prior to 1978, the preferential share is \$10,000. In fact, that preferential share only applies if the person died after July 1, 1960, and before 1978.

The amendment before us today reflects this. It is important to

note that the amendment does not change the law. Rather it will eliminate confusion by ensuring that the law is accurately reflected in the current Act. The amendment will help prevent mistakes in determining the beneficiaries of old estates. The amendment is made in response to requests by lawyers who specialize in wills and estates.

I move second reading of An Act to amend The Intestate Succession Act, 1996.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. This Bill No. 3, The Intestate Succession Amendment Act, 1999 seems like to be a small, sometimes maybe not that an important Act. But when we look at it and understand that it could potentially affect all of us in this room at some time or some people that we know and love, we know that it's something that we should be looking at and make sure that it's something that will benefit everyone in the province.

I understand that the government has done their work on this, and lawyers that have been working on it have of course the first-hand experience that they need. But at the same time, there's always individuals out there who have specific cases and concerns, and we again would like an opportunity to discuss these with them before we move on with this Bill so I request that we adjourn debate on this Bill at this time.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 4 — The Securities Amendment Act, 1999

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Securities Amendment Act, 1999.

The principal reason for this Bill is to extend the time periods associated with takeover bids and issuer bids. Rules governing takeover bids give shareholders 21 days to deposit their shares in response to a bid. That time period is often not long enough for the target company to find other bidders in order to maximize the value of its shares. Consequently there have been applications to security commissions to extend the 21-day time period. The limited time period has also led to a growth in shareholders' rights plans, for example, poison pills, which have the stated objective of giving the directors of the target company more time to evaluate the bids and solicit, consider, and negotiate alternatives.

Industry representatives have expressed concerns that these plans are unwarranted, defensive tactics that have the effect of entrenching the management of the target company. An industry committee chaired by Adam Zimmerman, the Zimmerman committee, studied these issues and proposed the changes outlined in the legislation. This committee consulted widely with many companies and agencies which gave general support for the amendments proposed. These amendments are part of a national initiative undertaken by all provinces to improve the takeover bid process.

In summary, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with these amendments shareholders will have a longer time period in which to respond

to a bid and an option for shares is more likely to develop enhancing share value. In addition it is expected that these changes will slow or halt the growth of so-called poison pill arrangements. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Securities Act, 1988.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm glad to have the opportunity to speak to The Securities Amendment Act, 1999. And from some of the minister's comments I think that we find them favourable, but at this time we are also checking with groups within the province and shareholders of companies that would be affected by this amendment. And we'll speak more on the issue at a later date.

So at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would move to adjourn this Bill.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 15 — The University of Regina Amendment Act, 1999

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I ask for the support of the legislature for a request from the University of Regina to amend The University of Regina Act.

The university has requested two amendments: one concerning its borrowing authority and one regarding parking control.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with respect to the university borrowing authority, the purpose of the amendment is to clarify the approval process required for the university to incur overdrafts for short-term borrowing.

The Provincial Auditor is of the view that the university requires an order in council to approve overdraft borrowing. The University of Regina has therefore requested that the Act be amended to clarify the board's authority. This situation does not exist at The University of Saskatchewan because the University of Saskatchewan Act has an overriding subsection which applies specifically to short-term borrowing.

What the University of Regina is requesting is essentially the same subsection in its Act. The University of Regina does not now have the right or authority under the Act to make the bylaws concerning parking on the university's lands. The right is vested in the Wascana Centre Authority.

Although the Wascana Centre Authority has delegated enforcement powers to the university, this has created administrative difficulties for both the university and the Authority. The university is requesting that The University of Regina Act be amended to vest in the university, the right and ability to make bylaws regarding parking control.

This is similar to the rights vested in the University of Saskatchewan under the provisions of its enabling legislation. Accordingly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are proposing The University of Regina Amendment Act, 1999, and consequential amendment to The Wascana Centre Act.

These amendments will give the University of Regina essentially the same rights as the University of Saskatchewan

enjoys in incurring overdraft borrowing and in making bylaws regarding parking control. We continue to encourage the universities in our province to revitalize, to become more streamlined and efficient. The proposed amendments will assist in that effort.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask for the support again of the legislature for the proposed amendment to The University of Regina Act and the consequential amendments to The Wascana Centre Act.

And therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 15, The University of Regina Amendment Act, 1999.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. From the minister's comments this afternoon, any time we can simplify administration for any part of any part of government, I think we would be in favour of that, and we're also standardizing the U of S with the University of Regina.

We still would like to have time to take a look, and in a little more depth look into the changes here. So at this time, I would like to adjourn, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 5 — The Municipal Hail Insurance Amendment Act, 1999

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Municipal Hail Insurance Amendment Act, 1999. The present Act describes the framework for the Saskatchewan Municipal Hail Insurance Association.

This is a body corporate that provides farmers throughout Saskatchewan with a minimum level of insurance against hail damage to crops. Through a consultative process the Saskatchewan Municipal Hail Association has requested amendments that will update the current Act and allow for additional flexibility when change is required in the future.

For instance, the association advised us that the requirement to name a person to represent a claimant who is within four miles of the crop damage is antiquated. Removing this requirement will allow claimants to select the most appropriate representative no matter what the geographic proximity.

The Act currently requires that notification of a claim for insurance be filed no later than October 15 of any crop year. The amendment will extend the time when notification can be filed to October 31 of the crop year.

As well, moving numbers from legislation into regulation will allow for changes on a more timely basis. The amounts that will be set out in regulations include the amount that the association may invest in its wholly owned subsidiary, the maximum amount of basic coverage, and the maximum amount of extra coverage. The current figures will appear in regulations.

To summarize, Mr. Speaker, the amendments allow for changes

to dollar amounts if and when a need arises, as well as updating the current Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Municipal Hail Insurance Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to speak briefly on this proposed legislation and in listening to the minister, I think it's a very positive sign that this legislation was requested by the association that's been affected mostly by it. And we think that when associations come forward requesting changes to legislation that's governing them, it's a very positive sign if the government responds in an appropriate way and certainly meeting the needs that the requests were originated on.

I also note that the minister indicates that a part of this legislation is housekeeping in nature to bring the legislation up to the realities of the current situation. I heard the minister say that some of the fees, etc., are going to be moved from the Act itself to regulations. And while I think that in some instances that type of a move is practical, we also always are very concerned when things are moved from legislation to regulations because it can allow for changes to the effect of the legislation without having it debated in this Assembly.

And so we have some concerns about that. And as well we are consulting with the association involved and we look forward to their input and comments on the legislation, if it meets the requests that they had expressed and the concerns that they had expressed.

So therefore at this time while we're awaiting feedback from the association I move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1545)

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

Ms. Lorje: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, please to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to draw your attention and the attention of all my colleagues in the House on both sides to the presence of two very distinguished gentlemen in the Speaker's gallery.

Dr. Gordon Barnhart, I'm sure is known to many of you, a former Clerk in this Assembly and also a Clerk in the Senate in Ottawa. Dr. Asit Sarkar may not be so well-known to many of you, but to anyone from Saskatoon he is extremely well-known through his extremely diligent work with the College of Commerce, and most particularly, most recently, that I've had contact with Dr. Sarkar, with the Raj Manek Memorial Dinner.

Both these gentlemen are very involved in promoting

democracy, both here in Canada and around the world, most recently in the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and, as my colleague from Regina Northeast will attest, also in Vietnam.

The work that they are doing both for commerce and for democracy is extremely important and relevant and ensures that the good name of Saskatchewan on a non-partisan basis is carried throughout the world.

I would ask all my colleagues to join in welcoming these two gentlemen.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 18 — The Constitutional Questions Amendment Act, 1999

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Constitutional Questions Amendment Act, 1999. This Bill provides for an amendment to ensure that the office of the Attorney General of Saskatchewan has due notice of all constitutionally based matters before the courts in Saskatchewan.

Notice is provided to the Attorney General pursuant to section 8(7) of the Act so a decision may be made as to whether it is appropriate for the Attorney General to appear on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

The amendment is required to address the concern that the amendments made in The Interpretation Act, 1995 may have unintentionally narrowed the operation of the term "regulation" and therefore the scope of application of The Constitutional Questions Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is desirable that we address this concern with the term "regulation" and ensure that the desired broader definition of "law" is utilized under the Act. To do this, the Act is amended to directly define law as it is defined in The Interpretation Act, 1995 and the Interpretation Act of Canada, rather than through reference to The Regulations Act, 1989. By defining the term law specifically, the legal interpretation issue is avoided and the full scope of the phrase law can be utilized.

There is an argument that without this amendment, constitutional challenges to matters such as bylaws or other secondary legislative instruments may have been outside the scope of the notice provision under The Constitutional Questions Act.

Mr. Speaker, I would note that members of the Saskatchewan legal community have as a matter of practice provided this notice to the Attorney General's office with respect to all such constitutional matters.

This amendment will therefore reinforce an existing practice and ensure that the legally required notice is provided in a way that will ensure that the constitutional interests of the people of Saskatchewan will remain protected in all matters before the Saskatchewan courts.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act to amend The Constitutional Questions Act.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This constitutional amendments Act is something that I would imagine most of my constituents won't feel it's going to affect their life greatly at this time. But then when we stop and think that the constitution is of course the foundation of all our lives, we have to make sure that the people that are dealing with it — the lawyers — are happy with it.

I understand from the Minister of Justice that the lawyers are already doing what this amendment is suggesting be done; it's just clarifying it within the legal laws . . . legal terms. So if they are happy with it — and I'm sure they'll be contacting us if they're not — then I imagine it would pass on. But at this time we'd like to just adjourn this Bill.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 20 — The Business Corporations Amendment Act, 1999

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Business Corporations Amendment Act, 1999.

The purpose of these amendments is to keep our legislation current by dealing with specific issues that have arisen from time to time in the analysis and application of the existing Act.

The three main reasons for the amendments are: to address specific outstanding legal concerns, to allow for electronic communications, and to satisfy the requirements of the agreement on internal trade.

Two specific legal concerns have arisen under the current Act. First is clarification of how consent to acting as a director takes place. Second is the rules about disclosure of financial assistance from corporations to employees.

With respect to acting as a director, generally an individual cannot be appointed as a director of a corporation without his or her consent. Whether an individual has consented to act as a director is a question of fact to be determined in each case. The amendments will clarify that for the election or appointment of a director to be effective, an individual must either: (a) consent in writing on or within 10 days after the date of the election or appointment; (b) be in attendance at a meeting where the election took place and not refuse to accept; or (c) act in the capacity of a director after an appointment.

The effect of the amendments will be to shift the onus to the person making the assertion that a director has in fact been appointed.

The second area of legal amendments is the requirement that financial assistance from a corporation to employees be subject to specific disclosure provisions. Previous versions of the Act contained an exemption from the disclosure of financial assistance to employees for living accommodations and for purchase of shares held by a trustee. These amendments will reinstate those exemptions.

Electronic communications are an increasingly important part of our businesses and marketplaces. These amendments in this area will make it easier to do business in Saskatchewan by allowing the electronic transmission of documentation to directors and shareholders and by setting out methods to conduct electronic meetings of shareholders. Further details of how these meetings and communications will take place will be set out in the regulations to the Act.

The Agreement on Internal Trade was developed to reduce and eliminate to the extent possible, barriers to the free movement of persons, goods, services, and investments within Canada and to establish an open, efficient, and stable domestic market. The parties recognize and agreed that enhancing trade and mobility within Canada would contribute to the attainment of this goal.

In keeping with that agreement the following amendments appear in this Bill — companies who are licensed under either The Vehicle Administration Act or the Motor Vehicle Transport Act of Canada will no longer be deemed to be carrying on business in Saskatchewan. As well corporations from other jurisdictions with a director or officer resident in Saskatchewan will not be required to file a power of attorney within Saskatchewan.

To summarize, Mr. Speaker, these amendments will address legal concerns, provide for electronic communications, and further implement the Agreement on Internal Trade.

I move second reading of an Act to amend The Business Corporations Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill at first sight has many parts to it and I believe will affect many people within the province. A number of the comments made by the minister, I think, a number of the changes are probably for the good. I think once again though my concern, and I know of my seatmates, the concern that we have had in the past and I believe it's going to come into effect here, is that we're leaving a number of things to regulation again. And we are not allowed to debate them in this House; they will automatically be brought in by the government. So I guess at first sight that would be one of our main concerns. We will have others at a later date after we've checked with members of the public. So at this time I would like to adjourn.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 7 — The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute Act, 1999

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I will move second reading of The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute Act, 1999. As well as, we'll be asking for a recommendation for consideration of the Assembly, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute Act was first passed in September of 1974. The Act allowed for the creation of the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute which opened on April 1, of 1975. In 1971 the Royal Commission on Farm

Machinery had recommended the establishment of a central agency for testing and evaluation of farm machinery. As well surveys conducted provided overwhelming support for farm machinery testing.

Then in 1972 a committee composed of representatives from the three Prairie provinces was established to examine the concept of a machinery institute. This group was called the interprovincial study committee for a proposed prairie agricultural machinery institute for the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, and for Saskatchewan. This committee's recommendation established a Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute known as PAMI.

In '74, Saskatchewan passed legislation, the PAMI Act, to create PAMI. The provinces of Alberta, Manitoba participated in PAMI to an interprovincial agreement. Field offices were located in Humboldt, Saskatchewan; Portage la Prairie, Manitoba; and Lethbridge, Alberta. The head office was located and still is located in Humboldt, Saskatchewan.

PAMI conducted independent testing on farm machinery and issued an independent evaluation report on each machine tested. In 1988, effective March 31, Alberta withdrew from PAMI agreement leaving Saskatchewan and Manitoba to continue operations. At that time in 1988, PAMI's budget was composed of about 75 per cent government grants and 25 per cent fee-for-service operations. Effective April 1, 1999, PAMI enters its 25th year of operation.

Today, although PAMI still receives some government funding, 75 per cent of its budget is earned from fee-for-service contract work for agriculture and industry. Today PAMI has a staff of 30 in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to emphasize the importance of PAMI to Saskatchewan's agricultural community and the agricultural industry of western Canada. According to a recent Saskatchewan Research Council study, the agricultural machinery sector of Saskatchewan generates about \$559 million in domestic and export sales. The study says the agricultural machinery sector employs about 5,500 Saskatchewan residents.

PAMI has worked and collaborated with and gained confidence of the universities, various farmers, farm organizations, and a group representing physical and challenged and mentally and physically handicapped farmers.

(1600)

PAMI has listened to the ideas and suggestions these groups have made for modification and adaptation to equipment. The ideas have made various types of farm equipment more usable. As well as modifications and adaptations, PAMI has contributed to the design of new equipment. One example is PAMI's response to public concerns about manure management in livestock operations.

To ensure that Saskatchewan is able to take advantage of diversification opportunities in livestock sector and to ensure the environmental and aesthetic concerns are addressed, PAMI has been very involved in the development of technology related to manure management, particularly with respect to hog

operations. For example, PAMI has developed specific equipment related to the storage of hog manure and its distribution as fertilizer. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is important because hog manure is a resource opportunity and can be used as fertilizer in this province.

PAMI has developed methods of handling manure to reduce its odour. PAMI has developed direct injection and pipelining equipment, and PAMI has developed the most effective piece of equipment called a straw cannon. It chops barley straw and blows it out into manure lagoons. This helps to prevent the odour.

Members of Saskatchewan's media can testify to the effectiveness of this technology because several reporters and editors attended the 1997 odour control tour of PAMI and enjoyed a barbecue at the lagoon site. The media reported that PAMI's technology works. That technology that may one day be sold to other countries; technology that's helping to diversify the agriculture economy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the last 25 years, PAMI has expanded and evolved. It has a national reputation. Last fall PAMI was hired by the federal department of national defence. PAMI was asked to conduct a review and examination of agricultural equipment to be adapted to the mine sweeping, for removing mines from the minefields found around the world.

The Department of Defence approached PAMI because of PAMI's broad knowledge of agricultural equipment and its application — not just as agricultural equipment. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel that citizens of Saskatchewan can take great pride in knowing that PAMI is involved in helping to rid the world of land mines of . . . a major international issue. At the same time, however, PAMI continues to work for prairie farmers by developing or modifying equipment that will assist farmers in diversifying their operations.

For example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, PAMI has recently awarded funds from Saskatchewan Agriculture Development Fund, or ADF, for two projects. The first project is to produce an instructional guide so that Saskatchewan herb and spice farmers can convert their older, small field cultivators to . . . (inaudible) . . . crop use. Funding for this project from ADF amounts to \$13,000.

The second project will examine dockage for cleaners to add value to grain. The ADF funding for the project is \$58,000. PAMI will pre-clean performance requirements and compare operating characteristics among three pre-cleaners. Results of this project will assist prairie farmers by determining which system works best to reduce dockage before taking the grain to the elevator or the terminals.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Saskatchewan Agriculture Development Fund is proud to work with PAMI and to assist the development of equipment that helps Saskatchewan producers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, PAMI has outgrown its legislation. After examination and evolution over a 25-year period, it's time to modernize the PAMI Act. It is necessary to amend the Act in order to reflect the scope of PAMI's work as it moves to the

21st century.

As I mentioned, PAMI's operating budget is now composed primarily of fees received for service and PAMI's services has evolved. While PAMI continues to evaluate farm machinery and issue reports about it, PAMI also assists and advises private industry on the development of agricultural machinery.

As we all know, Saskatchewan's agriculture implement manufacturing sector is one of the greatest diversification success stories for agricultural industry. As mentioned earlier, PAMI has been a major contributor to the success of the agriculture machinery sector in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, since 1988 PAMI's work and budget has doubled. Where PAMI's budget was about 2 million in 1988, its budget is now 4 million, with 75 per cent of the 4 million derived from fee for service.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Act has now been clear in terms of PAMI's working outside the agricultural sector. In fact, it is questionable if PAMI is allowed under the Act to venue outside the sphere of strictly agricultural work.

Therefore we have clarified this term of PAMI's operation so that PAMI is able to work outside the parameters of the agricultural industry. The proposed amendments will allow PAMI to conduct activities involving mechanization, electronic instrumentation, and related research and development for value-added agriculture in the food industry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is also necessary to broaden the scope of the Act to guide copyright, trademark, and industry design concerns that affect PAMI. The proposed amendment will allow PAMI to borrow funds or to establish a line of credit to meet the cash flow demands inherited in the activities of the institute. The amendment will allow PAMI to build on its technical capabilities to create additional financial stability for the organization as the result of increased service fees received and to access technologies from other industry.

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the language and terminology of PAMI is outdated. Several pieces of legislation, legislation which affect the PAMI Act and which is referred to as the PAMI Act, have already been amended and updated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute Act was introduced by this government . . . by the government of the day, and I am pleased today to stand with the NDP government and to introduce amendments to this Act. The amendments proposed to the Act here today will provide an opportunity for PAMI to build on the success of its last 25 years.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments of legislation will allow PAMI to continue to contribute to the economic diversification of Saskatchewan.

In conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members of the Legislative Assembly and I encourage you to adopt these amendments on The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute Act, 1999, and therefore move The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute Act, 1999, to be read the second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to announce to the Assembly the receipt of Royal Recommendation on the following Bill which was not in time to appear on the order paper. Therefore I beg to inform the Assembly that His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the subject matter of Bill No. 7, The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute Act, 1999, recommends it be the consideration of the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Trew): — The recommendation has been received.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I rise to speak on this proposed legislation. PAMI, over the last 25 years, has been an institution in our part of the province that has been a very important.

I recall with a great deal of interest 25 years ago when the institute was first formed and the great deal of optimism that surrounded its announcement of the three prairie provinces working together, and that agricultural machinery was going to be evaluated so that the farm community could have an independent analysis as to the claims that are made in terms of the working efficiencies and reliability of machinery.

Certainly in our corner of the world, in the Englefeld's and St. Brioux's, and Annaheim's of the world, there's a great and very important agricultural manufacturing, equipment manufacturing industry. And I know that these institutions and agencies rely very much on the work and the studies that PAMI can and has done over the years. And so I think it is very fitting that we acknowledge and congratulate PAMI on 25 years of service, not only to this province but to the agricultural community in the Prairie provinces.

It also is very true that the scope and the range of PAMI's activities have expanded over the years, and I think it is appropriate that the government indeed look at updating the mandate and legislation that operates the mandate so that PAMI can indeed expand its horizons and take opportunities from its expertise that will benefit not only Saskatchewan but the Prairie provinces as well.

And so we are very hopeful and quite confident that the legislative changes that are proposed in this legislation are going to be in the best interests of PAMI and the agricultural testing sector in a general rule.

However, we want to again consult with some of the people that have been involved with PAMI to see if there are perhaps further improvements or enhancements that can be made that we perhaps will be able to suggest when the appropriate time comes forward.

And so with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and ending on a congratulatory note for PAMI at 25 years of service, we would ask to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 8 — The Assessment Management
Agency Amendment Act, 1999**

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 8 amends The Assessment Management Agency Act. The Act establishes the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency. The Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency is responsible for preparing property assessments, and in the case of municipalities that employ assessment staff, overseeing the process.

The Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency is also delegated responsibility for determining assessment policies for Saskatchewan through its assessment manuals. In co-operation with the local government associations and other stakeholders, a review of the 1997 reassessment experience has been undertaken. After extensive consultations with the stakeholders including the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, the Department of Education, the Saskatchewan Municipal Board and the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency itself, the government proposes, as a matter of some urgency, the introduction of this Bill to amend the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency Act.

Mr. Speaker, the changes proposed in this Bill are pressing and include adjustments to the mandate of the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency and the timetable for the next provincial reassessment.

These amendments come as a result of government's ongoing commitment to ensure that our systems work for people, for industry, for communities, and municipalities. We are pleased to provide a number of improvements to the existing assessment management system. As our communities change, there is a need to continually improve the systems which help our communities stay strong.

Constant improvement of our legislation and assessment and property tax systems is an imperative that the Government of Saskatchewan has recognized and has responded to. All of the changes in this Bill are in keeping with our ongoing efforts to ensure that Saskatchewan citizens have user-friendly legislation and fair and up-to-date assessment management practices.

The changes, Mr. Speaker, proposed in this Bill are of significance to property owners who look to government not only to ensure a fair and just system but to balance the interests of the competing stakeholders. And, Mr. Speaker, this government has done that in these amendments.

Mr. Speaker, I would like now to briefly describe some of the key provisions in the Bill. First the Bill introduces a new provision adding a definition for the term "base date". It also provides authority to set limits by regulation on the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency's discretion to choose the date that the property values used in a revaluation are to reflect.

It is desirable and in the public interest for the government to be able to set limitations by regulation on the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency's discretion in setting this

date in relation to when a reassessment occurs since it has a direct impact on the time available to both local and provincial governments for tax policy analysis and decisions and also affects when preliminary assessments are available for this purpose.

In order to resolve a potential conflict of interest, this Bill introduces a new provision removing participation by the Saskatchewan Municipal Board in the Assessment Management Agency's technical advisory committee. The Saskatchewan Municipal Board requested that it be removed from this committee to avoid a potential conflict of interest with its role as the assessment appeal board. The Saskatchewan Municipal Board feels that participation in the process of developing assessment policies and methods conflicts with its role as the final appeal body.

Mr. Speaker, while the focus of the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency's mandate on assessment is implicit in the current Act, this Bill focuses the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency's activities explicitly and more clearly on assessment and places the burden of the preparation of taxation policy, analysis of taxation shift, or the preparation of information on procedures for assessment appeals where it belongs — in government.

The Bill achieves this by requiring the Assessment Management Agency to protect assessment shifts arising from changes in assessment rules and by removing references to researching shifts in taxation. This is in line with the division of responsibilities that evolved for the 1997 reassessment.

(1615)

For clarity of purpose and in the public interest, this Bill also revises the requirement that the agency carry out consultations prior to revaluation and preparation of its assessment manual. In order to receive a current . . . further a conflict of interest . . . to resolve a further conflict of interest — pardon me — references to the Assessment Management Agency's role in recommending amendments related to assessment appeal procedures are deleted.

These amendments will remove a conflict of interest between the Assessment Management Agency's present roles in relation to assessment appeals, for example, the conflict of being an extensive participant in the appeal process and also making recommendations on rules for assessment appeals.

The Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency should not be involved in or be perceived to be involved in establishing the legislative rules for assessment appeals. Removing this potential conflict of interest makes good sense.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill also substitutes a four-year revaluation cycle in place of the current three-year cycle. It thereby defers the next provincial reassessment from the year 2000 to 2001. This will resolve a structural timing problem that arises from two factors: the introduction of new provincial and local tax tools; and the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency's decision to advance the base date for assessment values by an extra year for the next reassessment.

The present three-year cycle does not allow sufficient time for proper analysis and decision making in conjunction with setting provincial and local policies. This change in the cycle will also give the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency and the cities more time to prepare for the introduction of the next round of major changes in assessment methodology now proposed for 2003 and to be deferred until 2005.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill also provides new authority for the government to set a deadline for the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency and the cities to complete preliminary assessments for a re-evaluation and to provide them to government for the development of tax policies as appropriate.

And finally, this Bill adds a new requirement that lands and improvements be physically re-inspected at least once in a number of years that is to be specified in regulation. This is to ensure fairness and a sound assessment.

These changes, Mr. Speaker, which affect so many people and so many stakeholders, called for a greater amount of co-operation and in some cases collaboration between the government, municipalities, the six cities which prepare their own assessments, the Saskatchewan Municipal Board, and the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency. But we know that co-operation, at least in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, never goes out of style. Furthermore co-operation is the culture on which we have built this province. We are confident that together we will meet this goal.

In summary, this Bill, Mr. Speaker, among other things responds to four significant concerns. First, clarifying the focus and mandate of the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency to ensure effectiveness and clarity of purpose. Secondly, the resolution of potential conflicts of interest between the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency's roles as assessor and assessment appellant, and its involvement in policy-making respecting the assessment appeal process.

The establishment of a fair and dependable timetable and cycle for reassessment is the third point; and fourthly, the need for a regular, physical, on-the-spot inspection of lands and improvements to ensure fairness and equity.

The provisions enunciated in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, address all of these concerns. These provisions ensure that industry, property owners, municipalities, government, and school divisions receive fair, timely, and up-to-date property assessments in order that all may have confidence in Saskatchewan's assessment system.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 8, The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 1999. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would imagine there are a very large number of administrators around this province have been waiting to see what this Bill says as well as the landowners in the province. The 1997 assessment caused many headaches and heartaches for a lot of people that they're still being dealt with out in, well not only rural Saskatchewan, but in

the cities as well.

The four areas that this Bill is dealing with are ones that we've heard about often, I imagine as all of us have as elected officials — with clarifying the mandate; removing a conflict of interest issues; the timetable, changing it from three years to four years; and the physical reassessment — are all issues that we've all been hearing about in our offices. I believe that . . . Again we've heard the government is changing a lot of the rules that we often debated in this House and discussed openly and put them into regulations which may be a concern for some of the . . . not only landowners but for administrators across the province, and it's something that I'm sure we'll be hearing about in the next few days as this Bill becomes obvious to a lot of the administrators.

So while we wait for the words from the people that these are going to . . . this Bill is directly affecting, I'm asking that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 8, The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 10 — The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act, 1999

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill No. 10 will replace The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act, 1978. The new legislation provides a revitalized framework for the way in which the boiler and pressure vessel industry is regulated, preserving safety and updating what is indeed a very old piece of legislation — older than me, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, the underlying philosophy of the way in which the boiler and pressure vessel industry is currently regulated dates back to the turn of the century. Back then the industry lacked formal standards for the design, construction, and operation of boilers. As a result, governments took a highly intrusive role in the industry.

The industry has since undergone many changes. Much of the safety of pressure equipment now results from self-regulating systems and processes in the industry rather than direct government intervention. Comprehensive codes and standards of design, manufacture, inspection, and operation have evolved at national and international levels.

However, the philosophy under which the industry is regulated remains relatively unchanged. Government is still involved in virtually every aspect of the boiler and pressure vessel industry: reviewing designs, certifying welders and operators, inspecting initial installations, ongoing inspections, investigating failures, as well as setting standards for design, construction, installation, inspection, and operation of pressure equipment.

The way in which this industry is regulated should continue to protect public and worker safety, recognize today's technology and allow our industries to remain not only viable but competitive into the future. Our government's approach to modernizing the regulatory framework for the boiler and pressure vessel industry is based on five key principles.

The primary reason for regulating the boiler and pressure vessel industry is safety. This is the first principle — that safety is the

prime consideration for regulatory legislation. The way in which this industry is regulated must continue to protect workers and the public as they go about their daily lives.

Second, regulatory legislation must be necessary, appropriate, and enforceable, and it must reflect the balanced needs of industry and the public.

Third, those affected by the regulatory framework need to be involved in both its review and its ongoing operation. Consultations were held with a number of representatives in the industry prior to developing this new legislation. This type of consultative process will continue.

Fourth, the responsibilities of everyone involved in the industry must be clear. The new legislation clearly assigns responsibilities to those who are most capable of meeting them. Owners ensure the safety of their operations. Operators carry out their duties in a safe manner. Manufacturers and installers maintain responsibility for their work and inspectors exercise reasonable judgment in carrying out their duties.

Fifth, any changes made to the way in which the industry is regulated must be safely achievable in the short term, and must allow the industry to adapt over time to changes in needs and technology.

The legislation before you today meets all of these principles. It provides a modernized framework for regulating the boiler and pressure vessel industry that through continued consultations will allow the industry to evolve while preserving the primary purpose of the regulatory regime, that being safety.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to examine the way in which the boiler and pressure vessel industry is regulated, to ensure that we are doing what is best to preserve public and workplace safety while providing a framework under which the industry can progress. The legislation before you today allows us to undertake this process of review and reform.

The new legislation moves more detailed requirements to regulations and establishes an appeal process for decisions of inspectors. It clearly outlines people's responsibilities within the regulatory framework and updates the fines associated with violation of these requirements. And it creates the opportunity to explore, through consultations, alternate means of industry regulation but does not rush into any changes without considering public and workers' safety.

It is our government's intention to proclaim this Bill after completion of the regulations called for in the legislation. Again we welcome the participation of interested parties as these new regulations are drafted.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of this Bill, Bill No. 10, The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act, 1999. Thank you.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Bill No. 10 — The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act, 1999, the Minister said we were replacing the old with the new. On this side of the House, we are very much in favour of replacing the old with the new. I'm sure it's something . . . and we do it quite gleefully in this building.

The new regulations that this Act is going to bring in is, of course, the safety being the most important aspect but at the same time the industries that are involved often shudder at the thought of new government regulations especially if they haven't had a chance to have input in them. We're very much hoping that the government is — while they keep the safety aspect of it to the forefront — make sure that we don't have a whole pile of rules and regulations that are again just going to be a very large annoyance for business and something that's going to cost a lot of money without being of real benefit to anyone except people who can weigh the number of papers that it usually takes to make sure the regulations are covered.

I also . . . we're hoping that the regulations are some that are consistent across the provinces so again we harmonize with the other provinces instead of having something that's entirely different and we'll find something that will be of benefit to everyone.

So I'm waiting with anticipation to hear from industries that are involved in this and we will be discussing it later, so at this time I'd like to adjourn debate on this Bill.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 13 — The Rural Municipality Amendment Act, 1999

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 13 amends The Rural Municipality Act, 1989. Bill 13 introduces amendments to adjust the property assessment and assessment appeals process to make Saskatchewan's system more equitable and more effective. As well it addresses a number of concerns raised by appellants and others over the past two years.

A review of the 1997 reassessment experience as well as a review of statutory tax exemptions have been completed. Through those processes and consultations with stakeholders such as the Saskatchewan rural municipalities association, the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, the Department of Education, the Saskatchewan Municipal Board, the government will be introducing further amendments to The Rural Municipality Act, 1989 in a subsequent session of the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, the changes proposed in this Bill are the ones that need to proceed now and include adjustments and new provisions that will streamline the process for assessment appeals. These amendments come as a result of government's ongoing commitment to ensure that our systems work for people as well as for rural municipalities. We are pleased to provide a number of improvements to the existing system.

While the amendments proposed in this Bill are incremental changes, they are important and are in harmony with amendments proposed in similar Bills to amend The Urban Municipality Act and The Northern Municipalities Act.

This Bill helps to ensure that the process of completing property assessment is transparent and accessible to the property owner and ensures further that the property owner is in the know and treated fairly throughout the appeal process.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to briefly describe some of the key provisions in this Bill. The addition of a new provision allowing assessment appeals on like properties in multiple jurisdictions to be consolidated and heard directly by the appeal board will allow for more expedient and consistent appeal decisions.

Examples of the possible application of this provision in rural Saskatchewan include pipeline properties, oil and gas wells, and others where common assessment methods arise as issues in the appeal process. The addition of new provisions allowing complex commercial or industrial appeals, including major mines or industrial plants, to be heard directly by the appeal board when the appellant, the board of revision, and the municipality agree, will remove some of the burden from local boards of revisions and streamline the administrative process. This Bill clarifies the acceptable methods for delivery and notice of appeal available to an appellant and provides several reasonable alternatives for delivery of notice.

(1630)

The addition of provisions requiring fair and just assessments for lands and improvements within school divisions, as well as within municipalities, addresses an important equity issue. The existing Act provides that the value at which any lands or improvements are assessed must be their fair value. The Act currently requires equity among assessments within a municipality. However, there is no requirement that assessments be equitable within a school division or divisions which may be part of the municipality. The 1997 reassessment certainly demonstrated that this is very important.

The Assessment Management Agency Act requires the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency to prepare assessments in accordance with the Act. The fundamental principle of equity among assessments applies equally for municipal and school taxes. For example, differences in the market index applied to agricultural land within a school division must be defensible.

This amendment addresses, first and foremost, a fundamental equity issue and establishes a principle which is in the overall best interest of taxpayers, municipalities, and school divisions. We are proposing that these provisions not come into effect until the date of the next reassessment, January 1, 2001. They will have no effect on appeals currently in progress.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill also includes a provision that removes all potential perceptions of bias in the constitution of local boards of revision. The committee examining the 1997 reassessment experience identified a concern that appellants to local boards of revision had a perception of bias when members of the council or school board were also members of the board of revision. To eliminate any possible bias or any perception of bias, council or school board members should not be eligible to sit as members.

This provision is also consistent with the Supreme Court decision which called into question the, quote, "institutional independence" of boards of revision when council members serve on the board. This provision excluding members of council from sitting on the board of revision may require new approaches — for example, greater use of district boards of

revision which have proved to be so successful in some rural districts in Saskatchewan.

We believe that these new provisions are fair and are in the best interests of the taxpayer and the municipality.

Another amendment proposed in this Bill clarifies that all parties to an appeal, including the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency, have equal duty to file written materials 10 days prior to a board of revision hearing.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, among other things, responds to three significant concerns. First, equitable assessment of similar properties within both municipalities and school divisions.

Secondly, the appeal process regarding appeals of assessment on like properties in multiple jurisdictions, and regarding complex commercial or industrial appeals, potentially including pipeline property, oil and gas wells, mines, and industrial plants.

And finally, the accessibility and transparency both of the information and process regarding assessment and appeals, helping to make the appeal process easier to use.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments should be supported by all members of the legislature. They are in the best interests of rural municipalities, our communities, and all Saskatchewan residents.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 13, The Rural Municipality Amendment Act, 1999. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am quite sure that I heard most of the comments of the minister some moments ago when she talked about Bill No. 14, the urban municipalities Act. It sounds as if the changes are virtually identical to that legislation and I'm anticipating that they are also the same to the northern municipalities Act. Bill No. 12 will be very, very similar.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I will just say I would reiterate all the comments that I made in regard to the urban municipalities Act and express them as well in this regard. And in anticipation of Bill 12 being very similar, saying that I would have the same concerns and the issues in that regard. And in the interest of brevity I would encourage the minister to just tell us if the changes are the same.

But at this point, waiting the input from our stakeholders and the people affected by this legislation, I would move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 12—The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 1999

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite so astutely observes that the amendments to the urban . . . northern rural which have already been read and

The Northern Municipalities Act do have many similarities.

However, particularly in the case of The Northern Municipalities Act, while the members opposite will notice some similarities because of the uniqueness of the northern part of our province, there are some significant differences in the northern one. So I would ask the members opposite to listen very intently for those changes.

Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 12 amends The Northern Municipalities Act. Bill 12 introduces amendments to adjust the property assessment and assessment appeals to make Saskatchewan's system more equitable and more effective. As well, it raises . . . or addresses a number of concerns raised by appellants and others over the past two years.

We bring these amendments forward, Mr. Speaker, because we believe in our northern communities and we want to ensure that northern communities are provided with the same legislative updates and tools as are available to municipalities in the southern part of the province.

Believing in the future of our northern communities, Mr. Speaker, means that my department is working on extending 911 emergency telephone service to northern communities to ensure that northern people have reliable access to vital services in an emergency.

Mr. Speaker, believing in our northern communities means that this government cares about the water and sewer systems in our northern communities. These are services that we in the south have taken for granted. To start the process toward the development of adequate water and sewer for northern communities, this government, in partnership with the New North, has contracted for a study to develop a long-term program for the development and improvement of water and sewer systems in northern communities.

The road toward adequate and reliable water and sewer service may prove to be a challenging one but my department, together with New North — some of the representatives of whom were visitors in our Chamber today — has taken the first important step, a step which clearly demonstrates our commitment to the people of northern Saskatchewan.

Believing in the North means my department has responded to the needs of the northern communities by establishing, last session, the Northern Revenue Sharing Trust Account Management Board. This management board reflects the interests and skills of Northerners and is yet another sign of government's commitment to our northern communities. It will provide recommendations for northern funding.

A review of the 1997 reassessment experience has been completed as well as a review of statutory tax exemptions. Through these processes and consultations with stakeholders such as New North, the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, the Department of Education, and the Saskatchewan Municipal Board — you can see we've had extensive consultations — the government will be introducing further amendments to The Northern Municipalities Act in a subsequent session of the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, the changes proposed in this Bill are ones that need to proceed now and include adjustments in new provisions that will streamline the process for assessment appeals. These amendments come as a result of government's ongoing commitment to ensure that our systems work for people as well as their northern municipalities. We are pleased to provide a number of improvements to the existing system.

Each year administrative and operational issues are brought to our attention by municipal administrations, local government associations, other stakeholders, and my own department staff. We do get letters, Mr. Speaker. The amendments proposed in this Bill contain changes to some administrative procedures and are in keeping with our ongoing efforts to ensure that Saskatchewan citizens have user-friendly legislation and municipal administrative practices.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to now briefly describe some of the key provisions of this Bill. The addition of a new provision allowing assessment appeals on like properties in multiple jurisdictions to be consolidated, heard directly by the appeal board, will allow for more expedient and consistent appeal decisions. The addition of new provisions allowing complex commercial or industrial appeals, including appeals regarding major mines or industrial plants, to be heard directly by the appeal board when the appellant, the board of revision, and the municipality agree, will remove some of the burden from boards of revision and streamline the administrative process. These types of appeals can be particularly complex in the North, given some of the types of industry and some of the distances and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill also clarifies the acceptable methods for delivery of a notice of appeal available to an appellant and provides several reasonable alternatives for delivery of notice, again an issue particularly in northern Saskatchewan where there is not reliance on the daily paper and so forth.

The addition of provisions requiring fair and just assessments for lands and improvements within school divisions, as well as within municipalities, addresses an important equity issue.

The existing Act provides that the value at which any lands and improvements are assessed must be their fair value. The 1997 reassessment demonstrated that equity within both municipalities and school divisions is important, with proportion of property taxes collected for school purposes being what it is.

The Assessment Management Agency Act requires the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency to prepare assessments in accordance with the Act. The fundamental principle of equity among assessments applies equally for municipal and school taxes.

This amendment addresses first and foremost a fundamental equity issue and establishes a principle which is in the overall interest of taxpayers, municipalities, and school divisions. These changes call for changes to northern municipal systems and new co-operative approaches to preparing assessments. For this reason we proposed that these provisions not come into effect until the date of the next reassessment, January 1, 2001. They will have no effect on appeals currently in process.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill includes, as the urban and rural Acts do, a provision that removes all potential perceptions of bias in the constitution of local boards of revision. The committee examining the 1997 reassessment experience identified a concern that appellants to local boards of revision had a perception of bias when members of the council or school board were also members of the board of revision.

This Bill recognizes there is no statutory requirement for council to be represented on the board of revision and that to eliminate any possible bias or perception of bias, council or school board members should not be eligible to sit as members. This provision is also consistent with the Supreme Court decision which called into question the institutional independence of boards of revision when council members serve on the board.

Another amendment proposed in this Bill clarifies that all parties to an appeal, including the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency, have equal duty to file written materials 10 days prior to a board of revision hearing.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, among other things, responds to three significant concerns of northerners: first, equitable assessment of similar properties within both municipalities and school divisions; secondly, the appeal process regarding appeals of assessment on like properties in multiple jurisdictions and regarding complex commercial or industrial appeals; and finally and thirdly, the accessibility and transparency both of the information and process regarding assessment and appeals, helping to make the appeal process easier to use.

The provisions of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, address all of these concerns. These provisions ensure that property owners, municipalities, and school divisions receive fair treatment and are a part of a transparent and equitable process in order that all may have confidence in the system.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments should be supported by all members of the legislature. They are in the best interests of northern municipalities, their communities, and all Saskatchewan residents. Mr. Speaker, I think that the provisions of these Bills are so good and positive that they bear much repetition.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 12, The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 1999.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1645)

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a rare movement or moment of agreement with the government, I would like to agree with the minister insofar as her comments about the North being very unique and having very special circumstances that require special consideration is a very appropriate statement.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this proposed amendment to the legislation has the similarities to the urban and rural municipality insofar as saying that assessment and appeal processes and things learned out of that reassessment process

are made more transparent, fairer, apply equally to northern residents as they do to urban and rural residents in this province.

And certainly those parts of the Bill that talk about studying special needs in terms of water and sewer requirements and things of that nature for the North are appropriate because very often communities in the North don't enjoy, as a matter of fact and of course, the same levels of municipal services and infrastructure that we do in the South. And certainly the people of the North are very much deserved of those same services.

Mr. Speaker, I think that there are other unique dimensions to the North that have been acknowledged by the minister's statements in terms of distance and communication. And any process of reassessment, of appeal, and things of that nature in regard to property have to be given special consideration given those challenges in the North.

The minister indicated that there has been extensive consultation . . . has occurred in the preparation of these amendments in this legislation and certainly we in the official opposition in the Saskatchewan Party have undertaken and do undertake to have extensive consultations as well. That information is forthcoming and while we wait it with eager anticipation, I would like to adjourn debate at this time. I move that we adjourn debate, Mr. Speaker.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 16 — The Mineral Taxation Amendment Act, 1999

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in this Assembly today to move second reading of The Mineral Taxation Amendment Act, 1999. This amendment allows potash producers to pay production taxes on a consolidated company basis beginning in 2002. In February 1998, a number of tax changes in the potash tax system were announced to encourage an investment by potash producers in Saskatchewan operations, to improve Saskatchewan's ability to compete for capital throughout the world, and to ensure the long-term health and growth of the Saskatchewan potash industry.

One of the specific changes announced at that time was that beginning in the year 2002 potash producers would be able to pay taxes on a consolidated company basis rather than the current mine-by-mine basis. All of the potash changes that were announced are beginning to be implemented through regulated amendments. As a result of the tax changes, IMC Kalium announced expansion projects at its Colonsay and Belle Plaine mines.

While the Colonsay expansion has been temporarily delayed due to uncertainty in the potash market, the expansion at Belle Plaine is continuing, and the two expansions are still expected to be completed within the three-to-five-year time frame initially established by IMC Kalium — an investment of some \$481 million, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment of this Act also includes housekeeping amendments. The prescribed form for waivers of the four-year assessment period is changed to a form acceptable

to the minister. This will permit more flexibility when a waiver form is required. This legislation also eliminates the deduction from the base payment that is the Act in error . . . that is in the Act in error and has never been applied in practice. So basically it's housekeeping.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this amendment is supported by industry and is part of a tax package of changes supported by the government.

With these brief comments, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Mineral Taxation Amendment Act, 1999.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it seems like a great part of this is housekeeping and very straightforward, but at the same time we would like to check with stakeholders concerned. So therefore at this time I would adjourn . . . I move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 17—The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 1999

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill No. 17, an Act respecting local government elections introduces a number of improvements that will make voting during local government elections more convenient and accessible. As well, this Bill proposes to eliminate legal and administrative barriers experienced by school boards during the period of transition after a school division has decided to restructure.

Mr. Speaker, before each round of local elections a review of the Act is conducted and amendments, if necessary, are identified. Local governments have requested many of these amendments. At the proposal stage, the amendments were circulated to stakeholder groups including the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, the city clerks' association, and local government administrators.

The changes and improvements included in this Bill illustrate our commitment to strengthening communities and protecting our democratic system of government.

Our first proposal responds to problems existing school boards have during the transitional phase when school divisions are restructured around the time of regular general elections. To provide for an effective transition, school boards will be able to remain in place during the transitional phase of school division restructuring. The most convenient time for school division restructuring to occur is January 1 of any year since the fiscal year of school divisions is the calendar year.

Mr. Speaker, to accommodate an effective transition, it is helpful for existing boards of education to be able to remain in office for a short period of time after a new board has been elected for the new division. School divisions that restructured in the fall of 1997 incurred additional costs and administrative disruption because the restructuring had to take effect partway through a fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill proposes to waive the requirement for an election in school divisions that are restructuring and allow existing board members to remain in office until the restructuring process is completed.

Mr. Speaker, a second major reform in this Bill is to clarify the advertising requirements for election notices. Local governments have indicated that the present advertising requirements are too costly and administratively inconvenient.

Mr. Speaker, we're proposing new provisions to reduce election costs for local governments while still ensuring adequate public notice is given. To enable this, we have expanded the types of publications in which election notices may be advertised. We have also streamlined the advertising process and provided for additional methods of notifying voters of the election.

Mr. Speaker, a third amendment proposes to provide local governments with an additional method of ordering candidates' names on a ballot. Local governments will now be able to arrange the names of candidates on the ballot in a random order in addition to the other methods available. Local governments may choose between a variety of methods that ensure that candidates have a fair opportunity to be elected.

Mr. Speaker, during the last session we provided curbside voting for disabled people who could not enter a polling place because it was not conveniently accessible. Accessibility for all eligible voters is a key factor in ensuring the integrity of the local government election process is maintained. We have expanded this provision to permit disabled people to vote at any polling place in the ward or municipality that has the most convenient access.

These new provisions will permit people with disabilities to choose the polling place that is the most convenient for them to cast their vote. As well, those voters that are in a hospital or a nursing home and unable to go to a polling place will be permitted to vote at their bedside. For our democratic system to work effectively, all people must be afforded an equitable opportunity to vote.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill also proposes new provisions that will prevent temporarily displaced voters to vote at an advance poll established outside a municipality or a school division. For example, this means that if voters are called to fight a forest fire during an election, they will be able to conveniently exercise their democratic right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, making the election process simple and easy to understand, and protecting our democratic system of government, is essential to our goal of ensuring community members participate in the process of fairly determining their local government representatives. Situations such as the Manitoba flood, the Quebec ice storm, or even — dare we think it — Y2K (Year 2000) make it necessary for us to consider innovative methods of ensuring natural disasters or special circumstances do not interfere with local government elections.

In view of this, local governments will now have the authority to postpone an election in a ward, municipality, or school division for up to 60 days. This will permit municipalities to deal with an emergency and then proceed with their local

election when a majority of the voters are able to cast their ballots.

Mr. Speaker, with a foundation built upon the integrity of our democratic election process, this Bill will make the election process convenient and accessible to more people. It will ensure the administration of the election process is simplified and easily understood.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of this Bill, Bill No. 17, an Act respecting local government elections. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to speak briefly about The Local Government Election Act proposal, Bill 17.

I think the minister's statement that the objective of this Act is to have simple and easy to understand regulations and rules regarding local administration elections is noteworthy and a valuable objective. And it would seem that the proposals as outlined have found favour with the member agencies, the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association), the urban and rural governments.

We are in the process of consulting with these bodies to see if these proposed amendments meet the requirements of these agencies as they've been proposed, and we look forward to receiving their feedback.

And with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

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