



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

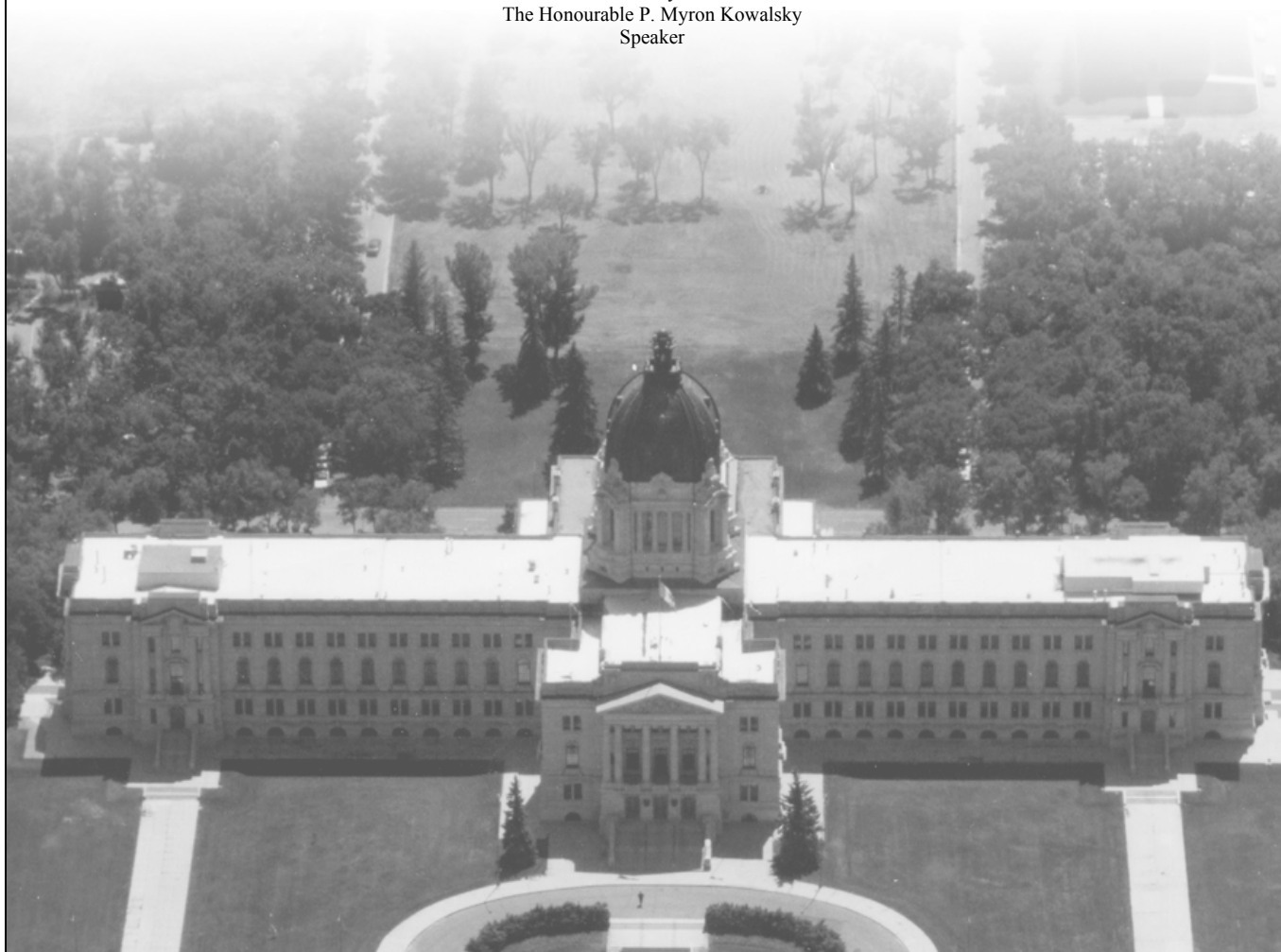
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky
Premier — Hon. Lorne Calvert
Leader of the Opposition — Brad Wall

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Addley, Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Bakken Lackey, Brenda	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
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Calvert, Hon. Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
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Cline, Hon. Eric	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
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Dearborn, Jason	SP	Kindersley
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Gantefoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, Glenn	NDP	Moose Jaw North
Hamilton, Doreen	NDP	Regina Wascana Plains
Harpauer, Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Ben	SP	Martensville
Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Higgins, Hon. Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kerpan, Allan	SP	Carrot River Valley
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Kowalsky, Hon. P. Myron	NDP	Prince Albert Carlton
Krawetz, Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lautermilch, Eldon	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Ted	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Morgan, Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, Hon. John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Prebble, Hon. Peter	NDP	Saskatoon Greystone
Quennell, Hon. Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Serby, Hon. Clay	NDP	Yorkton
Sonntag, Hon. Maynard	NDP	Meadow Lake
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Hon. Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Thomson, Hon. Andrew	NDP	Regina South
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wakefield, Milton	SP	Lloydminster
Wall, Brad	SP	Swift Current
Wartman, Hon. Mark	NDP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the people who use Highway 32 really would appreciate something being done to their highway. The prayer of this petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 32 in order to address safety and economic concerns.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these two pages of petitions are signed by constituents from the community of Lancer. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of residents of this province who are concerned about the scourge of crystal meth. The prayer of their petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to implement a strategy that will deal with crystal methamphetamine education, prevention, enforcement, and treatment.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today that I rise proudly on behalf of are from the communities of Wadena and Quill Lake. I so present.

I'll also lay on the Table petitions with respect to group home spaces in Swift Current.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I again rise today on behalf of people who are concerned about crystal methamphetamine and the effect it has on their families.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to take the necessary actions to implement a strategy that will deal with crystal methamphetamine education, prevention, enforcement, and treatment.

The people that have signed this petition are all from Wadena.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I stand to present a petition on behalf of producers who are very concerned about the increasing crop insurance premiums and the reduction in their coverage. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all necessary actions to reverse the increases in crop insurance premiums and the reduction in coverage.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by residents of Radville, Gladmar, and Bengough. I so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Ms. Bakken Lackey: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Saskatchewan who are very concerned about the spread of crystal meth. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement a strategy that will deal with crystal methamphetamine education, prevention, enforcement, and treatment.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Colgate, Minton, Radville, and Weyburn. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens that want to improve SaskTel cellular service in rural Saskatchewan.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all the necessary actions to install the technical equipment necessary to ensure that all rural areas of Saskatchewan are protected by reliable cellular phone coverage.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by good citizens from Jansen, Guernsey, and Lanigan. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present another petition to revisit the effects of the TransGas Asquith natural gas storage project. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately address the concerns of all individuals affected by this project, pay 100 per cent of the costs involved to rectify disruptions to water supplies, produce an environment assessment study encompassing a larger area outside the scope of the project, disclose the project's long-term effects on these areas, and consider alternative sources of water for the project.

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

Signed by the good citizens of Grandora and Asquith. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14 are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional papers nos. 76, 107, 639, 715, 716, and 720.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — I give notice I shall on day no. 100 move the first reading of the Bill No. 207, An Act providing for the Protection and Assessment of Children who are Abusing Drugs.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 103 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskWater: what was the cost of settlement between SaskWater and IPSCO relating to work done in the early '90s, what were the legal fees incurred by SaskWater for each year of the litigation, and what legal firms were hired by SaskWater?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, it's my pleasure today to welcome to this Legislative Assembly an independent officer of the legislature. He is a familiar face, Mr. Gerald Gerrand, who is our Conflict of Interest Commissioner. He has interviewed each and every MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and has reported publicly on this, assuring the public that all members are adhering to the conflict of interest guidelines. And I would like members to welcome him, and with him today in accompaniment is Mrs. Ella Gerrand. Welcome to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice, the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — It is my pleasure as well to introduce

through you, Mr. Speaker, to all members of this Assembly, Mr. Gerald Gerrand, Q.C. [Queen's Counsel] and his wife, Ella, seated in your gallery. As all members will know, Mr. Gerrand has served this Assembly as Conflict of Interest Commissioner for the past five years and today will be reappointed to serve an additional term.

Mr. Gerrand graduated from the College of Law at the University of Saskatchewan in 1954 and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1970. Throughout his career, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gerrand has practised law with great distinction in this province and has served the people of Saskatchewan well. As Conflict of Interest Commissioner he plays a valuable role in ensuring to the public that the business of the legislature is conducted in a scrupulously honest manner. I know that all members rely on him.

Mr. Speaker, I know all members will join in welcoming Mr. Gerrand and his wife, Ella.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the opposition critic for Justice, the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the members opposite in welcoming Mr. Gerrand to the legislature today. Mr. Gerrand has done, I think, yeoman service in the past dealing with all the variety of MLAs and the situations that have arisen.

I first came to know Mr. Gerrand, I had briefly his granddaughter, Alison, in my employ as a summer student who looked after my trust account, and I'm hoping that the two of them don't get together and compare notes too vigorously.

Mr. Speaker, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner has a very difficult task to perform. It preserves not just the appearance of propriety on the part of all members but there's the actual underneath work that's done to verify and analyze and question things that are there. And this particular Conflict of Interest Commissioner I think has done an admirable job in striking a balance between not being overly invasive or intrusive but yet examining things to the point where adequate and appropriate disclosure is made.

I would like to thank him for his past service, and I know he's had some difficulty with some of the MLAs in getting them to file on time and to make their appointments. And I think there was a reference by the member from Melfort who said that he was one of the last — referring to himself — one of the last old dogs still sleeping under the porch because he hadn't gone yet. So I would like to urge all of the old dogs that are sleeping under the porch to get out and go and visit Mr. Gerrand and fulfill their duties as MLAs. And I thank him for his work.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon in your gallery is a group of 24 public servants

that are spending the day at the legislature. They come from a variety of departments within the public service. So I would like to welcome employees from Agriculture and Food, Community Resources and Employment, Environment, Finance, Health, Highways and Transportation, and the Public Service Commission to the Legislative Assembly.

I know that myself and the member from Melfort will be meeting with this group of public servants immediately after question period, and I hope that they do enjoy question period this afternoon.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming the group of public servants here this afternoon. The minister mentioned all the departments that they represent. I look forward to meeting with you later on this afternoon and being put through a question period of a different sort. And in the meantime I hope you enjoy question period in this Assembly. And welcome to your legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure, indeed honour, today to introduce to you yet again a friend of mine and a friend of working people throughout Saskatchewan — indeed, I'd venture a friend of all of Saskatchewan — Mr. Gunnar Passmore, seated in the west gallery.

Gunnar is a representative with the sheet metal workers union, and in all of my dealings with Gunnar over a fair number of years now, Gunnar, I've found him to be very diligent, hard-working, and always represented the workers that pay his salary. And he's represented them very well. So please join me in welcoming my friend, Gunnar Passmore.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cumberland.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to introduce to the House a friend from Wollaston Lake — it's a long ways from here — sitting in the west gallery. His name is Ed Benoanie and Ed is a dog musher. I think he's a jack of all trades. He does everything in the community. He's been a chief, economic development worker, but his first priority is always for the community of Wollaston and the people there.

So Ed has travelled a long way to be with us today, and I think it's one of the first times he's going to be listening in the House. So on behalf of myself and everybody, I would like to urge everybody to welcome him here to the House. And it's nice to see you here.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina South.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to the Assembly today two officials who of course are well known to this Assembly. Seated in your gallery is Glenda Cooney, who's the deputy children's advocate and is currently the acting children's advocate for the province, and accompanying her is Sharon Chapman, who's the director of communications for the office. They're here today to further support the work that they have tirelessly undertaken in the past few years to protect the rights of children from physical abuse and otherwise. And I'm sure they'll be pleased by the activity in the House later this day. So I would ask all members to join me in welcoming them here.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

Saskatoon Contacts Win TELUS Cup

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on Sunday afternoon I, along with a couple of young hockey players in my household, had the great pleasure of watching the Saskatoon Contact win the TELUS Cup midget AAA hockey tournament in Gatineau, Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, the TELUS Cup is a symbol of national midget AAA hockey supremacy. This is the first national championship in the Contacts' 28-year history and they won it in fine style, going undefeated throughout the entire tournament.

The Contact defeated the host team, the Gatineau, Quebec Intrepide, 4-1 in the final game. Nick Kalmicki had a goal and two assists and was named the game's most valuable player. Matstar Lacoursiere from North Battleford scored a short-handed goal and David Richard and Russell Goodman got one goal each. Contact goalie Travis Yonkman made 22 saves.

Mr. Speaker, Contact players were also well represented at the tournament awards banquet. David Richard was named the tournament's most valuable player. Kyle Bortis was the tournament's top scorer and top forward. Eric Gryba was named the best defenceman.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, the TELUS Cup will be coming home to Saskatoon, but I think it's worth noting that almost half the players are from the smaller centres around the province. I ask all members to join me in congratulating the players and coaches of Saskatoon Contact, and everyone involved in the Contact organization. I particularly want to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of coach Jim McIntyre, who has been a coach of the Contact for all but three years of their history. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Saskatchewan Children's Health Foundation

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure Saturday evening of joining 600 Saskatchewan residents, including the hon. members from Batoche, Carrot River Valley, and Saskatoon Southeast at the 13th annual Children's Health Foundation Celebrity Dinner in Saskatoon. Other community leaders in attendance included the Leader of the Liberal Party, several city councillors, members of parliament, and members of the Saskatoon business community.

The Children's Health Foundation of Saskatchewan was founded on the belief that children in the province deserve the best possible health care. The Children's Health Foundation of Saskatchewan is committed to optimizing the safety, health, and welfare of our children by supporting programs in areas of pediatric patient care and research. Their goal is to see a children's hospital designation within an existing hospital in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I love this province and I am proud of it in many ways. One fact however I'm not proud of is that Saskatchewan is the only province in Canada, besides PEI [Prince Edward Island], that doesn't have a children's hospital. Dr. Bill Bingham, the head of pediatrics at Royal University Hospital, said it best Saturday night, and I quote: "The only thing stopping Saskatchewan from having a children's hospital is politics."

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you and all members of our Assembly that our job as MLAs will not be complete until we do see a children's hospital built in the province. Congratulations to executive director, Brynn Boback-Lane and her entire Children's Health Foundation team. You are providing hope for every child and family in our province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association Banquet and Awards

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association recently held their banquet and awards night in Saskatoon. I'm told it was a wonderful event, Mr. Speaker, with about 130 people in attendance representing 50 regional parks. The Minister of the Environment was also on hand to offer congratulations to the various award winners.

The evening was a celebration of the vital role our regional park system plays in the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities here in the province, and in particular, Mr. Speaker, to acknowledge the outstanding work of the citizens and volunteers involved in our regional parks.

The recipients of the volunteer awards were Lee Pollon of Whitesand Regional Park, Bob Stringer of Lac Pelletier Regional Park, and Lee Chamberlain of Sturgeon Lake

provincial park.

The Park of the Year award went to Outlook and District Regional Park, and Sturgeon Lake won the Park on the Move award.

I also want to take this opportunity to applaud the hard work of John Froese and the directors of the Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association as well as executive director Darlene Friesen and all the staff of the SRPA [Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association].

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the award recipients and in recognizing the SRPA for all their wonderful work in providing recreational opportunities for people all across our province. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kindersley.

Saskatchewan Centenarian Appolonia Jansen

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to applaud the achievements of Mrs. Appolonia, or Loni, Jansen, one of our centenarians in the Kindersley constituency.

Mrs. Jansen was born in Morgan, Minnesota on February 4, 1904. There were seven children in the family, with Loni being the oldest and only surviving member.

Her family moved to Saskatchewan in 1905. She married John Jansen and farmed in the St. John area, which is 20 miles west of Unity. Together Loni and John had 14 children, seven boys and seven girls with a set of twins in the middle, which was a great surprise to Loni.

Loni had only completed the fourth grade in school but was very wise to the ways of the world. She was a devout Christian, giving in every way. She feels blessed and grateful for family, friends, and her caregivers.

Loni is still a great communicator and loves to pull a prank once in a while. Her daughter said she used to play pranks on her teenagers such as putting a string in front of the veranda with a bell attached, so she would know when they came home from a date.

Loni has 52 grandchildren, 60-plus great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild. Loni presently lives at St. Joseph's Health Centre in Macklin, Saskatchewan and is enjoying good health.

And I presented Loni with her 100-year medal and centennial plaque on March 5 with family, friends, coffee, and cake. And for a lady over 100 years old, she was very, very quick.

I'd ask all members of the legislature to please join me in congratulating Loni in her 100 years in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for

Saskatchewan Rivers.

Batoche Theatre Company Presents *Ernestine's LaValise*

Mr. Borgerson: — Mr. Speaker, this past weekend the Batoche Theatre Company completed the tour of its latest production, *Ernestine's LaValise*, with performances at E.D. Feehan and at the Awasis conference in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, in the play an elderly woman, Ernestine, arrives at a centennial awards ceremony honouring First Nations and Métis women. A member of the provincial government begins the ceremony, begins the play, and Ernestine finds that she herself is going to be honoured.

But when Ernestine takes the stage, she takes over the stage and begins to tell the story of her life, her family, and her people beginning in 1885 and moving forward in time from Batoche to the present. The play is a celebration of Métis history and culture.

Mr. Speaker, Ernestine is played by Maureen Belanger, who also directs the play. Ernestine's husband, Alphonse, is played by Duane Favel. Maureen and Duane began their acting careers 28 years ago in Ile-a-la-Crosse's Upisak Theatre which, Mr. Speaker, incidentally is where the MLA for Athabasca began his theatre career.

Also in the play is Krystal Pederson; Ray Villebrun, from Red Blaze; his son, Chris Villebrun, Angus Vincent, and the Ile-a-la-Crosse Dance Troupe.

Ernestine's LaValise was toured to Beauval, Buffalo Narrows, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Meadow Lake, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon, and every performance evoked tears, laughter, and pride.

Mr. Speaker, in this centennial year, congratulations to Maureen Belanger and Duane Favel for their many successful years of Aboriginal theatre work in Saskatchewan and to the whole cast of *Ernestine's LaValise*.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Govan-Strasbourg Youth Curl in International Event

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to talk to you today about a remarkable girls' curling team whose members come from both my constituency and that of my colleague, the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

The team of Genna Mortenson and Megan Fritzler are from Govan, along with Elsa McKenzie and Laura Sorenson and coach, Ray Craswell, are from Strasbourg. They represented Saskatchewan in the annual under-18 International Curling Championship.

This year's Optimist International event was held in Calgary from March 31 to April 3. There are 12 girls' teams and 12 boys' teams competing from across Canada, the northwest US [United States], and Japan. The foursome and their coach were

honoured to be invited and given the opportunity to compete against other top-ranked teams.

These girls have curled together now for the past three years at the competitive level. This past season they competed in the qualifying bonspiels of the provincial junior women's playdowns. In Calgary, they played against teams from BC [British Columbia], Manitoba, Yukon, Wisconsin, and Quebec. The girls placed third in their pool and sixth overall. A skills competition was held in which Team Saskatchewan scored the highest and was rewarded with new curling brooms.

Our team curled very well overall, with Alberta winning the women's side. On April 11 the team was invited to the Duval Optimist Club supper meeting, where the girls gave a short presentation on their curling event in Calgary.

This is definitely one Saskatchewan youth team that will be up and coming in the curling world very soon.

I would ask all the members to join me in congratulating these youth curlers and their coach from Govan and Strasbourg. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cumberland.

Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, the 16th annual Saskatchewan Tourism Awards of Excellence gala was held a few days ago here in Regina. I hear it was a wonderful event, with members from all across the province gathering to recognize and celebrate the achievements of Saskatchewan's tourism industry.

Thirteen award recipients were chosen from 126 nominations and 39 finalists. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to say that the winner of the Saskatchewan Tourism Business of the Year award was Churchill River Canoe Outfitters, located in Missinipe in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, the folks of Churchill River Canoe Outfitters are more than deserving of this prestigious award. They are known locally and internationally for their knowledge of the area as well as the exceptionally high quality of their programs, guides, instructors, and equipment. They are committed to staff training and often hire residents from the nearby Grandmother's Bay First Nation.

As well, Mr. Speaker, the local guides work to educate river users on environmentally sound practices to help minimize their impact and maximize their enjoyment of this incredible resource.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to join me in congratulating Ric Driediger, the owner of Churchill River Canoe Outfitters; senior guide, Kevin Schultz; and all their staff on being named Tourism Saskatchewan's Business of the Year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Legislation for Treatment of Drug Addicted Youth

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, over the last month, the Alberta Legislature has worked in an unprecedented, tripartisan manner. In fact they abandoned discussion on the budget to respond to the calls from desperate parents, parents who were struggling to rescue their children from the depths of drug addiction.

Members from every party joined together to fast-track the Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Act. It gives parents and the government the authority to involuntarily apprehend a child suspected of abusing drugs.

Meanwhile in Saskatchewan many desperate parents have no legal recourse to rescue their own children from the scourge of drug addiction. Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: will he follow Alberta's lead and help Saskatchewan parents who want to save their drug addicted children?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been watching very carefully the progress of the Bill in the Alberta legislature. We've done our own legal review around this particular legislation. I know that our Legislative Secretary, who is looking at the addictions issue, has met with many groups who are in favour of what's being suggested in Alberta.

But there are also many questions that are being raised. And, Mr. Speaker, we intend to watch very carefully how they proceed in Alberta, and then if it works well, we will be quite willing to look at it. But we are concerned that there are a number of issues that need to be addressed before we proceed in the same fashion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, at the legislature today we have a family who is desperate for help. Their 17-year-old daughter, Mary, was a loving child. She was a role model to her younger brother and sisters. She was active in soccer, her church, and youth functions, and now they haven't seen her in months.

She is living with a known drug trafficker, a man in his 40s who has introduced her to drugs. A cab driver told Mary's mother that he drove her from one known drug house to another and that Mary was stoned and very, very thin, and very, very dirty. And her family has no legal recourse to get her back.

This family wants to know: when will this government give them the power to rescue their child?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I know that I and every

person in this legislature and the community has a great deal of concern for people like this. One of the challenges, and that's why Alberta has taken the lead in Canada to move forward and see how this kind of legislation could work, is that there are many personal rights that are guaranteed under our constitution that go up against how we work with this particular legislation. A good example in Saskatchewan is that we have pioneered over many years legislation in the mental health area which gives the ability of a court, after appropriate hearing, to make orders around having people require mental health treatment.

So that's one side of the case. We also, under our children-in-need-of-protection legislation, have legislation that deals with children. There's a challenge around these older adolescents and people in their young twenties.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, what we have right now is not working. This family's appeal to the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and the Department of Community Resources and Employment, they asked that their daughter be apprehended under section 18 of The Child and Family Services Act. This Act clearly stated that Social Services has the authority to apprehend 16- and 17-year-olds in the need of protection. But in a letter from the Minister of DCRE [Department of Community Resources and Employment] she stated the Act, The Child and Family Services Act further defines a child as under the age of 16. Access to residential treatment for a young person in care over the age of 16 years would occur on a voluntary basis.

Mr. Speaker, if there's nothing they can do to rescue their daughter under the current legislation in Saskatchewan, when will this government enact legislation that will enable this family to get their child back?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as I explained earlier, the province of Alberta, through this particular Bill that is moving forward as a private member's Bill, is leading the way in Canada. It's something that has been discussed at our Health ministers' meetings, and I'm sure that the Social Services ministers across the country have been looking at this as well.

[14:00]

And it goes to a very difficult place where, as the Legislative Secretary looking into addictions has discovered, there are many strong voices on one side, and strong voices on the other. We need to watch carefully what's happening in Alberta, and we're willing to learn from what they're going to do. And if this works and if there's a way we can do this, then we will do it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, we just have to stop watching

and start doing.

Mr. Speaker, in early April the officials from the Department of Community Resources went to the home where Mary was staying and reported to the family that she was abusing drugs. They said they would visit her again in a couple of weeks, but the next time they went, Mary was gone, and now they can't find her.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice wrote to the family and he said, and I quote:

I urge you to continue to engage the local police, social, health, and crisis services . . . To offer her whatever assistance is available the time she is willing or able to take advantage of that assistance.

Mr. Speaker, the minister is missing the point. Mary is a drug addict. She is neither willing nor able to take advantage of assistance. She needs help. She is too young to legally buy tobacco or liquor, but she's not too young to refuse treatment for her drug addiction. When will this government enact legislation to allow parents to rescue their children from drugs?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite sets out, this is a huge challenge, and it's one that all jurisdictions in Canada, and I think also in the United States, have been trying to figure out how to do this. And Alberta has gone ahead with legislation which all of the rest of us in Canada will be watching as it tries to make that appropriate balance between the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the privacy of the person and the need for parents and family to have some way to deal with people who are very, very ill.

And this is not an easy question, and therefore it's imperative that we work together with all the people involved and that we work with what's happening in Alberta.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, maybe the legislation isn't perfect, but we have an imperfect world, and sometimes we have to offer some imperfect solutions. But we have to try something.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation isn't working, and it's failing children like Mary and it's failing the people who love her.

According to the government's crystal meth strategy, in exceedingly limited circumstances The Mental Health Services Act can be applied, forcing a person to enter treatment for addiction. But obviously that didn't help Mary. The strategy goes on to say:

The province is open to exploring new and innovative approaches . . . That may be of benefit in particularly difficult cases.

If that was true and if this government is truly committed to rescuing children from drug addiction, will they follow Alberta's lead now and bring in legislation giving parents the power to protect their own children?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I think in Alberta they introduced this Bill with a first reading on March 14 of this year, and we've known about this. We knew that they were discussing some of the possibilities of going forward with this. They are, I think, moving forward quite carefully as well. I think it's prudent that we work together and understand what they're doing there and see how it can accomplish the goal that everybody wants which is to provide these children with help, and we will continue to monitor it that way.

But what I would say is that we do have services available across the system for young people and for their families and that they should be accessed through the addictions services people in every one of the regional health authorities.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why we have to wait and see what happens in Alberta. Why don't we do it at the same time? Why don't we do it parallel and see if we can learn something together?

Mr. Speaker, while the governments act in other provinces, this NDP [New Democratic Party] government just studies. While he was in opposition the Premier called for action on youth addiction rather than studying the problem. He said, and I quote:

The time for delay is long past. The time for action is now.
We cannot rest while a whole generation is lost.

And today in the Vancouver paper there was something that was just about the same. It said:

Either we act now, or we risk watching a generation of our youth suffer the nightmare of permanent brain damage.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the Premier will finally heed his own words. Two weeks ago all three parties in the legislature in Alberta got together to give speedy passage to the Bill, protection of children abusing drugs. That Act will help families rescue their drug addicted children.

A few minutes ago I gave notice of a private member's Bill based on this Act, and I'll introduce this Bill later this week. Will the government work with us to ensure swift passage of this legislation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier we're

looking at this issue very carefully. Our Legislative Secretary, working and looking at addictions, has been hearing very strong arguments on both sides of this particular kind of legislation, and we are going to make sure that whatever we do is something that will work.

And we're very willing to watch what happens in Alberta. We're willing to look at whatever the member opposite brings forward, and we will make sure that we do something that the professionals in this very serious addictions field say will work. And, Mr. Speaker, we're strongly committed to all of the people of Saskatchewan, especially those people who require our assistance.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the time has come for action. This government has talked the talk, and now it's time to walk the walk. Let's do something. Mary's family needs help right now. Other Saskatchewan families, other Saskatchewan children need help right now. And we don't have to reinvent the wheel. Let's look at the legislation that was passed in Alberta, supported by all the parties, including the NDP. I have plenty of information on the Act, and I'm willing to meet with the minister today and go over all the details.

Will the government commit to passing an Act or a similar Act, something that'll help our children now? Let's not wait any longer. It's time to do it now.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we are examining this issue very carefully, as we know, with the Legislative Secretary working on this. We are very willing to look at what the members opposite have raised. What I would say is that we in Saskatchewan are very well known for our pioneering efforts under mental health legislation to provide interventions at earlier places than other jurisdictions have done. And many, many provinces have modelled what they've done in the area of mental health.

This particular issue is in that area where there's a crossover with mental health and with the addictions kinds of things. And these are extremely complicated issues to deal with. We will guarantee that we will provide good leadership in this area for all the people of Saskatchewan, but we're going to do it with the help of all the professionals.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Investments in Navigata

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's hard to believe, but the NDP government has managed to produce a bigger government business fiasco than SPUDCO

[Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], Mr. Speaker. The NDP has no money to fulfill their share of this year's CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] program. They have no money, they say, to roll back their PST [provincial sales tax] increase, but they have now lost 42 million taxpayers' dollars on Navigata, a telecommunications company in British Columbia, Mr. Speaker.

Navigata is now the biggest loss of taxpayers' money in Saskatchewan history. From the government that brought you SPUDCO, Mr. Speaker, it appears that the NDP have learned precious little, if anything at all.

The question for the Premier is this: did he learn any lessons at all from SPUDCO? Did he learn anything at all from the loss of 35 million taxpayers' dollars on that particular deal? How could he then lose 42 million more taxpayers' dollars on a telco company in British Columbia?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for SaskTel.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party says one thing, but the facts are this, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all, SaskTel last year earned \$94 million for the people of Saskatchewan. They paid a dividend last year, Mr. Speaker, of \$88 million, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, they invested \$123 million by way of capital into the province of Saskatchewan. And what does that opposition Conservative party do, Mr. Speaker? They look at the small piece of external investments.

Mr. Speaker, I challenge them — I challenge them, Mr. Speaker — to define for the people of Saskatchewan what are core services. They say no high-speed Internet. They say no cellular service. Mr. Speaker they say no Max TV, Mr. Speaker.

All telephone companies are entering into the area of convergence. I think, Mr. Speaker, if you want to look at this I think, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition Conservatives would probably define core services as two cans and a piece of string, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, that is unbelievable that a minister of the Crown would say blowing 42 million taxpayers' dollars is small potatoes. It by no means is small potatoes. Neither were \$35 million blown on SPUDCO. Maybe for the, maybe for the high-rolling members of the government opposite who seem to be pretty free in spending the taxpayers' money it's small potatoes, but not for families waiting for a meaningful drug addiction treatment from this government, not for families waiting for some PST relief from the increase in the last budget, Mr. Speaker, not for farm families who are waiting for a government to fund its share of a farm safety net program. I can assure that minister it is not small. It is very large.

To the Premier: will he justify to the members of this Assembly and the taxpayers the loss of another 42 million taxpayers' dollars?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister responsible for SaskTel.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to review *Hansard* tomorrow to see whether I actually said that. I think if you review *Hansard*, like the member opposite says many times, Mr. Speaker, like he says many, many times, what he says is not the facts, Mr. Speaker. We'll review *Hansard* tomorrow to see if I actually said that. I'm confident I did not say that, Mr. Speaker.

Let me say first of all, remind that Conservative party opposite, Mr. Speaker, that member, the critic for Finance said that \$365 million was table scraps, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like him to describe this then, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, every telephone company in the world, every telephone company in the world is moving into the area of voice over Internet. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives opposite, what do they say? They say no, don't do this, don't do this.

In three to four years, Mr. Speaker, when every other telephone company is delivering voice over Internet, what would they say? They would say SaskTel lacked vision, where was this government when they should have delivered on voice over Internet, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For three years, the NDP government has told the taxpayers that Navigata would turn a profit in 2004. In 2002, they told us and I quote: "Navigata is expected to be cash flow positive in mid-'04." In 2003 they told us . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. I would ask . . . Order, please. Order, please. I would ask all members to allow questions to be put, particularly the member for Athabasca. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2003, they told us and I quote, "Navigata is now positioned to provide profitable growth to SaskTel in 2004 and future years."

In fact just last year, April 22, 2004, the Minister for SaskTel told this Assembly that Navigata is projected to be profitable this year. And did Navigata turn a profit in '04, Mr. Speaker? No. They lost an additional \$16 million.

Why in the world has this minister and this Premier, this NDP government been telling people that this company would be profitable in '04 knowing full well, apparently, that it would turn a loss of 16 million taxpayers' dollars last year?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for SaskTel.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Well thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Again we have the opposition Conservatives saying one thing and the facts being another thing. He actually quoted correctly there when he said that there was a projection — note the word projection — that it would be profitable. The word was projection. He's absolutely right. Just like every other telephone company, Mr. Speaker — projected, Mr. Speaker — that voice over Internet would do better than it did last year. But who do they chastise, Mr. Speaker? SaskTel.

Let me make this point, SaskTel through its external investments, Mr. Speaker, have invested \$152 million. What's it worth today? Probably somewhere between 250 and \$300 million. Yet, Mr. Speaker, they say don't do it. Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Minister for SaskTel.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — I ask the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, to get into the real world, understand that SaskTel, like every other telephone company, has to diversify to ensure that we are able to continue to provide the services that we do across our province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, in the real world, the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan expect this government to treat their money responsibly. In the real world, the taxpayers of this province expect this government not to blow \$35 million on potatoes and not to blow \$42 million on a BC telco plus \$20 million plus on a dot-com in Atlanta, Georgia. That is what taxpayers expect in the real world, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

Now that minister wants to quibble about the words used. We've quoted three times where he and this government have said this company will make money by 2004. One quote that doesn't use the word projection, from the '03 annual report . . . says Navigata is now positioned to provide profitable growth to SaskTel in 2004 and future years. Why, Mr. Speaker, then does the report say one thing and the facts, a \$16 million loss in '04, why does it say quite another from the words they provide the people of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for SaskTel.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say again in case the members opposite don't understand that Navigata is the vehicle for the delivery of voice over Internet, Mr. Speaker. They're the vehicle for the delivery of that service, Mr.

Speaker.

And I do want to also point out, I want to point out that under the rapid turnaround strategy that Navigata adopted, they are in fact cash flow positive and profitable in the first quarter of 2005. So the plan that they've implemented is working, Mr. Speaker.

And I note with interest as I sat here listening to petitions that the member from Arm River lobbied again, as he and others across the way do very often, that we should be delivering cellular service into all parts of Saskatchewan. And they're right, Mr. Speaker, they're absolutely right. They're absolutely right . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. We should take our turn. The Minister for SaskTel.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, let me say that those members are absolutely right if they will listen, Mr. Speaker. I'm trying to tell them they're right in wanting those services, Mr. Speaker. But here's the irony. They say that cellular service is not part of the core services. They say that high-speed Internet are not part of their core services. Yet, Mr. Speaker, they want this telephone company to deliver the service. It makes no sense whatsoever, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, actually members on this side of the House have the crazy notion that the government-owned Crown corporation SaskTel should choose to invest in Arm River over Salmon Arm, British Columbia, Mr. Speaker.

How many cell towers, how much additional service could be provided to the people of the province were it not for 2.5 million lost on Navigata in '01, 11 million in '02, 12 million in '03, and another \$16 million this year? The total, Mr. Speaker, \$42 million lost. They say they're not finished; they're going to invest more millions of dollars into this venture.

Mr. Speaker, that money would pay to retain and recruit a lot of nurses. That money would go a long way towards helping producers when they need it the most this spring, Mr. Speaker. But instead the NDP are pouring it in to British Columbia.

Will the Premier stand up and justify 42 million lost in BC, but nothing for CAIS, nothing for a farm safety net in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for SaskTel.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well again the opposition say one thing and the facts say another.

Let's take a little history lesson here. Back to 1990, Mr. Speaker, let's go back to 1990. Every year since 1990, SaskTel

has lost over \$250 million by way of long-distance revenues. That's a decline, \$250 million every year by way of long-distance revenues.

How do they and every other telephone company plan to make some of those revenues up, Mr. Speaker? It's going to be through probably voice over Internet. That's what every telephone company believes is going to happen, Mr. Speaker.

And how do you deliver that service right now? Because of the rulings of CRTC [Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission], it's through a vehicle like Navigata. That's exactly how they plan to deliver it. That's exactly how they plan to deliver the service here to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And that's exactly how they plan to continue to provide the high-quality service right here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, SaskTel and its workers are providing high-quality service across this province despite this government, despite the management they get, not because of it.

Mr. Speaker, last fall the Sask Party called for an independent public inquiry into SPUDCO so that that kind of disaster would never happen again. The NDP refused to hold that public inquiry. Pretty easy to understand, we know now as a result of the Gomery Commission that public inquiries aren't exactly the best thing for governments who are trying to cover things up, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP keeps telling us that . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order please, members. Just allow the question to be put. The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP tell us they've learned the lessons of SPUDCO. That's what they said. That's why they said they didn't need a public inquiry. Remember SPUDCO, Mr. Speaker, when the government represented it as a partnership with the private sector for six long years when it wasn't ever the truth, Mr. Speaker.

It looks like they have not learned their lesson because now they've been telling us for three years that this company — this Navigata — would make money for taxpayers. They said for sure in '04 it's going to happen. Last year they lost 16 million in '04. The total now, \$42 million. Will the Premier stand up and explain his priorities to taxpayers in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for SaskTel.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will tell you who has not learned their lesson, Mr. Speaker. I think the people of Saskatchewan gave that party a lesson in the last

provincial election when they told them, quit attacking the Crowns, Mr. Speaker. They said, we want to keep our Crowns. Last provincial election was based on provincial Crown corporations. The people of Saskatchewan enjoy and appreciate the service that our Crown corporations provide into rural Saskatchewan. I say . . .

The Speaker: — I'd ask the members to come to order. The Minister for SaskTel.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, they say they've changed; they've learned their lessons. Mr. Speaker, I say they have not learned their lessons.

Mr. Speaker, when you have a Crown corporation that generates over 900 million in revenues, Mr. Speaker, earns and pays dividends . . . had a profit, I should say, of \$94 million net income and pays dividends of \$88 million, and you have an opposition party that looks at external investments like the way they do, Mr. Speaker, I say . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed. Order please, now. Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, to move a motion regarding the reappointment of an officer of the Assembly, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, the Minister of Justice has requested leave of the Assembly to make a motion with respect to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

MOTIONS

Reappointment of Conflict of Interest Commissioner

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the conclusion of my remarks I'll be moving a motion that Gerald Lorne Gerrand, Q.C., of the city of Regina, be reappointed the Conflict of Interest Commissioner by this Assembly.

We've been indeed fortunate, Mr. Speaker, over the last five years to have had an individual of the calibre of Mr. Gerrand to serve as this province's Conflict of Interest Commissioner. He has provided exemplary service to the people of Saskatchewan during his first term and, Mr. Speaker, his work promotes public confidence in the activities of the members of this Legislative Assembly and for that we owe him our thanks.

Mr. Speaker, The Members' Conflict of Interest Act clearly defines the concept of a conflict of interest to any member of this Assembly. It sets out the duties required for the members of the Assembly and cabinet ministers to avoid such a conflict. It also establishes the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner as an independent officer of this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the commissioner's role in the operation of this legislation is vital. Members are required to disclose all their personal and business interests and those of their spouse and dependent children to the commissioner for use in a public disclosure document.

In addition, members of this Assembly must seek the approval of the commissioner before participating in any government contract. The commissioner also serves as a resource to all members of this Assembly in ruling on personal violations of the Act and in assisting members with the compliance with the Act.

Mr. Speaker, clearly the role of the commissioner is one which requires the utmost trust of this Assembly. The commissioner meets with each member of this Assembly to assist them in ensuring that they've complied with all responsibilities under the Act. Members of course are familiar with Mr. Gerrand, and I'll just say a few more things about the skills and attributes Mr. Gerrand brings to this important office.

We will recognize and be familiar with him as a well-regarded and highly respected member of the Saskatchewan legal community. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gerrand was born in Melville. His father practised law and was a member of this Assembly. Mr. Gerrand graduated from the College of Law at the University of Saskatchewan in 1954, articulated with his father, and practised law here in Regina. His practice is focused on civil litigation, and he is presently counsel with the firm of Gerrand Rath Johnson.

As I mentioned, he was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1970. He served as a bencher for the Law Society of the province from 1978 to 1982 and indeed was elected president of the Law Society of Saskatchewan in 1981. In 1982 Mr. Gerrand was elected a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. He served on the advisory committee for judicial appointments for the province of Saskatchewan from 1992 to 1996 and was chairman of the committee during the last three years of his appointment.

It's with great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, following consultation with members on both sides of the Assembly, which I appreciate, that I put forward Mr. Gerrand for reappointment to this position. And I encourage all members of this Assembly to join me in supporting his reappointment, Mr. Speaker.

So I would like to conclude by moving the following motion, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Southeast:

That this Assembly hereby reappoint Gerald Lorne Gerrand, Q.C., of the city of Regina in the province of Saskatchewan, Conflict of Interest Commissioner pursuant to section 18 of The Members' Conflict of Interest Act.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Meewasin, the Minister of Justice, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Southeast, the opposition critic for Justice:

That this Assembly hereby reappoint Gerald Lorne

Gerrand, Q.C., of the city of Regina in the province of Saskatchewan, Conflict of Interest Commissioner pursuant to section 18 of The Members' Conflict of Interest Act.

The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to second this motion. Mr. Gerrand has through the past years provided competent and impartial work in this area. This is an essential and very significant part of our role as MLAs to ensure that all MLAs are free of conflict of interest and free of the appearance.

And I spoke earlier and want to thank Mr. Gerrand for his past work and look forward to working with him in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The motion before the Assembly is the one moved by the member for Saskatoon Meewasin, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Southeast, with respect to the reappointment of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm extremely pleased to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions no. 1,002 to 1,004 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 1,002, 1,003, 1,004 have been submitted. The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — . . . 1,005.

The Speaker: — Ordered for return. Motion for return (debatable) . . . [inaudible] . . . It's 1,005. Just for the record, could we just have that repeated please by the Government Whip?

Mr. Yates: — We'll convert for debates returnable.

The Speaker: — No. 105 converted. The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We'll convert for debates returnable.

The Speaker: — 1,006 converted. The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We'll convert for debates returnable.

The Speaker: — 1,007 converted. The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again we'll convert for debates returnable.

The Speaker: — 1,008 is converted. The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again we'll convert question 109.

The Speaker: — 1,009 converted. The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, we'll convert again for debates returnable.

The Speaker: — 1,010 converted. The Government Whip.

[14:30]

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We will table responses to questions no. 1,011 through 1,014.

The Speaker: — Responses to 1,011 through to 1,014 have been submitted, those numbers inclusive.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Clerk Assistant (Committees): — Committee of Finance.

The Speaker: — I do now leave the Chair for this Assembly to go into Committee of Finance.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply

The Deputy Chair: — The question before the committee is interim supply. Will the minister introduce his officials? Minister introduce his officials, please.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Chair, seated beside me is the deputy minister of Finance, Ron Styles, on my left. On my right is the assistant deputy minister of the treasury board branch, Mr. Glen Veikle. Seated behind Mr. Styles is Joanne Brockman; she is the executive director of the economic and fiscal policy branch. And seated behind me is Arun Srinivas; he's the senior tax policy analyst with taxation and intergovernmental affairs branch.

Mr. Chairman, I'm just going to make a few opening remarks, if I might. And at the conclusion of that, I'll move a motion with respect to supply. Interim supply provides the opportunity for the government to receive approval for certain monies to enable the important work of government departments and agencies to proceed even though the budget for the new fiscal year has not been officially approved.

The first interim supply Bill is introduced later this year because of changes made last year to The Financial Administration Act. The changes allow departments to spend up to one-twelfth of their last year's appropriation until the government introduces a supply Bill.

With this interim supply Bill, we are seeking approval for an appropriation equal to two-twelfths of the budgeted amount for departments, with three exceptions. These exceptions are, the supply Bill seeks approval for an additional \$2.263 million for the Centennial Office in the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation. The Centennial 2005 Office requires the additional funding to proceed with the marketing campaigns and centennial initiatives planned for early summer, and to provide community-based organizations with the funding they require to plan and implement the significant activities and celebrations scheduled for their communities this summer.

Secondly, the supply Bill also seeks approval for two-tenths of the operating grant funding for K to 12 schools in the Department of Learning. This recognizes that school boards are funded on a 12-month basis.

And three, an additional \$4 million is required for the Department of Property Management to cash flow construction activities scheduled early in the year, and for end-of-the-model-year vehicle purchases delivered in April and May.

With the level of funding requested in the interim supply Bill, departments and agencies will be able to cover their expenses for the months of April and May. In the event that the budget is not passed by the end of May, we will seek approval for additional funds to ensure the work of government can continue.

And, Mr. Chairman, with that . . . I'm looking for my copy of motion no. 1. No. 1:

Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$1,099,149,000 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 2006.

I so move.

The Deputy Chair: — The question before the committee is no. 1:

Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$1,099,149,000 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 2006.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. We will get around to the question very soon or get to the motion very soon. I have a number of questions I would like to put forward to the minister in the interim.

I agree with the minister. We are doing very important work this afternoon, providing funding for the departments and agencies that rely on the Government of Saskatchewan for their

funding and for their resources.

I'd like to begin in the area of agriculture, Mr. Chair, and we all know that the economic crisis that the Saskatchewan farmers and farm families are facing in Saskatchewan. We had a chance to touch on it in estimates last week about the net farm incomes and we all know that they're taking a real hit. My question for the minister, through you, Mr. Chair: are there going to be any funds appropriated for agricultural assistance programs?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, in the estimates under the Department of Agriculture and Food, there's two items, farm stability and adaptation, and industry assistance. These items, which provide for funding of various government programs, agricultural programs, will also receive one-twelfth, as will all other aspects of the Department of Agriculture . . . sorry two-twelfths, as will all other aspects of the Department of Agriculture. If there's a draw on that — for example, with respect to crop insurance — we don't anticipate there will be a draw, but nevertheless we will be providing them with two-twelfths of their total appropriation.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Minister, for the answer. I just wanted to get into some of the specifics of it. Are any funds being put forward into the APF [agricultural policy framework], the ag policy framework? If so, which programs through the APF will indeed receive funds?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, under Agriculture and Food there are two subvotes, one for farm stability and adaptation, (AG08), and within that there are allocations this year for the Canadian agricultural income stabilization program. And furthermore, there is an allocation for crop insurance, (AG10), and within that there is allocations with respect to crop insurance. And in this particular instance we propose to provide two-twelfths of the amounts that are outlined in the Estimates document for the department.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I see the amount estimated for '05-06 is less in that line than the estimated amount in '04-05. So I just want to continue asking questions along this line. Is any money being used to fund payments owed through CFIP, the Canadian farm income program?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, we weren't sure whether it was a trick question, but if the member is asking about the Canadian farm income program, CFIP, that program has expired and there is no allocation or item within our estimates for that program. We also looked at the Estimates book for last year and again couldn't find any reference to it last year or the year preceding that. So there's no specific allocation, but if there is some residual issues surrounding that program, I certainly wouldn't discourage the members from asking the Minister of Agriculture in his estimates about that.

[14:45]

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair, to the minister, my understanding is it's customary in this appropriation debate or appropriation questions that I am provided with some information as far as where the appropriations . . . I haven't received any of that information.

Could the minister table the general information?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — The answer is yes, Mr. Chairman. And we'll send that over to the member right away.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. On the agriculture topic as well: will producers be seeing any of this money in the appropriations being dedicated to lowering their property tax bills?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, that particular allocation can be found under the Department of Learning. And I think I indicated and I would expect that with respect to that particular item, as well, that two-tenths of that allocation will be provided to the Department of Learning.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I am taken to understand two-twelfths — is that what the minister meant to say? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Okay, two-tenths, okay.

Moving on to Environment. How much of the funds under Environment will be spent on forest fire fighting fleet renewal?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, with respect to the forest fire capital, I would draw the member's attention to page 51 under Department of the Environment in fire management and forest protection, (ER10). Under that there's allocations for forest fire capital in the amount of \$19.24 million. Two-twelfths of that amount will be provided to the Department of Environment for forest fire capital.

While I'm on my feet, I just want to make it absolutely clear that it's the foundation operating grant funding for the Department of Learning which will be provided on a two-tenths basis. All other allocations under the Department of Learning, including for property tax relief, will be two-twelfths.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Turning now to Industry and Resources. What amount of the appropriations will be dedicated towards the Saskatchewan Research Council?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, Saskatchewan Research Council has a separate vote. Vote 35 can be found on page 131. The total budget for the Research Council is \$8.19 million and we propose to provide two-twelfths of that to the Research Council.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Will any of these funds be used for further development of the enhanced oil recovery technology?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, I would draw the member's attention to page 53 of the budget document where it indicates the nature of the incentives that would be implemented in support of the enhanced oil recovery projects in this coming year. Part of that is a new generic Crown royalty and freehold production tax structure. That would not be covered because that's a revenue item and what we're dealing with is, of course, expenditures.

But also part of that is a renewal of the Saskatchewan petroleum research incentive program. And on page 88 of the Estimates,

there's an allocation of \$1 million for the petroleum research initiatives, so we would expect that two-twelfths of that will be provided to the Saskatchewan petroleum research incentive program. There's also an exemption of PST and fuel tax, but again those are revenue items and would not be covered in the request for funds for expenditures.

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

Mr. Dearborn: — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Chair.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Seated in the east gallery, it's my pleasure to introduce some friends all the way from Ontario: Diane Chisholm of Stratford, Ontario, and Ms. Deb Paul. I'll ask them to give a wave.

They're out here visiting their very good son who just had a birthday party on Saturday, Mr. Jay Paul, who is husband to Mrs. Jessica Paul, our deputy communications director in the opposition office.

I've met them a number of times. They've been out for the wedding. We're always happy to see them in Western Canada. And I know that they sure surprised Jay on his birthday on Saturday night, as he had no idea that they were coming in, and merriment was had by all. So I'd ask all members present to welcome our guests from Ontario, and I bid you welcome as well.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the member of Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I too would like to join with my colleague, the member from Kindersley, in welcoming our guests from Ontario.

I have family out in Ontario who I was speaking to on the weekend. And I understand that it's snowing in the London, Windsor, Chatham area of Ontario. So I really hope that they're enjoying the sunshine that Saskatchewan has to offer today. But that's for today; it may change in a couple of days.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

Motions for Interim Supply (continued)

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Chair, back to the minister. In the area of rural development in the new department, how much money is going to be directed to the new Department of Rural Development through these appropriations?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, the total budget allocation in the estimates for Rural Development is \$6.626 million. Two-twelfths of that in this interim supply would be \$1.104 million.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair, I guess I'm looking for the minister to highlight some of the areas in these departments that might need immediate expenditures or areas that these appropriations will be put towards. Is any money going to be directed towards to operations of ACRE [Action Committee on the Rural Economy]? Will the department's funds be released to fund the upcoming ACRE report?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, the member would be relying on my memory of discussions on this from some months ago and I hesitate to do that. And therefore I would suggest that the questions should be put directly to the Minister for Rural Development who will have far more timely and accurate information. I wouldn't want to assume to answer the questions on behalf of that minister.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair, we certainly will be pursuing these questions in estimates with the appropriate ministers. I thought we could touch on each of the areas here this afternoon. Maybe we could turn to highways, money spent on highways. Which highway improvement projects will be receiving money this time around with these appropriations, and how much of the appropriation on highways will be spent on maintenance?

[15:00]

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, the Department of Highways will be receiving 174 ... or their budgetary allocations for the year, \$174 million, almost 175, and then a further \$125 million for highways capital. These are funds that will be expended on hundreds, if not thousands, of projects, and we do not have that level of detail or information.

That again is something that the Minister Responsible for Highways and Transportation would be able to let the Assembly know about, as to which specific projects would be undertaken or started during the months of April and May. One, again, it presupposes a detailed knowledge of all of their projects and also their schedule for the year. We don't have that kind of information.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and Mr. Chair. My understanding of this process was that officials would be present that could answer these questions in detail. I'll just proceed in touching on some other areas. And if the minister does have the knowledge or can undertake to get the information, I'd certainly appreciate it.

Moving to Labour, is any money being used from the appropriation for the WorkSafe campaign?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — We expect it would be two-twelfths, Mr. Chair.

Might I just indicate that we'll make note of any detailed questions that the members ask with respect to other departments. And we will ask if those departments might be able to, you know, to correspond directly with the member to see to what extent they can answer those questions for him.

The only officials I have with me here are the officials for the

Department of Finance. And although we would certainly be aware of details of matters that are taking place within the Finance Department and would have a grasp of, for example, budgetary allocations and general purposes of those budgetary allocations in departments such as Highways, we would not be familiar or have with us a list of, say, specific projects that the member's asking about.

But we will make note of the question. We'll make the question known to the — in that particular case — the Department of Highways and ask them to provide as much information as they can to the member directly. Thank you.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And, Mr. Chair, under the Labour topic, also if you could undertake to obtain information on the funds for reducing the backlog of decisions to be rendered by the Labour Relations Board. I suspect some of the funding for Labour will be used to address the concerns with the Labour Relations Board and the work that they do. Is that indeed the case?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — The answer is that yes, we'll make note of the question and ask the Department of Labour to correspond directly with the member and to let him know what the answer is to his question.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair, if we could turn to the Premier's office and Executive Council now and I think this is a question that the minister may be able to answer in a general sense. The amount of money being spent on the Premier's communication staff, the minister could just generally expound upon the need for this increased funding and how much of this ... how does this amount compare to the money that was appropriated last year?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, the Estimate documents indicates that the estimate for the subvote communications coordination and media services (EX03) in 2004-05 was \$1,063,000. And this year the estimate is \$1,560,000.

As to the allocations within Executive Council, recognizing that it applies to both communications coordination and media services, I don't have the answer to that question. But I know the Premier in his estimates would certainly be in a position to answer that or we can also make note of the question and ask the Premier's office to correspond directly with the member.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair, yes, a further question I guess in that area if you could undertake, I'm wondering if the hiring has actually been done in this quarter, and how much of that funding will go towards those new hirings.

Moving to Finance itself, and can the minister answer this question: will any funds be used for the PST rebate on energy-efficient appliances, that are appropriated here today?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, that would be a revenue issue, and that's not something that we would ask the Assembly to provide their votes for or their support for. So I can say to the member that the point-of-sale exemption went into effect on April 1. April 1 and there will be a corresponding

decrease somewhere in administration within the Department of Finance, but we're not asking for approval of that particular change in the program here today.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Could the minister outline if there's any provision in the appropriations here directed towards assisting the province in meeting our Kyoto objectives?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, there's no allocation within the budget as such with respect to Kyoto, but there will be initiatives in various departments, particularly in the Department of the Environment and the Department of Industry and Resources, that deal with items that are intended to ultimately reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Saskatchewan.

For example we talked earlier about the enhanced oil recovery project. There is currently a project in the Weyburn area — around Midale, I believe — that where carbon dioxide is being injected into the ground in enhanced oil recovery project there. That's the kind of initiative that I think the Minister of Industry and Resources would very much like to talk about.

In this budget as well we anticipate that there will be additional funds expended for the ethanol, for the ethanol projects because we anticipate that the ethanol plant in Weyburn and the . . . will be coming on stream, and also the ethanol plant in Lloydminster. There may well be other initiatives that both of those ministers would like to speak to. I think it's . . . My recollection though is that there are not specific targets that have been put forward for the province of Saskatchewan at this point. We look forward to working with the federal government at the point that they do. We still are in the process of having discussions with the federal government on that.

Some of the implications would not necessarily be directly ones that would involve the Legislative Assembly because they may be initiatives — say for example, the Crown corporation, SaskPower is an example — that may have an implication down the road in terms of revenues from the Crowns but would not be items that would be line items in the budget that would be considered by the Legislative Assembly, although it would be considered I guess ultimately by the Crown and Central Agencies Committee of the Legislative Assembly.

But there is no specific budgetary allocation for Kyoto that I can recall. But there are a number of initiatives in this budget that are intended to deal with the question of greenhouse gas emissions and ultimately moving Saskatchewan forward to be able to meet the standards when they are set down by the federal government.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair, when you referred to ethanol, is there any appropriations going towards capital in regards to the ethanol project in Weyburn, or are you just referring to the tax holiday, the rebate?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — I'm not aware of any, Mr. Chair. The only thing that I'm aware of with respect to ethanol is the ethanol fuel tax rebate on page 88 of the Estimates, which is budgeted at \$4.875 million. That's the only allocation that I'm aware of.

Now if there is some form of industry assistance for the proponents of the ethanol facility in Weyburn or in Lloydminster that is subsumed under, you know, some existing grants to industry, that may well be. I don't know that, but that is certainly a question that you may want to put to the minister. But we'll also make note of the question and get back with an answer, or hopefully have those departments correspond directly with the member to answer his question.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair, also does the same apply then for the Husky ethanol project in Lloydminster? Can the minister confirm that?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Again we'll ask the department to correspond with the member to indicate to the member exactly what we anticipate with respect to the ethanol facility in Lloydminster.

It's my understanding that that particular project is due to come on stream later in a fiscal year. It may not be until . . . in 2006 when it comes on stream, and at which point we would begin to flow out fuel, ethanol fuel tax rebates. But again I'll have the department correspond directly with the member to let him know what it is that they anticipate, and also to answer the question, is there any other forms of assistance within their expenditures that have to do with ethanol.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair, if we can move on to the Department of Learning . . . ask the minister to confirm if any additional funds, any additional appropriations will be used to fund the teachers' contract? The Minister of Learning has informed this House that this government will be responsible for the funds, the extra funds needed around the teachers' contract. Will the Minister of Finance confirm that for this House as well?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, at this point there is no contract. There is a tentative contract. We'll wait and see what happens with respect to that contract to see what implications that might have for us.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Just to indulge you in some conjecture, I guess, if there are indeed additional funds that are needed, do you anticipate that they will be funded from this appropriation?

[15:15]

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Okay. Again that's a hypothetical question, Mr. Chair. And once the contract . . . Hopefully the contract will be signed by the teachers, agreed to by the teachers. At that point we'll certainly let the House know what implications that might have for the budget.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, again under the Department of Learning, capital funding for schools, could the minister just outline which schools will be receiving capital funding, which divisions, and which projects will be receiving capital funding?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, I don't have the list of the capital projects with me, but we'll ask the Department of Learning to let the member know what specific capital projects

they will be funding through the various school boards in the province so that the member will have that information.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you for that undertaking. Certainly I've been hearing concerns from members of the Saskatoon Public School Board regarding the lack of funding or the lack of resources that are directed to capital funding in Saskatoon. And without getting into a debate with the minister on it at the present time, I'd certainly appreciate any information that he can provide on K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] funding that is happening in Saskatoon.

Members of this House are aware of a project in my constituency, of the need for a school in the Arbor Creek part of Saskatoon. We have 600 students in . . . or 600 children under the age of six in Arbor Creek that are in need of a school, and just wondering if any of the appropriations will be directed towards capital, certainly in my constituency in Saskatoon, but more so across the entire province. So I appreciate and I understand the minister will undertake to provide me with that.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Again, Mr. Chair, we'll ask the Department of Learning to let the member know what specific capital projects they have planned and that the members will be asked to support through their budgetary votes. And we'll let the member . . . we'll undertake to ask the Department of Learning to correspond directly with the member.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair, one more question in this area while we're on Learning is the foundation operating grant and the formula and the effect that it would have on the cities, especially of Saskatoon and Regina. Any information that can be provided from the department to answer the question would be appreciated.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, the interim supply before us today proposes to provide the Department of Learning with two-tenths of the budgeted amount they had for the foundation operating grants. But how those funds will be distributed to the boards, the nature of their formula, which I understand is quite complex, I don't have that with me. But again, that's something that the minister would have.

We can also make note of the question and ask the department to provide the member with an answer directly, to the extent that they are able to do that.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, in the budget book under Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming you show a reduction in estimated revenues for 2005-2006 from the 2004-2005 year of approximately \$35 million. How is that spread out across the year? Are you expecting it to be even across the year? Or within the two-twelfths that we're budgeting, that you've come before the Assembly to budget for today, will that have a disproportionately larger or smaller portion of that change in and reduction in the amount of revenues?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, I am trying to

recall now discussions that we had during Treasury Board about this item. Our thoughts were that we were likely to see a greater impact earlier in the year from the smoking legislation and that over time we'll see some rebound in our liquor and gaming area, but that the impact would be greater as the ban took effect, and over time that we would expect to see people making their way back to their traditional venues.

That's based on information that we've been able to garner from other jurisdictions. That's what we anticipate.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I recognize that it's too early in the fiscal year to have any information really back from April till now — that's only two or three weeks — but would you have any information based from January forward, a one-month, two-month, I guess, estimate or forecast on those revenues since from the time the smoking ban went in place? And where does that hit seem to be taking place? Is it on the VLT [video lottery terminal] side? Is it on liquor consumption, or how is that breakdown?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, we hope that during the first quarter report — that is after the first quarter of this fiscal year — we'll be able to provide the members with a more accurate assessment of what has taken place.

There were some initial indications that — and I don't have the information now — but that the projections that we're making in terms of reduced patronage are, in fact, accurate. But again, we look forward to providing a more detailed analysis. I don't want to provide analysis based on some anecdotal evidence or very limited evidence.

But we look forward in the first quarter report to providing the members with a more detailed analysis of how the smoking ban has impacted SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] and of course the casinos, and whether or not our assumptions were correct and what our assumptions might be going forward based on the first quarter report.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Earlier you made an announcement there would be a \$75 million top-up of the Liquor and Gaming Fund. How was that going to be allocated? Is it going to be \$25 million a year, therefore two-twelfths of that into this portion of the appropriation? Will it be front-loaded — could be 40 million this year and a descending scale into the other years? Is it going to be there to provide the losses as they come in, or is it just going to be \$25 at the end of the year allocated into the Liquor and Gaming Fund?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, we provided an analysis in our budget documents, and I would refer the member to page 70 of the budget document where we indicate the smoking ban offset. And we expect that in this fiscal year, '05-06, the impact of the smoking ban to be \$40 million. And that in the next fiscal year we expect that impact to be \$25 million. And in the third year we expect that impact to be \$10 million. So those three add up to the \$75 million that we budgeted and that the member raised here today.

Mr. D'Autremont: — How will those monies be allocated into the Liquor and Gaming Authority fund? Will it be one lump

sum payment at some point during the year or is it going to correspond to the reduction in revenues based on a monthly or a quarterly basis?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, what we're doing is we're anticipating reduced revenues from the SLGA into the General Revenue Fund. So we put funds aside last year in anticipation of this in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund which will then be used to put back into our revenues so that our revenues are more or less comparable to what it was prior to the implementation of the smoking ban, because we again anticipate that there will be an impact on the government's revenues as a result of the smoking ban.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Will that money be trickled into the SLGA fund or will it be a one-time payment?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Again, we anticipate a reduced dividend from the SLGA and therefore we set aside funds in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, not to provide those funds to the SLGA, but to bring those into government revenues for the specific years in anticipation of reduced dividends from the SLGA.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Minister. So let's say it's \$40 million. That \$40 million will then not be seen as a transfer from SLGA to the Consolidated Fund. Is that what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — That is correct, Mr. Chair.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you very much. And to the minister and to your officials, thank you for the opportunity just to further clarify what the member from Cannington was discussing with the funds from SLGA. My concern is the Community Initiatives Fund that will obviously receive less money then because of the dividend from SLGA. How has your department determined the breakdown now? Which areas are going to receive less money? And have you determined what the effect is going to be on those organizations that have been relying on their funds from the Community Initiatives Fund to operate their programs?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, the government distributes net income from the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation to beneficiaries according to The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Act, with the GRF [General Revenue Fund] retaining 50 per cent while the Community Initiatives Fund, CIF, and the First Nations gaming agreements each receive 25 per cent. And there's also a set amount for the Métis Development Fund that flows to the Community Initiatives Fund. So out of the CIF allocation of 25 per cent, there's a specific figure that's set aside for the Métis Development Fund.

[15:30]

With respect to the SLGA, 100 per cent of net profits generated from slot machines from SIGA [Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority] is paid to the SLGA. Based on both SIGA and Saskatchewan Gaming Commission forecasted net profits, an

amount is granted from the GRF, the General Revenue Fund, through the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation to the Community Initiatives Fund and through the Department of First Nations and Métis Relations to the First Nations Trust and the Métis Development Fund.

And the current gaming agreement between the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the province, concerning the distributions of net profits from SIGA casinos, states that the province will retain thirty-seven and a half per cent of SIGA casino net profits.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, but you didn't answer my question. You did tell me what I think most people know, is that the Community Initiatives Fund and First Nations Fund get 25 per cent each, and that there is some money goes to the Métis association. But obviously these funds are going to receive less money this year than they have the last couple of years. Your government has made sure that there is . . . it's not going to affect the General Revenue Fund, because there's been money set aside for it. But there's going to be less money for programming for those two groups — First Nations Fund and the Community Initiatives Fund.

I know every year that the amount of money that's requested of those groups is more than the money that they have. So with this kind of a cutback there's going to be organizations and individuals who are not going to get the funding who have in the past, and who perhaps need it this year.

Is there anything that your government has done to ensure that the Community Initiatives Fund and the First Nations Fund isn't going to lose money on this initiative? Did you save anything for them or is it all just going into General Revenue Fund?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, I would certainly encourage the member to put those questions to the responsible ministers. We'll make note of the questions and ask those ministers also to correspond with the member, to let the departments know of the member's interests to see to what extent they can respond at this point. There are issues too about when funds are received and what is actually paid out in a year that I don't have the details of all those transfers with me.

But the member raises a good question and we'll endeavour to ensure that the affected departments reply directly to the member.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, turning to the topic of the Department of Health. Health is an important part of this budget as it is of every budget in the country, and the national budget as well.

In this budget the government press release indicated \$4 million for expanding surgical volumes and reducing waiting lists. How much of this \$4 million will be allocated in the first quarter to reduce wait times? And I certainly understand if the minister doesn't have that information. He can provide that.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, in addition to the

one-twelfth that was granted for the month of April, this particular interim supply asked for a further two-twelfths. We've not received the request from Health, that I'm aware of, for anything extraordinary although if they had we would certainly look at that. But it's my understanding that's what has been . . . was provided with the budget and what is being requested today.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, Mr. Chair. Also if the minister could comment on any additional funds being allocated for improving cancer treatments capacity and also for the alcohol and drug strategy for the province, any additional funds coming forward.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Again this interim supply would provide two-twelfths of that amount.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And Mr. Chair, since the minister is undertaking to provide answers in written form, I have a couple of other questions regarding the integrated health sciences facility in Saskatoon. We've heard about the facility and the need for it. Certainly members on this side of the House have advocated it for quite some time. If the minister could provide any information that this allocation will go towards seeing that this facility is . . . the construction begins on this facility.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — We'll certainly let the Department of Health know the member's interest and encourage them to correspond directly with the member. Mr. Chairman, just in case I wasn't clear, this particular allocation today is for two-twelfths and covers also the first month of April, which was allocated at that time as part of the budgetary process.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. In the budget, in performance plan summary on page 20, the document talks about:

Approval to proceed with four additional health care facilities: new integrated health [care] facilities in Preeceville and Maidstone; [and a] Mental Health Facility in Saskatoon . . .

I want to concentrate on the mental health facility in Saskatoon for the time being, but certainly if the minister has any additional information on any of these four facilities, we'd appreciate it.

But today in question period we heard the Minister of Health talk about the priority for the government on mental health in this province. I've recently received correspondence from advocates for a new mental health facility in Saskatoon, and they've provided me with documentation that shows that for the past seven years this facility has been on the drawing board, and different commitments and different announcements have been made for this by this government.

I'm very interested in knowing if any of these appropriations from the Department of Health will go towards a mental health facility in Saskatoon, which I understand is long overdue.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — The answer is yes. There is provision in this budget to provide for an upgrade of what is the

Hantelman facility, I believe it is, in Saskatoon. That's what's in the budget, and this particular interim supply would provide for two-twelfths of that allocation.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you for that answer, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair, I understand that this will be a province-wide facility, a facility that services the entire population of Saskatchewan and therefore it will be entirely funded by the government, by the Department of Health. Am I correct?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, one would have to ask the Minister of Health as to what area of the province specifically would see the Hantelman facility in Saskatoon as a facility for people in the northern part of the province, as there are facilities here in Regina. And I don't have the particulars of that.

But it's fair to say that there is a specialization and concentration of services in some of our larger centres, because it's just simply not feasible to provide for that kind of facility in each of the health districts. But again, what the breakdown is, how it is, or which health districts would look to refer people from their areas to Saskatoon as opposed to Regina or some other facility, I don't have that breakdown. But the minister would certainly be able to provide that.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And, Mr. Chair, certainly the people that I have met with have made a strong case that this will indeed be a province-wide facility and therefore it would affect the funding arrangement with the Saskatoon Health Region. But I look forward to receiving more information on that.

One final question in the health area. Any money from this appropriation will be . . . will any money from this appropriation be dedicated to a children's hospital in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chairman, I'm not 100 per cent clear as to the state of play within the Department of Health on this particular topic. I understand there's certainly no capital or operating dollars within the budget. But in terms of planning dollars and so on, staff time that are allocated towards this project, I think it's best that I ask the Department of Health to correspond directly with the member and to answer that question.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. That's given me a glimmer of hope. I certainly hope that we do find something in there, but I understand what he's saying and will look forward to the Minister of Health answering that question in a written form.

Turning to a couple of final questions I guess or one final question regarding one of the longest standing promises in the province, the promise to hire 200 additional police officers in the province. The government maintains that this is a promise that they're still working on some six years after. In fact, the promise was made in 1999.

Can the minister tell me if there's any money from these appropriations that will go towards indeed hiring additional police officers so we can reach that goal of 200 additional

officers that was made by, you know, a previous government or previous administration in 1999?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, again we plan to provide the Department of Justice, pursuant to this interim supply, with two-twelfths of their budgetary allocations. I believe there was an announcement on budget day that we look forward to hiring additional police officers in pursuit of that commitment. But where and how these officers are to be deployed, that's certainly a question I think that's better put to the Minister of Justice. But we'll make note of the member's question and ask the Department of Justice to communicate directly with the member to give him the answer.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair, thank you to the minister and his officials for answering the questions that he was able to today. I understand the level of questioning might have been more detailed than the minister was expecting, and certainly I appreciate his undertaking to provide written answers.

And at this time I would like to indicate to the minister that members on this side of the House look forward to co-operating with him to provide the resources necessary for the Government of Saskatchewan to undertake the services that it does to provide to Saskatchewan residents.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — I thank the member for his questions, Mr. Chair. We're in a difficult position to try to answer questions for other ministers, not having the benefit of those officials, whether it's Health or Highways, here with us to answer detailed questions. But we've made note of the questions. We'll be asking departments to review the transcripts and to correspond directly with the member to provide him with the answers to many of the questions that he has asked. And we look forward to proceeding.

The Deputy Chair: — The question before the committee is interim supply no. 1:

Resolved that the sum not exceeding \$1,099,149,000 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 2006.

Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Chair: — Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: — Carried.

[15:45]

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, I move no. 2:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006, the sum of \$1,099,149,000 be granted out of the

General Revenue Fund.

The Deputy Chair: — The question before the committee is interim supply no. 2:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006, the sum of \$1,099,149,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Chair: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: — Carried.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, I move that the committee rise and that the Chair report that the committee has agreed to certain resolutions and ask for leave to sit again.

The Deputy Chair: — The Minister of Finance has asked the committee to report progress and asked for leave to sit again. Is that the pleasure of the Assembly?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: — Carried.

FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Chair of committees.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Finance has agreed to certain resolutions, has instructed me to report the same, and to ask for leave to sit again.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the resolutions be read the first time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the resolutions be now read the first and second time.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Clerk Assistant (Committees): — First and second readings of the resolutions.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again? I recognize . . .

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Later this day, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — Later this day. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Bill No. 117 — The Appropriation Act, 2005 (No. 1)

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move by leave of the Assembly, I move that Bill No. 117, The Appropriation Act, 2005 (No. 1) be now introduced and read the first time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has moved that Bill No. 117, The Appropriation Act, 2005 (No. 1) be now introduced and read the first time. Is leave of the Assembly granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Clerk Assistant (Committees): — First reading of this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — By leave of the Assembly and under rule 57(2), I move that the Bill be now read a second and third time.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is leave of the Assembly granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried. Moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 117, The Appropriation Act, 2005 (No. 1) be now read a second and third time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Clerk Assistant (Committees): — Second and third reading of this Bill.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 109 — The Criminal Enterprise Suppression Act

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Criminal Enterprise Suppression Act. Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to keeping Saskatchewan communities safe and creating a hostile environment for organized crime and gang-related activities. Members will be aware that in the same session we are

introducing The Seizure of Criminal Property Act and that in previous sessions we have introduced legislation such as The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act and The Pawned Property (Recording) Act.

Mr. Speaker, the sole purpose of this new Bill is to continue to provide tools to Saskatchewan's policing community to undercut the activity of criminal organizations. This Bill provides that where the court is satisfied on application by a police chief that the owner or manager of a business is a member of a criminal organization, the court may cancel or withhold any provincial tax or liquor licence needed to operate the business and, if applicable, prohibit the premises from being used to store or distribute liquor.

Simply put, this Bill was intended to make it clear that organized crime members may not expect to freely operate any provincially licensed business in this province.

If the court is satisfied that a business is knowingly being used for unlawful purposes, it may issue an order to cease business operations. It may liquidate and dissolve a business. It may deregister the corporation, and it may cancel any licences — including liquor licences. If the court is satisfied two or more people have conspired to commit unlawful activities that would likely cause injury to the public, the court may make an order to restrain those activities.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is being brought forward at the request of the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police as an additional method through which they can address organized crime issues. Under this Bill our police services will be able to address the purportedly legitimate business enterprises that are controlled or owned by a member of a criminal organization. Once again we are seeking to use civil procedures to address those who would seek a profit from criminal operations.

This process occurs under the direction of the court, and it is careful to provide the property owner with the right to answer the allegation of wrongdoing in a court of law.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill, along with the criminal property forfeiture Act, represent the next steps in this government's continuing commitment to create a hostile environment for organized crime in the province of Saskatchewan. I would invite all members of this Assembly to join us in supporting this Bill. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act respecting Civil Remedies against Organized Crime.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the minister that Bill No. 109, The Criminal Enterprise Suppression Act, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is an honour to be able to stand today to speak very briefly on Bill No. 109. Organized crime is and always should be a serious concern for all of us in the Assembly, and we must do whatever we can to curb the activities of organized crime within our province.

I think the latest statistics on gang-related activities in our province is alarming. And if there is legislation that's being requested by our police officers within the province, we should be looking at what their suggestions are, because they of course are the front-line workers that are trying to deal with the organized crime within our province.

So it will be with interest that the opposition party will be reviewing this Bill and meeting with the interested groups and seeing or getting their input as to whether this Bill is going to address the issue of organized crime. And then we will have a better knowledge of whether or not this Bill is going to meet the need that's being asked for. So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Humboldt has moved debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That's carried.

Bill No. 110 — The Seizure of Criminal Property Act

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Seizure of Criminal Property Act.

Mr. Speaker, members of this House will be aware that this government's been making a special effort through a series of recent Bills to assist our policing and justice officials in their efforts to address organized crime and gang-related activities in our province. As a result, The Pawns Property (Recording) Act and The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act were passed in previous sessions, and they are now being implemented throughout Saskatchewan.

This session I am pleased to be introducing this Bill, The Seizure of Criminal Property Act, as well as The Criminal Enterprise Succession Act as the next steps in this government's ongoing commitment to improving safety in Saskatchewan communities and creating a hostile environment for organized crime.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill provides that where the property's the product of or is owned by an individual or business that's committing unlawful acts, that property will be subject to forfeiture by an order of the court. The Bill provides that a police chief in Saskatchewan can apply to the Court of Queen's Bench for an order forfeiting the proceeds of any unlawful activity.

In this context, proceeds of any unlawful activity means any activity that would constitute either a provincial or federal offence where the property in question is obtained, in whole or in part, indirectly or directly, through such activities. Under this new civil process, rather than viewing the forfeiture of illegal property as an aspect of the punishment for a crime, this Bill recognizes the property that's being used for or which is the product of unlawful activities should not be retained by the individuals committing these crimes.

Accordingly the police chief may make an application to the court to establish on a balance of probabilities that the property is either an instrument or proceeds of an unlawful activity. If the police chief is successful in establishing one of these criteria, the property will be forfeited to the Crown . . . [inaudible] . . . Saskatchewan and liquidated. The proceeds of that liquidation will then be used to pay for the cost of the liquidation proceedings for the Crown and for the cost of proceedings undertaken by the police chief.

Mr. Speaker, this is a court controlled process that permits legitimate interest holders to be protected and allows the owner of a property to demonstrate that it's not the product or the instrument of unlawful activities. If, however, if they are unable to show that the property in question is not the product or instrument of unlawful activities or that they are not a member of a criminal organization, that property will be forfeited in the manner I have described.

Mr. Speaker, gangs and other organized crime activities are motivated by profit. By removing these profits and the tools used to make that profit from the hands of criminals, this government is committed to continuing to create a hostile environment for organized crime and other criminal gang activity in the province.

In the same way that electronic reporting procedure under The Pawns Property (Recording) Act or the new procedures under The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act provide new tools for the police to make the operations of such gangs more difficult, this Act will provide an additional tool to our police services.

It is this government's position that all efforts should be made to assist our police services in their quest to provide safer Saskatchewan communities. Through legislation such as The Seizure of Criminal Property Act, we are hopeful that additional inroads can be made in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in supporting this important, new tool for our police services in their efforts to make Saskatchewan an undesirable location for organized crime activities. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act respecting the Forfeiture of Property Acquired by or Used in Criminal Activities.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the minister that Bill No. 110, The Seizure of Criminal Property Act, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and again it's an honour to stand and speak to Bill No. 110. And again I stress that the Saskatchewan Party supports any legislation that will allow . . . [inaudible] . . . to be at the disposal of the police to deal with organized crime within our province.

We will be taking this piece of legislation to the affected groups to ensure that it does indeed address what the minister has just told us that it will address. And we have a few questions on the issues that he mentioned. In particular he said that the proceeds accumulated through the liquidation of confiscated properties

will go towards the expenses incurred in confiscating those properties. But if those proceeds become excessive, what happens to the funds at that point in time? Is there any programs, for example victim impact programs, that that money would be directed to?

So there's a number of questions that we will have for the minister. And we will be looking forward to being able to pose those questions to him. So with that, I adjourn debate.

[16:00]

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Humboldt has moved that debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried. Committee of Finance. I do now leave the Chair, so the House can go into Committee of Finance.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Government Relations Vote 30

Subvote (GR01)

The Deputy Chair: — The business before the committee is estimates for the Department of Government Relations. Will the minister please introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to be in front of Committee of Finance again. The officials with me today include, to my right, the deputy minister of Government Relations, Harvey Brooks; next to him, the assistant deputy minister, municipal relations, Maryellen Carlson.

Also we have executive director, policy development, John Edwards. We have executive director, grants administration and provincial municipal relations, Mr. Russ Krywulak. We have executive director of finance and management services, Wanda Lamberti. We have assistant deputy minister, trade and international relations, Paul Osborne. We also have the director of grants administration, Doug Morcom, and acting executive director, community planning, Ralph Leibel.

The Deputy Chair: — Sub (GR01). Is the committee ready for the question? I recognize the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Minister, welcome and welcome to your officials here today. I have a few questions — questions that I have been trying to get answers for, for probably five years since I took my position as MLA. And the questions are regarding forest fringe problems.

Now there's a group set up in my area, and they've been trying to get some answers regarding forest fringe questions. And to date there's been a lot of talk but again no answer's been done.

And I'm sure one of your officials today, Mr. Edwards, hopefully will have some answers for my questions today.

To date what has taken place regarding the changes made to legislation where the RMs [rural municipality] have the ability to tax permit land — not lease land; permit land — in the forest fringe?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much for that question. And I know, and I can signal to your constituents I know of your interest in this issue. And as you had mentioned in your statement to your question, indeed you have been bringing this issue forward for a while. As you are also aware, this department has been discussing this matter at least as long as you've been asking those questions and have basically concluded this is a lot more complicated than it actually appears on the ground.

Just by way of background, Government Relations did conduct a survey of RMs affected in July 2001 and did prepare a discussion paper incorporating both the survey results and feedback from the interested parties. That survey showed 7 of 32 rural municipalities within the forest fringe actually assessed and taxed grazing permit holders. Total grazing permit taxes, including both municipal and school, were just over \$100,000.

Government Relations officials have since met with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Saskatchewan Environment, Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization to examine this issue and identify potential options to address the concerns that had been raised. As I'd indicated, they have discovered the complexity of different views. It quickly became apparent during the review that there are indeed different views of what the problem is or what could be done about it. And therefore because of the different views, it was necessary to ensure careful consideration before any changes are proposed.

Government Relations provided an overview of the issues at a January 2005 meeting of the Crown land stakeholders forum and suggested that this group could discuss this matter to provide direction to the Department of the Environment. Government Relations is prepared to consider direction from Environment and Crown land stakeholders to resolve the various issues.

Mr. Allchurch: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister, for the answer. As you mentioned, the information you gave me was back in 2001. From 2001 to date there has been no change. The farm grazers that are grazing cattle in this permit land . . . And I do stress that it's permit land; it is not lease land. And this is something that I stressed to Mr. Osika when he was the minister and he did take the time to understand the forest fringe problem. And I think that's what the farm people are saying to you as your government, that you have to understand this problem before you can make any recommendations.

Now in previous talks that I've had with different ministers, your government has always said it's left up to SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] to make the final decision. Well I believe it shouldn't be left up to SARM. It should be left up to you because you're the government.

And I find it ironic that this is probably the most ironic tax imposed on a group of people ever. When you have a certain group of people paying tax for 365 days a year, and the maximum days of use that they can use is only 145, why should they be taxed? This is a question they have.

Now also to that, Mr. Minister, there are other users of that land. There is woodcutters. There is outfitters who use the land a lot more than the forest grazing people do, and yet they're not assessed any tax at all.

The grazing people have wrote letters. They have talked to SARM. SARM will not budge on this. When is your government going to take a serious stand and look at this properly so that the grazing people of the forest fringe do not have to pay tax on a year basis when they can only use the land less than half of the time?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much again for the continuing line of questions. The member does talk about the role of government and government having to make decisions. By making decisions, government makes choices. You examine options. You make decisions based on the options that are brought forward to you, and you move forward having made those choices.

One of the options available to government is always status quo. And the status quo remains in place unless a significant change comes forward. When government makes choices for change, government always wants to ensure that the people affected by the change are supportive of that change or provide you with evidence that a majority of the membership wants that change.

One of the complexities in this case is that the majority of rural municipalities affected want no change. The majority of rural municipalities are saying that the status quo is the right decision for this government to make.

We have agreed to continue to work with individuals in the Crown land stakeholder group, with the Department of the Environment to try to determine and work out options that are available to the people that you are representing as their MLA.

But we do have a broader issue here in which government has devolved certain authorities to rural municipalities. And as I'd indicated earlier, only 7 of 32 rural municipalities within the forest fringe actually assess or tax grazing permit holders. And on top of that, a rural municipality currently has the ability to cancel or pro-rate taxes. And RM councils also may choose to exempt grazing permit holders by bylaw. So government action already provides local councils to do some of the things that you're asking government to do across the province.

So bottom line is right now we are assessing all of the options. We are talking to all of the players, and we are looking for a compromise to come forward that gives us reason to believe that there's an acceptable choice to be made that takes us beyond the status quo.

Mr. Allchurch: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I've always been led to believe, and I'm sure you will agree with me, that in order to implement the tax or have the ability to

implement the tax, you must be able to provide a service. Can you tell me in regards to the permitted land that we're dealing with, permitted land and forest fringe, where the RM provides a service that gives them the empowerment and power to levy a tax? They do not provide any service; yet this government has given them the ability and the power to levy a tax.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well, Mr. Chair, all I can say to that is that we do believe that local decisions are best made at the local level. We provide rural municipalities with certain powers that takes the provincial government away from the decision-making table and allows the local governments to make certain decisions. And I would ask the member opposite if he has attended an RM meeting and asked that very question to the RM. They are at this point the decision-making power. They are the people that can best address the issue that the member raises.

On the other hand, this government is also open to examining other options that are available to us and we continue to do that.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, a little while ago you said that you relate to the status quo. Well back when this was implemented by your government, why didn't you just stay with the status quo? Why didn't you leave it the way it was when it was under the jurisdiction of SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management] who have the ability to permit each users of that said land in a fair and equitable basis? Why did you not stay with the status quo and listen to SARM and a few members of SARM, and right away give them the opportunity to tax this land without this government knowing the full details of that proposal?

[16:15]

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I just would like to reiterate, but add this one piece of information. The power was provided to the rural municipalities in 1989 and rural municipalities are required by legislation to assess grazing permits. But they have the ability to cancel or pro-rate those taxes if they feel the taxes based on the full year are not appropriate. RM councils may also choose to exempt grazing permit holders by bylaw. Those are the powers that have been provided to the rural municipality.

Mr. Allchurch: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Yes, you have given the RMs the power to levy that tax. It comes back to my former statement. How can you allow a body like the RMs to impose a tax on certain individuals when they don't provide any service?

And when the RMs at their RM convention passed this, I can guarantee you that 99.9 per cent of the people there didn't know what the heck they were talking about when they're talking about forest fringe. In fact, the former ministers that I was dealing with since year 2000 didn't know what forest fringe is and it wasn't up until the time that Mr. Osika took the office of minister that he actually sat down and understood it.

Now you had a former deputy minister last year, Mr. Larry Steeves, who also took the time to understand forest fringe. He is no longer in your department, but he is the deputy minister of Northern Affairs. He understands the problem with forest fringe.

It is the most unfair tax ever imposed on a certain group of people and your government stands here and says as long as SARM says it's okay, we're going to let them be the power that will grant the levy of taxes.

Yet it's your job, Mr. Minister, as the minister of municipal relations, to understand the problem and then allow this body to tax where it's taxable where the taxable people are getting a fair shake.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well I find it interesting that the member would say that 99.9 per cent of SARM delegates didn't know what they were voting on. I hope that that's not what the member was trying to say. I believe that elected members of local governments know what they're voting on when they go to conventions. And I believe that when they voted on this issue or one similar to it they were understanding that this government, and governments before it, have devolved authority for local issues to local governments.

Don't ask the provincial government to make decisions on local issues. People stand for election to rural municipality governments, to urban municipality governments — just as they do for provincial governments — to take responsibility for issues that are within their individual jurisdiction. And this government, with the support of members of SARM and SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], have devolved certain authorities to the local level without provincial government interference.

So I'll go back to what I said earlier. There's a local government decision-making process that exists here. But this government is also prepared to continue to look at existing options where the province might play a role. In other words, the Department of the Environment is taking a look at the role that decisions that are made within that department are affecting people on the land. But other rural municipalities have dealt with this issue differently than the municipality that you are representing in this case.

And I have to say I respect the decisions that local government members make. I'm willing to discuss their decisions with them as I do on an ongoing basis. I'm willing to discuss the role that the province should play in local government. And in fact, later this session the member will have an opportunity to discuss The Municipalities Act which we have worked out in conjunction with local governments, that establishes a relationship between local governments and the provincial governments respecting each others jurisdiction and moving forward issues that are, in most cases, very local in nature.

So I simply stress in closing on this issue, we are doing what we can through the Department of the Environment to address the issues that the member has brought forward. They are more complex because a decision this government makes for this rural municipality will have an impact against almost all other municipalities in the province, whether they have forest fringe elements to them or not.

And I urge the member to continue to work on the big picture, as well as the interests of his own constituents.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Well, Mr.

Minister, 99.9 per cent is just a figure of speech. But I can guarantee after questioning ministers in the year 2000 and again up until last year, most of them don't understand what forest fringe is, don't understand what the forest fringe problems are.

And when you look at this from the forest fringe . . . [inaudible] . . . perspective, they're charged tax on 365 days of the year and they only get to use it 145 days. How can one say that that is a proper taxation system? How can you, as a minister, say that that is a proper taxation system when you have to pay for the whole year and only get to use it one-half a year. If this is the case, if you're going to keep on charging the forest grazers tax on a year-round basis, will you impose tax on all the other users of that said land, for instance, the wood people — people that cut wood — or forestry people or outfitters, or anybody else using that land? Will you impose a tax on them?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I think the member opposite is trying to provide or ask me to take over authority that in fact the local members have and want to protect themselves. When he talks about 99.9 per cent being a figure of speech, I think he's forgetting something very important here and that is that 7 of 32 municipalities within the forest fringe assess these taxes, the people at the local level who understand completely the issues of the forest fringe because they live there. The rural municipal councillors and reeves in seven municipalities have imposed this tax and not exempted it.

They understand the issue. They understand it very well and they have chosen to impose this tax, not this government. Seven of thirty-two have done that. The others have chosen to provide exemptions or have chosen to change the delivery of the system somewhat.

So it's not that this government doesn't understand, it's that those who are there and have the authority to deliver it do understand and are taxing accordingly. I ask the member opposite again to discuss this issue where the decisions are being made, at the local level.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Well, Mr. Minister, this forest fringe land is under the jurisdiction of SERM. It is SERM land yet the taxation system is imposed by Municipal Affairs. Three years ago, the SARM convention, there was a resolution having the Environment COs [conservation officers] collect the taxes. And their answer was, and I quote:

We are not tax collectors, because there should not be a tax. We do it in a permit basis so that everybody using that land gets permitted to the amount of days they use it on a fair and equitable basis.

Why won't the government allow that to go back to the department of SERM where it should be, and was in the first place, before SARM introduced this amendment to the legislation that gives them the power to levy a tax yet not provide any services?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I really believe that the member opposite now is trying to unduly complicate what is already a very complicated issue. Is the member opposite asking me as minister not to allow rural municipalities to cancel or pro-rate

taxes, not to exempt permits across the board? Or is he asking me to remove local authority altogether and not to give them the ability to tax any local issues, and that these are provincial issues and not local ones?

I'm just wondering what authority the member wants me to assume on behalf of rural municipalities, and will that suggestion that the member is making have the support of the majority of rural municipalities across the province.

Mr. Allchurch: — Mr. Minister, what I'm asking you to do is go out to the RMs, at the seven if that's what you want, and talk to the people in government, local government. And also talk to the farmers that graze in this area and understand the issue — understand it. Because this is in permit land under the jurisdiction of SERM, not SARM — under SERM. And yet the government has allowed another body, which is SARM, to levy that tax. And they do not provide a service.

And that's where you come in as a minister. That should have been done way back when — when instead of taking SARM's decision that yes, we will amend this legislation, you should have went out there and understood what the problem was. And then you'd have realized then, Mr. Minister, that this is an unfair tax, and that it should not be allowed. And that the department of SERM should be the ones doing it under a permit basis, because it's a fair system to every user of the land.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The member opposite simply provides evidence to all members of the Chamber how complicated the issue really is. But when we break it down to its very simplest form, its very simplest form, the rural municipalities have authority to, once a tax has been levied, to pro-rate or to cancel it. We give that authority to the local rural municipalities. The councillors and the reeves that are elected at the local level can make this decision for each community that they represent. This is something that rural municipalities have lobbied for for years.

Is the member opposite telling me that it's his party's position today that we should withdraw that devolution of power that we provided back in 1989? Should we withdraw that power and assume it ourselves? Is that the position of the party represented by the member opposite?

Mr. Allchurch: — Mr. Minister, the land in question, forest fringe, is it SERM land or is it SARM land?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Again, I answer the member's question by saying this is SERM land. It belongs to the province of Saskatchewan and the rural municipality has the ability to tax it. The rural municipality also has the ability to cancel that tax, depending on what the citizens at the local level want. So the rural municipality has the ability to tax and to not tax that land regardless of who owns it. If it was private sector land, if it was corporate land, provincial land — it doesn't matter who owns the land, it's assessable and it's taxable. But the rural municipality at the local level has the ability to pro-rate or cancel that tax.

Mr. Allchurch: — Well, Mr. Minister, is this the same for all Crown land in the province of Saskatchewan, as you have just identified?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The province of Saskatchewan provides a legislative authority to local governments to assess and tax the Environment land. The other land I can't speak for.

Mr. Allchurch: — Mr. Minister, if it's good enough for forest fringe land, then why is it not the same for all land? Or is it different?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Actually, I've had confirmed for me what we're talking about is land leased for taxable purposes. In other words the property, the land, the purpose the land is used for is otherwise a taxable situation. So as a result, that's why this land is currently assessed for taxable purposes.

[16:30]

Mr. Allchurch: — Well, Mr. Minister, you're talking about apples and oranges. Forest fringe land is permitted land. Permitted land is year to year to year. It is not leased land. That is the difference. And that's what took Mr. Osika a long time to understand. He kept referring to permitted land and leased land being in the same kettle of wax. Well it is not. It's two different jurisdictions.

Therefore, Mr. Minister, when the government allowed the RMs the power to tax this land — and, like you said, there's only 7 of 32 RMs that's doing it and yes, you say they have the empowerment now to levy a tax or not — do you think an RM considering the conditions of rural Saskatchewan and agriculture today, where they're looking for any kind of dollars out there, this is the easiest tax dollars they can make? They can charge taxes for 365 days a year, allow them to be in that land for 145 and provide not one service. It's a freebie. Why wouldn't they want that? The reason they have that is because this government has allowed that to happen.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The member opposite continues to argue a case to the Minister of Government Relations that ideally should be argued to the reeve and council of the municipality or municipalities to which he refers. This issue does come down to jurisdiction and areas of authority.

The member tries to make an argument to the Minister of Government Relations, an argument that I will argue with him. I understand; and he knows I understand it because I was a Member of Parliament for that area for eight and a half years and I represented those very, very people that he's talking about. I've been there. I've talked to those people. I understand their circumstances, and I'm sympathetic to them.

At the same time, however, I have a responsibility as a minister of the Crown of a department that has devolved certain authorities to another level of government. I respect rural municipalities. I respect the government structures that are in place. I respect the decisions of their representative organizations, and I will continue to work with them to ensure that their ability to work within their own communities is as strong as possible.

Now the member argues that I don't understand. But it's the local authorities that have assessed and taxed that land and have chosen — even though they fully understand the implications — have chosen not to pro-rate or exempt their taxpayers from

that area of taxation.

The member's words are not mine, that this is an easy tax to take from their own people. But if that's an argument that he wants to make back home to the local reeve, I say feel free. Go home and make it.

Mr. Allchurch: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. I have made that argument with many Reeves regarding this. And I've said to them, just like I'm saying to you, when you levy or have the power to levy a tax, will you provide a service? And their answer is no, we don't have to; we don't own the land.

And I know, Mr. Minister, that you were not the minister of Government Relations when this first was implemented. I understand that. All I'm saying to you as minister now: will you undo a wrong that was done some years ago? Will you take back that legislation and put it in the hands of SERM where it belongs, where it's fair for everybody, through the SERM department?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I'll just wait till the member opposite is prepared to listen to the answer. The Department of Government Relations is working with SERM to examine other options that might be available in these circumstances. We have signalled that to the local leaseholders and we are including them in consultations and discussions. This is the way we do business — consultation, understanding, working together to find solutions that are acceptable to the majority of people involved.

In the case that's in front of us, again I can't stop thinking that the member opposite is trying to complicate the issue by requesting that this government take back authority that's been given to the local municipalities.

The member opposite argues that since SERM owns the land, the service must be provided for taxable purposes. The member is not thinking clearly, as I understand it, about who owns the other land in the RM. Private ownership, individuals who own the land, are they providing a service that's taxable?

A corporate structure, a railroad, pipeline, all of these are taxable services within the RM. But who provides the service to the rural municipal residents? It's the rural municipal government elected by the local residents, who ask their local governments to set budgets and deliver services. Every year the municipal government must sit down and balance revenues and expenditures against public criticism, public accountability, and public review.

The local government — regardless of who owns the land — makes assessments, provides a mill rate, and is held accountable at the end of the day for it. The municipal governments also have the authority to pro-rate for seasonal taxation or cancel taxes based on their own assessment of the local circumstances.

Again I tell the member opposite, we are continuing to look at what we can do within our jurisdiction. We ask the member to continue to argue where the jurisdiction currently exists, to seek the changes that he wishes.

Mr. Allchurch: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister, and I

definitely will be arguing.

My final line of questioning in regards to this is, there is a landowner in the Preeceville area who phoned me a month ago and has now been taken to court by the RM because he did not pay taxes on forest fringe permitted land. Now I've just talked to him to see what is happening with it, and apparently the court day has been cancelled. I really believe that when this finally does go to court, that the members that belong to the forest fringe association will understand and that the government will understand that this was a wrong and that two wrongs don't make a right.

I just hope that it doesn't cause for financial hardship on the government which therefore was turned back to the taxpayers of this province. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I ask the member opposite, because I haven't been served with any paperwork from the members opposite in this regard: is the province of Saskatchewan a party to this lawsuit?

Mr. Allchurch: — I don't know if that . . . I think it's just between the RM and the individual at this time. I don't believe that the government is brought into it. But I am quite sure that this is where it's going to be headed because of the amendment to the Act that allowed the RM in the first place to charge this tax. And that's why I believe that when this finally does go to court, that when it all comes out in the wash, the wrong that was done some years ago will have to be undone.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Well I think the member's preamble there indicates that the legal system and the courts understand that this is a matter where the jurisdiction lies with the municipal government. They've been given the authority to both levy the tax and to cancel it, and that the courts would not involve the provincial government in this issue because the jurisdiction does not lie here.

Mr. Allchurch: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. I look forward this year to raising my issues with local governments, in regards to this issue, to try and come up to a solution that's fair for not only the forest grazing people of the province but also the RMs. But I will like to conclude my questioning and pass it on to some other members. Thank you.

The Chair: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the minister and to your officials, Mr. Minister, I would imagine your office is getting a number of phone calls and letters from people who are looking at the new assessment or the reassessment, and questioning where the changes have occurred. I know that in my part of the province, in the northeast part of the province, there's been a considerable increase.

Can you tell me how many of the RMs had a . . . where the switch was? How much of . . . Where the main switch was in the assessment? I believe it was from the southwest to the northeast, but could you give me those figures, please?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I will answer the question a bit generally, and I'll in doing so ask my officials if we do have some of those

numbers available to hand them to me before I finish. But I'm not sure that the numbers the member is asking for are easy to come by.

Assessment is done in the province by the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency. The agency exists at arm's length from the province of Saskatchewan. Decisions are made by SAMA [Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency] by board, a board that's made up of representatives of the Rural Municipalities Association, the Urban Municipalities Association, and a number of appointments that are provided by government through Department of Government Relations and Learning.

The board of SAMA has consulted extensively with regards to developing guidelines for assessment changes in our four-year cycle. The member opposite will know that in 1997 there were certain decisions made on farm land that resulted in significant increases in assessment. And a result of increases in assessment, local governments set a tax system . . . tax rates in place that, based on the assessed numbers, increased taxes to some and decreased to others. And there's no doubt in 1997 the assessment increased substantially on the west side of the province over the east side.

Going into the 2001 reassessments, of course the government was looking at mitigation issues to try and deal with that. There was point eight three factor that was put in there. There was a program of tax rebates on education property tax. We have changed the percentage of value on farm land and on pasture land . . . but a number of things that were done over the years to address this issue.

But the significant issue that rural municipalities raised on assessment with us, on this shift in assessment, was that we wanted to go from the market approach to assessing farm land to the productivity approach to assessing farm land. And the board, after receiving a request from SARM, the board of SAMA made a decision prior to this year's reassessment to go from a market system to a productivity system.

The result of that change, requested by the RMs, has now shifted some of the assessed increase of assessment from the west side of the province to the east side of the province. In other words, it's taking us back to those pre-1997 days where there was an increased shift to the west side. So the decisions that have been made by SAMA, on the request of SARM, have taken us back to the pre-1997 days of equalizing the assessment across the province and doing it on a market-based . . . or a productivity-based approach.

When you combine changes in the economy, changes in the school divisions, changes in a number of other things, the way in which taxes will be applied east and west — oh, and pardon me — changes in assessment related to urban . . . or residential, commercial, and farm land, make it very difficult and challenging to come up with some exact numbers that the member opposite is asking for.

I'm told that we have projections with regards to taxes based on the current assessments on Government Relations' website, so if the member opposite wishes to go because it's quite . . . Every RM will have different projections. Please feel free to

access the website, and you'll be able to determine where the substantial shifts have occurred based on projections. We don't yet know what the mill rates are going to be like until the RMs set those.

[16:45]

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Minister, can you tell me what the total assessment increase is after this year's assessment over 2001, over the whole province?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Trying to answer that question . . . I'm informed that not all municipalities have their numbers in yet, so I can't give you the complete comparison of 2005 numbers versus 2001 numbers. But I can tell you that generally we have a good assessment increase across the province.

Let's not forget that everyone wants assessment increases. This is a good thing for the province. It means that the value of our land and our businesses are increasing. So assessment increases are a positive sign of a very productive and strong economy.

On the other side of it, obviously municipalities make choices with regards to the way in which they apply their mill rate factors across the piece on assessments. And of course, we do have the issue of how the school boards fit into all of that.

But the assessments that the member is talking about come to us as a result of guidelines put in place by Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency.

The Chair: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, I move the committee rise to report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The Chair: — The Government House Leader has moved that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That's carried.

The Speaker: — The Chair of committees is recognized.

Mr. Addley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the committee to report much, much progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again? The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Members of the Assembly, I'm advised that Her Honour is here for Royal Assent.

ROYAL ASSENT

[At 16:51 Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the

Chamber, took her seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bills.]

Her Honour: — Pray be seated.

The Speaker: — May it please your Honour, this Legislative Assembly has at its present session passed several Bills which in the name of the Assembly I present to Your Honour and to which Bills I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

Clerk: — The Bills are as follows:

Bill No. 304 — The Concentra Trust Act, 2005
Bill No. 305 — The Saskatoon Foundation Amendment Act,
2005
Bill No. 306 — The Soeurs de la Charite de St. Louis Repeal
Act

Her Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these Bills.

The Speaker: — May it please your Honour, this Legislative Assembly has voted the supplies required to enable the government to defray the expenses of the public service.

In the name of the Assembly I present to Your Honour:

Bill No. 117 — The Appropriation Act, 2005 (No. 1)

to which I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

Her Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I thank the Legislative Assembly, accept their benevolence, and assent to this Bill.

[Her Honour retired from the Chamber at 16:53.]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move the House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that this House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:55.]

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