

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present again today from people who are concerned about the EMS (emergency medical services) report:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to not implement the consolidation and centralization of ambulance services as recommended in the EMS report and affirm its intent to work to improve community-based ambulance services.

The people that have signed this petition are all from Naicam. Thank you.

Mr. Hillson: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I present a petition concerning the restoration of old Government House in Battleford. And the prayer of relief reads as follows:

That your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to designate the restoration of Territorial House in Battleford as a centenary project and provide the necessary funds to complete the project prior to the 2005 Saskatchewan centennial.

And your petitioners come from the town of Battleford.

I so present.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the condition of Highway 339. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair Highway 339 in order to facilitate economic development initiatives.

And this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Moose Jaw, Spring Valley, Milestone, Lang, Avonlea, and Belle Plaine.

I so present.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of people from southwest Saskatchewan concerned about the state of the hospital in the city of Swift Current. The prayer of their petition today reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to carefully consider Swift Current's request for a new hospital.

And, Mr. Speaker, the petition today is signed by residents of the city of Swift Current, the communities of Waldeck, Wymark, Hazenmore, Webb, and Rush Lake.

I so present.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are concerned about the proposals in the Fyke report, and the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to take the necessary steps to ensure that services are maintained at least at their current levels at Weyburn General Hospital, Bengough Health Centre, Radville Marian Health Centre, and Pangman health centre in order that accessible health care services are available to residents of Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency and beyond.

And the petition is signed by residents of Bengough.

I so present.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present regarding the EMS service in the province, and the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to not implement the consolidation and centralization of ambulance services as recommended in the EMS report and affirm its intent to work to improve community-based ambulance services.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people in the Redvers, Bellegarde, and Storthoaks areas.

I so present.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to not implement the consolidation and centralization of ambulance services as recommended in the EMS report and affirm its intent to work to improve community-based ambulance services.

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the Redvers, Regina, Wauchope, Storthoaks, and Antler areas.

I so present.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today to present a petition from citizens calling for the immediate implementation of province-wide 911 emergency service. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause government to fulfill its

promise to the people of rural Saskatchewan by immediately implementing the 911 emergency telephone system province-wide.

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

Sighed by the good citizens of Rabbit Lake and Glenbush.

I so present.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to do with the lack of funding to non-profit personal care homes. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide subsidies to non-profit personal care homes in the province so all seniors can be treated equally.

The signators, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Regina, Bredenbury, Esterhazy, Veregin, Togo, and Kamsack.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here of citizens opposed to possible reduction of services to Davidson and Craik health centres.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Davidson and Craik health centres be maintained at their current level of service at a minimum with 24-hour acute care, emergency, doctoral services available, as well as lab, public health, home care, and long-term cares services available to the users from the Craik-Davidson area and beyond.

Signed by the good citizens from Davidson, Craik, and Regina.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again I rise in the Assembly to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of the constituency of Shellbrook-Spiritwood and their regards to the cellular telephone coverage. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to improve reliable cellular telephone service in the districts of Spiritwood, Medstead, Glaslyn, Leoville, Chitek Lake, Big River, Fenwood, Debden, Shellbrook, Parkside, Shell Lake, Duck Lake, and Macdowall.

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

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Spiritwood, Shell Lake, and Leoville.

I so present.

Mr. Peters: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by folks that are concerned about the heritage Territorial House in the Battlefords. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to designate the restoration of Territorial House in the Battlefords as a centenary project, and provide necessary funds to complete the project prior to 2005 centennial celebrations.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by folks from Richard, Battleford, Wilkie, and Unity.

I so present.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise again with a petition from citizens concerned about the future of ambulance service in rural Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to not implement the consolidation and centralization of ambulance services as recommended in the EMS report and affirm its intent to work to improve community-based ambulance services.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good citizens of Wood Mountain and Fir Mountain. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received.

Petitions of citizens asking the government to take steps to ensure the Kelvington health centre is maintained at its current service.

And 10 other petitions that are tabled today as addendums to previously tabled petitions.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As every member will know, later this afternoon we will be unveiling in the rotunda of the legislature what are described as the millennium busts — the bust of our very first premier, Walter Scott; the bust of Tommy Douglas, first CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) premier of the province; and the restored bust of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker.

To help us celebrate this very historic event a number of people are with us today in the gallery, including, we're very pleased to say, a number of family members of those individuals who are we are going to honour in the rotunda later.

And I would ask all members of the legislature, therefore, to welcome the following people. First group of people, Mr. Speaker, are those who are here as descendants of our first premier, Walter Scott. And they have come from quite diverse parts of the country and some of them are in Saskatchewan for the very first time.

Mr. Speaker, in your gallery are descendants and family of Walter Scott; from Ontario, Dr. John McDonald; Dorothy Mitchell and her husband, Barry; Carolyn Feasey, and her husband, Bob; Alex McDonald, and his wife, Beverley Evans-McDonald, and their sons, Ian and Wesley, from Winnipeg; and from another branch of the Scott family, Gordon Scott from Ottawa, and Arlean Scott-McPherson from Regina.

Members, please welcome these members of the Walter Scott family.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And we are delighted that Shirley Douglas, daughter of Tommy Douglas could take time from her busy life to be with us today for the unveiling. Shirley.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And it's also my pleasure to welcome Mr. Dick Spencer and Mrs. Lily Spencer, former mayor of Prince Albert, and a very close friend and associate of John Diefenbaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I would also like, Mr. Speaker, to introduce, through you to members of the Assembly, the artists who have sculpted the three busts. First of all, Mr. Hans Holtkamp, who crafted the bust of Walter Scott.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Susan Velder, who did that of T.C. Douglas.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And Mr. Leo Mol, the original sculptor of the John Diefenbaker bust, first done in 1964, today being unveiled restored. Mr. Mol.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And as I said, Mr. Speaker, to our guests at lunch today, every good project needs a solid foundation. Would you please also, members, welcome Allan Douma, who has crafted the marble pedestals on which the busts are placed.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, I also want to welcome to our House this afternoon three individuals who really need no introduction to this House. First of all the Hon. Ralph Goodale, who will be taking part of the unveiling of Walter Scott's bust.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The Hon. Allan Blakeney, who will be unveiling the T.C. Douglas bust.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And no stranger to this House, Mr. Gordon Barnhart, former Clerk of our Legislative Assembly, who has recently written a biography of Walter Scott.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And finally, Mr. Speaker, two other very special visitors in your gallery. Mr. Hugh MacDonald, MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for the Edmonton-Gold Bar constituency in Alberta, and his son Isaac.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — On behalf of all members, Mr. Speaker, I welcome our guests and look forward to participating with them in the ceremonies later in the rotunda.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the Premier in welcoming our special guests in your gallery this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I too was privileged to be present at a luncheon in honour of the families of our first premier, Walter Scott; and Premier Tommy Douglas; as well as associates of a Saskatchewan-born prime minister, John Diefenbaker.

I was able to personally sit with Mr. Gordon Scott and Ms. Arlean Scott-McPherson, members of Walter Scott's family, and I look forward to meeting other family members later in the day.

But certainly, the official opposition welcomes each one of you to the Legislative Assembly.

Also, a very warm welcome to the sculptors. I have to confess, Mr. Speaker, that I was probably one of the guilty ones that touched John Diefenbaker's nose, and that's probably part of the reason we have to have the refurbishment. I understand now we'll have two more busts to go along with that one, so that's excellent.

Also I'd like to pass on a warm welcome to the Hon. Ralph Goodale, a former colleague of mine when I served in the Parliament of Canada; and to Dr. Gordon Barnhart, and the other special guests that are here for the unveiling of the busts this afternoon.

On behalf of the official opposition, Mr. Speaker, again we welcome them and would you join with us.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Liberal caucus, I too would like to acknowledge the special guests seated in the gallery today.

Today is a celebration and recognition of the many contributions made by three of Saskatchewan's most dedicated and talented leaders. Two former premiers and a former prime

minister have made a colossal input on Saskatchewan's collective destiny in the 20th century and whose legacy is remarkable indeed. These three men have shaped the direction of this province not only through the policies they promoted, Mr. Speaker, but also through the example of their own personal integrity and dedication. In these days where people of such value seem few and far between, these men were giants in their vision, their idea of what this province could be and could represent to the world.

They were all pioneers, Mr. Speaker — Walter Scott who helped bring this province into Confederation and led it during those formative years; Tommy Douglas who brought in a new way of thinking in Saskatchewan that made this province a world leader in policies such as medicare and leading the transition from the Depression to the modern age; and John Diefenbaker, who attained the highest office in this land, brought in the first Bill of Rights in this country, and proved that Saskatchewan people are capable of leading this country and that we were and remain a province to be reckoned with in innovation and new ideas.

And now as we enter the 21st century, Mr. Speaker, it is only fitting that we recognize their achievements on behalf of all Saskatchewan citizens with these enduring artistic renditions of three truly remarkable men.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I got quite a shock a minute ago. I looked up into the gallery and thought I saw my father, but in the west gallery is actually his brother — Uncle Noel, I call him — Noel Elkin, and cousin Jackie. And we always had balance in our family. My father was a union organizer but Uncle Noel was an entrepreneur so we kept that balance in the family and this is the way that we spent quality time together.

So I want you to welcome Noel and cousin Jackie to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melnychuk: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to, through you and to the members of the Assembly, welcome a school group from Lawson Heights School in my constituency in Saskatoon.

There are 34 grade 8 students seated in the west gallery with teachers, Ms. Tammy Boychuk, Mr. Scott Reeves, and chaperone, Mrs. Donella Schatz.

I will be meeting with this group later this afternoon for a photo and a quick chat on what they may or may not see in the Assembly this afternoon in question period.

But I would ask all members to welcome this school group to the Assembly today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Western Canada Farm Progress Show

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Regina is about to play host to the Western Canada Farm Progress Show. This annual event put on at Regina Exhibition Park runs from June 20 to the 23. Mr. Speaker, I encourage all — young and old — to attend the events taking place as there is everything from an antique tractor pull to a fashion show.

Mr. Speaker, the MacDon Stadium will be a theatre of innovation featuring the new 52 series self-propelled draper, auger windrowers, the new 5010 mower conditioner, and high clearance self-propelled sprayer.

New to this year's event, Mr. Speaker, are demos in cattle handling and equipment, and the Power Take Off Pub. These will be great places for shop talk and the idea exchange, Mr. Speaker. Along with the demos and the planned events, there will be 50,000 square feet of new-to-the-market machinery and products.

Regina will play host to people from an estimated 36 different countries attending the show to research and facilitate sales of North-American-made machinery and services.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, the Western Canada Farm Progress Show has much to offer to all. It is an event that all people will enjoy. I would like to congratulate the organizers on what is sure to be another very successful show.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Condition of Highway 43

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to read from a letter from Mr. Paul Boisvert, editor of the *Gravelbourg Tribune*, in support of maintaining weight limits on Highway No. 43 and upgrading its condition.

Mr. Boisvert's comments apply to many secondary highways in this province as well. And he says:

You can't turn your back on economic development that has been 50 years in the making. How much value does a government place on a business like Trailtech? How much does it place on something like a hospital? There are no economic models or studies made to answer those questions. What is certain is something so simple as a road can be the straw that breaks the camel's back in terms of creating communities that can survive in the newly emerging economy. A Trailtech and/or Bickner Trucking have established themselves in rural Saskatchewan because the area can provide basic needs like a road. If the decision is to close down rail lines then why let the roads go to ruin? Is it worth putting an entire region of southwest Saskatchewan at a disadvantage without first doing an economic impact assessment of the kind of wealth Highway 43 creates for the region and the province?

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Boisvert's letter underscores the importance of our secondary highways to commerce in this province, and the high priority that is placed on our highways infrastructure by both rural and urban residents.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Week

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During this week, people throughout Canada will be wearing a blue cornflower on their lapel. The cornflower is a hardy wildflower found across Canada, and because of its beauty and hardiness, it is the symbol of hope for those suffering from ALS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or as it's more commonly known, Lou Gehrig's disease.

Mr. Speaker, smallpox is gone from the face of the earth; polio is practically eliminated except for some small pockets in parts of the Third World; medical research has even made very hopeful advances in the fight against many forms of cancer — but the cause of ALS remains unknown and there still is no cure.

The purpose of this week and of the cornflower is to raise public awareness of this disease and to raise funds for medical research. As we know, ALS is a slowly degenerative disease which affects muscular function and leads to an inability to walk, talk, smile, eat, and sometimes even breathe. The most terrifying aspect of ALS though is that through all of this physical deterioration a victim's mind and senses remain clear. They are acutely aware of their suffering but they cannot articulate their pain.

Mr. Speaker, ALS can strike at anyone at any time regardless of age, sex, ethnic origin, or state of one's health. The fact that the disease is named after a famous athlete struck in the prime of his career tells us how unpredictable it is.

I know all members will join with me in saying a special word of thanks to the ALS Society of Saskatchewan for its work in raising money and awareness, and in wishing them well during this special week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Kenaston Resident to Celebrate 100th Birthday

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to honour a constituent of mine who'll be celebrating her 100th birthday on December 6 of this year. Mrs. Francis Brkich, who is also my grandmother, has seen an entire century come and go. And I have to say she's a great lady who's gained a lot of wisdom over the past 100 years which she's tried to pass on to me, along with guidance, advice, and abundance of love.

Mrs. Brkich was a true Saskatchewan pioneer who raised a family of nine children through some of the most difficult times in the history of farming in our province. She has a very big heart and spent much of her life helping anybody that needed her help. She's very active in the local church, community, and volunteered for church events and community events as well. She worked very closely with my grandfather, and together they

built a life based on the love of family, honesty, and strong rural values.

For myself, I look back upon the good visits we have together and look forward to many more visits, and of course the celebration coming this winter.

My grandmother's doing great these days and still lives in her own home in Kenaston. So you see, Mr. Speaker, longevity runs in our family. So if any of the members opposite are wondering how long I'm going to be here, I can advise them I maybe . . . may live to be 100 years old.

I would ask all the members to join me in congratulating Mrs. Francis Brkich on her upcoming 100th birthday.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Good Food Box Program in Saskatoon

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to draw to your attention a program called the good food box in Saskatoon. It is an initiative that makes healthy food accessible, supports local farmers, and builds community. This program was recently featured in *Synergy* magazine.

Twice a month, Mr. Speaker, volunteers gather at Mount Royal Mennonite Church to fill boxes with fresh produce, nutrition information, and creative recipes. Customers pre-order and pay low prices for the boxes which are delivered in our community. Many of the items are locally grown, allowing participants to support Saskatchewan producers.

The good food box program was developed in 1998 by the community hunger and education program, also known as CHEP, in conjunction with low-income families, local producers, and Saskatchewan Health. The initiative is open to all Saskatoon residents and is growing rapidly. The number of good food boxes sold monthly has increased from 40 to over 2,000. The program is now the second largest of its kind in Canada and more can register by calling CHEP at 655-4635.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to reducing poverty and hunger in Saskatchewan. Hard work, creativity, and community initiative are required to address the challenges facing our province and I know we all commend those involved with the good food box program. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Liberal Leadership

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm reluctant to mar the tranquility of this Chamber; however, that is about to end. For too long the Liberal Party has been on the sidelines of political debate in this province. For too long I have sat quietly in this House.

Well, Mr. Speaker, well, Mr. Speaker, no more Mr. Nice Guy. The gloves are coming off.

Our infrastructure is crumbling, our young people are leaving, our farmers are in crisis, patients wait unconscionably long

times for necessary services, a civil servant is fired for co-operating with a RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) investigation, Aboriginal people remain outside the mainstream, and this province turns in the worst job loss record since the Great Depression.

The NDP's (New Democratic Party) only strategy for building our economy is to buy companies in Nashville and Toronto and to compete with private business here in Saskatchewan.

We need new vision; we need new direction. I know that not all members will welcome the announcement of my seeking the Liberal leadership. The reason is simple; they're scared. They know a rejuvenated Liberal Party will decimate them.

In the recent BC (British Columbia) election, the Liberals swept to power. The NDP won a measly two seats. And the Saskatchewan Party did even worse — they didn't win a single seat.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Trans Canada Trail Volunteer Receives Recognition

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many times during this session our government has recognized the great number and quality of volunteers we have within the boundaries of Saskatchewan. Today, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate one of my constituents by the name of Gordon Glen who received a five-year pin for his volunteer involvement in the development of the Trans Canada Trail.

Mr. Glen is one of the many dedicated volunteers who have spent a great deal of time and energy on the development of the Trans Canada Trail. Mr. Speaker, he can only be described as a jack of all trades in his approach to building of the trail. Mr. Glen has flown over, hiked, soil tested, and driven the route and potential route of the trail in the Saskatoon area. His knowledge and experience from hiking in many parts of the world have been important resources in developing trails throughout Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in dedication to volunteers like Gordon Glen, who have made the Trans Canada Trail part of the Saskatchewan landscape to be enjoyed by everyone, I send out my deepest respect and congratulations. This trail will go on to reach many generations and bring a sense of unity throughout this great land.

I would once again like to thank Mr. Glen and all the volunteers who have worked so hard on the development of the Trans Canada Trail in Saskatchewan. You truly represent the spirit of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Court Ruling on Termination of former Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority Employee

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, on Friday, Justice Larry Kyle delivered his ruling in the Joe Dosenberger case. It was a

scathing indictment of the NDP government that is more interested in protecting its political hide than in fulfilling its regulatory responsibilities.

Justice Kyle paints an extremely disturbing picture, Mr. Speaker, of a mean-spirited, vindictive government that was prepared, Mr. Speaker, to destroy the reputation of a respected 28-year-RCMP veteran in order to cover up their political embarrassment. And even now, this arrogant, mean-spirited government refuses to admit it did anything wrong.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of this ruling, the NDP owes Mr. Joe Dosenberger 10 months salary, but they also owe him an apology and his job back.

Will the minister stand in the House today and apologize to Joe Dosenberger and give him back his job?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I would want to say today that the circumstances surrounding this situation are very unfortunate.

Through this, Mr. Speaker, it should be said that I have never doubted the integrity of Mr. Dosenberger or his intent would be other than to co-operate with the police, Mr. Speaker. And I think that Mr. Dosenberger would need to hear that. That there is no way that I would question his integrity or the intent in this matter being other than to co-operate with the police.

I regret, Mr. Speaker, the results that this has had on Mr. Dosenberger and his career. I hope the decision rendered, which we will not appeal, and the court settlement will enable him to move forward from this unfortunate situation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, as the minister said, this was indeed unfortunate. It's unfortunate for the whole province of Saskatchewan to have to put up with that kind of mismanagement from the NDP.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — They just don't get it, Mr. Speaker. A judge has now said Joe Dosenberger was right to co-operate with the RCMP and the NDP was dead wrong to fire him. But even now the minister refuses to take responsibility. She refuses to apologize. She refuses to admit she did anything wrong. Even in the face of that court ruling, the cover-up continues.

Mr. Speaker, when is the NDP going to take responsibility for the mess it created in Liquor and Gaming? Will the minister take the first step by admitting she was dead wrong to fire Joe Dosenberger?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, I am the minister responsible and I have accepted the court's decision. And I have

accepted that procedures and policies within the authority must change.

I've talked with officials, Mr. Speaker, and they're informing me that we will put in place procedures for ensuring that employees are aware that any requests from any outside party for confidential documents must be referred to the employee's supervisor, Mr. Speaker.

The authority continues to work co-operatively with the police at all times, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, we'll have more procedures which will just give them more opportunity to hide more misdoings by this particular government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, it is now clear Joe Dosenberger was wrongfully fired for co-operating with the RCMP in a criminal investigation. He was fired, Mr. Speaker, for doing his job. That sends a clear message to government employees who uncover wrongdoing — keep your mouth shut or the NDP will fire you.

In his ruling Justice Kyle said that Joe Dosenberger's job and the authority's was to maintain the integrity of gaming in Saskatchewan. His actions were fully directed to that end. He had no other agenda, Justice Kyle says, and I quote:

When his zeal was thus rewarded, a chill on regulatory diligence may have been the result . . .

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP telling people who uncover the wrongdoing: keep your mouth shut or we will fire you?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the authority and myself and this government is not in any way saying that to any employee. We have stated before that if they know of any wrongdoing, they could take that to the police.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Dosenberger himself stated that he was not able to share information with the authority because he felt that it could compromise the confidentiality of police information he was gathering. Mr. Speaker, he was also part of developing the terms of reference for the intensive audit that took place.

We would want to say, Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier, that we regret how this case has unfolded and the actions that have been taken. And we would also say, Mr. Speaker — I would like to say — that it has never been the intention to state other than Mr. Dosenberger is a man of high integrity and we know the intentions of his actions were nothing other than to co-operate with the official police.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The only regret on behalf of that NDP government is the fact they got caught. They got caught in two cases, and they fired both the people that uncovered that — both of them.

The NDP has no interest in truth. They have no interest in addressing these serious problems. Their only agenda has been to avoid political embarrassment. That was clear in Justice Kyle's ruling.

Justice Kyle said the cabinet document that went to the RCMP was a document about damage control, Mr. Speaker, designed to cover up a regulatory system that was clearly not working. Yet what was the first point of the communication strategy, Mr. Speaker? Our system of regulations and safeguard is working. Just like in the North Battleford water crisis we had. The NDP's first priority is to tell the public the system is working, even when the system obviously was not working.

Mr. Speaker, why does the NDP continue to cover up the truth and then punish those who do uncover the truth?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, it must be remembered that Liquor and Gaming Authority is a legally constituted regulator under the Criminal Code of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, cabinet cannot interfere in the actions that will be taken by a legally constituted regulator, and it should be remembered that in this case this was a cabinet information item only to inform of the circumstances and the actions that would be taken as they affect a partnership, Mr. Speaker, and as they would be given to the public for information, Mr. Speaker.

The moment Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority was informed of the problems at SIGA (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority) in June of 2000, action was taken. The very minute I was informed of that, I was asking our duly constituted regulating body to take action, Mr. Speaker. Actions speak louder than the words of that member across.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I love that quotation: actions speak louder than words. Tell Mr. Joe Dosenberger that. He's seen it. He's seen it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, Justice Kyle points out that after Joe Dosenberger was fired by that NDP government, Liquor and Gaming took a number of steps that actually weakened its ability to investigate SIGA. They withdrew from the Saskatchewan Criminal Intelligence Services. They chose to conduct its investigation into SIGA without the aid of Ron Ferguson, another former RCMP and their most senior investigator.

Again this raises a question: does the NDP really want to get to the truth or do they just want to avoid political embarrassment? Mr. Speaker, firing Joe Dosenberger for co-operating with the RCMP, and then Liquor and Gaming took specific steps to avoid any further co-operation with the RCMP. Why? What are they trying to cover up? What are they hiding?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, we're talking about a cabinet information item document that was given to cabinet for information purposes. Mr. Dosenberger, as I said, the circumstances surrounding that are unfortunate and I regret the outcome of that and will respect the decisions of the court.

When we talk about Criminal Intelligence Services, Liquor and Gaming Authority has never been a part of or attached to that group. They are a non-profit organization of police who get together to talk about the issues of the day and how they could further their investigations, Mr. Speaker. That came out clearly in court.

And, Mr. Speaker, we already know that the reason why the CII (cabinet information item) was taken from the file by Mr. Ferguson was to find the trail of how many people had the documents in their hands. That's as far as that goes, Mr. Speaker.

Now further, Mr. Speaker, Liquor and Gaming had been part of an intensive audit process that now is the subject of Justice and ongoing . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we started off this afternoon asking for an apology. The hand is barely out of the cookie jar and we have nothing but defence and excuses from that government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, for weeks the minister has been telling us she doesn't micromanage her department. But both Joe Dosenberger and Justice Kyle paint a picture of constant political interference in every aspect of SLGAs (Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority) operation.

Justice Kyle said:

Liquor and Gaming knew that misuse of funds had already taken place but they lacked the authority or the political will to deal with the matter without cabinet direction.

Is what he said.

Mr. Speaker, why does Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming need cabinet approval to investigate the misuse of gambling funds?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, Liquor and Gaming Authority is a constituted body under the Criminal Code of Canada. They have a responsibility to act outside of any direction from cabinet in these matters. As a courtesy, they would inform cabinet because this involves a partnership, and also the public would be notified immediately of the actions that would be taken, Mr. Speaker.

Now the moment that SLGA knew of wrongdoing at SIGA, action was taken. Mr. Dosenberger states himself he could not

make the authority aware of an investigation underway because it was confidential police information.

What we did know from our Provincial Auditor is action must be taken. And what we did, Mr. Speaker, was have an intense comprehensive audit under the direction of our Provincial Auditor and the firm Ernst & Young.

The reference terms said that we should look at all of the information according to financial records, regulatory action that would have to be taken, and all of that information has been referred to Justice and . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed.

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I repeat the quotation. Justice Kyle said:

Liquor and Gaming knew the misuse but they couldn't act because they lacked authority or the political will to deal with the matter without cabinet direction.

That minister said they don't need cabinet direction. Everyone watching on TV and sitting in the galleries can now choose, Mr. Speaker, whether to believe Justice Kyle or that minister. Our minds are made up.

Mr. Speaker, why does Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming need cabinet approval to investigate the misuse of gambling funds?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, whether or not that member understands the function of a duly constituted regulator, there is an Act that is in place that states what their authorities are; and that's certainly the point, Mr. Speaker, that they have the right to act under the Criminal Code of Canada and outside of the purview of this political body.

What they do have the responsibility to do, Mr. Speaker, and what I have the responsibility to ensure, is that there was a complete intensive audit done of all of the circumstances the minute we found out about that, Mr. Speaker.

The terms of reference were expanded to include many of the suggestions that were brought forward from Mr. Dosenberger. The final terms of reference required the special audit to examine expenses, records, materials, decisions of the SIGA board. We took action on behalf of the CEO (chief executive officer) there. We pulled the licences of the board members, which a regulator can do, Mr. Speaker.

When we found out about this, we took action, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there appears to be a constant political interference in the operations of Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming, yet the minister refuses to take any responsibility for a gaming industry that's completely out of control. Whether she likes it or not, the minister is responsible.

She's responsible for the maintenance of the integrity of the gaming industry in this province. She has completely failed in that area.

She is also responsible for Joe Dosenberger's firing. And the judge has now ruled that the firing was dead wrong.

Mr. Speaker, when is the minister going to take the responsibility for the negligence, political interference, and cover-ups at Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, on one hand, this member has repeatedly said to me, do you not know what's going on in your department and do you not have control of Liquor and Gaming Authority. In the area of a duly constituted regulator under the Criminal Code of Canada, no, I do not have the right to direct or act the authority.

(14:15)

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, I do have the ability to ask them to go through a complete auditing process to get information to co-operate with the police, which has always been done, Mr. Speaker.

In 1999 the Provincial Auditor said:

The operation of commercial casinos in Saskatchewan is relatively new. Accordingly, the Authority faces a challenge in designing systems and practices to regulate and monitor SIGA's casinos. We think the Authority has addressed those challenges well.

He goes on to ask us to continue in partnership to work to get complete compliance with the November report, Mr. Speaker, and SIGA is complying.

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, let's just review who's been fired at SLGA and who still has their jobs. Joe Dosenberger tried to investigate misuse of funds by SIGA and he got fired. Bonnie Swan uncovered Liquor and Gaming officials who were violating their own Act, and she got fired. Kathy Langlois, a judge has now ruled that she was dead wrong in firing Joe Dosenberger, but she still has her job, Mr. Speaker.

All the Liquor and Gaming officials under investigation for taking free trips to the Bahamas, they still have their jobs, Mr. Speaker.

The minister who approved all these firings and even now refuses to apologize, she even has her job.

Mr. Speaker, why are all the people who did the right thing fired and the people who did the wrong thing get to keep their jobs?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows the Wakeling report is due soon and we should wait to see the results of that report, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the members of Liquor and Gaming Authority, when they became aware of the financial mismanagement at SIGA, informed me of the actions that they would take and I informed this Assembly and the public, Mr. Speaker. There was no cover-up of information and no trying to hide any of the facts. In fact, the exact opposite, Mr. Speaker.

We required an intensive audit process, and in 2000 the Provincial Auditor made a number of recommendations following the completion of that audit process. The Authority is acting upon all of those.

We've given that information over to Justice in its entirety, Mr. Speaker, and the police are now looking at those. Let's let that process go as it should, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister keeps saying how open she's been with all the information. It was the opposition that dragged the truth, kicking and screaming, out of her mouth, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, no matter how many times, no matter how many times the minister tries to wash her hands of this matter, she cannot shake the stench of a cover-up and corruption.

Justice Kyle delivered a blistering judgment, Mr. Speaker, against an NDP government that has lost all its sense of right and wrong. The NDP let wrongdoing go unchecked for years, Mr. Speaker, and then fires one employee who is trying to uphold the integrity of the gaming industry in this province.

The NDP knows the gaming industry is out of control but they are more concerned in damage control than in regulatory control.

Mr. Speaker, it's time for the minister to take some responsibility; it's a time for the minister to tender her resignation. Mr. Speaker, will the minister hand in his resignation today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, I am the minister responsible and I have accepted the court's decision and I've expressed to Mr. Dosenberger and this Assembly my regret at the unfortunate circumstances of this incident, Mr. Speaker.

I have talked with the authority and I know that things must change in the way we tell our officials and our employees of the sharing of confidential documents, Mr. Speaker, and those will be put in place.

The minute I found out about any misappropriation of funds at SIGA, Mr. Speaker, those members were notified; the public was notified. We've had a process in place to act.

All of the recommendations from the 2000 audit are being acted upon, Mr. Speaker. Let the processes now that have been given

over to Justice and the police go forward as they should.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Problems in Gambling Industry

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. The NDP government's mismanagement of the gambling over the past few years has exposed a government with a big problem — a government more interested in covering up politically embarrassing and potentially illegal activities than ensuring integrity in a rapidly expanding gambling industry in our province.

The Premier himself, Mr. Speaker, has been a vocal opponent of government involvement in the gambling industry. In fact the Premier warned more than a decade ago that gambling expansion would mean, and I quote: "more prostitution, drug trafficking, and other crimes." Mr. Speaker, it seems like the problems may even be greater.

The Premier used his opposition to the expansion of gambling to launch his political career. Now that he's in the Premier's chair, what action is he taking to rein in a gambling industry that his government created that is running out of control?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, when the Leader of the Opposition stands in the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and accuses the many, many hoteliers in rural Saskatchewan, the many charitable organizations across this province, First Nations people of running amuck, Mr. Speaker, he should withdraw that kind of statement in this House.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a very unfortunate set of circumstances . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now I'll appreciate it when the Leader of the Opposition clarifies his statement that he just made a few moments ago, accusing everyone involved in the gaming industry in the province of running amuck. I'll appreciate when he clarifies that conversation, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are involved here in a very unfortunate circumstance. The minister, when she became aware through the Liquor and Gaming commission of what was wrong, acted immediately, Mr. Speaker. There has been much, much public disclosure of events. And we are working with the First Nations people, with SLGA, to put this thing right.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very disappointed that the Premier is downplaying serious exposure of SLGA and SIGA.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has asked dozens of questions about the NDP's lack of concern. And we've just seen that lack of concern expressed by the Premier about the massive and potentially illegal, illegal misuse of gambling revenues.

A retired judge is investigating potential illegal activities within the NDP's Liquor and Gaming Authority. And now another judge has ruled that the NDP fired the lead investigator at Liquor and Gaming simply for doing his job.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has been told by employees and investigators and now even a judge, that there is serious mismanagement and possibly illegal activity taking place within SIGA and the SLGA.

My question to the Premier: will he stand tall and apologize to Joe Dosenberger, and will he do the right thing — the right thing — fire his minister responsible for the SLGA and lodge a full independent inquiry into this mess to clear the air?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, who was it, Mr. Speaker, who was it that has asked Justice Wakeling to look into the affairs at Liquor and Gaming? Who was it? It was this government, Mr. Speaker. And Justice Wakeling will do a thorough review and we will have that report soon we understand, Mr. Speaker. And when that report is available, it will be available to this legislature and to the public, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, leave to introduce a motion.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

House Recess

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Cannington:

That this Assembly do now recess until 3:30 p.m. for the unveiling of the busts of the Hon. T. Walter Scott, the Hon. T.C. Douglas, and the restored sculpture of the Rt. Hon. John G. Diefenbaker; and that this Assembly will reconvene at the call of the Speaker.

I so move.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly recessed for a period of time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 32

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 32 — The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2001/Loi de 2001 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine** be now read a second time.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Responding to Bill No. 32, The Queen's Bench Amendment Act. I think the heart of government in this case is probably in the right place, but as usual we're not quite sure if what they're trying to accomplish is actually going to be that good.

And the unique thing in this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is that . . . what will be happening here is that in any case where there happens to be some family difficulties and a possibility of a family breakup, that there are now going to be mandatory parent education programs. At the beginning of a family law . . . and the example given is a divorce proceeding.

Now that in itself is probably not a bad idea except that usually by the time the relationship comes to that particular point in time, it's been that badly poisoned that I'm not sure going through a parent education program would actually provide any kind of a solution to what's going on.

There's a lot of other questions that come to mind here and I guess they worry us substantially. For example, so these classes are going to be set up; they're going to be mandatory. And I guess the mandatory part in itself may not be a particular concern. But what exactly are these classes all going to be about? How are they going to be taught? What's the content of those particular classes? As usual, that's being left up to regulations.

So we're asked at this particular point to accept the concept that there will be some mandatory parent education programs before or at the beginning of that family law proceeding, but we are not given any particular information, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as to what will be involved, what the regulations are, and those sorts of things.

It appears that these classes are going to be required for all couples who become engaged in court fights over custody/access issues or child support issues. And that in itself is no particular problem.

Now another interesting thing in this is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the particular individual who launches that family law proceeding is then the one that has to run around and find the . . . and hand the notice to the other member.

So if all of a sudden this family unit's fallen apart in a very bad way, you could essentially force the one member who is initiating the proceedings to travel essentially all over the province, maybe North America, trying to find this other individual because they're the ones that have to hand off that notice to require those particular classes.

And I think that's going to create some odd situations down the road. And I have no doubt that at some point government may have to come back with an amending piece of legislation to clear this up.

As I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what will those classes consist

of? And what we're not told is exactly what the government hopes to accomplish through those classes. Is this, you know, similar to putting up those signs on the highway, just an employment opportunity. Are they hoping to get some reconciliation going? Are they basically saying well, if this marriage unit is broken up, here is how to do this most amiably and here's how to continue on with your life.

None of those things are listed in this piece of legislation. So we really have no idea, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where this is going in that area, and again, as I said, that's up to regulations. And I guess we'll have to watch and wait, and obviously with some fear and trepidation as usual.

(15:45)

I've discussed in this House earlier on this spring and winter, the penchant this government has for inventing the wheel. And so the question is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, did this idea come from another jurisdiction?

And it would be nice if, when government comes up with a piece of legislation, they would give us that information, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so that we could go there and see exactly what had precipitated that legislation in that particular jurisdiction and how it's working and what the upsides and the downsides of that are, or is it just another one of those cases where this government has decided to create the wheel on its own again?

This is a very interesting idea. I think the direction or the hope that government has here is probably good and we will have to take that a little further when we discuss this, and at this point I'm prepared to move this on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the Committee of the Whole.

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

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 57 — The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 57, an Act respecting a tax credit for political contributions.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is the result of a truly co-operative effort between all political parties represented in this Assembly. This Bill is the product of an all-party consultation process. It has been reviewed by officials within the Department of Justice, the Department of Finance, and by the Chief Electoral Officer.

The Act, as the title suggests, provides a provincial income tax credit for political contributions made to a political party and to an independent candidate during an election period. Under the terms of this legislation the taxpayer, both individual and corporate, would be entitled to claim a tax credit for contributions made to a registered political party or to an independent candidate during the course of an election campaign.

Receipts would be provided by a political party or an independent candidate's business manager.

Under the terms of the Act the political parties bear reporting responsibility for the legislation with the Chief Electoral Officer administering the Act.

Under the terms of the Act if the contributor is under \$200, the amount of the tax credit to be claimed is 75 per cent of the total. A contribution of less than \$25 will not be considered an eligible contribution.

If the total is greater than \$200 but not greater than \$550, the amount of the tax credit would be \$150 plus 50 per cent of the amount by which the total exceeds the \$200.

If the total contribution is greater than \$550, the amount of the tax credit that a taxpayer is entitled to claim is the lesser of \$325 plus thirty-three and one-third per cent of the amount by which the total \$550 and \$500.

The Act will appropriate parallel . . . or operate, sorry, parallel with The Election Act, 1996 and does not replace reporting requirements or disclosure requirements under the Act.

The legislation ensures that an eligible tax credit contribution must be a legal contribution under The Election Act, 1996 and it must be a monetary contribution. It also recognizes net proceeds of a ticket to a fundraiser determined in accordance with the formula set out in the legislation as an eligible contribution.

The legislation sets out the requirements for an official receipt issued on behalf of a registered political party and on behalf of an independent candidate, as well as the record-keeping requirements for an eligible issuer of a tax credit receipt.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the legislation before you today sets out the reporting requirements in the case of an independent candidate following an election and the annual reporting requirements for a registered political party.

Contravention of this Act or a provision of this Act represents an offence and any persons found guilty of such an offence is liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than \$5,000, to imprisonment for a term not to exceed two years, or both.

The annual cost to the government for implementation of this program is estimated to be \$625,000. And it should be noted that the legislation is retroactive to January 1, 2001.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this legislation is a move towards levelling the playing field between all political parties when it comes to raising the necessary resources to carry out the work of our respective political organizations. Political parties are a fundamental element of our democratic parliamentary process. They provide stability and continuity. They ensure political representation of political interests.

As legislators, Mr. Speaker, we must recognize the legitimate needs of our parties and candidates to adequately, financially support. And we must encourage our citizens to support the political process with the financial resources to allow political parties and independent candidates to present their ideas to the public, to ensure that political choices are available, and that democracy can indeed continue to offer the best political

representative our citizens can offer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And with that, I move second reading of The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill is about democracy. It's about levelling the playing field and fairness. It's about allowing all individuals, be they within a political party or as an independent candidate, to come forward and seek election with more or less the same opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

The opportunity that is there doesn't necessarily mean though that all candidates seeking election will have the same resources. But it means they have the same access to gain those resources, Mr. Speaker, and that's very critical.

Up until now it's only been political parties that have an affiliation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with a federal entity that would have an opportunity to access tax credits. Those tax credits were put in place, Mr. Speaker, for two reasons. They were put in place to level the playing field for all candidates that all, no matter what resources they had available, did have some resources available to them.

And the second part, Mr. Speaker, it was tax credits were in put place along with spending caps so that candidates could only spend up to a certain limit in a campaign. That was, Mr. Deputy Speaker, done to ensure that those candidates with massive resources simply didn't swamp those candidates who had few resources.

And the trade-off for that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was the tax credit.

So, Mr. Speaker, what this Bill does, it moves towards levelling that playing field; that all candidates, either in a political party or as an independent member, have an opportunity to access those kind of resources.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this was . . . the planning for this Bill, the work, the detailed work in coming to an agreement on what the wording meant, how it would operate was done, as the House Leader for the government said, was done co-operatively in conjunction with the three political parties in the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it took a while to get this done, but we're very pleased to see that it happened. I know that discussion on this started on this about two years ago, but it's taken a while to bring it in. But we're certainly very pleased to see it in place, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This Bill is very similar in nature to the way it operates to how the federal tax credit operates. We're not really breaking new ground here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we're following what I believe every other province in Canada has, with the possible exception of one other — there may be one other province that does not have political tax credits for political contributions, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think it's time that Saskatchewan did get into line with the rest of the country on this very issue.

The tax credit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will be made retroactive to

January 1 of this year. It would be unfair if, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if only contributions from today, let's say, or from the time that this Bill was proclaimed, when it was given Royal Assent . . . if contributions to political parties were only given after that.

Because clearly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, monies that were contributed prior to today are as equally valid and useful to the political parties as money contributed after this day.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are very supportive of this particular Bill. We believe that it allows democracy in Saskatchewan to be exercised in a fair manner, on a level playing field for all members — those in political parties, those that are independent members, those that may be in political parties yet unformed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or political parties that are Saskatchewan-based and do not have federal ties.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're prepared to allow this Bill to move forward. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 55

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 55 — The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal (Regulatory Reform) Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Probably in most cases, not a bad Bill at all. It's rather interesting that the way the whole thing is worded, it sounds like it's just collecting a whole mishmash of who knows what and we'll put it in a bucket and say we don't need this any more, which is basically what this is all about.

There are pieces of legislation that this Bill addresses that go way back. For example, one is The Estate Tax Rebate Act, comes from way back in 1969. The relationship between the federal and provincial government in taxes has changed since then so this Act is no longer necessary and so it gets to be repealed.

A more recent one is another one on estate tax rebates, reciprocal arrangement Act. Somewhat similar, it comes out of 1970.

Industrial Towns Act — now that's an interesting one. It sounds like it comes out of medieval England, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It has special provisions to towns, villages, northern communities designated as industrial towns and so it's supposed to regulate the physical development of an industrial town. Well it doesn't even give a date on this one so this one's probably prehistory.

What it does do though, it's interesting, I think if we look at a

lot of these things, they've been, over the years they've been efforts by the NDP government to run every facet of life for people in Canada, particularly people in Saskatchewan. They try and do that throughout Canada as well, but places such as British Columbia have told them very specifically what they think of the way the NDP wants to run industries.

So that if a town happened to be an industrial town, the province would step in and say, now this is how you can be developed. Well I would think that if it's a good enough way for towns to develop, as it is presently where the mayor and council makes decisions on how the development takes place, if that's adequate for a town that grows for any other reason except industry, why shouldn't it be adequate for an industrial town as well.

So it's one of those ludicrous things that the NDP has put in place over the years and now because of embarrassment, they're pulling this out.

(16:00)

Also an interesting one here, Mr. Speaker, is that there's another one being repealed that's called the Wascana Energy Act . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And I'd love to comment on the member who said that's a good one. But Wascana Energy, it's been now privatized basically — the remains of SaskOil, a former Crown. The fact is the previous deputy premier I believe now works for the company that they were referring to over here.

So I can see the NDP on the other side being quite happy this is now being, you know, totally set aside and out of the control of the NDP because that seems to be where they go to roost after they're through over here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Whether they lose or whether they fall into disrepute and the premier moves into a back bench or whatever, they seem to move down to Alberta real quick to get themselves just a fine job over there — in a private enterprise, I should say.

I don't recall the last NDP cabinet minister that went over to BC and got a job with that NDP government. And I would have thought they'd be good at bingo or something like that. There's an opportunity there.

I also don't remember through the annals of history that any of them went down to Ontario and took part in the Bob Rae government.

It seems that whenever they are looking for another job they're off to Alberta. It's that Alberta envy that seems to do that.

Anyways, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's quite a number of Bills in here that need to be wound up, and by and large this is what Bill No. 55 does. There's another interesting one, though, that needs to be commented on.

Back in 1996 there was a Bill passed called the Crown foundations of district health boards which let local people put money into their district, so that they could put money in and it would be for the benefit of their particular health district. It gave, the Act gave the trustees of the Crown foundation

absolute discretion to spend the money as they saw fit. And there was quite a ruckus about this in 1996. It's taken this government a number of years but they're finally getting around to getting rid of it.

The irony of the whole thing when we look at Bill 55, is that on the one hand this seems to be opening up the door for this NDP government to be a bit more friendly to private enterprise, just to get some of that government red tape out of the way. And to that extent this is just a fine piece of legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But I think if we paid any attention to what's gone on in the House during the last two, three months, we've had time after time after time . . . I'm sure the critic for CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) must have asked a hundred questions if he's asked one on why is government Crowns, why are they buying up another business? And they keep doing this.

So on the one hand Bill 55 seems to move them a bit more in an area of being a bit more business friendly to the private world, to the real world of business, but on the other hand they just dug their heels in and if something comes along that looks good, they have to buy it.

And you will recall very definitely, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it wasn't more than two months ago and the Minister of Highways stood in his spot right over there and said very definitely, we will grow the economy. Unfortunately that wasn't the end of it.

Then there was a whole lot of information given about how they were going to grow the economy through the Crowns. The Crowns were going to buy up stuff in Saskatchewan, in Alberta, in the US (United States), anyplace in the world. Anything's for sale, the Crowns will buy it up. Probably lose money.

We've had a big long list this year. It's been a whole litany of sadness, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of things that they've purchased which have either lost money on the face of it right directly, or just taken Saskatchewan entrepreneurs, people who risk their own money, took a chance, had a great idea, moved it ahead due to hard work, and this government said, well now that someone else's done the work, I guess we could do it as well. So they'll stand by and watch.

So basically, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bill No. 55, has a number of good areas in that it gets rid of some of the red tape. It is, however, ironic that this government is going in two directions at the same time and also shows a substantial amount of hypocrisy on how this government thinks and how they act, if those go off in different directions.

Having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd be prepared to move this Bill No. 55 on to Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 43

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 43 — The Police Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Bill No. 43, basically called The Police Act, is the short term of that. I guess the unfortunate thing is not so much what this Bill all does or doesn't do — and I'll go into a few things where it falls short, and some places where it may have a good point to it — but very specifically that it is actually needed in Saskatchewan. That's the unfortunate part; that's the sad part.

And part of it again comes down to about this particular government's attitude when we deal on law and order — how do they deal with it, how do they deal with situations that are questionable — this government has a history of having things badly messed up.

If you listened to CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) about four months ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you'll recall very clearly they did a rerun, a one-hour rerun of a program that they, I believe, ran about a year ago in which it dealt with Social Services and how they dealt with a particular situation that is still in the courts. I believe, matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has been in the courts for seven years, and it's been an unfortunate case. I won't go into any details of it because there's no merit in that as far as discussing Bill 43 is concerned. But what it does do, it shows how this government seems to get itself into those sorts of binds.

And the questions that I have asked of me very often is not a question of detail on that particular court case, but the question is: why would it take so long; why would it take seven years; why couldn't this have been done in one or two? And even I guess that most people on the street wonder how something going to the courts could take as long as two years, but when it's gone on for this length of time, that's the question. And I think it indicates how this particular government doesn't know where it's going in that area, in many cases doesn't know how to deal with it.

And then we have The Police Act which deals with procedures of dealing with complaints regarding police procedures. And that CBC program that I talked about; definitely the police procedures were one of them. There was an interviewing that was taking place — an interview of a young child — and those procedures were questioned. Now how do you deal with those complaints?

There are some things in here that I think are good. For example, it allows the Vice-Chair of police boards to have all the powers of the Chair in the Chair's absence. And I think that makes eminent sense, because obviously we know that the Chair won't always be able to be at every single meeting. So what happens if something needs to take place — the Chair isn't there — do we all go home and the problem stays? Bill No. 43 allows the Vice-Chair to sort of take over in the Chair's absence. And we do that in most organizations in our everyday life, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and so it should be quite acceptable to have that happen here as well.

It also indemnifies members of the local police boards against lawsuits for actions taken in their role as a board member under the Act. And it'll be interesting because this seems to probably

offset another Bill that we're dealing with this spring, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I won't go into that one at great length, but it's the one that allows for class-action suits so where you could possibly have a class-action suit dealing with a whole board or a member of that board; in this case the members are indemnified in those situations.

It also makes the provisions for the Sask Police Commission to issue a province-wide code of ethics — and I think that's good — so that the code of ethics that applies in one city jurisdiction or another are exactly the same. I think where the code of ethics should have gone a little broader than this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the code of ethics should have gone over to the NDP cabinet because when we see what's been happening with SIGA and with SLGA, the firing of people who give information to the police, I think a code of ethics is needed more in this NDP government across the way than it's needed in the Sask Police Commission. It's good to see these people have the dignity to lead the way. It's too bad it doesn't go as far as it should.

It also gives the Board of Police Commissioners the right to hold meetings in camera where privacy is deemed necessary. And there's a couple of parts in here that go down the same road. It says it also protects an investigator from being compelled to disclose information to any member of a police force on behalf of the investigator.

As we go through part of that and as we keep in mind, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what this government's done with SIGA and with SLGA over the past, well, it's probably a month and a half, two months, any time that we see something that says they can do things in camera where privacy is deemed necessary, well if those things are properly defined there's probably a place for it. We all know from our work on municipal councils and town councils that there is a place for in-camera meetings.

But I get a little afraid when this government seems to be the one that's leading the charge for in-camera meetings and protecting people from not disclosing things to the RCMP, which are two items in Bill 53. We've questioned those before very seriously, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but this government has refused to bring forth any amendments to sort of clarify some of those situations.

It also says that all hearings are open to the public except cases where there's an ongoing police investigation that would be put in jeopardy. Well I would think at first blush we would agree with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if there is an ongoing investigation taking place you don't want to ruin that, destroy the work that's been done by opening up to the public.

However, what this Bill . . . where it falls short again is the fact that it does not — it does not, and I think that's important, Mr. Deputy Speaker — it does not tell us what happens to that information on those particular cases after the police investigation is over. Does it now become public, or is it now kept under wraps forever as we've seen this happen with the government opposite.

But to the extent that it deals with some positive things, like a code of ethics, the Vice-Chair of police boards being able to operate as the Chair in the Chair's absence, and those sorts of things, there are some positive things in here. And I think at this

time we will allow this to move on to the Committee of the Whole.

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

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

Mr. Peters: — Leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Peters: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to introduce in your gallery, Pete and Marg Penner. They're from the community of Rabbit Lake. And I'd like the rest of the Assembly to welcome them here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 37

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 37 — The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Dealing with Bill No. 37, An Act to amend the Statute Law, and I would like to read a few sentences that were made by our Justice minister because it underlines very specifically what this one is all about. And I quote, he says:

This Act, Mr. Speaker, makes several very minor amendments to a number of existing statutes. It corrects inaccurate references, numbering errors, typographical errors and other mistakes in statutes.

It's just amazing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that a government that can keep on hiring individuals as this government does, still can't get it right. Inaccurate references, numbering errors, all sorts of things.

So it's always scary and you get a piece of legislation and you know that it may be wrong just because all the, you know, i's haven't been dotted and t's haven't been stroked.

But at least they're going through that and I imagine their handy-dandy little Apple computer, when they pressed spell-check, probably must have found all of these mistakes. And so we're prepared to let this one go on to Committee of the Whole as well.

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

(16:15)

Bill No. 38

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 38 — The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2001 (No. 2)/Loi corrective de 2001 (n° 2)** be now read a second time.

Mr. Heppner: — As you and I probably both realize there's nothing of great import I could say about this one because of what it actually does.

We're quite aware that this government can probably make the same mistakes in both languages so we're quite prepared to let this one go on to Committee of the Whole as well.

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

Bill No. 47

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 47 — The Miscellaneous Statutes (Domestic Relations) Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This particular Bill is a very interesting one and as you may be aware that I, you know, spoke to the public on this one. And one of the . . . there's two things about it that I need to underline.

First of all, in many areas this Bill is totally inadequate and doesn't go far enough. We have some of the provinces in the Maritimes, we have Hawaii, and I believe, I think it's Vermont but I'm not sure of that, have taken some of the aspects of this Bill a whole lot further. And I think this government was very remiss, Mr. Speaker, in not taking it that far. And I'd like to go into some detail on what they should have done and could have done.

I think on . . . when we're talking about relations, two people living together, and the financial relationship and concern that builds up between one and the other and the statement that's there, there's a lot of groups of people that are left out of our legislation here in Saskatchewan. And those are the following, Mr. Speaker.

For example, if a daughter has stayed home with her father and basically made the housework her part of the contribution. The father becomes aged and she takes care of him. So over the time he basically has . . . whatever equity or wealth there is in the family is in his control, the daughter is in there taking care of him, should very definitely be taken care of in that relationship. But at the end of the day he has a will written out which might totally leave her out of the benefits that should be there, considering the commitment she has made to that household in her life.

We can say exactly the same thing, Mr. Speaker, for a son living with his mother, two sisters living together, two brothers living together. All those sorts of things, Mr. Speaker, should have been addressed. If we're going to deal with this issue and deal with the issue of domestic relations and the responsibility of one to the other and how financially one is sometimes sort of

subject to the other one, this Bill falls very far short of doing for the people of Saskatchewan what it should do.

And I believe it's in one of the Maritime provinces, Mr. Speaker, where the situation that they have set up is that any two people living in a domestic relationship — and remember I'm saying domestic relationship — can draw up a contract to sort of cover that off. Where I started off with the example of a father and a daughter, where they could say, okay, the daughter says: I'm prepared to stay home, take care of you, help take care of the house and the yard and all the other sorts of things, but at the end of the day I believe I should have the home or I should have this or there should be something there for the input that I'm putting in into that.

Some of the Maritime provinces have that. We didn't put that into our legislation in Saskatchewan and I think that is highly unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because I think it could have received a lot of very public support in that area. And it's unfortunate, as I said, that our Saskatchewan government has decided not to do that.

The other part that comes into that Bill — and that's where some of the controversy comes in — there's also an adoption section in this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, dealing with different relationships and adoption procedures and possibilities and how those are set up.

That is something that I think the public, by and large, has a large concern about. And what I've done, Mr. Speaker, I've done a survey in my constituency to see exactly what the public support is. And probably another time I'll go into some of the details of how this turned out percentage-wise. But I know on that particular aspect, my constituency came out very strongly against this particular piece of legislation.

Now just to make sure that I wasn't just speaking for my constituency, I also picked up the constituency of Saskatoon Idylwyld and I had exactly the survey done over there — same survey, written-out questionnaire worded exactly the same way.

And it was interesting that when it went into the urban area, I also had a similar result. That in both my rural area and in the urban area, in both cases, people were concerned and objected and did not want this Bill passed for those particular reasons.

So those bits of research, those surveys, are being done, that polling is being done across Saskatchewan right now as we speak. And I've talked to a couple of the MLAs who are going to be finishing it off in the next couple of days. Mine is done, as I said, and I did one urban one as well just to sort of get a feel for that as well.

It's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that members opposite have particularly polled their people. I haven't heard any of them get up and say we checked with our people in detail on this — this is a questionnaire, we did it in a scientific way, and here are the results. This is what the people of Saskatchewan want.

So first of all, the two things that I mentioned — they didn't do that on the adoption section; and on the other section where we talk about domestic relationships and taking care of those

relationships so that no one is hurt in a financial way — this legislation falls very far short.

And for that particular reason, Mr. Speaker, I will be adjourning debate on this particular Bill, Bill No. 47 at this time.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 48

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 48 — The Miscellaneous Statutes (Domestic Relations) Amendment Act, 2001 (No. 2)/Loi corrective (relations domestiques) de 2001 (n° 2)** be now read a second time.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Because we know of the relationship between Bill No. 48 and Bill No. 47, that essentially they're the same in the information that's in there, I also move adjournment of Bill No. 48 at this time.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 35

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 35 — The Public Trustee Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a very important Bill. It's a Bill in which we entrust government to take care of the financial considerations of people who are less fortunate. It might be a young child, it might be someone for whatever other reason is not able to handle its own financial transactions and the business that's required to be taken care of.

So we need to take this particular Bill very seriously. Because what this Bill does is it ensures, or it's supposed to ensure, that when you have these people who cannot handle their own finances that we have somebody that we can trust to do that.

And I'm sure in all of our communities from time to time, as MLAs on both sides of the House, we've had someone phone up and say, well there's this person who has probably inherited a whole lot of money or land or something else, how's that being taken care of?

Well this is exactly what we're talking about. Bill No. 35 deals with the Public Trustee, the individual that essentially . . . or the office that takes care of this money, uses it properly for the benefit of only that person to ensure that other individuals who may want to take advantage . . . and unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we know that the world is full of Shylocks and carpetbaggers. And so I think essentially what this does is protect some of these people against those individuals.

Now having said that, Mr. Speaker, there's something highly unfortunate that's happened — highly unfortunate that's happened. In the auditor's report, the last one that came out, the auditor found the following: a difference of \$490,000 between the office's records and the financial items held by the office on behalf of its clients.

Now I've just spent some time, Mr. Speaker, underlying the importance of this office because this office probably holds more trust, or we put more trust and more faith in this office than most other ones just because there is so much money that is being handled on behalf of the individuals that have no way, no ability to handle it for themselves. Almost half a million dollar discrepancy between that. That's frightening, Mr. Speaker.

When we look at a number of other things that showed up in the report — and I won't go into any details on that — but we're given information such as following. That there was buildings, cars, jewellery, on top of the nearly half a million dollars that had just been basically lost. So somewhere you had an individual in Saskatchewan who for whatever reason was not able to take of themselves, and whatever they had inherited or owned at one time for whatever reason was now being held by government and somewhere in the interim, houses lost track of, cars lost track of, jewellery lost track of, and half a million dollars.

Now I guess that's very frightening, that something that is so critical for taking care of the most disadvantaged in our land would have been dealt with so poorly.

In doing this research for Bill No. 35, I believe there were over 20 different groups that were represented in a committee consultation, and that's good. I think we have to recommend . . . or commend government for doing that. It's a good step to make sure that other people were involved in that.

There are individuals who raise some concern about the power of state involved in someone's life and their financial affairs. But let's just make sure, Mr. Speaker, that we're all aware that this isn't taking over money and funds from people who should be able to take care of themselves. This is handling the money and funds from people who cannot take care of themselves.

And to that extent, Mr. Speaker, we will allow this Bill to move forward to Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 36

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 36 — The Public Trustee Consequential Amendment Act, 2001/Loi de 2001 apportant les modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Public Trustee Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier on, the consequential Bill just basically follows through in the same vein as the original Bill that has been discussed. Just hopefully, the government isn't going to make the same mistake on a half a million dollars in two different languages. So I move that goes on to Committee of the Whole as well.

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

(16:30)

Bill No. 40

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Melenchuk that **Bill No. 40 — The Teachers' Dental Plan Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to stand today and discuss the issues that are brought forward in the teachers' dental plan amendment Bill. This is one of only three Bills that the Department of Education has brought forward this year, and I would imagine that this may be disappointing for some school divisions.

But when you recognize that the Bills are the government's vision and plans and changes for a department, and with the Role of the School report that was brought forward this year, I was hoping that maybe we would see some more issues brought forward; the minister rising to report the committee that he had put together to discuss and implement some of the issues that were brought forward in the Role of the School. But this hasn't been done.

So many of the problems facing this province could be addressed through increased education and changes in our education system — the Aboriginal issue, the issues dealing around health, the smoking issues, even economic development, Mr. Minister. I think that increased education is the basis and the foundation for the future of this province, and something this government has to rely on if we are actually going to see the province prosper the way it should be.

I think that the collective bargaining agreement that we saw last year, where the potential strike raised a lot of concerns across the province in the minds of taxpayers and parents and students. I guess we never really know what we have until we're in danger of losing it. And the fear of losing our teachers in the school system last year excited a lot of taxpayers.

I think we take our teachers for granted. And the teachers, along with the boards of education, held our education system together when the government attacked it relentlessly in the '90s. There was over \$380 million was taken from the education system that we should have seen in the '90s, and the teachers were one of the groups of people that paid a heavy price for that.

Last fall the boards of education and the teachers worked their way through a collective agreement and this dental plan amendment Act was part of the agreement that was reached. There are essentially two issues that are being dealt with in this Bill.

The first issue deals with the changes to the teachers' benefit programs that was signed last fall. The amendment should bring greater consistency in the application of teachers' dental plans, especially for those teachers who are working in historical high schools and alternate schools such as Ranch Ehrlo in Regina and the Radius program in Saskatoon.

Any school that has registered or otherwise recognized by the

Department of Education must be in receipt of the foundation operating grant in order for the teachers to qualify under this Bill. Coverage will not apply if the teachers in the school belong to a trade union, as they have an opportunity to negotiate their benefits directly through their own collective agreement.

The second issue deals with a series of housekeeping amendments that are repealing redundant provisions that will update terminology. According to the Minister of Education, these amendments are required so the collective agreement provisions agreed to last fall can be implemented.

So there are a number of questions that I will have for the minister, but at this time I move that we forward this Bill to the Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 41

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Melenchuk that **Bill No. 41 — The Teachers Superannuation and Disability Benefits Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again we're dealing with a Bill, education Bill, and teachers' superannuation and disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, the shortage of teachers in Saskatchewan is just an example of a number of . . . a group of people that have left this province in the past few years — 21,000 people have left in the last year. That's the worst job loss since the Depression. And it has impacted every aspect of our economy and the teaching profession is one of the areas that has been impacted by job losses.

The amendments to this Bill are dealing with teachers that retire and teachers that can be hired back for no more than 120 days. Both the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association) and the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation) have passed resolutions in the last year calling for the government to relax the rules regarding the number of days that a retired teacher could be hired in a school year. This is directly dealing with the fact that there are not teachers available, especially in the math and science programs, to deal with the students and the classes that are required.

This has impacted education and teachers in two ways. There are a shortage of teachers, and the teachers who want to be hired back are reluctant to do so because if they went over their allotted number of days their pensions were affected.

This is rather a contentious issue for teachers because from their standpoint a person's pension is their entitlement, and legally the government is not within their rights to penalize someone in this matter.

The other amendments that came forward in this Bill deal with various topics. The definition of contributory service is being expanded to cover periods of time during which a teacher is in receipt of long-term disability benefits, providing that the

teacher returns back to the classroom.

In a small number of cases the surviving spouse of a deceased teacher has been unable to receive a teacher's contribution and interest from the superannuation plan, and these changes will prevent future cases from falling through the cracks. And the government will now make an appropriate employer contributions with respect to the teachers in the Saskatchewan Teachers' Retirement Plan for those who choose to take deferred salary leaves.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues again in Education that we would like to discuss. And these ones . . . I know that this Bill is brought forward in order to relieve the problems that we have with the shortage of teachers. And there are discussions I would like to have with the Minister of Education where we can do this in the Committee of the Whole.

So at this time I'd like to move this Bill forward.

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

Bill No. 34

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Lorjé that **Bill No. 34 — The Saskatchewan Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (Treaty Land Entitlement) Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill No. 34 takes care of some things that unfortunately took a long time to be taken care of. And it deals with the obligation of Saskatchewan to the Government of Canada to assist in the fulfillment of treaty land elements with respect to three of the areas in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately it's taken about a hundred years too long to take care of those things, and I think that's highly unfortunate. On the other hand, when we look at how it was done, it created a whole lot of other difficult situations.

I think particularly the RMs (rural municipality) over the years voiced a lot of concerns about how this suddenly changed tax structures, how it changed responsibility for roads, changed a lot of those responsibilities; and had, you know, sort of little chunks of land here and there that weren't under their jurisdiction. So I think it's unfortunate, as I said, that this wasn't dealt with a hundred years ago because then that land would've all been in one, nice, neat package and I think it would've been to the betterment of everyone else. Unfortunately that's not the case.

So this Bill deals with those three First Nations groups, and to that extent I think it's good. This follows out of some legislation passed back in 1992 that didn't recognize some further TLE (treaty land entitlement) settlements that would be taking place between 1992 and the present, so this addresses that.

Now where the concern comes in, Mr. Speaker, is if we look at this Bill it has two parts to it and I mentioned the one part. The

other part it essentially says, and this clause deals with any agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of Saskatchewan, taking us into the future and is . . . Again, Mr. Speaker, we have no idea where it's going to take us. We have no idea what those agreements are going to be and it's a little difficult sometimes to give a lot of support to a Bill that has some very good aspects to it but then leaves all kinds of questions unanswered — major questions.

We just talked in the last few minutes, Mr. Speaker, about some of the shortcomings of the land entitlement system, the difficulties it created. Now is the Government of Canada, the Government of Saskatchewan going to get into further agreements which will create some more problems? Likely they'll get into more agreements and likely those agreements are going to cause some problems.

And it's unfortunate that this piece of legislation doesn't sort of list and put some parameters around where this could go and what could all happen. And that's unfortunate but I guess we'll just have to wait and see how it turns out and then have some other Bills to deal with that, and we'll debate that at that time.

So at this time we're ready to move this to the Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 42

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Lorjé that **Bill No. 42 — The Métis Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker it's a privilege for me to rise in the Assembly today to speak to Bill No. 42, The Métis Act.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that being of Métis descent and for more than 40 years I have lived in a constituency where there is a large number of Métis people. During this time, Mr. Speaker, I have become personally aware of the many issues affecting the Métis people.

Mr. Speaker, recognition and respect for the many contributions that the Métis have given Saskatchewan is long overdue and much deserved. In fact, Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the House applaud the minister's initiative in this area.

However, Mr. Speaker, there are some parts of The Métis Act that are definitely lacking. One of the most important parts surrounds the issue of accountability. We know that in some areas of the province, Mr. Speaker, the Métis grassroots people have recognized the necessity for stronger accountability measures. In spite of their efforts to have these measures implemented, they have no results.

We have also heard from a number of instances where financial and electoral accountability has been lacking, causing a great deal of strife and discontentment among the Métis people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, when public funds are used there can only be one way of ensuring accountability, and that is to allow the Provincial Auditor access to financial statements and other irrelevant documents. This Bill unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, does not have any provisions for this.

The members on this side are very concerned with the minister's apparent lack of insight considering problems of the past.

When accountability is lacking, Mr. Speaker, who are the ones that suffer? All Métis people suffer, but the ones that suffer the highest are the ones . . . the ones that pay the price are the Métis children.

Some might ask how this can happen. What this means, Mr. Speaker, is that children and families may be denied services needed to preserve their economic and social well-being.

We have met with many grassroots people who have expressed their concern regarding this Act. In fact the issues that I have just talked about are issues that have been brought to our attention by these people.

One of the most profound concerns of this Act as it is written, is the encompassing power of the secretariat. Grassroots Métis people fear their democratic right and influence may be compromised as it stands under this existing constitution.

We know, Mr. Speaker, the minister wants this Bill to go through as quickly as possible. And while the Bill does move to recognize the many contributions of the province's Métis people, there are some parts of this Bill that we feel must be clarified. Given the many concerns that we have brought to our attention, we feel that more discussion and consultation should take place. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, at this time I will move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

(16:45)

Bill No. 39

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Trew that **Bill No. 39 — The Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm pleased to be able to rise in the Assembly today to talk about The Occupational Health and Safety Bill, Bill No. 39 — redefined definitions and roles of chief mines inspectors to ensure person in the position has the necessary qualifications and expertise to exercise his or her authority under this Act.

It also, Mr. Speaker, makes it necessary for the person filling the role of chief mines inspector to hold a valid licence under The Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act.

This Bill also makes it necessary for legislative changes to be given to the mines chief or the chief mines inspector. The legal authority to do the job.

Mr. Speaker, many changes are necessary to go along with the new mine regulations expected later this year. Both Saskatchewan Mining Association and the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour supports these changes. The changes being put forward here seem to make a lot of sense and appear to be supportive by the industry. That is absolutely vital.

Anyone filling the roles of chief mines inspector must have a great expertise in a wide variety of areas given the range of mining activity we are lucky to have in Saskatchewan: potash, uranium, coal, precious metals, Mr. Speaker. And also possibly even diamonds.

The mining industry employs somewhere in the neighbourhoods of 20,000 people in Saskatchewan and has an annual sales of about \$6 billion.

We understand from the industry that the government is currently working on a major rewriting of the mining regulations in Saskatchewan, and these changes are necessary to comply with the other changes.

We should point out, Mr. Speaker, that with the rewriting of those regulations, it will probably come even more . . . there will probably even come more substantial changes, changes we will not see in the legislature for a few years.

I would hope that when the Bill winds up in Committee of the Whole, the minister will be kind enough to give us an overview of the regulation . . . regulatory changes the government is complimenting at present.

One of the chief mine inspector's major roles is to ensure a safe working environment for the 2,000 men and women who work in the mining industry which are so very important.

Mining, traditionally, Mr. Speaker, has been a fairly dangerous operation compared with others, with the potential for more to go wrong, so we need to ensure the safety of the workers, and at the same time, make it possible for the mining industry to continue to flourish.

That's why it is so significant that we have heard supportive words from both the mining association and the labour movement in regards to this Bill. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, at this time I would move this Bill onto committee.

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

Bill No. 1

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 1 — The Partnership Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

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

Bill No. 11

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Mr. Sonntag that **Bill No. 11 — The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

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

Bill No. 13

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 13 — The Class Actions Act/ Loi sur les recours collectifs** be now read a second time.

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

Bill No. 16

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Crofford that **Bill No. 16 — The Film Employment Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2001** be now read a second time.

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

The Chair: — It being near 5 o'clock, we will recess until 7 p.m. this evening.

The Assembly recessed until 19:00.