

The Assembly met at 10:00.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand today to present a petition from constituents of mine who are hoping to have the Humboldt territory operations office remain in Humboldt. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reconsider the proposed closure of the Humboldt territory operations office for Saskatchewan Housing Authority and to renew their commitment to rural Saskatchewan and maintain a full, functioning territory operations office in Humboldt.

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the city of Humboldt and the community of St. Gregor.

I so present.

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the Assembly today to present a petition on behalf of people who are concerned about the new tobacco legislation.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately amend tobacco legislation that would make it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to be in possession of any tobacco products; and furthermore, anyone found guilty of such an offence would be subject to a fine of not more than \$100.

The people that have signed this petition are from Rose Valley, Wadena, and Elfros, Saskatchewan. Thanks.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of citizens who are concerned about the shortcomings in the government's tobacco legislation. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately amend tobacco legislation that would make it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to be in possession of any tobacco products; and furthermore, anyone found guilty of such an offence would be subject to a fine of not more than \$100.

Signatures on this petition this morning, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Tisdale, Meadow Lake, Prince Albert, and actually as well from Edmonton, Alberta.

I so present.

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with reductions to the

Saskatchewan drug plan. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reinstate a reasonable annual deductible amount for prescription drugs in Saskatchewan.

And this petition is signed by individuals from the community of Glentworth.

I so present.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of those citizens that are . . . have concerns about the tobacco legislation. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately amend tobacco legislation that would make it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to be in possession of any tobacco products; and furthermore, anyone found guilty of such an offence would be subject to a fine of not more than \$100.

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

And this is signed by residents of Bracken, Orkney, and Climax.

I so present. Thank you.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present regarding health care in our province. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reinstate a reasonable annual deductible amount for prescription drugs in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people in Kendal and Indian Head.

I so present.

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are concerned about the changes to crop insurance. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to halt its plan to take money out of the crop insurance program and hike farmers' crop insurance premium rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Weyburn, Fillmore, and Pangman.

I so present.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here to improve Highway 42.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to make the necessary repairs to Highway 42 in the Arm River constituency in order to prevent injury or loss of life or prevent the loss of economic opportunity in this area.

As in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Tugaske, Eyebrow, Brownlee.

I so present.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition from citizens concerned about the safety of Highway No. 15.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to use a portion of its highway budget to address the concerns of the serious conditions of Highway 15 for Saskatchewan residents.

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

Signed by the citizens of Watrous, Aneroid, Guernsey, and Raymore.

I so submit.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it will be no surprise today I have a petition of citizens concerned about Highway No. 15. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to use a portion of its highway budget to address the concerns of the serious conditions of Highway 15 for Saskatchewan residents.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Watrous, Manitou Beach, and Simpson.

I so present.

**Mr. Peters:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by residents of the province concerned about the prescription drug deductible. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reinstate a reasonable annual deductible amount for prescription drugs in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by people from Bracken, Orkney, and Climax.

I so present.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with a petition from citizens who are outraged over the . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. I ask members just to come to order, please, so we could . . . it would be much easier for me to be able to hear — and everybody to hear — the member's statement.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I realize it's a pretty sensitive issue, but I rise today to represent citizens who are very much outraged with the crop insurance scheme of this government. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to halt its plan to take money out of the crop insurance program and hike farmers' crop insurance premium rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks of Bracken and Orkney.

I so present.

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

A petition concerning a proposed in-patient treatment centre in the city of Weyburn; and

Addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper no. 7, 11, 18, 23, 132, and 157.

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. Brkich:** — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 62 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for CIC: how many exams for a class 1A driver's licence were taken in the year 2001 in the areas outside of Regina, Saskatoon, P.A., and Moose Jaw; and how many have been taken so far in the year 2002 in the same areas?

Also on the same day I have another question:

How many communities has SGI eliminated services which provide class 1A driver licence testing; and further to that, how many more communities will SGI eliminate from offering this test this year?

I so present.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I

shall on day no. 62 ask the government the following question:

What is the total expenditure so far in 2002-2003 on the We're Fixing the Roads advertising campaign, including expenditures on all advertising mediums in the 2001-2002 fiscal year, including a detailed breakdown of all costs associated with that campaign?

And, Mr. Speaker, I have a similar question for a previous year.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 62 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Labour: what is the projected cost to the Workers' Compensation Board for increasing the permanent functional impairment award from a minimum of \$1,100 to \$2,200, and from a maximum of \$22,600 to \$45,200, and how many workers' claims will be affected by this change?

And also, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I give notice I shall on day no. 62 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Labour: what is the projected annual costs for decreasing the Workers' Compensation Board independence allowance calculation from 10 per cent to 5 per cent of the permanent functional impairment award?

And I also would like to submit a number of other written questions as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm very pleased this morning to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly and the guests that have come here to the Assembly today, Ms. Olga Ginsberg, seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, who is a member of the National Parliament of Ukraine, Verkhovna Rada.

She's accompanied by Yars Lozowchuk, who is an active member of the Ukrainian community here, and also by Gwen Jacobson from Government Relations.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Ginsberg is leading a delegation of senior officials from Ukraine who are participating in the Canadian-Ukraine legislative and intergovernmental project. Her delegation is here to learn about Canadian policy and legislation, to effectively govern land registration, which is a major priority for the Government of Ukraine. And they are interested in our land title computer software.

So I would like to ask everyone to help me welcome Ms. Ginsberg to this Assembly.

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

And please enjoy your visit here. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to join with the Minister of Government Relations in welcoming the member of the National Parliament of Ukraine.

And if I may be permitted, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker, I've just indicated to her that on behalf of the official opposition I want to welcome her to Saskatchewan and to the Legislative Assembly this morning, and I hope that she enjoys her stay here in Saskatchewan.

And also a special welcome to Yars.

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

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the House, four adults from the Saskatchewan Abilities Council who are seated on the floor of the Chamber.

And they are participants in the life enrichment program and they are Florence Matt, Steve Fiessel, Dorothy Grierson, and Clark Amundsen. And they are accompanied here today by Lynne Demeule. And the group will be taking in the proceedings this morning including question period and I'm sure that'll be the comedy highlight of the day for them.

So I'll ask all the members to offer them a very warm welcome.

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

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning in the west gallery, I have the grade 5 students from the Yorkdale School Division here visiting the legislature along with a number of chaperones and teachers.

Their teachers: Miss Valerie Jeske and Mrs. Susan Brilz. And also, the chaperones, Mr. Speaker: Corinn Lutz, and Dale Bohn, Gaylene Skinner, Chris Dreger, Louise Perrson-Riess, Margo Ziolkowski, and Cheryl Deneswych are also accompanying the young folks who are here.

Later on this morning I'm going to have an opportunity to have some photographs with them and some refreshments.

And I want all members of the legislature to join with me in welcoming the chaperones and the students and the teachers to the legislature this morning.

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this morning to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Hon. Assembly, 12 grade 10 to 12 students seated in the east gallery from the Gravelbourg High School. The students are accompanied by their teachers, Rosemarie Brown and Francine Gauthier, and chaperones, Michelle Lafreniere and Kathy Dewulf.

I hope that the students and teachers will have an interesting and educational day in their Legislative Assembly. And I'll be

looking forward to meeting with you later this afternoon at 3:30.

And I hope that all members will extend a warm welcome.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through to all members in the legislature, I'd like you to welcome 30 guests from Porcupine Plain School, in the east gallery.

They're grade 8 students. With them are the teachers, Chantel Weaver, Anette Legare, and Doug King, and a parent, Kevin Logan.

I met with them for just a couple of minutes earlier and I think the only people more excited about being in the legislature today than them is the opposition.

I look forward to meeting with you a little later.

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

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the member from Regina Northeast and welcome Lynne Demeule, Florence Matt, Dorothy Grierson, Steve Fiiesel, and Clark Amundsen to the Assembly this morning.

Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity over a number of years to work very closely with Lynne. She is someone who is very devoted to the human services sector and to her community — a very hard-working individual that has been recognized for that work on many occasions, Mr. Speaker.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would introduce . . . like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, a very special person who is part of the group that was introduced by the member from Kelvington-Wadena. And that is my niece, Alicia Kim Kistner. And, Alicia, would you stand? And, Mr. Speaker, Alicia is one of those very, very special people that can just make your entire day much better with her beautiful smile and her cheery attitude.

So I would ask everyone to join with me in welcoming Alicia to the Assembly this morning.

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

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislature, sitting in the west gallery, Mr. Bob Bymoen. If you would stand, Bob. He's the president of the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union) and we welcome you here today.

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe I was presumptuous — I think you were going to members' statements. I would ask leave of the Assembly to make a statement before you go to members' statements, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

## STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

### Apology to the Legislative Assembly

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I was asked the following question by the member from Rosthern:

. . . (has) SGI, hired Robinson or . . . any other private investigation firm to run surveillance or investigate Saskatchewan residents?

I replied with the following:

I . . . (have) been advised that . . . they do not.

I said yesterday that I would apologize to this House if the information I provided was incorrect. The information I was given was incorrect and therefore so was my answer. For that, Mr. Speaker, I apologize to this House.

I have directed the president of SGI to do the following: review the circumstances of the case which was raised yesterday in question period; ensure that the corporation's policies regarding in-depth investigations have been fully complied with; and determine why I was given incomplete information on this issue and take appropriate remedial action. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Saskatchewan Employment Statistics

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's Labour Force Friday and I have good news. And contrary to the forecast of the political editor of the *Leader-Post*, just as we have been saying for the past several months, the true strength of the Saskatchewan economy is beginning to reassert itself. And that is good news for Saskatchewan.

We all know the seriousness of the agricultural situation. Our Premier has just returned from the Western Premiers' Conference with unanimous recognition of its seriousness. We all know that drought and subsidy wars have been a drag on our economy over the past year. Other sectors though have remained strong and the results are here in black and white for us to see.

In the May 11 —in May, pardon me — 11,500 more jobs were created than a year ago . . .

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

**Mr. Yates:** — . . . 486,000 people employed in Saskatchewan — the second highest employment for the month of May on record.

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

**Mr. Yates:** — And, Mr. Speaker, even jobs in agriculture were up by more than 1,000.

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

**Mr. Yates:** — And the forecast is predicting even a brighter future for next year.

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

**Mr. Yates:** — And, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Thank you very much. The member's time has elapsed.

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

#### **Regina Aboriginal Kinsmen Club**

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last evening the Leader of the Opposition and I were honoured to attend the opening ceremonies of the First Nations pavilion, the gathering place, Mosaic 2002, A Festival of Cultures.

The Regina Aboriginal Kinsmen Club were instrumental in planning and organizing the festivities at that pavilion.

Mr. Speaker, the Regina Aboriginal Kinsmen Club deserve a great deal of commendation for their dedication to inner-city youth. In February of 2000, a group of Aboriginal businessmen from Regina and the surrounding area decided to form a service club dedicated to providing opportunities for youth living in the core area of Regina.

The group's members felt that as Aboriginal entrepreneurs and professionals, they could act as role models for kids who might otherwise be denied the opportunity to reach their full potential both as human beings and as community leaders of tomorrow.

To that end, the group approached the Queen City Kinsmen who assisted in the establishment of the Regina Aboriginal Kinsmen Club, Canada's very first Aboriginal Kinsmen Club.

Since its inception, Mr. Speaker, this club has helped numerous organizations and individuals through partnerships and fundraising events. They promote high ideals and afford their members the opportunity for personal motivation, business practices, communication, and public involvement.

Members of the Saskatchewan Party official opposition salute the Regina Aboriginal Kinsmen Club and wish them much success in their endeavours to assist inner-city youth in becoming the best they can be.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Regina Employment Programs Recognized**

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board Training for Excellence Awards . . . at it, a program received an award that deserves our special merit.

In the category for Recognition of Prior Learning, the Ranch

Ehrlo Society Construction Crew — Construction Careers Regina and Ranch Ehrlo Society received an award.

This program is a construction experience program for youth at risk, Mr. Speaker. Each participant is given the ability to develop their own portfolio so that they have the skills an employer may want.

The construction career project may also add the Conference Board of Canada's National Partners in Education Award to their list of achievements.

The construction career project was given this award because of successfully placing — get this, 1,800; yes, 1,800 — people in construction jobs and apprenticeships.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — The industry experts in Saskatchewan Construction Association are very supportive of this program and highlight that the project helps First Nations people and others establish careers in construction.

Mr. Speaker, the true victory of this program is that it is helping to retain and reintroduce people into the workforce while letting all of us reap the rewards. It's a delight to bring this story to our attention.

Thank you.

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

#### **Emergency Response/Mine Rescue Competition**

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The mine rescue team from Luscar Ltd. came home winners from the Saskatchewan emergency response/mine rescue competition on June 1 in Saskatoon.

Luscar's team, made up of employees from the Bienfait and Boundary dam mines near Estevan, competed in the surface and soft rock categories. The team placed first in first aid, firefighting, and proficiency.

As a result of placing first in these three categories, Luscar won the overall team title. Members of the local Luscar team included Arnold Betzema, Keith Gould, George Kingdon, Scott MacKenzie, Ken Elliott, Trevor Bourassa, and Dale Feser.

There were six surface mine teams competing. They came from surface coal, uranium, and potash mining companies. Please join me in extending congratulations to the team from Luscar.

Thank you.

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

#### **Tourism Pride Dinner**

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the conclusion of Tourism Awareness Week I want to mention to the Assembly the tourism pride dinners held this week in Saskatoon and Regina, the latter of which I was happy to attend with the

Minister of Labour.

These recognition dinners are held annually by the Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council and are designed to recognize the professional development of members of the tourism industry.

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, as we know, tourism is a \$1.1 billion industry which employs 45,000 employees. That is 1 out of every 10 workers in the province. Within the industry are many professionals who meet national standards through certification.

Professional development improves the skills and broadens the knowledge of tourism employees, which leads to better service for our guests, which in turn makes our province more attractive to future visitors.

There are a number of professions which require certification and STEC (Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council) dinners honour those workers who received certification in 2002. The professions range from outfitting to heritage interpreting, bartending, information counselling, tour guiding — like our wonderful guides in the legislature here — hotel front desk management, and a whole range of activities.

Mr. Speaker, these workers in the tourism industry are invaluable to our province and its economy. I congratulate those involved in organizing the evenings that were set aside to recognize such valuable work. Thank you.

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

#### **Sara Hnetka Receives Top Mark in Piano Examinations**

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, music is the art of mixing combinations of tones and rhythms to create melody and emotional effects. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow called music the universal language of mankind, while William Shakespeare called it the food of love. Some claim music, not English, is the international language because everyone responds to notes.

It gives me great pleasure to rise in the legislature to recognize a constituent who has been very successful through her piano examinations in connecting with people in her world.

Sara Hnetka, a 16-year-old from Archerwill, recently received the award for attaining the highest mark in Conservatory Canadian examinations in Saskatchewan for grade 6 piano.

This is not the first time Sara has received this award. In the past she was presented with medals for grade 1 piano, grade 3 piano, and grade 5 piano. Sara also recently won awards at local music festivals.

Sara's skill and dedication to music has allowed her to achieve a high level of success. Whether or not Sara continues her pursuit of music excellence, her gift of music is a lifetime talent which she can use to enhance the world she lives in.

I would ask this Assembly to join with me in congratulating Sara on her success in her piano examinations.

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

#### **Winners of SaskPower's Energy and Environment Poster Contest**

**Mr. Kasperski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as Environment Week 2002 draws to a close, I'm pleased to tell the members of the House about the achievements of four very special grade 5 and 6 students here in the province.

These four students, Aidan Searle of Saskatoon, Derek Yakimchuk of Wakaw, Elena Topisirovic of Moose Jaw, and Ceara Caton of Eastend, were chosen as winners of SaskPower's first ever Energy and Our Environment Poster Contest.

In response to a call from SaskPower for posters on addressing climate change, more than 1,000 posters were received. The magnitude and variety of these responses shows just how much we can learn from our youth when it comes to environmental awareness.

To reward their efforts, each winner will be given a bicycle from SaskPower Shand Greenhouse. Their school will also receive a credit to help purchase trees for school grounds, as well as climate change books and reference materials for their libraries.

I am very encouraged, Mr. Speaker, by the efforts of these students and seeing that this generation of leaders and decision makers is already well tuned with environmental issues.

Please join me in congratulating Aidan, Derek, Elena, and Ceara on creating their winning posters, and SaskPower for its proactive steps to educate more of our province's residents on the issues of climate change. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

(10:30)

#### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

##### **Investigation of Claims by Government Agencies**

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We appreciated the apology that we received this morning from the Minister of SGI because this House cannot operate if we can't trust the veracity of the individuals answering the questions.

We did, however — and I don't think that this business is completely completed, Mr. Speaker — we have a lot of questions for the Minister of SGI this morning. And the first one relates to a request for an apology made by Virginia Cook yesterday. Can Virginia Cook expect an apology from the minister for what happened to her because of the actions of SGI?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated in the lobby yesterday, Mr. Speaker, for me to offer an apology — while I regret that I'm not able to, Mr. Speaker

— would suggest, if I offer an apology, it suggests that I have an opinion on the case and I have full knowledge of the case. Mr. Speaker, I am aware that there is an appeal taking place right now and it's absolutely inappropriate for me to inject myself into a specific case especially where there's an issue of appeal taking place.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — As head of SGI it's the minister's responsibility to be in touch with what his department's doing. He should have known what would have happened so he could have apologized before all of this work took place, before the appeals took place. This minister is not in control of his department and his department is out of control.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, after question period the minister went out and he spent some half . . . 30 minutes with his officials to decide on the action that he was going to take with the media.

Mr. Minister, to the minister, did his officials mislead him before he gave those same answers as he gave in the House to the media?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Mr. Speaker, I made it clear in my statement that the information that I provided in the House yesterday was incomplete and inaccurate and I apologize for that.

If that member is now, Mr. Speaker, standing up and saying that we should not investigate cases where we think there is fraud, Mr. Speaker, I ask him to stand up and say that here in the House and say it outside, Mr. Speaker.

We as an insurance company, any insurance company, have the responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to investigate cases where we think fraud has occurred.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, we asked the question in the House. The minister says he did not know the answer to that. He apologized today. After that, after that, Mr. Speaker, he went out and checked with his officials.

Did his officials give him incorrect information after that particular point?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I said in my apology, Mr. Speaker, that the information that I received, that the information that I received was incomplete and inaccurate. I don't know how much more clearer I can be than that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, each year it is estimated that across Canada there is \$1.3 billion in fraud as a result of inappropriate claims as it pertains to insurance, Mr. Speaker. Surely that member is not suggesting that we should not investigate cases where we think fraud has occurred, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — For the third time to that minister . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, please. And allow the member to put the question.

**Mr. Heppner:** — For the third time to that minister, after the question was asked, after he answered the question in the House, he went out and spent some 30 minutes with his officials. He knew at that time what the question was. Then he went out and gave the same answers to the media.

Did his officials mislead him, give him incorrect information after question period, before he went and addressed the media?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, I was clear that the information that I received was incomplete and incorrect, Mr. Speaker. I've asked and instructed the president of SGI to do a full review, Mr. Speaker, to bring back to me in a very timely manner for the requirement that he looks into the issues of how investigations are conducted, Mr. Speaker. I've asked him to look into the specific case.

I was absolutely categorical in saying that the information I received was incomplete and inaccurate. I don't know how much clearer I can be than that, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Simple question to the minister. Did he receive the incorrect information before question period, after question period, or at both times?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Mr. Speaker, one more time I'll read this last statement. I said . . . And this is what I've asked the president of SGI, to determine for me why I was given incomplete information on this issue and take appropriate remedial action. I can't be any clearer than that, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to ask again though of that member, Mr. Speaker, if that member says that we should not conduct investigations where we think fraud has occurred, I ask you to stand up in this House and tell us that, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — This minister, Mr. Speaker, this minister comes in the House and he says he does not know the correct information because his officials have given him incorrect information. Mr. Speaker . . .

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — It's impossible for any minister of this NDP (New Democratic Party) side to go ahead and deal with their issues if they're given incorrect information by their officials.

What disciplinary action will this minister take on his officials

for misleading him and thus misleading the people of this province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, appropriate . . . an appropriate action will be taken, Mr. Speaker. I think they don't like process, Mr. Speaker.

And again, coming from that member, that member who said, Mr. Speaker, that we should first contact people who we think are . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order, please. I would ask the member . . . Order, please. Order, please.

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I said that appropriate remedial action will be take . . . will be taken as soon as we know the facts of what exactly had took place, Mr. Speaker.

But coming from that member, that member who said just a few days ago in this House that in cases where we think fraud has been committed, we should first contact — believe this, Mr. Speaker, believe this — we're supposed to first contact the individuals to see if it's okay if we investigate whether they're doing something wrong or not.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the investigation, the investigation has taken place. That's why we had the apology. He was misled by his people.

Will he fire those people that mislead the cabinet ministers and thus mislead the people of this province? Will he commit to do that so we can get correct information in this House as we work for the people of this province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to form a vigilante group and just get rid of people without knowing what the facts are, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, and coming from that member, Mr. Speaker, who said that even in cases . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Mr. Speaker, and I find it incredulous, even coming from that member, who again a few days ago said that even where individuals have a criminal record and have been charged a number of times, we should contact them to see whether or not we should do an investigation on them; to see whether they'd like it if we did an investigation on them, even though they may be defrauding the people of Saskatchewan. What a ridiculous position, Mr. Speaker.

I ask him to stand up in the House again or out in the rotunda

and again restate that position.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Ridiculous, Mr. Speaker, is when we have a member of this House . . .

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — . . . a member who's a cabinet member who gets incorrect and misleading information from his people and he's not prepared to say that he's going to discipline them and make sure that he comes into this House knowing what he's talking about.

Mr. Speaker, let's see that if in the interim since May 27 this minister has got any correct information from his people that are supposed to advise him or whether he still is totally at sea with what's going on with SGI.

Mr. Speaker, now that the minister has been made aware that SGI does conduct video surveillance on insurance claimants, perhaps he also knows the answer to this question. Mr. Speaker, will the minister finally explain in detail what criteria are used by SGI to determine when an insurance case needs to be investigated and when video surveillance is needed?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Mr. Speaker, I ask members and the people who work in our civil service to listen carefully to what that member has just asked, Mr. Speaker. He's asked us not to follow due process, Mr. Speaker, to just . . . for the minister just to fire people indiscriminately, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Mr. Speaker, I've been clear. I've asked the president of SGI to find out why I was given incomplete and inappropriate information, and that I wanted remedial action to be taken place . . . to take place as a result of that.

But, Mr. Speaker, if that member is suggesting that, on behalf of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, where we think fraud has been committed that we should somehow not investigate that, Mr. Speaker, please stand up and tell the people of Saskatchewan that.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, I very specifically asked that minister to explain what the rules and criteria are that SGI uses. The minister got up and restated incorrectly and falsely my question and then didn't answer it. Will he now get up in his spot and answer the question: what criteria do they use? That's the question. We want the answer from that minister.

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Mr. Speaker, last year . . . Mr. Speaker, I said that I've asked the president that he would ensure that a remedial action took place, Mr. Speaker.

Again, Mr. Speaker, if that member is suggesting that somehow when we believe that fraud has been committed, Mr. Speaker,



that we should somehow not investigate that, I would ask him to stand up and make that point again, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to say again that if somehow he is suggesting that indiscriminate investigations and surveillances of Saskatchewan people take place, nothing could be further from the truth. Last year, there were 6,500 personal injury claims and of that, Mr. Speaker, we are told that between 8 and 10 involve surveillance, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that does not suggest indiscriminate investigations and surveillances of people.

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

(10:45)

**Mr. Heppner:** — We asked the questions, Mr. Speaker, and the minister restates them incorrectly. And he wonders about being far from the truth — and he wonders about being far from the truth.

We've heard it this morning — we've heard it this morning. Another question, and see if he knows this one. He spent 30 minutes in his little vestibule back there yesterday getting briefed, by now he should know. It's been since May 27, what does he know?

Mr. Speaker, the minister told John Gormley on May 28 and . . .

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — We've got the Minister of Health chirping over there, how long it took to write these questions. It'll take 24 years for those people to even get a sniff at government again.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — The people of Saskatchewan are livid over the information that's coming out over the incorrect surveillance, the unnecessary surveillance, the invasion of privacy that SGI is doing. May 28, and I quote John Gormley's show:

In Saskatchewan we have roughly 6,500 auto injury claims each year and only between (6) . . . to 10 of these are investigated in-depth.

Yesterday in the legislature the minister said, and I quote:

. . . in cases where there are injury claims — I've said, some 6,500 across the province annually . . . SGI, the corporation . . . will investigate . . . some 8 or 10 annually . . .

**The Speaker:** — Would the member go directly to the question, please.

**Mr. Heppner:** — The minister . . .

**The Speaker:** — And would the members allow the member to go directly to the question.

**Mr. Heppner:** — In the year 2000, there were 72 investigations. Mr. Speaker, why is the minister relying on incorrect information to give that kind of information to this particular House? How many people are being investigated on an average year, Mr. Speaker? And how many of those are charged because of that investigation?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Mr. Speaker, I've said that the information I received was incomplete and it was inaccurate. I can't be any clearer than that, Mr. Speaker. He is correct when he says that the numbers were 70 in the year prior and they were 9 last year, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I believed that that was the average at the time. And that's why I've stood in the House and apologized, Mr. Speaker, because I believed that that was the average at the time. And I apologized then and I apologize now, Mr. Speaker.

But let's put this in perspective, Mr. Speaker. Of 6,500 injury claims, whether it's 9 or whether it's 70, Mr. Speaker, it's a small percentage.

And again, is that member suggesting that somehow if we believe that fraud has been committed that we should not do the investigation?

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We asked a very simple question: how many charges were laid because of those investigations? Again we received no answer.

This government continues to stall, to have their officials give them incorrect information, and the people of this province wonder how at sea they actually are.

I want to go back, Mr. Speaker, to a statement that the minister made earlier on. He said that because of the fact that his officials were misleading him, giving him incorrect information, an investigation was going to take place.

I want that minister to stand in his place and tell us who's going to do that investigation. Is he going to investigate, himself? Or will this be SGI investigating themselves? Or who's going to investigate this, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Mr. Speaker, part of the reason SGI has amongst the lowest insurance rates in all the country, Mr. Speaker, is because we investigate and we ensure, Mr. Speaker, that SGI's customers are not being ripped off, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, if that member, if that member is suggesting that we would know in advance somehow whether those individuals that we believe are committing fraud are in fact committing fraud, you wouldn't have to do the investigation, Mr. Speaker — excuse me — you wouldn't have to do the investigation.

It's hard when you're yelling overtop of this all the time.

Mr. Speaker, if that member suggests that we shouldn't do the investigations when we think fraud is committed, he should stand up in the House here again — or out in the rotunda — and say so, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Budgetary Projections

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's obvious this morning we're going to get very little in terms of honest answers from that minister, so let's try, let's try the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Let's try the Premier.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Order. Order, order. Order. Order, order. Order. Order. Order. I would ask members to come to order. I would ask members to come to order, complete order. Order. Order, order.

Members, it is one thing to talk about being misled and inadvertently misled or accidentally misled; it's another thing to impute that there was a deliberate attempt at misleading. And to question another member's honesty is not permitted in this House. And I would ask the member to withdraw the statement before he proceeds with his question.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll withdraw that statement and I'll apologize to the House.

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

**The Speaker:** — I thank the member.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — But I do want to have an answer from . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, now.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — This year's provincial budget on March 27, the Minister of Finance told the legislature and the people of Saskatchewan that the budget was balanced. But as everyone in Saskatchewan now knows, Mr. Speaker, the budget wasn't balanced. In fact, the NDP will run a deficit this year of at least \$225 million.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister told the people of Saskatchewan that he was introducing a balanced budget when he knew full well that the budget would run a \$225 million deficit.

Will the Premier tell us why the people of Saskatchewan should believe anything the NDP government says?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, we've heard the nonsense from the . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, we've heard the nonsense from the member opposite and we'll continue to hear it. He will

go around saying that we're trying to mislead the people of the province.

But I want the people to know, Mr. Speaker, that I had the opportunity to challenge that member in estimates, where I pointed out to that member that Moody's Investment Services had looked at our budget and had given us a credit rating upgrade. And I said to that member that he was peddling nonsense, and I asked that member to stand up and justify saying we were misleading the people.

And this is what he said, Mr. Speaker, and I quote from Hansard, May 15, page 1464. When I challenged him, he said this:

. . . I'm not suggesting . . . you're trying to mislead the people of Saskatchewan . . .

He said that, Mr. Speaker, and then he went on, Mr. Speaker, to say:

Mr. Minister, I am not suggesting that you are mishandling the finances of this province.

He says one thing one day, Mr. Speaker, and another thing another day. And what he has, Mr. Speaker, in the face of our credit rating upgrade and 11,000 new jobs this May, is no credibility, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Information Services Corporation

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when a government has lost its way, Mr. Speaker, when a government can't keep its stories straight any more, Mr. Speaker, they just crank up the volume of the argument. It doesn't mean they're any stronger, Mr. Speaker. The arguments are still weak. And this is a government on its way out. Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, two years ago — two years ago, Mr. Speaker, this government . . . My question is to the Premier. Two years ago, this government promised to automate land titles for 20 to \$30 million. The cost to date, \$60 million and rising.

Mr. Speaker, well what they then said was, we'll pay for this bloated expense by selling this technology around the world. Now we hear, Mr. Speaker, that the government is not going to try to sell this technology around the world. No wonder the people of Saskatchewan don't believe them.

To the Premier, would he tell this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order. Must be able to hear the question. Order.

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, in light of the events of today, in light of the string of times that this government has had to

change its story, would he please tell this Assembly why in the world Saskatchewan people should believe a word that government has to say?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, in answer to the member who wants to be the leader of the Saskatchewan Party, let me say this: he wants the story, I'll tell him the story.

**The Speaker:** — Would ask for order. Would ask for order.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you the story. We have questions about the budget. Now we'll listen to the questions, but I'll tell you we'll pay attention to Moody's of New York . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — . . . who gave this budget a credit rating upgrade.

We will listen to the question from the member from Rosthern who chirps perennially from his seat . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. Members have had an opportunity to ask their questions. I would now ask the Premier to continue with his response. Order. With order. Order.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, we'll listen to the question from Rosthern. But I want to hear him state his position — or better yet, his leader. Is it the position of the Saskatchewan Party that those who are suspected of defrauding the motorists of Saskatchewan should not be investigated? Would they make that clear?

Mr. Speaker, we're going to build in this province. We're going to . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, it is completely obvious to the people of Saskatchewan this is a party in decline, a party that cannot stand good news.

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, on a day, on a day when there are more people working in the month of May in Saskatchewan, second highest in the history of this province, I just want to say this, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to fight the Republicans in Washington, I have to fight the Liberals in Ottawa, I have to fight the Sask Party in Saskatchewan — in spite of that, 11,000 new jobs in the month of May.

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

**The Speaker:** — Yes, I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd ask for leave to introduce

guests.

Leave granted.

(11:00)

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, shortly after the time allotted for introduction of guests, a school group from my constituency arrived in the east gallery. And it's my privilege and my pleasure to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and to all members of the House, 12 grade 11 students from my home community of Invermay, from the Invermay School.

They're here on a day in Regina and will be heading back to Invermay later on today. I understand that many of the students were at the school as early as 6:30 this morning to get here.

So I want to ask all members to welcome the grade 11 students and the their teacher Gail Krawetz and bus driver Budd Johns. Let's welcome them this afternoon.

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

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege.

**The Speaker:** — Would the member state his point of privilege please?

## PRIVILEGE

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I sent you a letter outlining the point of privilege dealing with the events of the House in the last two days. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read that letter into the record. Mr. Speaker, I would like to move a motion at the end of my comments. And the motion will read:

That the statements by the minister responsible for Crown Investments Corporation on pages 1856 through 1858 of June 6, 2002 Saskatchewan *Hansard* regarding the surveillance of Saskatchewan residents by Saskatchewan Government Insurance be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for investigation.

Mr. Speaker,

. . . on several occasions the Minister responsible for Crown Investments Corporation said that Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) does not hire private investigators to investigate no-fault insurance claims and that SGI does not conduct any form of surveillance on private individuals.

The Minister made statements to this effect on eight occasions yesterday. I have highlighted these statements on pages 1856 through 1858 of Hansard for your information.

Later, after the Official Opposition produced a videotape of surveillance conducted by a private investigator under contract with SGI, the Minister and an SGI official admitted that SGI does contract with private investigators to conduct surveillances.

Page 111 of the 22nd edition of Erskine May states: "The Commons may treat the making of a deliberately misleading statement as a contempt." Page 141 of the 19th edition of Erskine May states that: "Conspiracy to deceive either House or any committees of either House will also be treated as a breach of privilege.

The Minister clearly made misleading statements in the Assembly when he said SGI does not conduct surveillance of individuals. On some (but not all) occasions, he qualified this statement by saying he had been advised of this information by SGI officials.

Therefore, either the minister deliberately misled the House, in contradiction of Page 111 of Erskine May as quoted above, or there has been a conspiracy by one or more SGI officials to deceive the Minister, and by extension the House, in contraction of Page 141 of Erskine May as quoted above.

Either way, the end result was that members were provided with incorrect information in the Assembly. Page 67 of Marleau and Montpetit states:

The House also claims the right to punish, as a contempt, any action which, . . . tends to obstruct or impede the House in the performance of its functions (or) obstructs or impedes any member or officer of the House in the discharge of their duties.

Clearly providing incorrect information to the House — namely, that SGI does not conduct surveillance of individuals — obstructs members of the Assembly in the discharge of their duties. It is important that the Assembly determine who is responsible for this obstruction. As such, I believe this matter should be referred to the Standing Committee on Elections and Privileges for further investigation.

This situation is similar in nature to the privilege question involving former National Defence Minister Art Eggleton earlier this year. Mr. Eggleton provided misleading information to the House of Commons regarding the capture and detention of prisoners by Canadian Forces . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. I consider this a serious matter. I appreciate very much if members would not interrupt.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll repeat that paragraph:

This situation is similar in nature to the privilege question involving former National Defence Minister Art Eggleton earlier this year. Mr. Eggleton provided misleading information to the House of Commons regarding the capture and detention of prisoners by Canadian Forces in Afghanistan. A point of privilege was raised against Mr.

Eggleton.

Even though the Speaker accepted that Mr. Eggleton did not intentionally mislead the House, he went on to cite the passage from Marleau and Montpetit mentioned above and ruled that the motion to refer the matter to the appropriate committee should proceed.

Mr. Speaker, the member . . . a member or a minister providing misleading information to this House prevents the members from properly performing their duties. The member from Rosthern asked questions related to SGI's use of private investigators on May 27. Later that day the member faced a difficult scrum based on the information provided by the minister in the House.

Yesterday this House found out that the information provided by the minister was false. This false information made it difficult, if not impossible, for the member for Rosthern to perform his duties.

Mr. Speaker, any attempt to mislead the House is a contempt of this House. Mr. Speaker, this House cannot allow either the ministers or the department officials to provide false information to this Assembly.

An investigation by the Committee of Privileges and Elections to determine how this occurred and how widespread this practice is must be established. Further, the committee should report its findings to this House along with recommendations to prevent these breaches from happening again, and impose penalties on the officials providing false information.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has admitted in the House that he provided misleading information, information that he had received from his officials. This provides the prima facie evidence that a breach of privilege and contempt of this House has occurred.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you allow this motion to proceed to determine the extent of this breach of privilege and contempt of the legislature of Saskatchewan.

The minister's performance and SGI's must be investigated by a proper agency to conduct a contempt of this Assembly. That should be an agency of this House. That agency, Mr. Speaker, is the Committee of Privileges and Elections.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, I understand that you will be required to make a ruling as to whether there is a prima facie case of violation of privilege of the House as brought to your attention by the House Leader from the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, as I've listened carefully, although I'm not previously advised of the matter being brought to the House, I listened to the words of the Opposition House Leader. He refers to Erskine May and the references there related to privilege of the House having to do with deliberately misleading statements or conspiracy to deceive.

I point out, Mr. Speaker, that in those references, it refers to the conduct of a member of the House, that is . . . that is the particular conduct or behaviour which is referred to in those

references in Erskine May.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this day, as we are all aware, the minister stood in his place and advised the House that . . . along with his apology to the House, that he had presented to the House information that he believed to be accurate, but which he subsequently learned to be incomplete and incorrect. Mr. Speaker, I understand that the minister has done the honourable thing at the earliest possible opportunity. After having learned that he had been provided inaccurate and incomplete information, he stood in his place and advised the House of that.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the appropriate case is that there is no prima facie case. Privileges of the House have to do with members of the House and the hon. member opposite would like to suggest that that should be extended. I suggest that that is not the case and that there is not a prima facie case of violation of privileges of the House before us.

**The Speaker:** — Members of the Assembly, I did . . . or I want to confirm that I did receive today a letter from the Opposition House Leader at approximately 9:53 a.m. I did not have time to peruse it in detail until the member lead me through it shortly and I thank the member for the letter and for the explanation that he has just given.

The . . . I want to bring to members' attention on page 3 of our own rule book about privilege when:

A member who proposes to raise a question of privilege shall first advise the Speaker of his intention so to do and the subject matter thereof, at least two hours prior to the regular daily opening of the Assembly.

And it's item 6(2) which says:

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Speaker shall have the right to waive notice.

I . . . Because of the intervening events that have happened today, members, I wish to extend to . . . pardon me, I wish to use the Speaker's right to waive notice of that two hour period and I wish to deal with the matter at this time.

The . . . I also want to mention that I heard, as everybody did, very clearly, the statement of apology by the member from . . . by the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation and I thank him for the apology as members did. And I heard from that statement that although he apologized for misleading the House that he did not do so in a deliberate or knowing manner.

Having heard both the request for the statement of . . . for the motion of privilege and the statement by the minister, it is the job of the Speaker to rule whether or not there is sufficient evidence, whether there is prima facie evidence for an item like this to proceed to a motion.

I must say that in this particular case the member did not establish sufficient case that there was any intention or ill will or deliberate attempt or that the member knowingly misled the House.

Furthermore, I would like to say that with respect to the

evidence the member gives about statements that happened outside of the Assembly, the Speaker will not rule on any statements that are made or any action that is taken outside the Assembly.

I would therefore rule that the prima facie case is not established.

Why is the member on his feet?

**Mr. Toth:** — To introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just joining us in the east gallery, we have 16 grade 4 students from the school in Whitewood. And, Mr. Speaker, they are joined by their teacher, Ms. Fischer, and chaperones Ms. Belogh and Ms. Browatzke.

They are just going to be here for a few minutes. I look forward to meeting them shortly for photos and just a brief discussion. I trust they'll enjoy the proceedings of the Assembly that they will note taking place here shortly.

And at this time, I ask members to join me in welcoming the students from Whitewood.

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

(11:15)

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

#### **Bill No. 58 — The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2002**

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasant duty today to rise and move second reading of the Bill that amends The Income Tax Act, 2000.

Mr. Speaker, the 2000 budget, that was two years ago, announced this government's plan to reform Saskatchewan's personal income tax system. Our objective was to achieve a simple, fair, and competitive tax system that would be more responsive to the needs of Saskatchewan people and strengthen the Saskatchewan economy.

To meet this objective our government introduced a multi-year tax reform initiative as part of our long-term vision for growth and opportunity in Saskatchewan.

And in that regard, Mr. Speaker, it was so encouraging today to hear the latest job figures from Statistics Canada which showed that in Saskatchewan there are 11,000 more people working today than there were a year ago. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, it also indicated that it is the second highest number of jobs ever in the province of Saskatchewan. So that's very encouraging,

Mr. Speaker.

On January 1, 2001, the determination of Saskatchewan income tax was simplified. The flat tax which had been introduced by the previous government, the debt reduction surtax, and the high-income surtax, and the Saskatchewan tax reduction were all eliminated.

These have now been replaced with a simple, three-rate tax structure and provincial tax credits which generally parallel the federal tax credits. The new provincial income tax system also introduced a universal, dependent child tax credit and a universal supplement to the age tax credit.

And I'd like to say, Mr. Speaker, that since it has been two years since we introduced tax reform, many, many people across the province have noticed filling out their tax returns this spring for the 2001 tax year, which is the first full year of a three-year plan, that their income tax situation is much, much better than it has been in the past.

And of course it will be even better for 2002 and for 2003 as a result of this Bill. Because what this Bill does, Mr. Speaker, for the third year in a row, is to bring about further income tax reductions for Saskatchewan people.

And I should say, Mr. Speaker, that the 2002 changes have already been implemented so people will see that when they file their income tax returns next spring. And the 2003 changes are on track for implementation on January 1, 2003.

These changes will include a significant expansion in the income tax brackets in addition to the reduction in the tax rates; and increases, Mr. Speaker, to the child tax credit and the seniors tax credit. And the major point, Mr. Speaker, is that all income tax payers are benefiting from tax reform.

Mr. Speaker, our multi-year, personal tax reform initiative delivers meaningful tax relief to Saskatchewan residents. We've heard voices lately say that most of our emphasis should be on cutting corporate taxes and that we should be transferring some of the corporate tax load onto individuals and families. We've taken the opposite approach, Mr. Speaker. We have been cutting business taxes somewhat through reductions in the small-business tax credit and raising the threshold before which corporations pay the corporate capital tax. But, over much opposition, we've emphasized personal, individual, tax reform for individuals and families to help out the individuals and families in our province, Mr. Speaker.

Others have a different view. They feel that we should concentrate on simply tax reductions for corporations and raising corporate . . . or I should say sales taxes on individuals. We've heard that from the more conservative voices. And we don't want to take that approach, Mr. Speaker. We're trying to reform personal taxes in Saskatchewan.

The introduction of higher personal tax amounts is removing thousands of lower-income earners from the income tax rolls. So far income tax reform has put \$330 million per year more into the hands of Saskatchewan people. This final stage of tax reform in 2003 will provide a further \$78 million in tax reductions.

And I should also add, Mr. Speaker, that one of the things that had been a problem I think in our income tax system before was the flat tax which was brought in by the Devine government, which this government did away with, with tax reform. Because what that flat tax often did was to really hit people who have low incomes very hard with an income tax bill.

And when we abolished the flat tax, that took 55,000 low-income people off of the tax rolls altogether, Mr. Speaker. At the same time we brought in the sales tax credit to give low-income people a credit every three months, along with the GST (goods and services tax) credit that they receive, to compensate them for the expanded sales tax.

Mr. Speaker, an average Saskatchewan family today is paying \$854 less in provincial income tax than they did in 1999, and almost a full third less than they did in 1993. Mr. Speaker, the average family in Saskatchewan pays \$1,300 less in income tax today than they did in 1993.

I'd like to repeat that, Mr. Speaker, because it's often not understood that income taxes have only been going in one direction in this province, which has been down. Income taxes have been reduced every year in this province, I believe, for the last five years. And the average family, Mr. Speaker, pays \$1,300 less in income tax today than they did in 1993.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — . . . these changes being introduced today will provide a further \$180 to the average family in annual tax savings, Mr. Speaker, a further \$180 on top of \$1,300. And I should point out to anyone watching that these tax changes have been opposed every step of the way by the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, this government has also introduced a number of initiatives to improve the competitiveness of Saskatchewan's business tax regime. We've reduced the small-business income tax rate from 10 per cent in 1991 to 6 per cent today.

We've increased the annual amount of income eligible for the lower small-business rate from 200,000 to 300,000. That just took effect January 1 of this year, Mr. Speaker, because we're trying to help out small business. And once again, we're doing that notwithstanding the opposition of the opposition.

We've also introduced a number of tax incentives targeted to specific segments of the provincial economy, including manufacturing and processing, the film industry, and the resource sector. And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do more for families and businesses as our fiscal resources permit.

This Bill introduces amendments that will implement the income tax initiatives announced in the 2002 budget. And with your permission, I will now describe the business tax initiatives that are being implemented through the income tax amendments contained in this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, in 1995 our government introduced two major initiatives in support of the province's manufacturing and processing sector. The manufacturing and processing profits tax

reduction lowers the provincial corporate income tax rate on manufacturing and processing profits to as low as 10 per cent. The investment tax credit for manufacturing and processing encourages the acquisition of manufacturing and processing capital assets.

And I should just take a moment, Mr. Speaker, to explain that the purpose of lower manufacturing and processing taxes is to say that we want there to be more manufacturing and processing value added to food products, to produce food in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, it has been working. What we have seen in the last number of years has been a doubling of manufacturing in Saskatchewan; roughly the same, I think, with food processing — much more investment, many more jobs in manufacturing and processing.

And I think this is one of the reasons why we have 11,000 people more working in Saskatchewan today than we did just a year ago, because we're trying to encourage manufacturing and processing in our province. And that's what these tax changes do, Mr. Speaker. In addition to trying to help out individuals and families, we're trying to help out the manufacturing sector and the processing sector.

We're also trying to encourage investment in research and development and the expansion of knowledge-based industries through the scientific research and experimental development tax credit introduced in 1998.

What does that try to do, Mr. Speaker? It tries to encourage companies to invest in research and development which ultimately leads to economic development. The credit reduces Saskatchewan corporate income tax in the year eligible expenditures are incurred. Unused tax credits may be carried forward for seven taxation years or carried back three years.

To improve the ability of smaller knowledge-based companies to access this credit, the carry forward provision is being extended to 10 taxation years. And what that means, Mr. Speaker, is you may have a business that starts up and they're investing in Saskatchewan but they're not yet profitable, and so they don't have any income tax against which to deduct the value of their credit.

We're saying that they used to have up to seven years to make a profit, to pay income tax and they could then claim their credit against that income tax. Now they can take up to 10 years, to encourage businesses to invest in research and development.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that our personal tax reform and our business tax initiatives are part of a long-term vision for growth and opportunity in Saskatchewan. We believe that a competitive tax regime which helps individuals and families and not just the corporate sector as some of the conservative forces called for, is central to our plan to create the economic growth needed to secure our Saskatchewan quality of life. We believe we're doing what is right, what is fair for people, what's fair for ordinary people and middle-income people, and what makes sense for our province and our people — building a stronger, more prosperous Saskatchewan for everyone to enjoy.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I note that this Bill also includes some technical amendments that were requested by the Canada Customs & Revenue Agency, usually referred to as Revenue Canada. These technical amendments will clarify certain provisions, correct references to the federal Income Tax Act, and parallel federal legislative changes.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be very pleased to answer questions concerning the amendments to The Income Tax Act, 2000 when discussing this Bill at Committee of the Whole. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Income Tax Act, 2000.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, any tax reduction is a good tax reduction, Mr. Speaker. However, Mr. Speaker, that tax reduction should not be offset by a corresponding tax increase someplace else.

And that is exactly what is happening in this case, Mr. Speaker. While the minister is reducing the income taxes a little bit, he in turn is causing taxes to be raised in other areas. He is downloading, Mr. Speaker, on municipalities. He is downloading onto boards of education. He is downloading onto post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker. And he's even downloading costs onto our health care system at the local levels, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, because of the downloading by the Minister of Finance, he is causing municipalities, both rural and urban, to raise their property taxes to offset that loss of revenue from the government.

Mr. Speaker, boards of education across this province are raising their mill rates on property to pay for the necessary educational components for our children. And those costs are being driven up to individuals because of the minister's downloading.

We've just heard, Mr. Speaker, how tuition fees are going up by as much as 8, 9, 10 per cent at our universities because of underfunding by the province — downloading, Mr. Speaker, on our education system at post-secondary levels.

(11:30)

So while the minister may be dropping taxes in one area, he's causing taxes or costs to be raised in another. More enough, Mr. Speaker, enough to more or less offset his income tax drops. Mr. Speaker, when you do that, when you lower one area and raise another and it balances out, it does nothing to stimulate the economy.

Mr. Speaker, the minister is talking a little bit about a job increase. Well, Mr. Speaker, one month increase in jobs does not offset many months of losses. Mr. Speaker, it does not offset the 20,000-job loss last year.

Mr. Speaker, the member . . . the minister talks about taking 55,000 low-income people off of the tax roll. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, he's raised the cost of SaskPower, of power costs to them. He's raised the cost of heating to those same people.

He's raised the cost of telephones, Mr. Speaker. He's raised the cost of gasoline. And he has raised the cost of rents to those people, Mr. Speaker, because of the property tax increases.

Now depending on your level of income, Mr. Speaker, you may or may not pay taxes. But it doesn't matter what your income level is, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't matter whether you're rich or poor — you pay for power, you pay for heat, you pay for telephones, you pay for gasoline, and you pay your rent or housing costs, Mr. Speaker.

So what he has done at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, is charged more people at the low-income level that he is claiming to protect, Mr. Speaker — costing them more than what any potential savings could have had to them through a lowering of the income tax, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the government . . . the minister keeps saying that the opposition is opposing. No, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to the small-business tax, we would completely eliminate it. Because small business, Mr. Speaker, is the engine that drives job creation in this province. If he wants to stimulate this economy and get some job creation, eliminate the small-business tax, Mr. Speaker, would be a good step towards it.

There are a number of groups, Mr. Speaker, concerned about this particular piece of legislation and how the costs are shifting, Mr. Speaker, and how this minister is downloading on people in this province. Therefore I would move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 66 — The Municipal Employees'  
Pension Amendment Act, 2002**

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2002.

Mr. Speaker, it is necessary to amend this Act to improve benefits to plan members, to maintain equality for plan members, and to address housekeeping issues.

Mr. Speaker, if a member of the Municipal Employees' Pension Plan becomes disabled, the member has the option to contribute to the plan. If after two years the member is totally disabled, the member may apply to the Municipal Employees' Pension Commission for a waiver of contributions to the pension plan while disabled.

The waiver is retroactive to the first date of disability. While contributions are waived the member continues to accrue a pension benefit respecting that service. If the member's disability was the result of a workplace injury and the member receives benefits from the Workers' Compensation Board, the board begins to set an amount aside equivalent to 10 per cent of the Workers' Compensation Board benefit after the member is disabled from work for two years. These funds are held in the reserves of the Workers' Compensation Board where they earn interest.

Upon the member turning age 65, these funds are used to purchase an annuity that will then provide retirement income. Offsetting the pension under the Municipal Employees' Pension Plan, associated with the same period of pensionable service as the Workers' Compensation Board benefit, ensures that a member of the Municipal Employees' Pension Plan does not receive two pensions for the same period of disability.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, the intent of the amendment is simply to ensure that whatever the disabled pensioner receives will be one pension, and not actually two pensions in relation to the same period of time.

Under the terms of the Municipal Employees' Pension Plan a member can make contributions retroactively for a period of service with an employer and/or a period of approved leave of absence.

The process of acquiring and paying for past service is known as purchase of prior service. It is desirable, Mr. Speaker, to allow plan members to purchase prior service with any participating employer of the pension plan versus a specific employer of the plan.

This amendment, Mr. Speaker, reflects the original intent of the benefit.

There are two categories of members participating in the Municipal Employees' Pension Plan — firstly, general members, and secondly designated members. Designated members are police officers and firefighters who have been designated by their employer under the terms of the pension plan. These members pay a higher contribution rate than general members do in order to have the opportunity to retire earlier under the terms of the pension plan. The normal retirement age for general members is age 65, but it's age 60 for the designated members.

Police officers and firefighters contribute to the pension plan as general members unless their employer designates them under the terms of the pension plan. If a police officer or firefighter contributes to the Municipal Employees' Pension Plan as a general member, and subsequently becomes a designated member, the individual becomes entitled to a general member pension and a designated member pension, each payable on different dates. This causes retirement planning difficulty for the individual. This Bill addresses this issue, Mr. Speaker, by giving general members who become designated by their employer options regarding the payable dates of their pension benefit.

Further, Mr. Speaker, years ago a minimum monthly pension was established under the pension plan for rural municipal secretaries who are now referred to as rural municipal administrators. At present, no rural municipal administrators qualify for the guarantee and likely none ever will. This Bill, Mr. Speaker, therefore repeals this provision. Rural municipal administrators will receive the benefit they earn under the pension plan.

Mr. Speaker, to comply with the Income Tax Act of Canada and for valuation purposes, the Municipal Employees Pension Plan needs to separately account for the assets associated with



defined benefit pensions and money purchase annuities. The separation of the assets will be achieved through actuarial methods. Based upon the results of an actuarial valuation, the commission will determine its ability to provide inflation protection to individuals who purchased annuities from the plan.

Mr. Speaker, I hereby move second reading of The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak on Bill No. 66, An Act to amend The Municipal Employees' Pension Act.

In general terms, it's very . . . pensions are a very important and critical part of our society and as we . . . as we know and have been told by the experts that future people, because of demographics of our population, there's going to be a greater and greater strain on our Canada Pension Plan. And people are being told and more and more people are beginning to look after their own pension requirements in the future.

And it's very important that the . . . this particular pension is run properly and adequately so that individuals, when they start to retire in the next, well 5, 10 to 15 years, when the bulk of the baby boomers do retire, that these individuals have adequate pensions and are able to have a good standard of living after they have retired.

Mr. Speaker, interesting to note that they're including firefighters and police officers and I accept the explanation of the minister in that concern. As we know, firefighters and police officers have a relatively higher risk in their profession and the job, both health-wise and safety, and it is important that they are able to retire somewhat earlier than the average person because of their circumstances of their job.

Also, the minister had talked about the RM (rural municipality) administrators and the amendments made to the RM administrators being included in The Municipal Employees' Pension Act.

Interesting to note that the minister spoke of actuaries and, as we found out with the Workers' Compensation Board, how important that their numbers are accurate and how important that the proper information is given to the actuary so that the actuary can make the proper designation and proper calculations so that the fund is properly administrated and there are funds available when people retire and need to draw on the pensions.

So I would like to speak to the stakeholders. Our critic will look at this Bill in much greater detail, and at this time I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 59 — The Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission Act**

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Saskatchewan Financial

Services Commission Act.

This Bill creates the Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission, a body that will integrate the three major organizations that regulate financial services in Saskatchewan: the Saskatchewan Securities Commission, and the financial institution section of the consumer protection branch, and the pension benefits branch of the Department of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation that will benefit businesses, consumers, investors, and the province. Businesses, consumers, investors in the financial services industry will have a single point of access to the financial market regulators. It will allow for more responsive, coordinated, and effective decision making with respect to all aspects of financial regulation.

It will provide Saskatchewan with a stronger voice in national financial market regulation issues. It will allow for Saskatchewan to respond more efficiently and effectively to emerging trends and regulatory initiatives in an ever-changing marketplace.

It will eliminate gaps and overlaps, and minimize inconsistent treatment of similar financial products under the current regulatory structure. And it will provide for the advantages and efficiencies gained by the pooling of the knowledge, expertise, and experience of the existing regulators.

The creation of the Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission follows a trend towards consolidation of the regulation of financial services that is occurring at provincial, national, and international level. In particular, Ontario and Quebec are currently considering legislation creating a single financial services regulator.

Mr. Speaker, the new Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission will oversee the following institutions: credit unions; insurance companies; trust, loan, and financing corporations; and security dealers and advisors.

And the following financial services will be covered by the Act: lending in general, financing and trust companies, trading in or advising with respect to securities, the administration of pension plans, the sale of insurance products, and mortgage and loan brokering.

Mr. Speaker, the new commission will have a broad mandate and will therefore require members possessing a wide range of skills and experience. The commission will consist of no more than seven members including a Chair appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Initially the responsibilities of the commission will be in the nature of coordinating and overseeing the regulatory services provided by the current regulators. The creation of the new commission will be accomplished with existing resources and it will not be necessary to increase current staffing levels.

Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of the government to pass regulations under this Act to assign the current responsibilities of the Securities Commission to the new Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission. In addition the commission can, over time and after consultation with business, consumers,

and regulators, assume regulatory functions with respect to other financial services.

Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes that industry self-regulation is an important part of our current regulatory system, and this Bill will allow for a continued role for self-regulators.

(11:45)

Broad consultations have been conducted concerning this Bill. The government engaged the services of a consultant who conducted extensive interviews with business representatives and regulators. My officials have held numerous meetings with interest groups and business representatives over the past two years. In addition a consultation paper was forwarded to a large number of stakeholders last fall, many of whom have provided a detailed response to the proposal. Support for this initiative, Mr. Speaker, has been overwhelmingly positive.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of The Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission Act.

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

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 59, The Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission Act, as mentioned by the minister, looks on surface that it is quite a good idea. It's bringing together, integrating, a number of — three I guess — other commissions or agencies into one single-point access when it comes to financial service issues.

And, Mr. Speaker, we think that's a very good idea. I mean any time that you can look at making government smaller, we think that's a very good idea. If we can make government more accessible, easily . . . easier accessible for the general public, we think that's a good idea also, Mr. Speaker.

I was a little concerned, though, when I heard the minister say that, I guess on one side which is good, that they didn't look like they would need any more staffing or budget to roll this all into one Act. The concerning part is . . . disconcerting part is may be they could use less staff. Perhaps is it a way of reducing — having a single-point access — rolling these three departments into one, or commissions into one. Is that a way may be an opportunity to may be make government a little smaller?

Mr. Speaker, I think if there is one thing that we realize over and over again over the past winter when we were holding different meetings around the province, is so many people said that it was difficult to know what you needed to do to — to whether it's to start a business, getting loans, that type of thing. And it seemed like there was at times just too much bureaucracy and this is may be an opportunity to try and loosen that up and lighten that up for people doing business in the province, Mr. Speaker.

The minister also talked about broad consultation, and that they've done a number of . . . a lot of consultation with interest groups around the province. And we would applaud him on that.

The only concern that we would have is we heard that very same statement from the Minister of Labour when she was talking about The Labour Standards Act that they brought in and the broad consultation they had. And then you talk to the very people that it's affecting, Sask Pork, and they said they were kept out of the loop. So when this government says broad consultation, we take that with a grain of salt, Mr. Speaker. And until we are able to do our own consultation and see whether the interested parties were actually spoken to and consulted with, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we would adjourn debate on this Bill.

Debate adjourned.

### **Bill No. 57 — The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2002**

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and also thank you to the members for allowing us to bring this in just a little bit out of the cycle here.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to rise today to move second reading of amendments to The Automobile Accident Insurance Act. The Automobile Accident Insurance Act is the universal vehicle insurance plan administered by SGI on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan.

Its primary purpose, Mr. Speaker, is to provide basic auto insurance coverage for all Saskatchewan drivers at very affordable rates. The Auto Fund operates the . . . on a, I should say, a break-even basis over time. It neither receives money from nor pays dividends to the General Revenue Fund. It's basically a trust fund for Saskatchewan motorists.

As such, it's vitally important that the Auto Fund respond to the needs of Saskatchewan people. SGI understands it has a responsibility to provide the programs and services Saskatchewan people demand. To do that, SGI needed to find out exactly what it is that people want.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, SGI, through a formal customer feedback campaign last year, directly asked its customers how SGI could serve them better. The results were clear. Customers told SGI they had the following specific areas of concern. Customers said: one, give good drivers discounts on their insurance premiums; secondly, improve no-fault insurance; and third, keep auto rates low.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments to the legislation I will outline today act on that customer feedback and will address each of the issues raised by SGI's customers.

Mr. Speaker, the first of the amendments I would like to outline today will allow SGI to respond to the number one desire of its customers — the introduction of discounts on vehicle insurance premiums. For a number of years, the motoring public in Saskatchewan has made it quite clear they'd like recognition for drivers who have kept our streets and roadways safe.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased The Automobile Accident Insurance Act will be amended to allow for the introduction of the Safe Driver Recognition program. Owners of personal use vehicles with private and farm class plates will be eligible for a

discount under the program. That accounts for about 72 per cent of the province's vehicle population.

Mr. Speaker, I would note that most Saskatchewan drivers . . . excuse me . . . are safe drivers. Under Safe Driver Recognition, two out of three Saskatchewan vehicle owners will receive a discount on their vehicle insurance. That's about 350,000 people in Saskatchewan.

The proposed amendment allows for the introduction of a safety rating scale. All Saskatchewan motorists will receive the safety rating on the scale, based on their driving record since 1995. Safe drivers with a positive rating will get a break on their vehicle insurance to a maximum of 7 per cent. SGI's records show that 55 per cent of eligible Saskatchewan vehicle owners will receive a discount on their plate insurance of 5 per cent or more.

Mr. Speaker, while auto insurance premiums are increasing across the country, we are pleased that not only are we putting \$60 million back into the pockets of Saskatchewan vehicle owners in the first 12 months of this program, we are also not increasing insurance premiums this year. That's a double savings for 350,000 Saskatchewan vehicle owners. Through this amendment, the government is responding to the number one issue of Saskatchewan motorists, that is, to reward and recognize safe driving.

But customers tell us it's just as important that bad drivers pay their fair share. New financial penalties will begin to be assessed once the program is in place. These new penalties will replace current drivers' licence surcharges. Certain incidents will cost drivers points on the safety rating scale, such as at-fault accidents, certain traffic violations, and traffic-related Criminal Code convictions like impaired driving. The more incidents a motorist has, the more demerit points will be assessed, resulting in higher financial penalties per incident.

As I stated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this system will ensure higher risk drivers pay their share, helping to offset costs of discounts for safe drivers. As well, the safety rating scale will make the rating and penalty system simpler to understand. Motorists will see for themselves how their driving habits affect their auto insurance costs.

Finally, I want to remind the House once again that we're implementing Safe Driver Recognition with no rate increase in 2002.

While drivers in other provinces are facing rising premiums, drivers in Saskatchewan are paying among the lowest vehicle insurance rates in Canada and this program will further lower rates for those with safe driving records.

Mr. Speaker, Safe Driver Recognition will help the Auto Fund continue to meet its goal of providing among the lowest vehicle insurance rates in Canada. SGI will also meet that goal by implementing the next proposed amendment dealing directly with improving auto injury insurance in this province.

SGI customers identified another main area of concern in the customer service feedback campaign, that is the desire to improve no-fault insurance. The following amendments respond

directly to this customer issue.

The personal injury protection plan, commonly known as no-fault insurance, was introduced in 1995. Mr. Speaker, no-fault insurance met its initial goals — it helped control rising injury claim costs, enhanced fairness, and improved injury benefits. However, no program is perfect.

Included in the 1995 legislation was a five-year independent review to assess the system and to provide recommendations on areas where changes to the program should be made.

Mr. Speaker, the independent review was conducted by the Personal Injury Protection Plan Review Committee. Following a thorough review of Saskatchewan's auto injury insurance program, the committee concluded that the basic principles, benefits, and administration of the program are sound and should be continued.

However the committee also conducted — or concluded, I should say — that improvements must be made, namely to provide improved benefits and service, and enhanced role for tort law. The government agrees that the program is sound but there is significant room for improvement.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments to The Automobile Accident Insurance Act details specific areas where no-fault insurance will be improved to ensure the program provides injury benefits that are more fair and equitable.

One of the most important proposed changes will provide additional benefits for people who were — who are, I should say — very seriously injured in auto crashes. It will increase medical and rehabilitation limits to \$5 million from the current level of \$573,000. This new benefit limit will also be retroactive to the program's start date. This means any person who has been seriously injured in a crash since January 1, 1995 will now have up to \$5 million in medical and rehabilitation benefits, Mr. Speaker.

In another effort to improve benefits to those seriously injured, the amount of benefits for those who sustain a catastrophic injury in an auto crash will increase. The maximum permanent impairment benefit will increase to \$175,000 from the current \$143,000.

It is proposed, Mr. Speaker, that changes also be made to income replacement. This benefit is provided to people who cannot work due to their injuries and pays up to 90 per cent of net income based on a maximum gross salary of \$58,000 per year. Overall the proposed changes in this area will provide more choices for calculating the benefit for injured people to ensure greater fairness.

Personal situations will be taken into account better providing for injured people who are caregivers, self employed, and farmers. For example, in the case of small-business owners and farmers, it is proposed that they be able to choose a substitute worker benefit that allows them to hire more workers or a specialized contractor during busier seasons. As well, Mr. Speaker, self-employed people who's business cannot continue because of their injury will be entitled to compensation for a limited time for fixed expenses that continue after their

accident.

Another proposed change will ensure those who suffer a catastrophic injury receive an income replacement benefit no less than industrial . . . no less than the industrial average wage. This is an increase over the current minimum benefit which is equivalent to the minimum wage.

I'd now like to turn to proposed changes to the death benefit provided to surviving spouses and dependent children. It is proposed, Mr. Speaker, that death benefits be calculated on income for the year prior to a person's death, providing for those who may have recently lost a job or were on leave at the time of the accident.

As well, Mr. Speaker, dependents of low-wage earners will be provided with a death benefit comparable to federal support guidelines for a minimum wage earner. As well, the definition of dependent will now include a disabled dependent over 21 years of age.

In the case of the death of a child, no payment is sufficient compensation for such a tragic loss, Mr. Speaker. However it is proposed that an increased death benefit be provided to the parents of a child under 21 who dies as a result of a motor vehicle accident. We understand that when a death occurs it is a difficult time for a family and proposed changes will take this into account by increasing the amount paid for funeral expenses and providing a benefit for vocational counselling for the surviving spouse and for grief counselling for the entire family, Mr. Speaker.

I'd now like to focus on a group of proposed changes that deal with a key issue, the right to sue. The introduction of the no-fault system in 1995 took away the right to sue except for limited tort action for economic loss. In return, it provided a high level . . . it provided, I should say, high-level benefits to all Saskatchewan motorists regardless of whether they were at fault for the accident.

(12:00)

Mr. Speaker, the following group of key amendments deals with the issue of law suits and proposes an expanded right to sue, including for pain and suffering in certain circumstances.

The first proposed change relates to impaired drivers. It will give an injured person the right to sue an at-fault and convicted impaired driver for pain and suffering. The impaired driver will continue to be denied a permanent impairment benefit. If it is their second offence in five years, they will also be denied an income replacement benefit.

A similar amendment is proposed regarding intentional acts. An injured person will now have the right to sue for pain and suffering in cases where the driver is convicted of using their vehicle to deliberately harm the injured person. An injured driver who is convicted of using their vehicle to intentionally cause injury to another will be denied both income replacement and permanent impairment benefits.

The final proposed change regarding the expanded right to sue will allow an injured person to sue for all losses including for

pain and suffering against certain institutional third parties whose negligence contributes to a crash. Third parties that will be liable under this proposed new legislation include vehicle manufacturers, repairers and suppliers of parts, and licensed drinking establishments.

Mr. Speaker, changes are also proposed to the appeal system to make it more effective and customer friendly. Currently an injured person can dispute any decision made by SGI by requesting an internal review. If they are not satisfied they can then proceed to optional mediation or to the Court of Queen's Bench.

SGI and Saskatchewan Justice are working on the develop . . . on developing a new appeal system where the injured person will retain the right of access to the Court of Queen's Bench or alternatively, to an independent appeal tribunal which will report to a different minister of the Crown. SGI is working towards helping the new appeal system . . . I should say SGI is working towards having the new appeal system in place by the start of 2003.

Mr. Speaker, implementing the proposed amendments will ensure that no-fault insurance continues to meet its goals — that is, to provide among the best injury benefits in Canada at very affordable rates for Saskatchewan residents. But more importantly, no-fault insurance will better meet the needs of those who are injured in auto crashes.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we take action to improve no-fault insurance. Equally it is important that we recognize that some people want a very different type of injury insurance. During the customer feedback campaign, some people clearly indicated they want the ability to sue an at-fault driver for pain and suffering when they are injured in an automobile accident.

Mr. Speaker, this government is listening to Saskatchewan residents and it is responding by making changes so that its programs and policies better meet their needs. To that end, I am pleased to put forward a further amendment to The Automobile Accident Insurance Act that will allow all Saskatchewan residents to choose the auto injury insurance product that best meets their individual needs. No-fault insurance will be complemented by a new tort based product modelled on the premier option.

Mr. Speaker, the Coalition Against No-fault Insurance put the premier option before members of this House as the auto injury insurance plan they felt would best serve Saskatchewan residents. As the premier option recommends, the new auto injury insurance product will reintroduce the right to sue an at-fault party for pain and suffering. It will introduce that right and keep insurance premiums for the product affordable by offering a lower level of defined benefits than are available under no-fault insurance and by having a deductible for pain and suffering awards.

Defined benefits are those benefits that an injured person has access to regardless of who is at fault for the accident. Defined benefits under the tort based product will include a provision for lost wages up to \$300 per week. They will also include provisions for homemakers as well as a benefit for those not employed if they are confined by their injuries. Those who

choose this product will also have access up to \$20,000 to cover medical and rehabilitation costs. If the person suffers catastrophic injuries, that maximum increases, Mr. Speaker, to \$150,000.

The tort product also includes death benefits similar to those provided by no-fault insurance. It is proposed that spouses be eligible for a minimum \$45,000 in death benefits.

It is complemented by a death benefit for dependent children equal to 5 per cent of the deceased's weekly income for each child.

The tort product also provides a benefit for those who suffer permanent injuries as a result of an accident to a maximum of \$10,000. If an individual suffers catastrophic injuries, the maximum permanent impairment benefit payable increases to \$130,000.

Mr. Speaker, it is proposed that the defined benefits within this product be indexed to the cost of living so they will rise with any rise in the cost of living. Let me emphasize at this point, Mr. Speaker, that the benefits that I have just outlined are the benefits that any person with tort coverage would have access to should they be injured in an auto accident.

In addition, where there is an at-fault party, an injured person would be able to sue. They would be able to sue for economic losses, that is any actual losses the injured person incurred as a result of the collision above the defined benefits that I have just outlined.

They would also be able to sue for pain and suffering. As the premier option recommends, awards for pain and suffering would be less a \$5,000 deductible.

This new product, Mr. Speaker, will be available to every Saskatchewan resident. And the process to choose it . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Why is the member from Watrous on her feet?

**Ms. Harpauer:** — With leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to introduce to you and to the rest of the Assembly a school group in the east gallery.

There is 21 grade 4 and 5 students from Watson, and they're accompanied today with their teacher, Chris Hancock. And I don't have all the names of the parents, but I see a number of parents in the gallery.

So it pleases me to welcome them to the Assembly and I would like all the members to join with me.

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

#### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 57 — The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2002 (continued)

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — To the member from Watrous, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the break.

All Saskatchewan residents over 18, Mr. Speaker, will be able to elect this new coverage by going to any SGI motor licensing issuing office or they can make the election by mail. Parents will also be able to make this election for their children.

Mr. Speaker, SGI does not want anyone to be without insurance as a result of the introduction of choice. By having all Saskatchewan residents maintain their no-fault coverage until they decide to make a change to tort, it ensures that they will always have injury insurance coverage.

I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to introduce this proposed product as it gives Saskatchewan residents the ability to compare two quality auto injury compensation plans and to choose, Mr. Speaker, which one best meets their individual needs and the needs of their family.

This government has chosen to take a new approach, a made in Saskatchewan approach, namely allowing a choice between two different types of insurance products. But I remind members, both are quality insurance products. It is, we believe, the best way to meet the needs of residents who want two very different types and kinds of protection.

Further, at introduction, premium for the tort product will be identical to that for the no-fault insurance product.

Mr. Speaker, clearly the proposed amendments to The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act that I've outlined here today directly respond to the needs and desires of Saskatchewan people. We are listening to what they have to say, and we are responding through this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of amendments to The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure for me to speak on No. 57, a Bill to amend The Automobile Accident Insurance Act. It's a very lengthy Bill with many, many amendments as the minister has outlined in his very lengthy speech just now.

And there's a number of questions that come up, but I'd like to agree with the government and they have done a survey of customers. And it's very important that they got feedback from the customers of SGI to get the proper information and because this . . . ever since no-fault was introduced in 1995, it was very controversial at the time, there was many people had a lot of problems with no-fault and they continue to have problems with no-fault. And so it's very important that when the amendments are passed that the government does get it right and make the proper changes to this Bill that satisfies the many, many concerns that the customers and the people of Saskatchewan has

with the no-fault.

The minister outlined a number of areas talking about discount of vehicle premiums, safety driver recognition programs, and areas like that. And I think it's very important that we recognize and reduce the premiums of people that have a very safe driving record. And they go the extra step to have an excellent safety record. Most people are very concerned about that but things do happen where individuals have accidents that are outside their control.

Also the minister spoke of the safety rating scale, and I believe the minister mentioned a maximum of 7 per cent discount based on the scale.

It is encouraging that the minister's announced there's no premium increases this year because there's a number of areas in other parts of government that is increasing, and this is a direct cost to individuals' lifestyle and the cost of living, and also the cost of doing business in the province — is the cost of licensing vehicles and insurance.

The minister spoke in length about streamlining SGI no-fault, and it's going to be very interesting to see all the particular items that are going to be put in place, hopefully, to streamline SGI because there's a number of concerns that citizens have concerning the operations of SGI. And one has to always keep in mind the value for money that the customer is getting; and then the people of Saskatchewan are the customers of SGI and the customer — the saying goes — is always right. So it's very important that the customer is getting proper value for their money.

And then the minister also spoke of having an option of the tort based law versus the no-fault, and there's a number of questions arise out of that. The minister is going to have to, to outline how other people in accidents . . . As an example, people that are passengers in a vehicle, if one vehicle is under no-fault, another one is under tort, how does that relate to the passengers in either vehicles as far as claiming disabilities income or claiming insurance as far as injuries are related? And so, you know, also other areas of concern — pedestrians who are just walking and if they're struck by a vehicle, how the two systems relate to those individuals as well.

There's one point that the minister pointed out is concerning deliberate injuries. And I know a case that I . . . we've probably all heard of the cases in the news where an individual actually ran into another individual, pinning them between two vehicles, breaking, I believe, breaking the individual's legs. And under no-fault — that's the system that we had at the time . . . and how unfair it was that this individual did a deliberate criminal act. But as far as insurance was concerned, it was considered no-fault and the individual didn't even have the right to sue, even though the individual was charged and, I believe, convicted of this terrible, terrible crime.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I had mentioned, this is a very lengthy Bill and our critic for SGI, the member from Swift Current, will thoroughly analyze this Bill, will consult with the stakeholders of the province concerning this Bill, and we will definitely have many, many more questions in the future days about this Bill.

And I'd like to now move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

(12:15)

**Bill No. 60 — The Saskatchewan Financial Services  
Commission Consequential Amendment Act, 2002/Loi de  
2002 apportant des modifications corrélatives à la loi  
intitulée The Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission  
Act**

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission Consequential Amendment Act, 2002.

Mr. Speaker, I just earlier today introduced The Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission Act, an Act that creates the Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission. The Act itself — that's probably the reason it has that name, Mr. Speaker — the Act itself contains most of the consequential amendments.

However, amendments are also required to a bilingual Act, The Co-operatives Act of 1996. This Bill makes the necessary amendments to that Act.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of The Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission Consequential Amendment Act, 2002.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to reply concerning Bill No. 60, Sask financial services. It appears that it's very similar to Bill 59, Sask financial services, and it deals with co-ops. And so again, we would . . . we will discuss this matter with the stakeholders and have many questions in the future days.

So at this time I would like to move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 63 — The Members' Conflict of Interest  
Amendment Act, 2002 (No. 2)**

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Members' Conflict of Interest Amendment Act, 2002. Mr. Speaker, the members of this Assembly will be aware that in 1993 this Assembly unanimously passed legislation that introduced, for the first time in Saskatchewan, a comprehensive regime whereby the members of the Legislative Assembly could govern their own conduct in a transparent and demonstrably fair manner.

The Members' Conflict of Interest Act sought to establish a balance between the responsibilities of a member to this Assembly with those other responsibilities that they may have in their private life. That Act introduced an independent Conflict of Interest Commissioner to assist members in the preparation of their public disclosure statements and to provide advice as to what their responsibilities were under the Act.

The Act also set out certain prohibited activities that existing members — and in some cases, former cabinet ministers —

could not pursue. While this legislation has been a significant success in terms of increasing transparency, it has recently become clear that changes are required to the Act to close certain gaps which have been identified, most notably in a recent report by the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

So, Mr. Speaker, this Bill provides for extending the existing general six-month limitation period for the offence provision to two years from the day of the expiry of the contract or benefit in question.

It expands the scope of the cooling-off provisions to provide that former cabinet ministers are prohibited from lobbying government on their own behalf or on behalf of any other person during the 12-month cooling-off period.

It also implements a restriction for a former member of cabinet from becoming an associate with any person that has received a contract or benefit from the government.

It also expands the scope of inquiry of the commissioner to mandate the commissioner to include comment on the conduct of any former member or any current or former public servant or Crown corporation employee.

The Bill also provides an ability for a former member of cabinet to apply to the commissioner for an exemption from the 12-month prohibition of post-cabinet conduct. It provides the ability for the commissioner to grant an exemption where the commissioner is satisfied it is not contrary to the public interests to do so, with subsequent full disclosure of such exemption to this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, it's the solemn responsibility of the members of this Assembly to govern themselves in a manner which enhances the confidence of the public. In so doing, a balance must be struck to ensure that those who enter public life are not unduly hindered in returning to private life. The central policy theme of this legislation is to ensure that any potential conflicts of interest are declared and, equally importantly, disclosed to the public so they may face scrutiny under the light of day.

It is for this reason, Mr. Speaker, we've introduced an ability for a former cabinet minister to seek an exemption from the Conflict of Interest Commission. This initiative, which has been in place in Alberta for some years, provides for some additional subtlety whereby circumstances that were not foreseen by a blanket prohibition can be addressed on a case by case basis by the commissioner where appropriate.

This is entirely consistent . . . (inaudible) . . . government contract provisions, for sitting members are currently dealt with under the Act, and it is consistent with the commitment to transparency and disclosure which I previously noted.

Mr. Speaker, there are also amendments in this Bill that will provide an ability for the Speaker to file reports under the Act while this Assembly is not in session, and for transmission of a report of the commissioner to the Speaker where the commissioner has commenced an inquiry at his or her own initiative.

Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to ensuring that

public confidence in its elected members be promoted in every reasonable manner. These amendments are consistent with steps taken in other jurisdictions and will keep Saskatchewan's legislation in the forefront of Canada's conflict of interest legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Members' Conflict of Interest Act.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure for me to speak on Bill 63, An Act to amend The Members' Conflict of Interest Act.

The minister raised a number of questions. Now as a member elected in 1999, I have filled out three of these conflict of interest forms. And it became very apparent that each year that I did it, it was fairly lengthy and took considerable time to do. And I know that a number of members have said it was a tendency just to write on the form, same as last year because nothing had really changed. And the Conflict of Interest Commissioner always pointed out that we needed to fill the form out completely and which we always did.

But it would be a great benefit to have a short form and just include the areas that need to be changed on the short form and be added to the total form that we have filled out in previous years. So I hope that is what the government intends with this change of the form.

Another area that was pointed out — I don't believe the minister has considered this as amendments — but the deadline to have the form filled out has always been, for some time, March 31, and all of us also have to have our taxes done. And it seems that it would be of a great deal of benefit to members to have an extended . . . or change the deadline to fill the conflict form out to take into effect our tax position and for the past year and so it coincides with Revenue Canada and declaring our income and expenses as we do every year. And so that's one area where I would like the government to reconsider and changing the deadline date for filling out the form so that it makes it a little easier for the members to do that when they do their income tax.

Now the other area which is very important, as we know, is the conflict areas where former members and former cabinet members having the opportunity to do business with the government that they used to be in. And as we know, in the case of Mr. Upshall, it became a very serious matter where the rules and the laws of the time were skirted and circumvented to . . . while technically within the rules, but at the end of the day we realized that they were not properly upheld. And the perception, well, and the reality of that individual's case, was that he did circumvent the rules but no action could be taken against the individual because of the . . . not being reported within six months.

So I think it's of great interest to the public and to members on both sides of the House that these changes be clarified and strengthened so that it's very clear what the rules are and what can and cannot be done. Because it is true there's a balancing act that we must take here because members are not . . . do go . . . come from the business world and enter politics, then leave politics and go back into the business world.

And so there should be certainly an opportunity for members to be able to contract and work at government jobs, or do contracts for a government. But it must be very clear for the public that there is no conflict taking place.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we will consult with the stakeholders and discuss this Bill in greater depth. But I would like to move to adjourn debate at this time.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 69 — The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Amendment Act, 2002**

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to move second reading of a Bill to amend The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Act and to make an amendment to The Architects Act, 1996.

In today's economy architects as well as applied science technologists and technicians play an integral part in shaping the landscape of our society. The work of architects and of applied science technologists and technicians, though unique, does at times require a co-operative approach.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill before the Assembly today acknowledges the exclusive scope of practice granted to architects while at the same time recognizing that members of the Saskatchewan applied science technologists and technicians work in areas related to architects.

The Bill is important to protect the public interest by providing scope of practice protection to Saskatchewan architects, as well as title protection to applied science technologists and technicians. Mr. Speaker, all affected groups are satisfied that these new provisions will ensure that each of them can continue to practice their professions in the best interests of the public.

As such I am pleased to move second reading of an Act to amend The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Act and to make an amendment to The Architects Act. Thank you very much.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we're dealing with pieces of legislation that deal with particular trades and professions, it's very important, Mr. Speaker, that all those who are in that field or in associated fields, Mr. Speaker, be aware of what changes are taking place and what impact those changes are going to have not just on the particular people mentioned in the Bill, Mr. Speaker, but also on all those that are in somewhat the same field that can be affected.

You know, you look at various pieces of legislation that come down dealing with the professional bodies such as, as an example, chartered accountants, Mr. Speaker, because you have various groups of accountants that belong to different organizations.

And the same in dealing with this Bill dealing with applied science technologists and technicians. You know, you have various groups, Mr. Speaker, that are associated in these fields

that you need professional regulation, professional bodies to regulate those trades, what their rights and duties are, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the proper accreditations take place.

But there's also those in other fields that have . . . that are affected by those changes, Mr. Speaker. And they need to know just how that is going to affect them and their field. On this particular one it deals with how this Bill deals with people who may hold themselves out to be architects.

So, Mr. Speaker, it affects the technicians, it also affects architects, and both groups need to be comfortable that the changes being put forward here will not adversely affect them in the proper performances of their duty, Mr. Speaker. And those are very important items.

We all know how important these people are to society in maintaining the functions that they deal with, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, so that we can have a chance to learn whether or not all of the groups, as the minister has stated, are in agreement, we need an opportunity to contact those groups or vice versa, to have those groups contact us to make sure that they are comfortable with these changes.

And while it doesn't seem that the changes are all that great, Mr. Speaker, sometimes a small change in wording can have a very significant impact on how an Act is applied . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the deputy minister . . . the Deputy Premier says that they are very comfortable. Well we have to wait to see, Mr. Speaker, whether or not that is the case.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate at this time.

Debate adjourned.

(12:30)

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**SECOND READINGS**

**Bill No. 44**

The Assembly assumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Serby that **Bill No. 44 — The Animal Products Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've had a little bit of time on this side of the House to take a look at Bill No. 44, and read through the comments that the minister had when he first introduced the Bill.

And he told us that it updates the process for the appointment of inspectors to reflect the current needs for enforcement of the Act and its regulations. And the minister also explained how it puts in place an arbitration process for settling disputes between the custom feeders and animal owners.

Basically, if I'm understanding it correctly, it gives the minister the power to appoint inspectors instead of having to go through the Public Service Commission or the cabinet, which would give him more freedom to appoint people not employed by the



government, as inspectors, in emergency circumstances such as the control of animals to prevent disease.

And I could see where this would probably be quite beneficial for the province, Mr. Speaker. It would give some flexibility to the minister in the case of an emergency. We are hearing more and more of different diseases that are becoming concerns, so it would give the minister some flexibility to react quickly in the case that there was an outbreak in our province.

And we also know that consumers are demanding far more health and safety regulations and precautions to be taken in the food industry. So we, in the province, have to be quite aware of that and take the steps necessary to meet the needs of the consumers so that we're quite competitive in the marketplace.

The Bill also further . . . there is further changes to the Bill that the minister had told us about, but just to stay on track with the food safety end, there are a few questions that I would like to ask the minister which can be done in Committee of the Whole. They're regarding the details of the inspection portion of the legislation and how it can affect the people of Saskatchewan, both the producers and the consumers. Although it appears to be something that would be quite beneficial there are a couple of questions that I wouldn't mind asking, but that can be done in Committee.

And the other change that the minister had mentioned was that under the current legislation, custom feeders have a lien on animals in the case of unpaid charges. And he said that there is nothing in place to settle disputes over these charges, so that this will address that issue, Mr. Speaker. It puts in place an arbitrations process and a mechanism for distribution of monies raised for sale of disputed animals.

So the minister told us that it was representatives from both the producers and the livestock dealer organizations who asked for these changes to be made and I believe that to be true.

And hopefully the arbitration process that he's proposing in this Bill will indeed prove to be useful in assisting the conflicting parties in being able to settle the disputes in a more . . . or a less costly manner, rather, and in a far more fair and easy manner.

So without saying too much more on the Bill, Mr. Speaker, a lot of the questions that I have can be addressed in Committee of the Whole. So with that, I will pass the Bill on to committee.

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

### Bill No. 50

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Serby that **Bill No. 50 — The Department of Agriculture and Food Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to get up and speak to this Bill again. This is another Bill that I don't feel that there would be a lot of difficulty with. It puts in place the mechanism for winding down the Agri-Food Equity Fund. And that was in a fund that was established in 1994 to

promote value-added ag industry in Saskatchewan.

And it's a fund that I think has been, you know, the government has trumpeted this fund as a grand success and driver of economic development in Saskatchewan. And I believe there are a number of very positive and good projects that have accessed this fund. So the questions, which again can be asked in the Committee of the Whole, is why is the government choosing at this point in time to shut it down?

And in his speech, the minister told us the assets of the equity fund would be transferred to the Ag Credit Corporation. But my understanding is that that is also another fund that is in the process of being wound down. So in the future he suggested that he will partner with more firms through CIC (Crown Investments Corporation) for value-added initiatives.

And I guess that's where the concern comes in, Mr. Speaker, is we're seeing more authority being shifted to CIC to get directly involved in the economy, so we have a number of questions. The equity fund from my . . . the Agri-Food Equity Fund that was in place, from my understanding, did not take equity positions as much as CIC tends to want to. So that's a concern that we wish to question the minister on when we have an opportunity.

And we do recognize on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, that the province needs greater access to venture capital. And we have not seen a lot of initiative on this government to make movements towards the province and the industries in the province being able to attract venture capital into our province from outside sources, which is why we end up with a problem only too often where developers are turning to government for financial needs and help, instead of being able to find it. And there's a number of reasons for that, Mr. Speaker, and we've spoken to it a number of times in this House, how it is difficult to attract capital dollars to our province for our different ag industries.

The case of what's presently happening in the ethanol industry where CIC is taking an equity position in the ethanol industry is a prime example of why we have some concerns with the Agri-Food Equity Fund being put under the jurisdiction and governance of CIC, and why we think if it's not handled very carefully, that it will be yet another . . . seen as another deterrent to attracting investment dollars to our province.

It seems that whether it's in agriculture or in anything else, that the NDP's economic strategy has been a disaster in this province and it's not creating jobs, although they do have — for the first time in a number of months — a positive job creation record and we've heard a lot about that today. So congratulations on finally doing well for one month . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, if only they could continue that it would be good news for the province.

By our GDP (gross domestic product) numbers, we haven't really expanded our economy and we're still looking at people that are continuing to leave, so we're a little concerned about how CIC plays in the investment sector.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm also going to move this Bill to Committee of the Whole as we have a number of questions that

I wish to ask the minister at that time.

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

### Bill No. 51

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Serby that **Bill No. 51 — The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 2002 (No. 2)** be now read a second time.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Bill is a follow-up of a previous Bill that has already been introduced and spoken to and passed through the House, so a lot of the research that we had done on the first Bill also covered areas that are in the second Bill.

And we believe this Bill is a very positive move towards what we need to be looking at in this province. We realize that the minister has consulted with a number of groups on this Bill, and I've talked to members of those groups and some of the people that were directly involved in the drafting of this Bill and the requests that are in it.

What the Bill does, to my understanding, is allow the corporation operating feedlots to become members in the producer co-op associated with feedlots. And this would allow the feedlots access to new sources of financing, and I know that that's what cattle feeders in the industry are asking for, Mr. Speaker.

It'll give them the same loan guarantee programs that they, you know, are not currently eligible for under the feedlot structure. So it's very important to help the cattle industry to access financing, and I believe it's a very good move on the part of the government to allow this.

It's an industry, that I've said a number of times on this side of the House, that we need to look at how to help expand in the province — although I can't help but say I've also mentioned that we're going to go backwards here a little bit, because we're refusing to address the issues of the drought and the water and feed shortage.

So although we may do small steps to help the industry grow, there's a huge step that's causing . . . or a huge blockade that's causing problems for its growth that need to be addressed as well.

So having said that, I'm also going to pass this Bill into Committee of the Whole. There is a couple of questions that I would like to ask at that time, but I think this is an important Bill and will be helpful to the cattle feeders of the province.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, I move this House do now adjourn.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I would like to take a moment to thank the members for their diligent attention to the work in

this Assembly and wish all members and their staff a well-deserved weekend. This House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:43.