



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

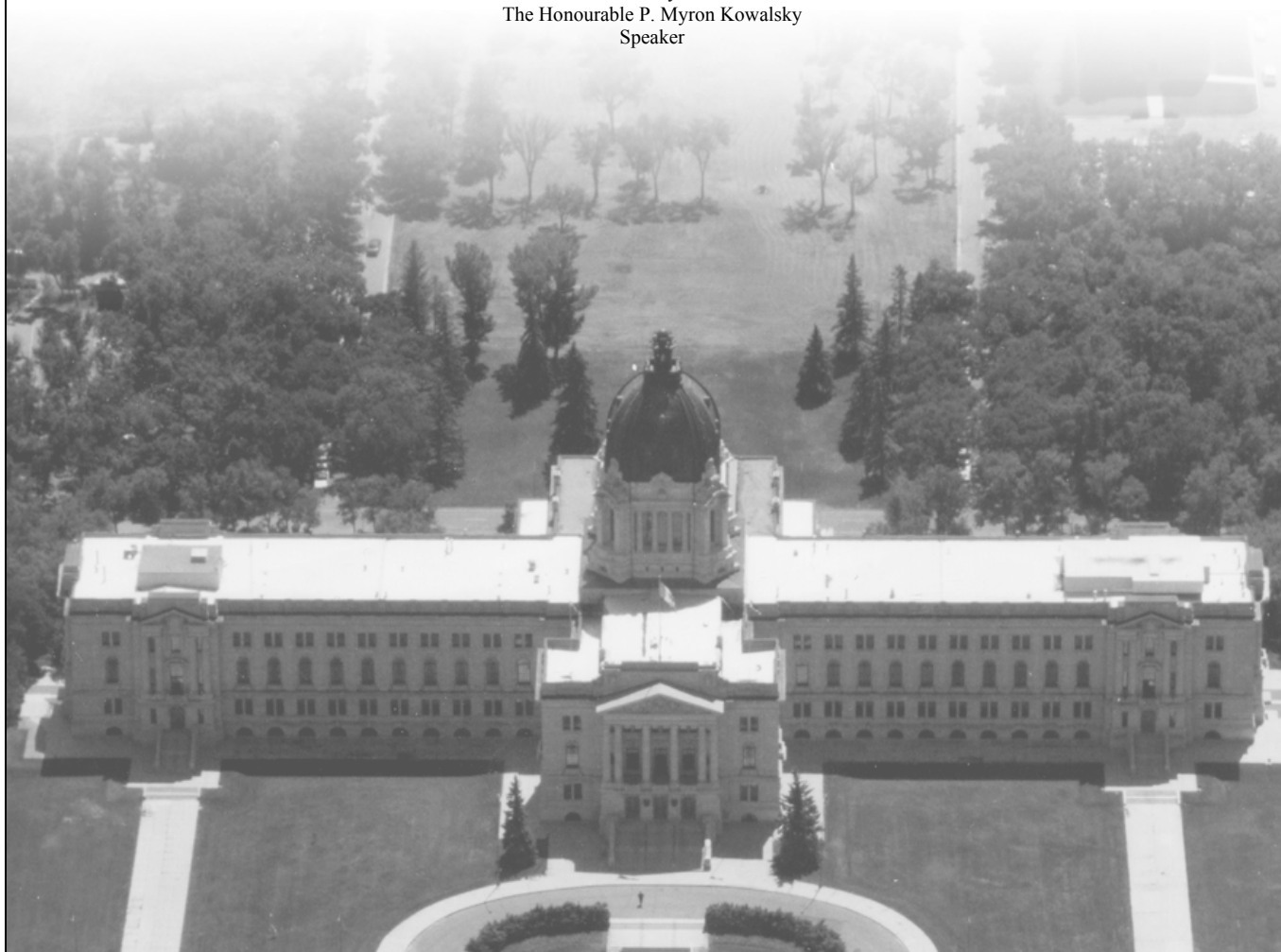
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
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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
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Borgerson, Lon	NDP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Calvert, Hon. Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Cline, Hon. Eric	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Crofford, Hon. Joanne	NDP	Regina Rosemont
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
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, there is a desperate need for some attention to be paid to Highway 32 as indicated by this particular petition:

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 four pages of petitions are signed by the residents of Lancer, Abbey, and Swift Current. I so present.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today on behalf of people who are concerned that this government has decided not to recycle plastics within the Regional Authority of Carlton Trail:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to take the necessary action to reintroduce recycling of plastics within the Regional Authority of Carlton Trail.

The people who have signed this petition are from Naicam and Kelvington.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition on behalf of the staff, participants, and families of the Wheatland Regional Centre Inc. and other like centres across the province that provide services for individuals with disabilities. The signatures on this petition are concerned that the Government of Saskatchewan is not meeting the needs of most vulnerable people, of the most vulnerable people in this province. And the prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners will humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly will please consider implementing the minimum compensation recommendations for staff members who support people with disabilities as outlined in SARC's human resources plan.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from the fine community of Beechy, and I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Thunder Creek.

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the forced amalgamation of school divisions. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to reverse the decision to force the amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan and continue reorganization of school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Briercrest, Baildon, and Moose Jaw. I so present.

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

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens of this province who are very concerned about the crop insurance premium hikes and coverage reductions. And the prayer reads as follows:

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 increase 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 citizens of Radville, Colgate, Weyburn, and Minton. 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 Weyburn-Big Muddy who are very concerned about the deplorable state of Highway 35. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to make the necessary repairs to Highway 35 north from the United States border in order to prevent injury or loss of life and to prevent the loss of economic opportunity in the area.

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

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

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

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition from parents in my constituency of Saskatoon Silver Springs regarding a much-needed elementary school in the Arbor Creek area of Saskatoon. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement an allocation of financial resources to build an elementary school in Arbor Creek.

The petitioners today live on Kutz Crescent, Budz Green, Peters Cove, and Sears Cove in northeast Saskatoon. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

**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 the government to repair and resurface Highway 15 from the junction of Highway 11 east to the junction of Highway No. 2:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that this portion of 15 Highway be repaired and resurfaced immediately so as to remove the safety hazard to all motorists who rely on this vital road for transportation and economic purposes.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by citizens from Hanley, Saskatoon, and Regina. I so present.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to read another petition opposed to possible reduction of health care services in Wilkie. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Wilkie Health Centre and special care home maintain at the very least their current level of services.

Signed by the good citizens of Wilkie and district. I so present.

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

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the Assembly today and present a petition on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan concerned with the forced amalgamation of school divisions. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to reverse the decision to force the amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan and continue the reorganization of school divisions on a

strictly voluntary basis.

Mr. Speaker, this multiple-page petition is signed by citizens of Kerrobert, Major, Coleville, and Luseland. 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 paper no. 72, 640, 666, 715, 720, and 730.

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 104 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Community Resources and Employment: is the Valley View Centre in Moose Jaw scheduled to be closed in the next five years?

Thank you.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislature a number of EMTs [emergency medical technician], paramedics, and dispatchers that work for Crestvue Ambulance in Yorkton, that were outside in front of the legislature today trying to receive wage parity with a number of other health districts and their same health district in Melville and areas like that, Mr. Speaker. I would ask all members to welcome them here today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Lakeview.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the government members, I also welcome the emergency medical services workers from the Yorkton area, and I look forward to having their issues resolved at the bargaining table. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce 56 grade 7 and 8 students that are in the east gallery along with their teachers. Twenty-eight of these young people are from Victoria School in Saskatoon, and 28 are from Kingston, Ontario. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Thomson and Mr. Hesketh from Kingston, along

with Saskatoon teachers Mr. Brusky, Mr. Olfert, and Mrs. Diederichs.

Mr. Speaker, these young people are visiting Regina today. They are going to have a visit with myself at the end of question period; we'll have drinks and refreshments. For the next 25 minutes they're going to observe question period, and I know that we will all want to welcome them to the legislature.

On a personal note, one of the young people in the gallery is the nephew of a member of the legislature, and that's Tor Nilson Lokken. He no doubt will hear his uncle John answer some questions in question period this afternoon. So I would ask all people in the legislature to welcome these young people to our Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for The Battlefords.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour for me today to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly, individuals sitting in your gallery who represent Saskatchewan's local municipalities in various capacities and who have worked collectively and collaboratively in the creation of The Municipalities Act that will be given second reading in the Assembly later today.

In your gallery, Mr. Speaker, we have from SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], Mr. Ken Engel; from the Rural Municipal Administrators Association, Kevin Ritchie. From SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] we have Barry Gunther, Allan Earle, Cam Baker, and Keith Schneider. And we have legal counsel, Merrilee Rasmussen.

Mr. Speaker, all of these individuals have sat on the committee that has developed The Municipalities Act, and I cannot thank them enough for their dedication to the people and municipalities of the province.

Also, Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery are individuals from the Department of Government Relations who have played a vital role in the development of the consolidated municipalities Act, and I would like to thank them on behalf of government for their work: Mr. John Edwards, Noela Bamford, Keith Comstock, Rod Nasewich, and Allan Laird.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, but certainly not least, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the legislature, Sandy Schnell, legislative Crown counsellor, and thank her for her work in taking the effort of The Municipalities Act committee and crafting the legislation that is before us for second reading today.

I ask all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming these people and thank them for their hard work in crafting The Municipalities Act.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood

River.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the minister, on behalf of the official opposition, and welcome the members from SUMA and SARM and the delegation here today. I know they've done an awful lot of work on the municipal Act and the consequential municipal Act, and they're here today to hear the first reading.

But I think you can understand, with all of the changes, why the other Act was actually repealed. And hopefully we've got this one right this time. So again, welcome, and enjoy your afternoon in the Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature, in your gallery, Jennifer Nowoselski. She is a constituent of Saskatoon Fairview. She is a grade 12 student at Bedford Road Collegiate, an active member of the Saskatchewan Youth Parliament, and she's here to observe us today. But mostly she's here visiting a friend of hers, one of our Pages, Arielle Zerr. I'd like all members to welcome her to our Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to stand today and introduce to you, through you, and to all members of the Assembly Mr. Larry Hubich, president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, with us here today.

And he's sitting with some members of the Health Sciences Association. Some of the names that I'd like to read into record are Chris Driol — he's the president of the HSA [Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan] from Saskatoon; Dennis Tarr — he's a care paramedic in Yorkton and the union rep for Yorkton; Jim Jeffrey, staff rep of the HSA in Regina; and Mario Kijkowski, labour relations rep out Regina for the HSA. And I'd like to welcome them to the legislature today, especially when we have second readings of some labour legislation and adjourned debates. So welcome to the legislature. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

**Mr. Addley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce to you and to all members my legislative intern who's working with me — actually, I don't own him, he's actually just working with me; he actually owns me in a way — is Mr. Kevin Chernoff. And I notice he's sitting with Cam Baker, a veteran of the Saskatchewan legislative internship program. So I'm not sure who's teaching whom more up there. But if all hon. members would welcome Kevin to the House today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Athabasca.

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery, the west gallery, is a friend of mine and a constituent from Buffalo Narrows, Mr. Brian Morin.

Mr. Morin, of course, was in Weyburn over the weekend. He has two sons trying out for the hockey team there. And both of his boys also played with the La Ronge Ice Wolves and have been very active in minor sports throughout the North. And, Mr. Speaker, his wife was a good athlete.

So I want to take just a moment to welcome Brian to the Assembly, and ask all my colleagues to join us in welcoming Mr. Morin to the Assembly today. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Members of the Assembly, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you an out-of-province guest seated in the Speaker's gallery today. Mr. Hasani Ngobeni is a Sergeant-at-Arms, travelling to us all the way from Limpopo province, South Africa, which was incorporated four years ago in the year 2001. And he is the special guest to our Sergeant-at-Arms, Patrick Shaw.

Mr. Ngobeni has come to our legislature on an attachment to look at the security hardware and security policies in place in Saskatchewan and to compare practices in Limpopo with what we do here. May your visit to our province and our legislature be a rewarding one, Mr. Ngobeni. It's reassuring to me to have a backup Sergeant-at-Arms. Members, please join me in welcoming Mr. Ngobeni to our legislature.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

#### Whitewood Community Drama Club Performance

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what happens to a cruise ship full of passengers when they are shipwrecked on a not-so-deserted tropical island? Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, actually a couple weeks ago, the Whitewood local drama club hosted three dinner theatres which were sold out each evening. And they answered that question. They performed the play *Lagooned*. And, Mr. Speaker, they did an excellent job.

Mr. Speaker, just having had the opportunity of attending that dinner theatre, and having good food, and just the privilege of enjoying the fellowship of people around us, and then to note how well 27 local people performed when they performed this, did this performance of *Lagooned*. And how they shared with us the story of this crew and the shipwrecked cruise ship and

the final results and the outcome of that drama.

Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the Whitewood Community Drama Club — the 27 actors, the eight backup personnel who did the lighting and the sound, and most certainly the director, Donna Beutler, for her hard work, her dedication, and for a job well done.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Transit Service Employee Recognition Awards

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Public transportation services provide all of us with greater access, opportunity, and choice. They strengthen our community by reducing fossil fuel consumption and traffic congestion and foster a healthy and safe environment.

Mr. Speaker, recently I had the pleasure of attending the 52nd Transit Services Branch Employee Recognition Awards Banquet in Saskatoon, where some 300 men and women were honoured for the high-quality services they provide. The evening brought together colleagues from all sections of the branch to congratulate those who achieved the highest standards in both workplace safety and in the safety of delivering the city's transit passengers.

Mr. Speaker, the strength and success of transit services branch in Saskatoon are its employees. Every day, all year long, they ensure the citizens of Saskatoon have the access to safe, clean, and reliable public transportation in all types of weather and traffic conditions.

Mr. Speaker, this year's most notable award went to Roanne Olfert, a Saskatoon transit operator, who was selected by her peers as Transit Employee of the Year. Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ms. Olfert on her achievement and in recognizing all Saskatoon transit service employees for the important and valued transportation services they provide. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Selnes Family Inducted into Saskatchewan Baseball Hall of Fame

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Baseball Hall of Fame announced that the Selnes brothers — Jack, Arnie, Henry, Lyle, Roy — and their cousin, Hans, have been chosen to be inducted as a family.

Sons of Norwegian immigrants, the boys learned how to play ball at their one-room school. During the 1930s through to the 1950s, they contributed to the success of their senior Meskanaw hardball team. The blazing fast ball and the hard hitting skill of the Selnes boys were renowned and often utilized by neighbouring teams.

Henry, the sole living member of the group, lives in the Pleasant Valley area. His memories revolve around the group's love of the game, events like travelling to sports days as a team in the back of Beacher Jack's truck, playing ball all day, usually staying for the dance long into the night, and landing home in time to change for a day's work on the farm.

The boys played the game because they loved it. They thought nothing of walking 3 miles to play a game, then walking home afterwards and doing chores. I dare say most of us would really think we'd achieved something if we'd done that even once.

Mr. Speaker, and members of the Assembly, please join me in congratulating Henry and the families of Hans, Jack, Arnie, Lyle, and Roy Selnes.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Athabasca.

#### Clearwater Aviation

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently the Clearwater River Dene Nation in my constituency of Athabasca began operating Clearwater Aviation, a company that offers charter and ambulance services to local residents.

Mr. Speaker, the Clearwater River Dene Nation has an impressive portfolio of businesses that includes trucking, catering, and forestry services, and now the first ever locally owned and operated aviation company in that area, Mr. Speaker.

Clearwater Aviation began after the First Nation decided it wanted to improve local services. Since then, the company has met its projections and flies approximately 70 hours a month.

Mr. Speaker, Clearwater Aviation plays an important role in the health and well-being of local residents. It has dramatically saved time with medical evacuations and eventually hopes to build a solid tourism trade.

The Clearwater River Dene Nation, headed by Chief Roy Cheecham, has an ambitious economic development plan that has created sustainable and profitable jobs and provides vital services to the people in northern Saskatchewan.

I ask all my colleagues to join me in acknowledging the Clearwater River Dene Nation near La Loche, and of course their chief, Roy Cheecham, and the council for their commitment to economic development in the North and improving the quality of life for many northern Saskatchewan residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Cannington.

#### Congratulations to Helen Grandy on 100th Year

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On September

3, it will be Helen Grandy's 100th birthday, Mr. Speaker. Ms. Grandy was born in Illinois and her family immigrated to Canada when she was very young. They moved to a farm site south of Oxbow.

She then took her normal school training and became an elementary schoolteacher. And her first job, Mr. Speaker, was in southwest Saskatchewan where the school was 50 miles from the nearest town — not a lot different than today, Mr. Speaker.

She married Thomas Whitfield Grandy in 1931, and at that point she quit teaching, Mr. Speaker. They had four children. She's in excellent health and continues to live in her own home, Mr. Speaker, with the aid of a housekeeper.

One of the things that Mrs. Grandy did is she taught 4-H, Mr. Speaker. And she taught yoga to the 4-H. Yoga and Oxbow, Mr. Speaker, in my mind, are not synonymous, but I'm glad to say that Mrs. Grandy did an excellent job with the 4-H. And I would like to congratulate her on her 100th year. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Dewdney.

#### Corrections Exemplary Service Awards

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Corrections officers often make a difference in the lives of people in conflict with the law. They work to keep our communities safe and play an important role in helping turn troubled lives around.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, 31 individuals received Corrections Exemplary Service Awards for their contributions to the provincial and federal corrections systems.

Mr. Speaker, the Corrections Exemplary Service Awards acknowledge the special obligations and hazardous conditions that peace officers experience in their work with adult corrections or young offender programs. They recognize officers with at least 20 years of full-time exemplary service who have spent at least 10 years working as a peace officer in an institution or with a parole or probation service.

Mr. Speaker, the 17 members of the federal service and the 14 provincial employees who were honoured have helped many offenders return to successful and productive lives in their communities. Through rehabilitation programs these officers have demonstrated respect, fairness, and dignity for the people they serve.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure all my colleagues will join me in congratulating the 2005 recipients of the Corrections Exemplary Service Awards on their accomplishments, and in thanking them for their dedication and courage in sometimes difficult and dangerous circumstances on our behalf.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Biggar Writer Receives Saskatchewan Arts Board Award**

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A friend and neighbour of mine, Biggar writer Jeanne Marie de Moissac, was recently awarded \$12,000 to create a new manuscript of poetry by the Saskatchewan Arts Board. A prolific writer, de Moissac's works have appeared in *Grain*, *Dandelion*, *Arc*, *Fiddlehead*, *Playgirl*, and have been broadcast on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] Radio. Her first book, *Second Skin*, was published by Coteau in 1998.

Jeanne Marie de Moissac was born and raised near Biggar and currently lives on a farm in the Bear Hills area. Jeanne Marie has had many interests. She has been a farmer, including raising sheep, and kept busy raising her children while working at Angie's Hair Salon & Barber Shop in Biggar.

Jeanne Marie de Moissac read from her latest book, *Slow Curve*, during a book launch last October.

I look forward to the next time Jeanne Marie gives me a haircut, where we can discuss politics and her latest endeavour in the literary world. Please join me in congratulating Jeanne Marie de Moissac on her latest achievement.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland.

**Saskatoon Credit Union Anniversary**

**Mr. Addley:** — Mr. Speaker, over the weekend I had the great pleasure of attending the 65th anniversary celebration of Saskatoon Credit Union. There were over 300 people in attendance and it was a great evening, enjoyable for a lot of different reasons.

For a number of years I had the honour and privilege of serving as president and Chair of the Board of Directors of Saskatoon Credit Union. I am extremely proud to have had the opportunity to serve an organization that has been extraordinarily successful, not only in terms of business but also in terms of putting into practice the social and co-operative values upon which it was founded.

And so I was more than pleased to have the chance to say a few words in praise of all the Saskatoon Credit Union has achieved in its 65-year history. But the high point of the evening, Mr. Speaker, was the performance by Saskatchewan centennial 2005 youth ambassador, Theresa Sokyryka, who treated the audience to a number of songs from her debut album which is released today. Mr. Speaker, given all that the Saskatoon Credit Union has accomplished in its 65-year history to benefit not only Saskatoon but the province as a whole, I think it's fitting that this anniversary should coincide with the Saskatchewan centennial celebration. In fact the theme for the evening was 100 years of heart and 65 years of fulfilling dreams.

I invite all members to join me in congratulating Saskatoon Credit Union for 65 great years as an integral and vibrant part of the community. We look forward to many, many more.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

**Strike by Emergency Medical Technicians in Yorkton**

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, striking Yorkton ambulance workers are here in Regina today and have been picketing the legislature. These workers want wage parity with other ambulance workers in the province. These Yorkton workers earn 5 to \$8 less per hour than ambulance workers just a few kilometres away in Melville. This NDP [New Democratic Party] government has the power to fix this problem.

Will the minister commit today to ensure wage equity for these Crestvue ambulance workers so they can get off the picket line and go back to work where they want to be, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, the workers who are here today are bargaining their first contract with a private employer. They're not employees of the Sunrise Regional Health Authority or of Saskatchewan Health.

Funding for ambulance services right across the province are provided to the private operators on the same basis, and the contracts are then negotiated with the workers, with those ambulance services. And I encourage the members to go back to the bargaining table.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, there's not much use going back to the bargaining table until that minister and that government decides to fund them properly and make a fair, level playing field throughout the province. He said there is a fair, level playing field; there isn't.

You get the situations like Moose Jaw, Regina, Saskatoon are treated different than they are in Yorkton. We have a private contractor in Yorkton that these people work for and all they're asking is wage parity with people in the other part of the health district, such as Melville, that make anywhere from 5 to \$8 an hour more.

Will the minister make a commitment today to these people who've had to come in here, picket the legislature to get any kind of action, and hopefully they get action from this minister. Will the minister make a commitment today and deal with the problem we have in the Yorkton area?



**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, once again the member from the opposition doesn't get his facts together before he comes forward here. This is a first contract between employees and a private contractor. I think the member may want to discuss with his colleagues whether they should support Bill 87, The Trade Union Act, which allows for some very clear rules around first contracts which would assist these workers in a very, very clear fashion.

Mr. Speaker, the facts are that we provide the same funding across the health care system in Saskatchewan and that that funding is used by many other operators to negotiate contracts which do provide the kinds of wages that the member talks about.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Once again, he does not provide the same funding across the province. That is part of the problem in this situation. Mr. Speaker, these people have been on strike for 20 days, but this problem has gone on far longer than that. This has gone on for many months, in fact, years.

This is a government that prides itself on wage equity and wage parity and yet they sit back and watch what's happening for the Crestvue Ambulance workers in Yorkton where they're making anywhere from 5 to \$8 an hour less than their counterparts in Melville in the same health district, Mr. Speaker. Not even a different health district.

So maybe the minister would like to rise today and address to these people that he would be willing to fix the problem out there. I don't know how on earth he can justify anything else. Let's treat workers that are doing the same job with the same qualifications, let's pay them the same. Will the minister do that, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, this is a first contract between a private contractor and the employees that are working for that contractor. The company involved is receiving the same funding as other private contractors across the system and those contractors have been able to negotiate contracts with their employees that provide the pay scale that's there.

**The Speaker:** — Order, please members, order. Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, the whole situation here is that we end up in a situation where we're providing the funding

on a standard basis right across the whole province. That particular contractor is working with the employees around a first contract. We all know that first contracts are quite difficult. I ask those members to support Bill 87, the amendments to The Trade Union Act.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Legislation for Treatment of Drug Addicted Youth

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday a family desperate and hurting came to this legislature to find out if their government could help them get their daughter back from the drug underworld. The family says their daughter is a 17-year-old drug addict who's living with a known drug trafficker and they haven't seen her in months.

We understand the family met with ministers and several department officials yesterday afternoon. Mr. Speaker, this family is desperate. As a last resort, the family asked the Minister of Community Resources and Employment to help get their daughter back by using section 18 of The Child and Family Services Act. We understand that was not done. Can the minister tell us why not?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Community Resources and Employment.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all I would say that I spent considerable time with this particular family yesterday, and committed to do everything that's within my power to do.

Now I can't speak to the specific case but I can tell you what we do in this kind of a situation. First of all, when a complaint is made of this nature regarding a child who's under the age of 18, we investigate. So a worker would go out — a child protection worker would go out — would speak in person to the person in question, and determine whether or not they were lucid in terms of having the conversation, and would offer services and offer an exit from the situation that they're in. And this would happen in every situation, Mr. Speaker.

Aside from that there would be follow-up that would occur at subsequent occasions. Now there is a difference between a child who's under 16 and one who's over 18, which I will subsequently explain.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, a young person on drugs — it doesn't matter if they're 16 or 17 or 15 — they really don't know what they're doing. And right now it's clear that not only is the family powerless to get their daughter back, so is the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police].

Current legislation does not provide the family with the legal

tools necessary to save their child and to get her into the treatment and the counselling that she needs. Tomorrow I'm going to be introducing a private member's Bill to give parents those tools. The family does not understand why this government wants to just wait and see what happens in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will his NDP government be supporting our Bill so the families aren't put through an emotional wringer to try and get the kids that they love back and give them the help that they need?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources and Employment.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to continue on with explaining the legal environment at the moment, a child who's under 16 is determined to be under the care of their parents and there can be an order. If a child is over 16, or in either instance, there has to be evidence presented to a judge — which is similar to the Alberta legislation — there has to be evidence presented to a judge . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please, members. Order, please. Order. Order. The Minister of Community Resources and Employment.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Again, there has to be evidence presented to a judge, so there has to be sufficient evidence that a judge would consider necessary to judge that that child was not capable of making a decision. And certainly we are continuing to pursue visitation to determine whether or not in these instances there is sufficient evidence to put before a judge. But a judge makes the determination of whether you can move to the next step of apprehension.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Investment Saskatchewan Dividends

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Speaker, last week the SaskPower minister stood in this House and defended the NDP's policy of taking 90 per cent dividends from the Crowns and he said, I'd like to quote:

I'll tell you what we . . . [won't] do. We . . . [won't] take over 100 per cent like they did in the second-last year of the previous administration . . . we . . . [won't] take over 200 per cent like they did in the last year of the previous administration.

Mr. Speaker, today Investment Saskatchewan released its annual report. It had a profit of \$19 million last year. Mr. Speaker, do you know how much the dividend was that Investment Saskatchewan paid to the government? Forty-two million dollars. That's \$42 million, Mr. Speaker, and that is 220 per cent of Investment Saskatchewan's net profit.

Mr. Speaker, once again the NDP says one thing and yet does another. How can this government justify stripping more than twice the net profit out of Investment Saskatchewan?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — As usual, Mr. Speaker, the opposition says one thing, but the facts are something else. What the member did not tell the House, Mr. Speaker, but I will report to the House, is that during 2004, the year in question, Investment Saskatchewan had a number of major and unusual cash receipts from its investing companies — most notably, Mr. Speaker, \$154.5 million from HARO Financial, and \$9.3 million in cash receipts.

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. Order. I would ask members on both sides of the House to stop pointing fingers and also to allow the debate to continue here. The Minister of Industry and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I'm pleased to report that not only did Investment Saskatchewan almost triple its net earnings, Mr. Speaker, but Investment Saskatchewan today, as the report revealed and the member's well aware of it, Mr. Speaker, has over, I believe, \$160 million in cash sitting into its account. And, Mr. Speaker, if Investment Saskatchewan did not pay a dividend to its shareholder, the people of the province, I would expect that opposition to complain about that as well, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that Investment Saskatchewan reported a \$19 million net profit and yet this government took \$42 million in money from that Crown in terms of a dividend.

Mr. Speaker, Investment Saskatchewan's CEO [chief executive officer] says that they were actually required to pay two dividends to this government. The first dividend was \$17.3 million, which was 90 per cent of the corporation's net income for the year and then the government requested a special dividend of \$25 million more.

Mr. Speaker, the question is, why that request? What was that about? Why did the NDP force Investment Saskatchewan to pay two dividends that total more than twice their net profit for the year?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, when Investment Saskatchewan is sitting with \$160-some million in cash and when the people of the province have needs such as the need to fund the CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] program, Mr. Speaker, we make no apologies that profitable Crown corporations and agencies pay dividends to the shareholder, Mr. Speaker, which is the people of Saskatchewan.

And we make no apologies, Mr. Speaker, for the fact that this

government believes that the Crown corporations should operate to the benefit of the shareholders who are the people of this province and they will continue to operate in that fashion.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Speaker, this is the government that had \$1.1 billion in unexpected revenues from other sources last year and then they had the nerve to claim another \$25 million from Investment Saskatchewan. They couldn't make do with the extra \$1.1 million, another 25 million was needed?

Mr. Speaker, idea no. 56 of the Saskatchewan Party's *100 Ideas* calls on the government to implement a Crown dividend policy that establishes net return levels adequate to meet Crown reinvestment requirements and directs excess Crown profits to a dedicated infrastructure renewal fund.

Now, that's a lot different from the NDP's Crown dividend policy today. Mr. Speaker, their policy calls for equity stripping and using their Crowns like their own personal piggy bank.

Mr. Speaker, last year the NDP took a dividend from Investment Saskatchewan that amounts to more than twice the company's net profit. Just last week, the Minister for SaskPower condemned that exact practice under the former administration.

The question, Mr. Speaker: why is the NDP once again saying one thing and doing another?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well as usual, Mr. Speaker, we have the opposition Conservatives who say one thing, but facts say something else. Now just the other day, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . and that member wants to talk about financial management. Under the leadership of the Minister of Finance, Saskatchewan received its 12th credit rating upgrade, Mr. Speaker, since 1995.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — And the Dominion Bond Rating agency said what, Mr. Speaker? They said that the province was being well managed financially, Mr. Speaker. A far cry from this, Mr. Speaker, 23 years ago today a government was elected that virtually bankrupted this province, Mr. Speaker. And we have come back, Mr. Speaker, from the mess that those people created. And the last people we need to take fiscal advice from are those people over there, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

## Minds Eye Pictures

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, let's do a quick review. So far the taxpayers . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, please. Order. Order. Well, I would ask all members to take a deep breath. I recognize the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So far the taxpayers of Saskatchewan have lost \$7 million in Minds Eye Pictures. And now we discover today that the book value of our direct investment in Minds Eye is worth zero. Nothing. Nada. Zilch. Nothing, Mr. Speaker. They poured \$7 million into this company. Did they do careful research? No. Did they carefully consider their investment? No. Did they do their due diligence before they spent taxpayers' dollars? No. Did they lose everything? Yes.

Mr. Speaker, what action will be taken to ensure these kind of errors are not repeated in the future? This government has learned nothing from Pangaea, nothing from SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], nothing from Navigata. When are they going to stop wasting taxpayers' dollars?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. Order. The Minister of Industry and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member is correct that we have taken some writedowns on Minds Eye, but as usual, Mr. Speaker, the Conservative opposition does not talk about all the facts.

They do not, for example, mention that Meadow Lake OSB [oriented strand board] recorded fifteen eight million dollars in earnings. They don't report an increase of earnings from Saferco of 13.5 million. They don't report, Mr. Speaker, earnings of \$1.9 million from Centennial Foods. They don't report about Big Sky Farms' year being positive, and they don't report \$30.9 million interest income from HARO.

Mr. Speaker, Investment Saskatchewan had a very good year, and we will continue to have good years, Mr. Speaker, as long as we rely on the expertise of the model we've set up at Investment Saskatchewan. We've had a good year, and we're on a roll, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member has any thoughts on the question, which was on Minds Eye Pictures. Documents released under access to information show that the president of Minds Eye threatened to shoot the Tommy Douglas movie in Manitoba unless he got more money. But an August 18, 2004 briefing note from the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation recommended against providing more money, saying the project was receiving over \$1 million already in tax credits. Then magically, Mr. Speaker, just like in the movies, the decision was reversed.

Who decided to reject the department's advice? Who promised the extra centennial money to Minds Eye?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Culture, Youth and Recreation.

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Mr. Speaker, the centennial gives us a great opportunity to recognize the many people that have contributed to the building of this province. And we do indeed have a great story to tell about Tommy Douglas. And he built the province. He made great contributions to the social fabric of this province and indeed to Canada. He was voted the greatest Canadian.

And there are many economic benefits as a result of doing this film in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and that includes rural Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, that does not excuse blowing taxpayer's dollars. There's more that was in the August 2004 briefing note, and it states, and I quote:

Mind's Eye has established a consistent pattern of requesting last minute assistance . . . to offset financial crises that will result in negative publicity . . . [This] strategy has been unhealthy, not only for Mind's Eye, but has negatively affected the industry as a whole . . .

Mr. Speaker, the question was, who promised this money? And why did the NDP government embark upon a course of this action its own officials — the officials of that member's department — said was unhealthy and would hurt the industry?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Culture, Youth and Recreation.

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Mr. Speaker, the facts are that the department did recommend this *Tommy Douglas Story* to be a one-time grant through the centennial office.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for

Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — The facts are, Mr. Speaker, that department officials recommended against it. The briefing note also said, and I quote:

There is no policy rationale to support investment in this project beyond the Film Employment Tax Credit . . . Any support outside the provisions of existing programs and policies would be subject to negative scrutiny. It would create significant precedent for other film projects and [would] have an impact on the credibility of the results of the film review.

Mr. Speaker, the question was, who promised Minds Eye the extra money and why was the advice of the experts so recklessly ignored?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of due diligence done by our partners . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Mr. Speaker, the grant from the centennial office was agreed to only after extensive due diligence done by our partners, including CBC, SaskFILM, and every other partner that's involved. And this is a great story to be told to the province of Saskatchewan and to the rest of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

And the 8 million that's being spent on this project, 7 million of that is going to be spent in Saskatchewan — including young people and rural Saskatchewan. In fact in a story today it was . . . There's a story told about how much benefit it's giving to the community of Gravelbourg, for example.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, it's appalling that this minister would stand there and say due diligence was done. This was a political decision because it was Tommy Douglas and that is the sole reason why this money was spent. The officials recommended against it.

What due diligence? They've lost money again and this isn't the first time that Minds Eye has lost money. What would Tommy Douglas say about that?

On a day when we have health care workers picketing this Assembly, we find out that the government ignored the advice of the experts and caved in to political pressure. It caved in because it was too embarrassed to have this movie about

Tommy Douglas shot in Manitoba. It has no money for the health care workers, however it's handing money over to a company for a movie while, at the same time, it's writing off ...

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. Would the member please put the question?

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, who made the decision and how can they justify spending the money on a money-losing company?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Culture, Youth and Recreation.

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that there was a lot of due diligence done on this work including from officials from our department who recommended to the Centennial office that this production be shot in Saskatchewan.

And why would we not shoot it in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, when there's so much economic spinoffs as a result of this movie being shot in this province. We have a great story to tell, Mr. Speaker, and the centennial gives us that opportunity to do so.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again this displays how the government is saying one thing and does another. I question how due diligence was done when the report from her own officials recommends against spending this money.

Could she possibly table some of the study that was done for the due diligence and could she possibly answer the question? Did the Minister of Youth, Culture and Recreation authorize the spending of the money to Minds Pictures .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Culture, Youth and Recreation.

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to say again that the department did recommend this production being shot in Saskatchewan and that it did get, it does get one-time centennial funding. It's creating all kinds of opportunities for our young people, Mr. Speaker.

And again, you know, the opposition says one thing, but the facts are there was a lot of due diligence done and it was recommended, and it's the right time to tell the story of Tommy Douglas in this province, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I am extremely pleased once again to stand on behalf of the government and table response to written question no. 1,015.

**The Speaker:** — Response to 1,015 has been tabled.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 106 — The Municipalities Act

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 106, The Municipalities Act. The Act represents a significant step in advancing the municipal-provincial relationship, and presents a significant opportunity to strengthen our urban and rural municipalities and to create opportunities for more effective local government.

And, Mr. Speaker, earlier today I introduced a number of guests in your gallery today who are here in support of the Act. And I'd like to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that I inadvertently left out one of my introductions, and I would like to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to all members of the legislature, Mr. Dale Harvey who's also here representing ... [inaudible interjection] ... oh, I'm just ...

**The Speaker:** — The minister wishes to do an introduction. Is leave granted for an introduction?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The minister will proceed.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was just including it in my speech, but I understand the rules of the Assembly, and I'm very pleased to be able to accommodate.

Earlier I introduced members of the local associations that are here today, and I wanted to introduce a member who I inadvertently left off my introduction list earlier, Mr. Dale Harvey from SARM, who was also active in the creation of this legislation.

And I ask that all members welcome him to the Chamber today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## SECOND READINGS

**Bill No. 106 — The Municipalities Act  
(continued)**

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much then, Mr. Speaker. I will proceed on The Municipalities Act.

The foundations of the current framework of Saskatchewan's municipal statutes are almost 100 years old. We have had separate rural and urban municipality statutes for nearly a century to accommodate traditional differences in the functions of these municipalities. The new municipalities Act will replace the current urban and rural municipalities Act and will provide smaller urban and rural municipalities with the tools and statutory framework they need in order to function efficiently and effectively in the 21st century.

I believe it is appropriate that this significant step in modernizing municipal legislation and the municipal-provincial relationship is being taken during not only our province's centennial year, but also the centennial year of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities and the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association. Both organizations, Mr. Speaker, had tremendous centennial conventions earlier this year, and I was pleased to be a participant in both conferences.

The impetus for this legislation came primarily from the municipalities themselves, and the drafting of The Municipalities Act has involved the full and direct participation of the municipal sector. I commend the proactive approach taken by SUMA in establishing a committee to review the provisions of The Cities Act to determine which provisions might be applicable to smaller urban municipalities. I also commend SARM for having the foresight to recognize and seize the opportunity to create change that will benefit local RM [rural municipality] councils across the province.

As you may recall, Mr. Speaker, The Municipalities Act was introduced in the 2004 fall session. It did not pass at the fall session, and earlier this session, I made a motion to withdraw that Bill.

As a result of the debate that arose in the legislature during the fall session, I committed at the municipal forum meeting held in December to undertake direct consultations with municipalities early in 2005 on the draft Bill for The Municipalities Act. These were to supplement the already extensive consultations with and presentations to the municipal sector that had been done during 2004.

This commitment was to follow up concerns that were expressed by my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly when The Municipalities Act was introduced into the Chamber in November, concerns that the municipal sector was not knowledgeable about the new Act and that there needed to be even more opportunity for consultation with the sector.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, I held regional public consultations in six communities during the second week of February 2005 —

Weyburn, Aberdeen, Wilkie, and Humboldt in which I was in attendance, and Swift Current and Naicam where representatives of my department were present. I am pleased to report the following results of these consultation sessions to the legislature.

Approximately 275 people attended the sessions. More than 140 municipalities were represented, including 90 rural municipalities, 30 towns, and 20 villages or resort villages. There was media coverages at the sessions in Weyburn and Humboldt. Six of my opposition colleagues attended the consultation sessions and members of both The Municipalities Act working committee and SUMA's town and village legislative review committee were in attendance at the various sessions.

The tone and nature of the discussion at these sessions was very open, respectful and positive. No one in attendance took any issue with the overall intent or direction of the new Act. The sessions provided a good opportunity for people to obtain a greater understanding of the Act itself and various features of the new Act related to public notice, conflict of interest, rural election provisions, loans and guarantees, and debt and borrowing. There were no concerns raised with how The Municipalities Act handled these matters.

There were a few suggestions for refinements. These were then taken forward to the working committee. The working committee also recommended other adjustments to refine the original Bill, and these changes have been included in the Bill introduced in the spring session and in front of us for debate today.

In general Mr. Speaker, the consultations were well received and I believe the fact that there were very few differences of opinions or issues raised at the sessions is due to the quality of the final product. This in turn is the result of the success of the collaborative and co-operative process undertaken on behalf of SUMA, SARM, Government Relations, as well as the urban and rural municipal administrators' associations in developing the legislation and in forming the municipal Act preparedness committee to assist with transition to the new Act.

This committee is seen by individual municipal officials and administrators as a very positive step that will go a long way to ensuring that municipalities are prepared to come under the new Act and are comfortable with the new Act.

It is clear that the municipal sector strongly supports and expects a new statute. As I indicated earlier, the primary impetus for the Bill has come from the municipal sector itself. SUMA's work on new town and village legislation was approved by the SUMA membership and was a foundational element in the work on The Municipalities Act. And at the SARM 2005 spring convention, delegates soundly defeated two resolutions calling for a delay in the passage of the new Act.

Mr. Speaker, as I referred to earlier, a number of changes to the original Bill have now been included along with consequential amendments to other Acts impacted by this Bill. Approximately 120 statutes require consequential amendments as a result of replacing The Rural Municipalities Act, The Urban Municipalities Act, so I felt that it was important to introduce

this Bill as an entire package rather than have these amendments brought forward and made either as House amendments or as subsequent amendments in a subsequent session of this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate at this time for me to once again thank the volunteer members of the working committee that have continued to work diligently to bring this legislation to us today.

I want to acknowledge each of them. From the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, Barry Gunther, Allen Earle, Keith Schneider and Cam Baker; from the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Murray Percell, Ken Engel and Dale Harvey; from the Rural Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan, Kevin Ritchie; and from the Urban Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan, Mark Dubkowski.

In addition to the volunteer members in the working committee, I want to recognize the work of the officials from my own department, Government Relations, and their colleagues in the Department of Justice. The development of this Bill was indeed a collaborative effort. By working together we've been able to lay the legislative foundation necessary to increase the autonomy of municipalities and to reflect the modern principles introduced in The Cities Act while staying true to the traditional values of local government and of this great province of ours.

As I indicated to you last fall, Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes that Saskatchewan's urban and rural municipalities are in the best position to make local decisions for the benefit of their citizens, and we are committed to working with local governments and their representative associations to increase autonomy and to reduce provincial oversight in matters that are of a truly local nature.

The Municipalities Act recognizes and furthers this commitment, and, Mr. Speaker, I will take this opportunity to reiterate some of the things that this Bill will do.

The Bill fundamentally changes and modernizes the relationship between the province and smaller urban and rural municipalities. The provisions of the Bill are crafted to enable municipalities to respond more quickly and efficiently to local issues as they arise and to encourage creativity and flexibility in how these local issues are addressed. Like The Cities Act, The Municipalities Act contains a statement of principles and municipal purposes to define the new relationship between the province, the municipalities, and their residents. These statements also form the basis of a new approach to local government accountability that I will talk about in just a moment.

Mr. Speaker, the Act introduces the principles of natural person powers and areas of jurisdiction for urban and rural municipalities as was first introduced in The Cities Act. Natural person powers will provide municipalities with the same legal powers as individuals or businesses, and will enable local councils to administer their corporate affairs with more flexibility and less prescription. This new approach is more permissive in nature, and the legislation provides for limitations to a municipality's authority only where it is appropriate and in

the public interest.

Mr. Speaker, the establishment of areas of jurisdiction will provide municipalities with more flexibility to govern, regulate, license, and deal with a variety of local matters and future issues that are within municipal jurisdiction as they arise. And again, Mr. Speaker, this Bill uses the concept of a permissive approach, recognizing the capability of local governments to plan and act responsibly within limits being provided when an overriding public or provincial interest is present.

The last important principle that I spoke of when the Bill was previously introduced concerns public accountability. We are taking steps to ensure that municipalities are directly accountable to their citizens as much as possible, as opposed to being held accountable to the provincial government. The Act contains a number of measures that improve the accountability and transparency of municipal governments to the public and to ratepayers. These include more consistent rules regarding closed council meetings, requirements for public notice policies, and for publishing a municipality's debt and debt limit. The points I spoke about above have not changed from when the Bill was previously introduced.

It is also important to note that, like The Cities Act, this Bill ensures that municipal bylaws or resolutions that conflict with any federal or provincial statute or regulation will have no effect to the extent of the conflict. This codifies the common law practice, Mr. Speaker, and ensures that when necessary provincial and federal laws will override those at the local level if a conflict occurs.

Mr. Speaker, those who have worked with the rural municipalities Act of 1989 or the urban municipalities Act of 1984 will see many familiar provisions in this Bill. For example, despite the granting of natural person powers, a number of financial matters will continue to be prescribed as before, including budget requirements and appointing an auditor. These are important matters of public interest, Mr. Speaker, and it is critical to have a consistency of approach between and amongst municipalities.

With respect to property assessment and taxation, Mr. Speaker, The Municipalities Act has essentially the same provisions as the previous municipal Acts, including the continuation of a simplified assessment appeal process to provide a less onerous and intimidating process for persons who appeal their property assessment without the aid of lawyers or appeal agents. As was also previously indicated when the Bill was introduced, there are no new powers of taxation for municipalities except for some expanded provisions regarding the use of special tax bylaws to raise revenues in all or a portion of a municipality to pay for a very specific purpose. I note that special taxes levied in this manner can only be used for services that can be completed and that . . . [inaudible] . . . properties can pay for within one year.

As was the case with The Cities Act, the authority to supplement the Act with regulations has been included in several areas, so that additional public interests may be accommodated if and when they are identified. The existing regulations pursuant to the municipality or . . . pardon me, Mr. Speaker. The existing regulations pursuant to the municipal

Acts are currently being reviewed. After consultation with the municipal sector, new regulations will be prepared and approved prior to the Act coming into force.

Mr. Speaker, I feel it is imperative to emphasize what a significant piece of legislation The Municipalities Act is, and to repeat that its creation can be attributed in large measure to the spirit of co-operation and collaboration that has made this province strong. It only came about because of the dedication and commitment of the key stakeholders who worked diligently in the public interest of having a standard set of principles and authorities for all municipalities while recognizing in some cases traditional differences could and should be accommodated.

As I said previously, our municipalities, Mr. Speaker, have much to offer in terms of social, cultural, and economic development. We have listened to the municipalities and support their request to modernize the legislation under which they are governed. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to move second reading of Bill No. 106, The Municipalities Act.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill 106, The Municipalities Act be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few moments just to comment on the Bill, Bill 106, The Municipalities Act, before this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister indicated, the Bill of this nature was to be introduced in the Assembly in the fall of 2004. And at that time the opposition had raised a number of concerns, but we'd also indicated that there were . . . The Bill in general, we weren't necessarily disagreeing with it totally, as a result of what the Bill was endeavouring to do.

However, we had some major questions. And one of the questions that was raised, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that I'm not exactly sure if the stakeholders really understood the whole process of legislation and how legislation is introduced and the opportunity for opposition to review the legislation before it moves forward. And in the short fall session there just wasn't adequate time to address all of the questions and certainly some of the issues that were brought forward. Now, Mr. Speaker, just some of the discussion we had at that time — certainly the people who had worked on the piece of legislation had indicated that they really wanted to see this legislation move forward. And there were a lot, there were and are a lot of good principles that were brought forward and are continued in this Bill.

But as we did some more research into the legislation and did some consultation in the broader spectrum, Mr. Speaker, you are aware of the fact and members are aware of the fact that there were some questions that were raised at both the local level, whether with RMs or municipal councils. And one would have to suggest that in the development of this piece of legislation that . . . And I understand that there's a lot of stakeholders involved. When you look at the number of RMs

and municipal councillors and reeves across the province and urban municipalities, there are a number of stakeholders. And a Bill of this nature is no simple Bill just to send out and ask people exactly, well do you understand or do you understand where we're going, or the intent of the piece of legislation, and get people to agree immediately.

And so, well the Bill died in the fall or didn't move ahead in 2004. We'd indicated at that time to the minister and to his officials that we were more than ready to move forward after we had further consultation. Mr. Speaker, at the time we had raised some concerns. And the minister had indicated, in some quite private discussions, well if there's some issues of concern we can address those down the road through amendments to the Bill.

[14:45]

Our suggestion to the minister was, if there are areas of concern and through further consultation we find out that . . . and I believe the minister has indicated there were some minor issues that they've raised and they've corrected in the new Act. And I'm pleased to see that the minister, while he may not necessarily have had to remove the old Act from the table, but I'm pleased to see that a number of issues were addressed and are introduced in this new Act. And we trust at the end of the day, once consultation has been completed, that we will find that all parties in general have come to a conclusion that this meets the needs that we've been required or we've been looking for.

No doubt, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the fact that we've had an urban municipality municipal Act, we've had a rural municipal Act, we've had . . . and then it was combined with The Cities Act. We've had two major pieces of legislation which have now been combined under one piece of legislation. And, Mr. Speaker, you will appreciate — members of this Assembly will appreciate, the public will appreciate — when you come forward with a Bill of this nature and the thickness of the piece of legislation, some 200 pages, Mr. Speaker, you can appreciate the work and effort that has been done by everyone — whether it's SARM or SUMA or representatives from those two organizations — and the work and effort they have gone into, and certainly the Department of Government Relations. And I would like to compliment each and every one involved for their work, their dedication.

And we are pleased to see as well that, as a result of a number of questions raised last fall, that there were some meaningful public consultations so that individuals within the municipalities and across our province would have a better understanding of what this Act was doing to address the concerns that they were bringing forward.

Mr. Speaker, this is a significant piece of legislation. It draws a lot of the two former Bills under one Act. It, as the minister has indicated today, hopefully simplifies the process of how municipalities and . . . rural and urban govern themselves, and how they deal with situations that crop up. And as we look back 100 years, we realize that there . . . changes have taken place significantly over the past 100 years. And this Bill, and as we look into it deeper we will indeed assess whether or not what the minister has been telling us certainly meets the needs of the



municipalities and governments across our province.

Mr. Speaker, while this piece of legislation is before this Assembly today, one area that municipal governments are still looking at is how they're funded. And we hope that down the road we can come to an agreement and come to an understanding and through recommendations, whether it's municipal or rural politicians, we can find a funding formula, Mr. Speaker, that municipalities can deal with and cities can look at as they're setting their budgets, rather than having to rely on waiting for the province to actually come down with its budget on an annual basis. A formula or a revenue-sharing agreement of some form, that municipal governments will know exactly where they stand on an annual basis, is certainly something that I hear out in my area people are looking for.

So, Mr. Speaker, having made those few comments, I want you to know, Mr. Speaker, that my colleagues and I have had, initiated some discussion around this Bill that has just been reintroduced to ensure that the questions that were raised have indeed been answered. We take the minister's word for it. We just want to do some follow-up and address any concerns that may come, so that when we move forward and eventually move this piece of legislation through the Assembly, at the end of the day all the stakeholders involved will say, yes, we've finally come to an Act, a piece of legislation, that deals with the concerns, that creates an opportunity for us as municipal governments to address the issues that we face.

We understand that urban and rural issues aren't all the same, but if there's a level playing field, Mr. Speaker, we believe that when we look at how municipal governments have worked across this province, even as they do today, probably the most efficient form of government we have in the province of Saskatchewan is still at the local level.

And I want to compliment our . . . all the local men and women who do really volunteer their time to provide leadership in their communities, and then leadership through their communities to the province and to the people of Saskatchewan. At this time, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Moosomin that debate on second reading of Bill 106, The Municipalities Act, be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Bill No. 107 — The Municipalities Consequential  
Amendment Act, 2005/Loi de 2005 sur les modifications  
corrélatives découlant de la loi intitulée  
The Municipalities Act**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to open debate at second reading on Bill 107 and as such, Mr. Speaker, I rise to move second reading of Bill No. 107, The Municipalities

Consequential Amendment Act, 2005.

This Act, Mr. Speaker, represents changes that are made to bilingual Acts as a result of the introduction of The Municipalities Act. I refer, Mr. Speaker, to The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997; The Education Act, 1995; The Interpretation Act, 1995; and The Traffic Safety Court of Saskatchewan Act, 1988 as the four Bills amended by this particular piece of legislation. All other consequential amendments are contained within The Municipalities Act itself.

The changes being made to these statutes, as in all the other consequential amendments contained in The Municipalities Act, primarily do the following: replace references to the municipality, The Rural Municipality Act of 1989 and/or the urban municipalities Act of 1984 with a reference to The Municipalities Act; repeal the various definitions of municipality in favour of a new definition in The Interpretation Act, 1995 that identifies all of the specific types of municipalities and the different municipal statutes under which each type is governed; ensure that where intended and appropriate, specific provisions only relate to a specific type or types of municipality, such as rural municipalities or municipalities other than rural municipalities; and remove or replace outdated language relating to certain municipal positions and entities, such as secretary-treasurer, or maintenance area corporations.

Mr. Speaker, accordingly I am proud to move second reading of Bill 107, The Municipalities Consequential Amendment Act, 2005. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill 107, The Municipalities Consequential Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again just to make a few comments regarding the Bill 107 before the Assembly. I know it's a Bill of general housekeeping, as the minister has already indicated — a Bill that addresses the issue of French language and which Bills of the Assembly certainly are brought forward, and indeed French translation is also offered to those pieces of legislation.

And the minister mentioned that some of the Acts that are going to be clarified as well. We have a section under alcohol and gaming and The Education Act. Mr. Speaker, the general principles around this Bill, and I know this Bill is fairly simple and straightforward, and in making some of the corrections and addressing some of the issues that have come . . . will be coming forward as a result of Bill 106.

However, Mr. Speaker, our colleagues want to take a little more time just to review this piece of legislation a little more in depth to ensure it addresses all of the needs that is bringing forward, and the concerns. And therefore at this time, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Moosomin that debate on second reading of Bill 107 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the

motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The motion is carried.

**Bill No. 114 — The Education Amendment Act, 2005/  
Loi de 2005 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Learning.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Education Amendment Act, 2005. It's my pleasure to outline for all members the substance and purpose of the amendments incorporated in this amending Bill.

Many of the amendments deal primarily with administrative matters. These matters include repealing sections that pertain to the Learning Resource Distribution Centre Revolving Fund, as the distribution centre is no longer operational, and thus as you might expect, there is no need for an associated revolving fund. Learning at this point covers the cost of all purchases — all the cost to purchase, sell, distribute, print, and for print and non-print materials to educational institutions through the learning resource distribution centre. The learning resource distribution centre was discontinued a few years ago because many of the school divisions found it more to their advantage to purchase the resources directly from publishers.

Other amending provisions are included to allow expanded membership on the Board of Teacher Education and Certification. The Board of Teacher Education and Certification has a responsibility to recommend to the minister and to the university president changes to teacher training programs, to specify results to be expected from teacher training programs, to review course content of all teacher training programs, and to review regulations related to teacher certification, as well as to make recommendations with respect to certification of teacher applicants.

The amendments will provide for the participation of representatives from the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents, the First Nations University of Canada, and the Gabriel Dumont Institute. Currently the Board of Teacher Education and Certification has membership from the Department of Learning, the University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina, and the teachers' federation.

Throughout the Act, reference to high school divisions and its superintendents of administration are repealed or clauses amended because we no longer have high school divisions in the province, nor the unique designation of superintendent of administration. Although many school divisions continue to use the title of superintendent, The Education Act of 1995 and subsequent regulations uses the designation of secretary-treasurer exclusively.

In relation to school division secretary-treasurers, amendments are being made that will no longer require a prescribed form of guaranteed bond. And the department will no longer need to receive a copy of such a bond, as this is an employee and

employer responsibility.

Additions are being made to require members of a conseil d'école — which is the francophone equivalent of the local district board of trustees in the public system — to take an oath before assuming office and to vacate the position under specified circumstances. The change will make the provisions for participants of each of these to be consistent with those of members of local districts boards of trustees.

Mr. Speaker, as members are well aware, we are implementing a new system of school division governance through the process of restructuring. This process will provide and have an impact on most school divisions throughout the province.

As members of the Assembly will know, we have announced that the elections for the boards of education of the new school divisions will be held on June 15, 2005. The new school divisions will become operational on January 1, 2006.

Minister's orders have been issued to establish all the new school divisions. For the period of June 16, 2005, to December 31, 2005, the existing boards of education will continue to have responsibility of operating school divisions that currently exist. As of January 1, 2006, the new amalgamated divisions will become operational. And the boards of education elected this coming June will assume the roles and responsibility for boards of education as provided in The Education Act.

As I've noted, Mr. Speaker, one of the first steps to be taken when a new school division is established is the election of the board of education. As part of the planning process to assist boards of education in the transition to larger school divisions, last spring we reconstituted the restructuring coordinating committee. A similar committee has provided valuable leadership for the voluntary restructuring initiative undertaken several years ago.

The membership of this committee included representatives of all the educational stakeholders. It's the recommendation of this group that boards of education, elected as of June 15, begin work immediately to plan for the transition that'll occur on January 1, '06. Our existing legislation, however, does not make any provisions for boards of education assuming roles and responsibilities before school boards become operational.

Through this amending Bill currently before the Assembly, new provisions are being incorporated into the Act which will — through the minister's order establishing the new school division or through subsequent order — assign specific roles and responsibilities to the new boards of education for the transition period.

On the recommendation of the restructuring coordinating committee, the roles and responsibilities delegated will allow these boards to strategically plan for the new school divisions to hire staff, such as the director of education and the secretary-treasurer, for the period of June 15 through December 31, in order to provide leadership for the strategic planning process.

I want to clarify that these legislative amendments will apply only to those school divisions that are part of the provincial

restructuring initiative. They will not apply to those that are otherwise unaffected.

In these divisions — those that are being affected — the boards that were elected in the fall of 2003 will continue to have responsibility for the aspects of the operation of their school divisions in the restructured divisions until January 1, '06. For those that are not being restructured, they will continue to have on the normal election cycle.

The amendments that are before the Assembly will alleviate any confusion that potentially would exist during the transition period. Boards that were elected in the fall of '03 will continue to exercise the powers and duties under The Education Act. Boards that are elected in the spring of '05 will assume duties and responsibilities that relate specifically to the planning for the restructured divisions.

[15:00]

Also included in the amending Bill before the Assembly is a provision that provides for the abolition of corporal punishment in all public schools in the province. The prohibition of corporal punishment in schools is consistent with the recent Supreme Court ruling on interpretation and application of section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada and supports the provincial government's existing policy directions for children and youth.

The court emphasized that parliament does not advocate any form of corporal punishment — of physical punishment — to children but at the same time provides protections to a limited group of persons — specifically parents and teachers — so as not to overextend the scope of the criminal law into a sphere where it has potential to harm family relationship or the role of teachers. The prohibition is being strongly urged by the Children's Advocate. I would indicate that, as corporal punishment is seldom used in our schools today, the prohibition relative to the proposed amendment will have little effect on teacher practice.

The final substantive amendment is to accommodate changes to the Lloydminster charter. Under the new provisions of the charter, the city of Lloydminster will use Alberta's property assessment and taxation provisions. The city of Lloydminster will be required to submit assessment information as of December 31 to the Government of Alberta and to the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency, SAMA.

SAMA will prepare equivalency assessments for the Saskatchewan portion of the two Lloydminster school divisions by March 1. The equivalency assessment information will then be provided to Saskatchewan Learning for its use in calculating education foundation operating grants. The amendment is needed to allow the minister to use the equivalency assessment in determining the amount of foundation operating grant payments for the school divisions in Lloydminster.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that this is a largely housekeeping Bill that will allow us to move forward with restructuring, will allow us to update our procedures in terms of student discipline in accordance with current practice, and will allow us to make a number of other minor adjustments that will help Saskatchewan move our education forward through this period of

restructuring. As such, I am pleased to move second reading of The Education Amendment Act, 2005.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Learning that Bill No. 114, The Education Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to rise and respond to the second reading of Bill No. 114, The Education Amendment Act. And listening to the minister's remarks regarding this Bill, for the most part it is housekeeping. It is a housekeeping Bill.

I always find it interesting though when we start talking about this, and the minister will talk about, you know, how pleasantly like the restructuring is going, while on our side it's forced amalgamation. Let's really coin it for what it is. It's forcing school divisions into amalgamated, integrative divisions with really little say from any of those divisions. But I'm going to try not to get too far down that road. Every time I've stood up in the House over the last few months I've talked an awful lot about the whole forced amalgamation and talked about the reasons for forced amalgamation and all of that. And I'm going to try and shy away from that.

But I do remember talking to the minister at different times, and the minister had mentioned that really there's nothing that needs to be done. We'll just go ahead and do it. I don't need any legislation; I can just go ahead and force these bigger boards and that type of thing.

Now we're starting to see that there are some things that need to be done legislatively to make it work properly. I think at one point there was only one piece of legislation that's on the books right now that we're talking — it's in adjourned debate I believe — talking about the election dates of board trustees and the fact that we don't need to have the election dates of the old boards.

But there is more legislation that needed to be done obviously because we have this Bill in front of us. And any time we have a piece of legislation in front of us, it's incumbent upon us as the opposition to go through it clause by clause and send it out to many of the stakeholders.

I find it very interesting — even though some of the guests in the gallery have left now — about the municipal Act and how it came through, and it was going to be very, very straightforward, and all the homework had been done, and we can just automatically pass that Bill. Well unfortunately the homework hadn't been done, and we saw what happened. They had to pull the Bill and reintroduce it. Not that we have anything wrong with the gist of the Bill, as with this Bill, not that we may have anything wrong with the gist or the intent of the Bill, but there does need to be homework done on these particular Bills.

Because especially when you talk about school divisions and the uproar that this government has put rural Saskatchewan . . . not just rural Saskatchewan, I would say anywhere outside of

Regina, Saskatoon. This government has put that area, anything outside of Regina and Saskatoon, into a bit of an uproar. They're not . . . in a state of flux. They're in a state of flux. They don't know quite what's going to happen and how this is all going to work.

Because many, many school divisions have been through amalgamation and the minister talked about reconvening the restructuring board to help these divisions through. They had been through voluntary amalgamation which really worked quite well, and many of the boards were very happy with the way that worked. Now they're into the process of being forced into a school division with no sort of personality or corporate history at all. This is a brand new entity, and how is all that going to work?

So I think people in, especially in rural Saskatchewan — I won't necessarily say in the major centres, but in the smaller communities that are afraid of losing their schools — are really going to pay a lot of attention to any piece of legislation that comes forward.

There's a section in this piece of legislation that talks about assets and liabilities from a disestablished school board, be it separate or public. And what happens to those assets or those monies that that school division has saved and secured over the last number of years?

And I can think of one myself. And it's in a school division that's in my constituency that I represent and know all the board members very, very well. It's a very small school, it's a very small school division. There is just a one-room school in this division, which is better than the division next door that doesn't have a school, but this division actually does have a school. And this division has done great work within its division to save money. I've been out to that school a number of times and looked at the programs that it has to offer; looked at the assets that it has in that school.

And their biggest concern is . . . And they have a bit of a bank account. They have a bit of money saved up because they thought they were going to have to do some work on their school. They thought they were going to have to do a number of things to their building to keep it in good shape for the future of the kids in that area. And when I went out to that school division, or that school, and listened to their trustees speak, that was their biggest concern . . . is what is going to happen with the money that we have saved up in our area? We've charged taxes to the farmers and the property owners in our area. We've got a bit of a cash on hand. What is going to happen to that cash when we are forced into new divisions?

And you know, they didn't want to lose that money, and they kept thinking now, can we move it into a trust and then into the community rink which is having a hard time keeping going? Can we move it into a trust and into the community hall because that money has been raised around this area.

And when we look at this Bill it talks about that very thing — dealing with some of the assets and liabilities. But in this situation, it's assets that this school division has, and what's going to happen to that? And it repeals the portion of the Act that says:

The assets and liabilities of a . . . disestablished [public or separate board division] . . . shall be vested in the board of education [in the] . . . school division in which the . . . division is [located] . . .

Well I would like the members of that school division to read that paragraph and then explain it to me and tell me exactly what's going to happen with the assets because they'll need to know this. They'll need to know that the Act is changing. So, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of changes to The Education Act. That's section 60 to section 310.

There are some other changes, and in section 42 it looks like it gives the minister some extra powers, which is always a little concerning seeing what the minister has done with the powers that he does have, and now to give him extra powers is always a little disconcerting to many.

So, Mr. Speaker, at this time, until we are able to consult with divisions around the provinces — around this province, I should say — the divisions that haven't been, that are still functioning, that will be functioning until the end of 2006 that have a truly vested interest in the education system of our province, many of those trustees will not be on the newly amalgamated boards. Very many aren't.

And it was interesting, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on that point . . . I just about was wrapping it up there. But while I'm on that point, I heard an advertisement just recently asking for people to consider running for the newly amalgamated school boards. And I really thought that that struck me as strange, Mr. Speaker, that I don't remember in the past having to advertise people in rural Saskatchewan to please get out and run for a school board. Because people took that on because it was a service that they were doing for their kids and their region, their community, or their school.

But it strikes me rather curiously that now we have to advertise to get people to serve on these newly amalgamated school boards, these super-boards if you want to call it that. And I don't mean super as far as really good, I mean super as far as huge, huge school boards, Mr. Speaker, that we have to advertise to attract school trustees. To me that would state that perhaps we're having a hard time attracting people to these new, forced amalgamated boards, Mr. Speaker.

But I'll get a chance to speak on that in a little bit. I think there's another Bill coming up that may even address that further, and I'll be glad to go a little bit further down that road. But any time, as I said, that there are changes to the Act — and especially education over this next year or two — people have a real sensitivity to it. And I know they'll be glad to have a look at these changes and either agree or disagree into the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, at this time I move to adjourn debate.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Indian Head-Milestone that debate on second reading of Bill 114 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Bill No. 115 — The Education Property Tax Credit Act**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Learning.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am indeed very pleased today to rise to move second reading of The Education Property Tax Credit Act, 2005. Members are aware that The Education Property Tax Credit Act will provide education property tax relief in the form of a credit that will be shown on individual property tax notices.

The purpose of this amending Bill I introduce today is to provide the authority and details for the education property tax credit program that will be retroactive to January 1, 2005. This will ensure that these provisions will match the date the property taxes are imposed according to legislation.

This Act was drafted by the departments of Learning and Government Relations. It's based on an options paper coming out of the working group. That working group included both departments as well as the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Saskatchewan association of urban municipalities, and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association. Taking into account the recommendations of the working group, the Government of Saskatchewan is allocating \$110 million to property tax relief over the next two years.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, that this property tax credit program will see property tax payers receive an average 8 per cent credit on the education portion of their property tax notice for 2005 and 2006. This should help shift the cost of education from property-tax-based provincial revenue sources and result in the provincial share of education rising from 42 per cent to 47 per cent. This uniform tax credit will be based on a percentage of the education property tax levy for the 2005-2006 property tax years.

Residential and agricultural property owners and most businesses will see a reduction of an average of 8 per cent in education property tax levies for 2005.

This is of course good news for property tax payers in this province. This education property tax relief will also be available to commercial, industrial, and multi-unit residential properties, although it will be capped at \$2,500 annually. This cap will ensure that residential and agricultural properties, on which there will be no cap, will receive meaningful relief through this program.

To ensure that school divisions are compensated, Saskatchewan Learning will provide a grant to each school division, in addition to the foundation operating grant. This grant will be based on the total education property tax credit provided to property owners within the school division boundaries. This grant provides payment on behalf of school property tax payers for the credits they receive.

The Act also provides authority to the Minister of Learning to make payments to both school divisions for the purpose of the credit program, as well as to tax roll software vendors and

municipalities to ensure implementation of the credit as has been recommended by the working group. These payments will be subject to the regulations and limited costs such as tax roll software programming, updated tax notice forms, and tax notices from manual based systems.

The Act takes into account that, at present, municipalities have a very limited authority to cancel current year's school property taxes. To implement this credit, municipalities will be provided with authority to reduce the current year's school property taxes by the credits calculated in accordance with regulations. Also, municipalities will be required to show the credit calculated on tax notices for each property.

I would like to state that a notwithstanding clause is included to ensure that municipalities have clear authority to implement the credit.

Provisions are in place regarding the management of the compensation for school divisions. Municipalities will be required to prepare and submit a credit report to each school division in the prescribed form. Then school divisions will submit a credit summary report to Saskatchewan Learning for all municipalities in their boundaries to claim the grant. Finally, a general regulation-making authority is noted so terms or other provisions not covered in the proposed Act may be clarified.

Mr. Speaker, this proposed Act demonstrates our government's commitment to addressing the issue of sustainable, meaningful education property tax relief. It's an important step forward in changing the balance in education financing. As you know, this government is continuing to work with local governments, municipalities, and school boards to determine a long-term solution to property tax relief that will see equity for both students and taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, accordingly I am very pleased to move second reading of The Education Property Tax Credit Act, 2005.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[15:15]

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Learning that Bill 115, The Education Property Tax Credit Act be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure again to rise on Bill No. 115, An Act to provide Education Property Tax Credits. It was interesting as the minister was going along and talking about this property tax credit and how it's going to work, and it's going to be a credit back to the municipalities. And I remember what it . . . It just struck me as going back in this Assembly about five or six years ago, and listening to the minister of Education at that time say, we've got a tax credit for you coming where people are going to get some refund on their education portion of their property tax.

Because as I said many times in this Assembly, I can tell you in 2003, when I knocked on doors, one of the biggest factors, one of the most common concerns during that election was the over

reliance of property . . . of the property tax base to fund education. And it was a issue that was certainly spoke on at pretty much every door that I was at, where people owned their own property.

Many of the people in rural Saskatchewan, ag land — of course, that has been a major, major issue in agriculture, well going back many years. But I can say since 1998, when I first started getting involved in the political process and going to tax revolt meetings in my constituency, property tax and the portion of education on their property tax bill was way out of proportion.

And so what happened was the government then decided that they would put \$50 million in and they would do a property tax rebate for \$50 million and it was going to last two years. And I think at that time . . . I don't know whether the government didn't expect to look past two years or didn't expect to be the government after those two years, or whatever it might be, but they addressed the issue for two years — \$25 million a year.

And that program was administrated mainly through the department, if I remember correctly. And I remember hearing municipalities were quite upset and school divisions were quite upset because the administrations cost of that program was going to be very, very high. They said that we could do it better through the RMs. And so I will applaud the government in one sense in that they are looking at the RMs now to do this education tax credit rebate.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Why is the member from Saskatoon Sutherland on his feet?

**Mr. Addley:** — With leave to introduce guests.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Saskatoon Sutherland has asked leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Addley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for allowing me to interrupt his roll.

It's my great privilege and pleasure to introduce some guests that travelled all the way from Prince Albert. My sister-in-law, my niece, and my nephew are here; Wendy Temple — if you could give a wave — she's my sister-in-law, and Stephen Temple is my nephew, and you'll guess that Micheala Temple is my niece, so we'll put it all together.

So if hon. members would please welcome them here today. They're visiting, attending a conference, and they're already seen the IMAX, and they're just touring around Regina. So if all hon. members would welcome them to the Assembly today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Kowalsky:** — I would like to just echo the words of the member for Saskatoon Sutherland and welcome the

Temples, who are my neighbours — two doors down — from Prince Albert. Welcome to the legislature.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 115 — The Education Property Tax Credit Act (continued)

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was talking about the property tax credit and I think it's important that we have some context here as to why we've got to where we are today and this Bill today. And I think it's important that we look at . . . This has been in issue in the province for many, many years and the government has tried to address it by putting \$50 million in a number of years ago over two years. And what happened to that money? And that money was spent.

People saw a slight credit on their property tax, on their education portion . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The minister from North Battleford is hooting from his seat, "8 per cent." Well four years ago it wasn't 8 per cent, Mr. Minister. You're talking about \$110 million today and we're talking about \$50 million four years ago. It wasn't 8 per cent. If you're going to hoot from your seat, maybe you'd better follow along with the . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. I think . . . Order, please. Order. I would allow the member to speak and I would ask also the member to focus on the remarks through the Chair, please. The member for Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regardless, we are talking about the history of the issue of property tax and how this government has failed over and over, and over and over again, to address this issue, Mr. Speaker. Whether we talk four years ago when they . . . or five years ago when they put \$50 million in — 25 over two years — or this situation now. But of course when they put the \$50 million and spread it over two years, it didn't solve the problem.

So what the government did is instead of addressing the problem, which is overreliance on property tax to fund education, they struck the commission, the Boughen Commission, which reported back to the government and told the government what it needed to do to properly fund education and some of the steps it needed to take, Mr. Speaker.

But the interesting part about the Boughen Commission was in the 2003 election, what the Premier had to say about the Boughen Commission. He said, we have the room to accept the Boughen Commission in the financial house that we have today which, Mr. Deputy Speaker, seems to be a theme that we have heard over and over again. They say one thing and do something totally opposite because they did not have, they did not have, the fiscal house to accept the Boughen Commission. That is obvious. Because if they did have the fiscal ability to accept the Boughen Commission, which is exactly what the

Premier said, they would have accepted it.

But what they did is they couldn't accept it because they don't have the fiscal capacity to accept it so they cherry-picked the one thing out of it which was forced amalgamation, which was in the last Bill and I won't go down that forced amalgamation road. But they did look at the Boughen Commission and told them what they should do to properly fund education. Well they ignored that. They went down the road of forced amalgamation.

Now it just so happened that there was an extra windfall of money from the federal transfer. I remember a year or two ago they said, oh we'll address property tax. It's not a problem. We're going to address property tax once we get the extra money from the federal transfer — which at that time, quite frankly, they didn't have a clue whether there was a cent coming or not. Because there was at that time no money coming and they said, oh we'll give the school divisions one-third of whatever money we receive from the federal government. As it turned out, they ended up getting \$330 million from the federal government so they put one-third to that. So they put \$110 million towards the education portion of property tax for two years. It's \$55 million a year for two years, makes \$110 million.

Now if you go back, what exactly did they do five years ago? They had 50 million; they plunked it, they thought they'd put a bandage over the problem, get them to the next election. And what happens is, is after two years the bandage is pulled back, the wound and the hurt is just as great, people are struggling under extremely high property taxes. The highest education portion of property tax anywhere in this nation is right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So what did they do by addressing the problem, by putting \$50 million towards it five years ago? Nothing. And what are they going to do by putting \$110 million towards this issue right now? In two years time they'll have done absolutely nothing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So what they are doing is they're putting \$110 million . . . Now the minister of Education and the minister of Municipal Affairs are both hooting from their seats now, saying that \$110 million is nothing. And of course, they haven't been paying attention because I said \$110 million is a bandage, that's what the \$110 million is. It will cover a wound again for another two years. It will cover a wound for two years and I will guarantee you, in two years time, we'll rip the bandage off and was anything solved or cured? Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. The wound will still be there.

And until this government finally decides that it needs to fund education, a greater portion of education from the provincial coffers and quit relying on property tax, that's all this \$110 million is, is another bandage on a wound that will be just as infected in two years time, Mr. Speaker. The government fails to address the real problem and that's funding education, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on this Bill.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Indian Head-Milestone 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's carried.

### **Bill No. 108 — The Business Corporations Amendment Act, 2005**

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Business Corporations Amendment Act, 2005.

Amendments to The Business Corporations Act are needed to keep Saskatchewan legislation current, to respond to amendments to the Canada Business Corporations Act, and to respond to recent developments in securities laws. The amendments follow the lead of the federal Business Corporations Act by reducing the Canadian residency requirement for directors.

Currently, a majority of the directors of a Saskatchewan corporation must be resident Canadians. Under the amendments, at least 25 per cent of the directors must be resident Canadian. The rationale for the reduction is that the majority requirement is unnecessarily restrictive, particularly where corporations are seeking to engage foreign expertise in their board. The ability to include more directors from outside Canada will increase the corporation's ability to raise capital. This amendment is a necessary response to keep Saskatchewan competitive in this regard.

The bulk of provisions in this Bill respond to changes in Saskatchewan's securities law. Current provisions of The Business Corporations Act regarding the solicitation of proxies are at variance with the provisions contained in national rules which have been adopted as regulation of the Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission. Similarly, certain provisions in The Business Corporations Act dealing with the preparation, auditing, filing, and distribution of financial statements no longer correlate with the provisions in Saskatchewan's securities law.

Accordingly, the amendments provide that wherever corporations comply with the relevant provisions under Saskatchewan's securities law, they will be exempt in the corresponding provisions in The Business Corporations Act.

The Act also contains an expressed provision enabling the creation of regulations prescribing the qualifications of persons eligible to be appointed as an auditor of a corporation.

Regulations will be introduced to assist Saskatchewan corporations in avoiding liability that may flow from receiving auditing services from someone who is not qualified.

The Act also contains a number of housekeeping amendments. These amendments seek to maintain and enhance the currency, clarity, and consistency of the Act. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of The Business Corporations Amendment Act, 2005.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the committee is

the motion put by the minister that Bill No. 108, The Business Corporations Amendment Act, 2005, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to get up and to discuss this particular Bill. It's always interesting when the NDP always bring a business . . . bring a Bill that's dealing with corporations and big business because over the past they've never been known to be friends of big business, especially their grassroots people.

And I remember at a lot of their conventions, they seem to attack them quite handily all the time, attacking big business. Yet in the House, their cabinet ministers will say they're always trying to attract — which they should be — trying to attract business here. But I know from the grassroots end, their people have a distinct hate it seems like for big business over there.

It was interesting on this particular Bill . . . I just met with constituents of mine that has a business. He's looking to expand in my constituency, so I won't mention the name of it, because just like everybody they get a little nervous of this government, when they have business. But what he's been look for is equity outside of the province to expand. He says I definitely don't want the government involved in my business, to come to them for investment. Which is good. I mean, he says, it's time to grow. He says I have a chance to grow.

But he said he was looking for money here in Saskatchewan and also outside. He'd been to Alberta. And the message he got there was people — the investment company there — was very nervous about Saskatchewan, coming here. He said you don't have a very good business climate there to begin with. He said I don't . . . the wording he was told was he doesn't basically . . . they don't want to invest in Saskatchewan. They're very nervous about it.

We can talk about the hours . . . they were still talking about the available hours legislation. Still mentioning there, the damage that has been done. So that message is still out there, Mr. Speaker, on that available hours legislation. And even as we speak right now, this government says that we're going to amend that, and it has yet to come forward yet at that end of it.

[15:30]

So you think the business world isn't watching them, Mr. Speaker, from inside of the province? They are, and they're very nervous out there. So it's very hard for people to raise investment outside of the province, Mr. Speaker, on account of that — on account of the meddling and the interference that this government has done with labour legislation at that end of it on big business.

I know that there is some amendments on this particular Bill that may benefit some corporations, which are good. We need that money. We need corporations to come in here, and there are very good jobs to be growing with that.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I know that we want to study this Bill and also send it out to a lot of the business people out there to just see what their thoughts are on this particular Bill because I

think that the government has to work with business. And I think maybe this government is starting to eventually learn the lesson that to grow this province that it has to work with business, along that end of it. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will adjourn debate on this particular Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Arm River-Watrous 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. 113 — The Non-profit Corporations Amendment Act, 2005/Loi de 2005 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les sociétés sans but lucratif**

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Non-profit Corporations Amendment Act, 2005. Mr. Speaker, according to the most recent data gathered by Statistics Canada, Saskatchewan has the highest percentage of volunteer participation in Canada, with 42 per cent of Saskatchewan residents aged 15 and older volunteering on an annual basis.

This government recognizes the significant contribution to Saskatchewan made by these organizations and the volunteers that devote their and energy to them. The Premier has recognized the importance of the work of non-profit organizations through the establishment of the Premier's Voluntary Sector Initiative, an initiative which seeks to build on an effective and collaborative relationship between the Government of Saskatchewan and the voluntary sector.

In 2003, this government enacted amendments to The Non-profit Corporations Act to provide . . . or to improve protection from liability for directors and officers of not-for-profit corporations.

Today I rise to introduce further amendments to the Act that will enhance the environment in which non-profit corporations operate in Saskatchewan. The amendments update the provisions dealing with audits and financial reviews of non-profit corporations. Specifically the amendments will assist corporations in dealing with the increased cost of audit services by increasing the threshold below which a corporation may waive the requirement for an audit.

To ensure that Saskatchewan non-profit corporations will continue to receive appropriate financial review, new regulations will be introduced prescribing the qualifications of individuals conducting audits for financial reviews. The voting requirements for resolutions to waive audits and financial reviews have also been amended. The current provisions require the unanimous support of members voting on such a resolution. The amendments will require an 80 per cent majority on such resolutions for charitable corporations and a special majority, i.e., two-thirds of those voting, for membership corporations.

These amendments will avoid the potential for one or two



disgruntled members forcing corporations to obtain audits or reviews where they would not otherwise be necessary, but will at the same time reflect the higher standard required of charitable corporations that solicit donations from the public.

The Act is updated by bringing the residency requirement into line with that contained in legislation in other Canadian jurisdictions. An amendment reduces the requirement for Canadian resident directors from a majority to not less than 25 per cent. The requirement that at least one of the directors of the corporation be a Saskatchewan resident has been maintained.

A new provision stipulates that the appointment or election of a director to a non-profit corporation will not be valid unless the consent of the new director has been obtained. This amendment will address problems created where individuals have become subject to the obligations and potential liabilities that may flow from being a director without their knowledge or consent.

In addition, the Act has been updated by adding the power to create regulations that will allow for electronic communications under the Act. The regulations will include a provision allowing corporations to communicate with their members via email, where the member has consented to receiving communications in that matter.

Mr. Speaker, the director of corporations will work with the Premier's Voluntary Sector Initiative to assist non-profit corporations in education and governance issues, and in particular the importance of appropriate and up-to-date mission statements and bylaws.

The Premier's Voluntary Sector Initiative and the Government of Saskatchewan seek to foster an environment within which non-profit corporations can effectively and efficiently govern their affairs and activities. This Bill will assist corporations in doing just that.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of The Non-profit Corporations Amendment Act, 2005.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the committee is the motion put by the minister that Bill No. 113, The Non-profit Corporations Amendment Act, 2005, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to get up and talk about this particular Bill, which I think is tied to the Bill we just previously on kind of piggybacked.

The member was quite right when he talks about Saskatchewan for volunteerism. Saskatchewan has always been known throughout Canada as some of the greatest volunteerism participation over the years. I mean that's what made this province great, that's what's maintaining the towns and the cities and the villages out there throughout Saskatchewan, at that end of it.

And any way that this government can assist the organizations, non-profit organizations, from raising money, or from doing things out there, that's good. We commend the government on that particular piece of legislation coming forward.

It also needs to be looked at to make sure that the organizations and the business organizations are happy with it because we have to help them. The corporations are out there, non-profit, that are raising money to fight the many diseases out there from cancer to diabetes, to multiple sclerosis, to any number of cures that they're working towards, that they're raising money for that. Never mind that we talked about the service clubs out there — the Elks, the Kinsmen, the Lions — numerous service clubs that are raising money throughout the year to make this Saskatchewan a better place.

I know it talks about changing the auditor status on that, I think which so far looks on the surface a good provision. Because I said before, anytime you can help an organization that's raising money, that is helping to find a cure for the many diseases out there, I think that's a good role of government in that end of it because they need help, all the help they can get when they're out there at that end of it.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, we still want to study this Bill and also want to . . . I also have some corporations, non-profit that I know of and also service clubs that I belong to, that I would like to have a look at this particular Bill. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will adjourn debate on this particular Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Arm River-Watrous 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's carried.

#### **Bill No. 112 — The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2005**

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading on The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2005.

Mr. Speaker, members of this House will be aware that The Small Claims Amendment Act, 2005 is being introduced this session to implement the recommendations of the Small Claims Court review committee. This committee consists of three . . . excuse me, Mr. Speaker. This committee consists of representatives from the Law Society of Saskatchewan, the Canadian Bar Association, as well as Justice department officials.

This committee was asked to provide recommendations to improve general efficiency in the small claims system and to improve access to justice with respect to small claims matters. While the majority of the changes recommended by the committee are being made in the other Bill, this Bill provides for an additional important change arising from the work of that committee.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill provides for the creation of a civil division of the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan. Currently the vast majority of the work of this court consists of criminal proceedings. It was the recommendation of the review committee that a civil division be created that will be focused on addressing the specialized nature of civil matters brought

under The Small Claims Act.

This Bill provides that, with the consent of the chief judge, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may set the number of judges to be assigned by the chief judge to the new civil division and designate the location of such an assignment. The chief judge has the flexibility to assign non-civil division work to these judges where necessary or to assign additional judges to act as judges of this civil division where the workload is appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments are being proposed to improve both the expertise and the efficiency of the court in dealing with civil matters. The Small Claims Court is intended to operate as a court for lay people rather than lawyers, and it's a low-cost method of dispute resolution. The changes in The Small Claims Act, when combined with the creation of a civil division of the Provincial Court under this Bill, should greatly assist in achieving these goals.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Provincial Court Act, 1998.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the committee is the motion put by the minister that Bill No. 112, The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Melfort.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and speak briefly on Bill 112, An Act to amend The Provincial Court Act.

Mr. Speaker, for a while I thought that we were on the wrong bit of legislation, but I understand that the civil court is indeed going to have the prime responsibility for small claims issues. And therefore, Bill 112 and 111 are pretty much tied together so that they both deal with the same issues.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it's important that we make the small claims process easier to access. And if changing this court Act in order to provide for a civil court is going to improve that system for small claims, Justice of the Peace, and things of that nature, it is likely going to be a Bill that is worth supporting.

Mr. Speaker, in order to make sure that there's nothing that has been overlooked or omitted from this legislation, we certainly are going to want to speak to people in the legal profession that will give their comment on this legislation. And in order for that to happen, I would move to adjourn debate.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That's carried.

**Bill No. 111 — The Small Claims Amendment Act, 2005/Loi de 2005 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les petites créances**

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Small Claims Amendment Act, 2005.

Mr. Speaker, in the spring of 2004, a Small Claims Court review committee was struck with a view to providing recommendations to improve general efficiency in the small claims system and to improve access to justice with respect to small claims matters.

The committee consisted of representatives from the Law Society of Saskatchewan, the Canadian Bar Association, as well as Justice department officials. This committee also consulted closely with the judiciary, and it conducted focus group meetings with members of the public who had gone through the small claims process in order to ensure the practicality of these recommendations. This Bill is based on recommendations of that committee, and I take this opportunity to thank all members of that committee and the judiciary for their diligent efforts in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, a number of the recommendations of this committee do not require legislative changes to implement, including changes to the monetary limit for Small Claims Court and various other administrative steps designed to improve uniformity in the Small Claims Court process.

In general terms the overall themes of the recommendations were to improve access to justice for the public in smaller civil claims and to ensure consistency in the administration of justice across the province.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill furthers these themes through the introduction and implementation of a case management meeting requirement between the parties and a judge prior to the conduct of a small claims trial. In conducting the case management meeting, the small claims judge is specifically authorized to seek to settle the matter before the court without a trial. If a settlement cannot be reached, the judge is authorized to make a full range of other orders to manage the dispute and to otherwise expedite the resolution of the dispute if the matter must go to a trial. For example, orders could be made for the additional disclosure of evidence or for the preparation of a statement of defence prior to a trial date.

These changes are intended to avoid unnecessary delays in the conduct of trials and to ensure that all parties to a trial are aware of their rights and have been diligent in preparing their cases.

In addition to this major change in procedure, amendments are also proposed that would authorize the timely disposal of trial exhibits after the expiry of any possible appeal from a small claims judgment to provide for good faith liability protection for a clerk of the court who is seeking to assist a member of the public and to broaden the discretion of the court to assess costs in a small claims matter, other than lawyer-related costs, where the court deems necessary or appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to the ongoing operation of a Small Claims Court that is accessible and efficient in its operations as a court for the average person rather than the average lawyer. We are confident that with the changes recommended by the Small Claims Court review committee as implemented by this Bill and by The Provincial

Court Amendment Act, 2005, this court will continue to provide a valuable service to Saskatchewan residents.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Small Claims Act, 1997.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion put by the minister that Bill No. 111, The Small Claims Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. I recognize the member from Melfort.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and speak briefly on An Act to amend The Small Claims Act, 1997, Bill 111.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister outlined, this Bill provides some important housekeeping changes to The Small Claims Act in order to streamline the small claims process. Mr. Speaker, there are interesting innovations like introducing pre-trial case management conferences and giving the presiding judge more latitude in terms of discretion as to how this may . . . recommendations that he can make in order to facilitate settlements of the small claim process.

[15:45]

Mr. Speaker, I also understand, in looking at this Bill, that there is greater discretion for the judges presiding to dismiss and to deal with frivolous claims in an appropriate manner, and it also expands the basis upon which a judge can award court costs.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it's important that the whole process of small claims be streamlined as much as possible because in many instances this involves people who have substantial amounts of their portfolio and their savings that could be at jeopardy in this small claims process, and to deal with these issues in a timely manner is very important.

Mr. Speaker, many instances like this are going to require comment from the legal system and people that have had experiences with the small claims process. And in order to facilitate that, at this time I would like to adjourn debate.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member from Melfort that this debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — Committee of Finance.

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

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### General Revenue Fund Health Vote 32

## Subvote (HE01)

**The Deputy Chair:** — The business before the committee is estimates for Health. Will the minister please introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I'm pleased to have with me today John Wright, the deputy minister. And right behind him is Mike Shaw, associate deputy minister. And to Mike's right, directly behind me is Duncan Fisher, the assistant deputy minister. And then to Duncan's right is Max Hendricks, who's the executive director of finance and administration branch. And to my right is Lawrence Krahn, who's the assistant deputy minister.

I also have with me members from the department: Bonnie Blakley, who's the executive director for health human resource planning; Roger Carriere, from the community care branch; Deb Jordan, who's with the community hospitals and emergency services, acute and emergency services branch; Bert Linklater, executive director of the regional accountability branch; June Schultz, who's the director of the budget and financial planning in the finance and administration branch; Rod Wiley, who's the executive director of regional policy branch; Tracey Smith, who's assistant to the deputy minister; and Kevin Wilson, who's the executive director of the drug plan and extended benefits branch.

So I'm very pleased to have all of these officials with me today and look forward to the questions.

**The Deputy Chair:** — The question before the committee is subvote (HE01). Is the committee ready for the question? I'll recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'd like to welcome all the officials here today for the minister.

I'm not sure we're going to be able to put all of the officials to work, but I do have a number of questions. One case file that I want to talk about . . . and I want to talk about some health promotion issues. And then I want to talk about the question that when I left off about two weeks ago, asking about the issue around recruitment and retention of nurses and overtime and I've kind of gone back over the statement that was said. So those are the three areas that I'm going to hit on in the time that I have.

I also have a number of other colleagues that are going to ask questions; I think that they are probably more constituency specific. So I will be turning it over to them in a little while.

But the one case file that I did have was a Regina man who is on CPP [Canada Pension Plan]. He is partially paralyzed and has a colostomy bag and requires a catheter. And he uses about 10 disposable catheters per day. Because he is on limited income — so it's very a very specific question — he cannot afford to purchase these disposable catheters. It works out to be around \$5,000 a year. He's had some help with this financial end of it for a while but has requested financial assistance from Sask Health. And I guess apparently the response that came back is that he was told that he didn't qualify because he wasn't in a wheelchair and only partially paralyzed. Which seems, you

know . . . I guess there's a certain criteria, but that seems a little stringent, I guess.

He's been having trouble with infections because he is not able to afford as many disposable catheters as he needs. So he's had issues with infections which then of course causes him to access the health care system probably many more times than he really would have to had some of these . . . had he received some funds from Sask Health to cover what the disposable catheters.

I guess I'll leave it at that. What is the department's policy on that, and can this person expect any help? Because I think if you were to take a look at the whole system, he's probably costing the system much more than he would ever ask from the system if they covered the situation that he's in.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you for that question. I think the specific plan out for the paraplegic has very strict definitions of how people qualify. And so it may be that some patients wouldn't qualify for that.

Then if that particular program doesn't apply to an individual, then the normal course is that they would go to the Department of Community Resources and Employment for an assessment as to their income levels. And if they're under a certain income level then they would have total coverage under the supplementary health program. That assessment around individuals takes into account all sources of income.

But if in fact a person is not qualified under the paraplegic program and their income is above the limit set in the, for the supplementary health program then these are the kinds of things that would not be covered. And often in that initial discussion it's trying to make sure how they fit into that. But we don't, we don't have total coverage for this particular area. We provide cover for the people who fit the strict qualifications under paraplegia or if they fit the income requirements under the Department of Community Resources and Employment.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'll have to check then and see if this person has accessed all the other avenues that may be accessible to him. And I realize that there are parameters which you have to work in, it's just how strict those parameters are. And it always seems that we tend to hear from the people that are just outside those parameters — not by much, but just outside those parameters.

And so then of course the natural question is, could you expand those parameters to take into consideration someone like the fellow that I'm talking about here? But until I check and see what else he has done and what other avenues he's followed to have some of this covered, we'll just kind of leave it at that and I may be getting back to you directly.

What I wanted to question you on then was health promotions. And could you just first of all give me kind of a broad overview of what Sask Health is doing in the area of health promotions. Certainly there's more and more talk right now and with the smoking ban . . . And I'm going to get into that a little bit with health promotions. I realize that that's only one part of health promotions. I'd kind of like a broad-brush overview of what is being done in health promotions. And then specifically I want to kind of target some of the questioning towards the tobacco

reduction strategy that the Department of Health is working on.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you. This is a very good question because it covers a whole broad area of issues that we deal with. And so what I'll try to do is a fairly concise description of different things that we're working on, and then allow you to hone in on some other areas.

But when you're talking about population health in general, it relates to things like the population health action plan which we set out last year where you look at issues like smoking, obesity, healthy eating, and activities that you should have . . . the In Motion program, all those kinds of things.

But also within the population health area is the whole public health issue. So there you have safe drinking water, you deal with West Nile virus, you deal with all of the vaccinations for the population in general, and you also deal with just the overall public health capacity as it relates to any kind of influenza pandemic or some other thing that would come like that.

And so we end up having a very detailed strategy that sets out the . . . in the health promotion part, if that's what you specifically wanted to talk about, and that does then relate to the tobacco or the substance abuse kind of things — healthy eating, the mental wellness issues, and then the active communities. Those are the four main themes we've chosen in Saskatchewan and, as you'll see, they kind of hit the North American issues which are smoking, obesity, and some of those kinds of things.

So I'm not quite sure where your question is going, and if you want to have a broader picture I can try to paint that. But maybe you can ask some other questions and we'll continue.

[16:00]

**Mr. McMorris:** — I guess my first question would be, what is the dollar . . . What are we looking at in the estimates? And I probably should go through here, but the exact dollar figure for those four areas that you had mentioned — whether it's mental health, active living, tobacco reduction, or obesity — what are you looking at for a dollar value spent on that in this upcoming year for the promotion of those four target areas? Or is that too hard to break down? Or just first of all health promotion, but then those target areas.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I will try to answer that. We have some provincial kind of programs or provincial coordinating roles that we provide. But most of the direct dollars around a lot of these programs are in the RHA [regional health authority] budgets, so the regional health authority individual budgets would set out that. I mean, I think it's possible to pull some of that together. But one region might have a little heavier emphasis on the In Motion program versus the healthy eating part and there are some other things there.

Some of our work that we're doing actually through the provincial programs, the regional health authorities and the health quality council as we look at the chronic disease management, some of those fit in very carefully into that health promotion side, which is service provision. But then also how can you have people aware of things they can do in their own lifestyles which will help their health.

So I think that some dollar figures if . . . Specifically you asked about the budget. We have about a half a million dollars for tobacco control in the provincial portions. There are about 1.5 million for West Nile virus. Those are specific amounts. I think that in the health promotion strategy, which is the coordinating effort across the province, that's about 270,000 that funds the people that provide the advice in Saskatchewan Health for the province. We can go through a whole number of different ones, but if you have some specific questions I can provide that as well.

But to pull it all together, I mean arguably we'd like to say that you're providing acute care with a lot of the money, obviously, but we're also trying to shift to make sure that health promotion has a high priority. And some of these chronic disease management programs, some of the things we're looking at around actually replacement of hips and knees — you'd want that to be your last and final resort — what are the things that you can do when somebody's starting to get a gimpy leg early on that maybe will allow them to exercise or do other things with the physio. Well, that's all health promotion but how you break that out is quite difficult.

**Mr. McMorris:** — I guess the area that I want to specifically target is the tobacco reduction strategy and you had mentioned that there is about a half a million dollars being put into that this year.

I would be interested in finding out . . . I understand, I certainly realize that the health districts, or health authorities have ownership in a lot of this promotional material, and not material, but the strategy of educating people in their own districts, or regions, or authorities. But I would probably think that a lot . . . most of the tobacco reduction strategy is run through your department.

So especially when you starting to develop information packages, and, you know, I guess the area that I really want to drill down into is what is being done for the retailers? People that are at the service stations and their employees that are selling tobacco products, what is being done to educate those people as to the . . . what the dos and the don'ts and how they determine what they can do in different situations.

Some of these people are no doubt working part-time and they're under the age of 18 and they're, you know, put in this position of whether they can sell tobacco products or not, and they're responsible, not the person that's purchasing.

So that's kind of the area I want to find out about, is that it's all fine and dandy to pass legislation and say that the owner of a convenience store, or the employee of a convenience store is responsible. But what type of education is being put out there so that these people know what is expected of them?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — As we move forward with the tobacco reduction Act in the first iteration before we went to the smoke-free part this last January 1, we had been working all along the way with the retailers. And so in November when we knew the January 1 date was coming, we sent a package of information to all of the retailers in the province.

This information had been prepared in the health promotion

branch working together with the retailers. There's a group of retailers that are sort of consultants. And so that had the information around how the new Act was going to come in to play, how the public health inspectors would be involved. We also have a regular update that's . . . updates that go out to the retailers, and we have kits basically that we have prepared that retailers can use to work and train their employees.

**Mr. McMorris:** — That's what I was looking at then, is knowing what was done for the retailers around the province, and I know it's information that's going out. So you're saying that you have sent out information to all retailers in the province and in that kit would be obviously various resources to inform them of their responsibilities going forward.

And it's interesting because I have talked to a number of retailers and they're concerned over this, and they feel that quite frankly the information that has been put out hasn't been sufficient to train their employees. What again — and I guess I would like to know a dollar figure — how much has that cost? How much has it cost the Department of Health to put those kits together, to send them out to every retailer in this province?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I don't have the specific number roundup, but I would be happy to provide you with the kit as a retailer so you can actually see what's there. And basically it has things like no smoking signs, the other things that you see in establishments. It has information about how the Act works and those kinds of things. So we'd be happy to share one of those so I'll arrange to have it sent over to you.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would be very interested in receiving one of those kits. You never know what three years down the road brings. Maybe perhaps I'll be a retailer and needing that.

But I would really be interested in knowing the dollar figure. The dollar figure as to how much that cost to put the kit together, the ongoing cost, and as well as . . . yes, the cost of sending it out.

Because there is . . . other provinces are going through the same process of tobacco reduction. And other provinces use an organization called Operation ID. And I know you're probably very familiar with it; I'm very familiar with it. And the cost in other provinces to put this information out is zero for their department of health because this is what the Operation ID does.

Now I know you probably have some sort of a bias towards Operation ID. You think that it at times promotes unhealthy life styles with tobacco use but I would be very interested to know from your perspective as to why and I would be very interested to know the number . . . the dollar value that we're putting in promoting the reduction of tobacco compared to what other provinces are putting in with Operation ID, which is not costing them really anything. And I believe it's used in every other province but Saskatchewan. It's being allowed to . . . They're allowed to put their information into the retailers' hands and then to the employees' hands. And the package looks very, very useful. And there are a number of things that they Operation ID has that — you know, I've talked to retailers — that your promotional package doesn't have.

And I've wondered if you've looked at even what the Operation ID has and copied it to some extent — some issues around, you know, who's eligible, and dates, and those type of things, to have in front of the person that's selling a tobacco product. To know what is the eligible date, when is the person . . . when can he and when can't they, their age, and that type of thing that, from my understanding, Department of Health won't allow the retailers to have now, and I'm questioning that. So if you could answer. There's probably three or four questions in that vein, but I would be very interested in your answers.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you for that question. And I'll provide you the information around providing the kit. It's not in this year's budget. It was done last year and partly the year before. But I am quite curious that you seem to be advocating the operation that's involved.

I met with the retailers and the organizer of Operation ID for Canada a few years ago. And it was very clear when talking to this woman that she was a marketer from the tobacco industry, and that this is funded by the tobacco industry.

The World Health Organization has sent a warning out across the world to be very careful with the tobacco company funded promotion or Operation ID-like operations and are encouraging countries everywhere to be very, very careful.

We in Saskatchewan, after looking at this, said we're not going to use this operation because it is something that comes from the tobacco industry. And so we made that decision a number of years ago, and I think we'll be sticking with that. Our kits and what we provide — I think you'll see — are very equivalent to the kind of information there, plus some other things that are done.

But we're working with something that we want to denormalize the use of tobacco, and we don't think having an organized tobacco company program assists in that at all. Thanks.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Well that's interesting. And I don't know if I'm necessarily promoting Operation ID over the program that you have until I see what you have available and the information that you have available.

But what I can say is, talking to a number of the retailers that have compared both the products — the one that you're offering and the one that Operation ID offers — and they have, to the person that I've talked to, said that the promotional material to train their people from Operation ID was more effective and much better done than what your department has done. Now I haven't seen it, so I can't say for sure from my own perspective, but I know that's what retailers have said.

But I find it interesting — and I hope this isn't the case — that just because tobacco companies are funding this, that it's no good. If that's the reason . . . If you can prove to me that there is some sort of subliminal message in there that's making people smoke, that's one thing. But just to come out and say that because tobacco companies are funding this, then it is no good, I don't think is good enough, because it operates in other provinces. And it's effective in other provinces.

You know, I can use the example . . . If that's the example, I

mean, what are we doing letting alcohol companies say, don't drink and drive? Because that must mean we should be doing it. If we're just saying that the person . . . Whether it's a tobacco company saying, don't smoke at a certain age and down or an alcohol company . . .

And you can even take it one step further — the provincial government with gambling, talking about, you know, about addiction to gambling and things like that . . . I mean, we're as a provincial government saying, you know, this is something to be careful of. But because we're the ones getting the profit, does that mean we shouldn't be able to say there's problems here and there's dangers here?

And to use that same argument about tobacco companies — and major tobacco companies can't say, under the age of 18 don't smoke; it's bad for you — because there's some sort of hidden message there, I don't think is good enough.

Now I would be very interested in knowing why other provinces feel that it's more than suitable, but we don't. And we'll be putting, and I'll be interested in finding out the number — I see we've put a half a million dollars into tobacco reduction strategy going forward — how much we put in last year because I'm concerned that the fact that it's just because it's tobacco companies putting forward the information package that that eliminates it from any possibility of being effective here in Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — We made this decision quite a number of years ago. We prefer to go with a Saskatchewan-made product, working with our local retailers. And the cost of developing that was a few years ago. We think that it makes sense to do this, working with Saskatchewan people. We accept the advice from the World Health Organization and from many other of the advocates around the world saying, this is not something you should use.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Well we'll be interested to see those numbers. I'm not going to spend any more time on this right now. But I would be interested in seeing the numbers. You had mentioned that the cost was a number of years ago. And if there has been no costs going forward, I'd say the package that you have is very ineffective because if you're not changing it as you are going forward and addressing the issues going forward, there will be costs going forward. And, you know, that's all part of a proper education package, is keeping up to date. Regardless of that, we'll leave the Operation ID and the tobacco reduction strategy for a minute.

[16:15]

What I want to do is talk about recruitment and retention of nurses. And the last question that I asked you a couple weeks ago, and you went through the different numbers, and how many are full-time, how many we have as full-time nurses in our province compared to other provinces; you went through that. And one of the last statements you made here is you said . . . I guess about three-quarters of the way through your last answer you're talking about, I believe, overtime, it says the number of overtime hours for SUN, Saskatchewan Union of Nurses' members, declined by about 11.4 per cent.

What do you have, what statistics do you have to back that up? How do we know that when we look at the cost of overtime in the health regions over the last number of years?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — We took the information directly from the SAHO [Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations] payroll system.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Then I'd be interested to know . . . When we look at the budgets over the last couple of years and we look at overtime — the overtime for the Saskatoon and Regina health authorities over the last four years — in 2000-2001, in Regina the overtime was a little over three and a half million dollars, and in 2003-2004 it's over \$5 million. You know, it's an increase of \$2.6 million in four years for overtime in the Regina Health Authority.

In the Saskatoon Health Authority, if you compare 2000-2001, the Saskatoon Health Authority paid about 400 . . . 4.2 million roughly in overtime, and in 2003-2004 it paid well over \$6 million. That's an increase in four years of over \$2 million, which if you take the 2000-2001, it's an increase of 50 per cent in the last four years for overtime.

I would be interested then as to what that overtime was spent on when we see that the overtime for nurses, according to the minister, has decreased by 11.4 per cent.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I think the information that I provided to you last time related specifically to nursing and it was for the year '04 over the year '02, and so that was 11.4 per cent. And correct me if I'm wrong, but I think you are taking all of the employees for the whole health region and using those numbers, and I was specifically referring to nursing last week.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Yes, what the numbers that I'm taking are just out of the, you know, the total overtime for the Regina Health Authority and the Saskatoon Health Authority. So if it's not registered nurses — because registered nurses, RNs or RPNs [registered practical nurse] have gone down 11 per cent, but our overtime has gone up 50 per cent in the last four years — who is getting paid the overtime? Where is this overtime being paid? Is it lab techs, is it x-ray techs, is it, you know . . . I'd be very interested to know a bit of a breakdown on the overtime costs then, when we're seeing our registered nurses who again . . .

And that was the basis of my last question a couple of weeks ago, is that nurses are certainly working more overtime. That's what we're hearing all the time. But you're showing that it goes down eleven and a half per cent but overtime costs went up 50 per cent in the last four years.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — It's a little bit challenging to answer the questions when you've got the global amounts. But some examples of where we have increased overtime, we know that. It does relate to some of our CT [computerized tomography] scans, MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging], some of those things where we've expanded the numbers of hours and we recruited more people, but we still end up having to use some of our existing employees a bit more. And we know across the board, and have been monitoring the overtime hours over the last number of years, and we're starting to have this level off

and go down because we have the senior management in the RHAs [regional health authority] working specifically to deal with some of those things.

But it's hard to answer all of those questions without sort of taking notice of what specific area and then going and looking to see if we have that data directly. But we have a much more comprehensive SAHO system where we have everybody on the same payroll system just now in the last year, or the last two years I guess it would be. And so some of those kinds of comparisons will be easier to make because we're working with one system rather than a whole array of systems.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Well I'd be very interested if the minister could, in the future, get some of those numbers, get some of that breakdown. Because if we're paying, you know, 50 per cent more overtime in the last four years in the Saskatoon Health District, I would like to know where that money is going. I mean if it is, if it is because we're running the MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging] more often, then we better look at full-time staff and attracting . . . That better be a targeted area to recruit more full-time staff. Because when we're spending, in the two health districts, over \$11 million this next year . . . in this past year I should say — '03-04 — when we're spending well over \$11 million on overtime, and we had better start looking at some full-time positions.

We certainly know, talking to Saskatchewan Union of Nurses that the fact that overtime is an issue. And they're concerned with the upcoming bargaining process, that some of the deterrents for health districts to use overtime to backfill the lack of full-time work, may be being eroded in this next contract. I realize you probably won't talk about what the contract negotiations are into the future, but that's certainly what we're hearing. Because we're relying so heavily on overtime, which is a symptom simply of not having enough full-time workers.

And when you start looking at not having enough full-time workers, you can look at all the symptoms that that causes. One would be overtime and we're certainly working on that. Another issue is WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] and the amount of claims that the health authorities are finding with WCB. You know, we can go through some of the numbers as far as WCB and what the premiums are that the health authorities have to pay to WCB. And they are increasing significantly. The health authority . . . the Regina Health Authority in the last year has gone up \$1 million in premiums for WCB. Why is that is because the amount . . . their claims are going up. Why are their claims going up? Because of relying on nurses probably to work more hours than what they were scheduled, or whatever. I think it relates back to the first issue that we were talking about with overtime.

So although the minister had said the last go-round with estimates that we are fitting in quite nicely in Western Canada with the number of full-time employees, full-time nursing positions, I would say that we should maybe revisit that and look at dealing with some of the problems that we see in our health care system — especially with registered nurses, the amount of overtime that they are spending, and the number of workers' compensation claims, that we see our premiums going up in these two health districts. And when you talk to the Union of Nurses, that the fact that we just don't have . . . They're also

saying that we need more full-time positions.

So I would ask the minister to comment on those symptoms that . . . And if it is that we've got enough full-time employees, full-time nurses, then what are causing these symptoms with such an increase in overtime and an increase in WCB rates, those type of things?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — First thing I'll talk about is the safety in the workplace. And that's a concern that I think I have and I think right across the system. So we in . . . What we did with the money that we got out of the first ministers' accord last fall, we allocated quite a large chunk of that money directly to safety issues around buying equipment — lifts, those kinds of things — training.

And we're continuing to monitor very carefully the workers' compensation claims and the safety issues that are there. So that's . . . I appreciate you raising that point and that's one that we are making a strong effort to have everybody work safely because it's better for the patients, better for the workers, and better for the whole system.

Now when it comes to overtime, and as it relates to nurses — because you've come back to that again — is that when we look at the whole system, the numbers of hours of overtime per nurse, if you calculate on the per nurse in the provincial system, is about one hour of overtime per nursing full-time equivalent per week, is about 52 hours per full-time equivalent for a year. So that's how much it is. Now clearly what we know is some nurses would never work overtime and so some others are working more, but in the overall scheme of things.

Now the other question that you raised is around the number of full-time nurses working. And in Saskatchewan we have the greater percentage of nurses — RNs, RPNs, and LPNs [licensed practical nurse] — working full-time than our neighbouring provinces of Alberta and Manitoba and the national average. And let me fill that out for you — 50 per cent of registered nurses, 74 per cent of registered psych nurses had full-time employment in the year 2003. This is higher than the Canadian average as well as being higher than all the other Western provinces. We also know that 50 per cent of the licensed practical nurses had full-time employment and this is higher than Alberta and Manitoba and the Canadian average.

The Statistics Canada report 2004, in November 2004, on employment trends in nursing said that we know that 82 per cent of the RNs who work part-time voluntarily chose this arrangement, while the same is true of 60 per cent of the LPNs.

So we have more full-time nursing positions in Saskatchewan. We continue to look at the new graduates and how do we get them into some of those positions when they first come out of school, and that becomes a challenge. But as our system goes, we have more full-time jobs than our neighbours.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Yes, the last time we were in estimates you went through those numbers; pretty close to the same numbers as this time give or take a few per cent. So we have some consistency there.

The time that I have . . . again, I'll get back to the full-time

equivalents and that type of thing. It's interesting when you mention that there's one hour per week per nurse, full-time nurse, and it would be great if that's how you could work it out, so every nurse worked one extra hour. But that's not how the system works, you know, and you said that there are certain nurses that work a pile of overtime, an awful lot of overtime. So it's easy to say that it's only one hour per nurse per week and you spread it over that it doesn't sound like nearly as significant a number, but when you look at how many nurses are actually working overtime, and then you add that up per hour per week it's much more significant, I think.

Before I leave I do want to ask a couple of questions on questions that were asked today in question period regarding the contract in Yorkton with the ambulance, the EMS [emergency medical services] people. And I do want to just try and understand the difference on how the funding is determined. The difference between, for example P.A. [Prince Albert], Saskatoon, Regina, and Moose Jaw, they get a flat rate of \$275 and a mileage or kilometre rate of 2.75 per kilometre, whereas in Yorkton the rate is \$200 flat rate for a call, \$200 flat rate, and a per kilometre of \$2 per kilometre. Why the discrepancy between those communities?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — On a province-wide basis we have suggested guidelines which set the maximums of patient charges. This is what a patient is charged, is what you're reading to us. And so the regional health authorities will choose various amounts in their region, as long as they don't go higher than the provincial maximum which we set province wide.

But those are the charges that are paid by the patient. They're not the charges that are given to the operators.

**Mr. McMorris:** — So those are the charges that are charged to the patient. And the health authority determines that or is that set through the provincial government?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Each of those charges is set by the regional health authority.

[16:30]

**Mr. McMorris:** — Then why would . . . And I guess you're answering the question here for the regional health authorities, but that hasn't stopped us before in some of these questions. Why would, for example, in Moose Jaw, it be 275 and in Yorkton 200? I realize it's a different health region. Maybe I'll leave it at that first of all.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I think what happens in each of the regional health authorities, they have different factors involved. So when the charges were set, for example, in Moose Jaw, Regina, Saskatoon, most of the calls come from within the city. So they set a flat fee and don't worry about the mileage part. Whereas an area like Sunrise or probably Heartland would set a flat fee and then a mileage charge because the costs would be different on some of the longer calls.

**Mr. McMorris:** — So the difference then between Yorkton and Melville, the charge through the health district, is it the same — \$200?



**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — If you're in Yorkton or if you're in Melville, the patient pays the same amount.

**Mr. McMorris:** — So just then comparing that health region with other health regions then around the province, you know, you'd mentioned Saskatoon and Regina most of the calls are . . . but Moose Jaw, for example, would do a number of rural calls. Moose Jaw not much unlike Yorkton or Swift Current or North Battleford. How do the rates compare in those other health regions compared to Yorkton?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Okay. The question that you asked is, are there variations across the province? And the answer is yes, but there is an ambulance fee guideline which was set out in October 2001. And basically the idea was to try to standardize the costs across the province.

The effect of that guideline was that for — and this you have to remember: these are the previous health district names — but it's Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon health districts. The basic call pickup rate was not to exceed \$275, and the kilometre charge wasn't to exceed \$2 per kilometre. And there was supposed to be no change in the waiting time hourly rate. And then for all of the other health districts outside of there, the pickup rate was not to exceed \$200 and the kilometre charge was not to exceed \$2 per kilometre.

So those are the guidelines that are still in effect now. And so, basically, that difference would be there. But this is the cost to the patient, that's there.

**Mr. McMorris:** — I think that's all the questions I have right now. I mean, there's lots more questions I have right now, but in the time . . . I'd like to turn it over to the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy and she'll ask some questions.

**The Chair:** — I recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I would like to ask some questions around the Pangman Health Centre. And this has been going on, this issue of a doctor, Dr. Oberholzer from Radville, being unable to come to Pangman and to provide services to the residents of Pangman and area.

Presently we have numerous individuals travelling to Radville to have the services of Dr. Oberholzer and Dr. Helms. And Dr. Oberholzer has indicated for quite some time now that he would be willing to offer this practice for the convenience of the residents of Pangman and surrounding area within their own health centre.

I spoke with you, Mr. Minister, on March 22 of last year — over a year ago — and at that time you indicated to me that you would look into it and that in the short term that privileges for Dr. Oberholzer would be granted in Pangman and in the long term that primary care would be implemented in Pangman Health Centre. To date that is over a year ago, Mr. Minister, and nothing has happened.

In November of last year, the rural municipality of Norton wrote to yourself, and in their letter they state, and I quote:

We were advised that the Saskatchewan Medical Association and [the] Department of Health have yet to finalize [a] . . . Primary Health Care Contract for the doctors to sign.

To my knowledge — I've contacted the RM of Norton — they have not received a reply from your letter. And on February 1, I spoke again after . . . This is one of numerous times that I have spoke to Lee Spencer, who is the CEO of the Sun Country Health Region. And he indicated to me that what was holding this up was a contract being signed between Saskatchewan Medical Association and Saskatchewan Department of Health and that ongoing negotiations were being held and that a contract would be finalized.

He also indicated to me that the Department of Health was starting to plan to put primary care into Pangman and that Marga Cugnet from the Sun Country Health Region had been instructed to start the process of looking for a primary care nurse for Pangman. He also indicated to me that he would be meeting with Lawrence Krahn from the Department of Health within two days of February 1 when I spoke to him and that this issue was moving forward. To date I have heard nothing of this being resolved, and I would like the minister to indicate when this will be resolved, and how.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you for the question about this ongoing discussion for the Pangman community and Pangman facility. What's happening is, on a province-wide basis, is that Saskatchewan Health has been working together with the Saskatchewan Medical Association and others around developing a memorandum of understanding of a template for a primary health care contract between physicians and a regional health authority. And this is a major task to do this and there's been many, many, many months — perhaps years — of discussion about this. We're very close to having that completed and that will then provide a template for the relationship between the regional health authority and the doctors who are in the Pangman area.

One of the things that then has to happen as that contract is developed is that the various doctors who may provide the service in a community, if it's one or two or three, they end up having to make sure that their call arrangements and others mesh together, and that has been I think one of the challenges not only in this area but in many parts of the province. Our hope is that the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association], Sask Health, regional health authority memorandum of understanding will provide some very good guidelines for how this can be resolved right across the province.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Well thank you, Mr. Minister, and I hear what you're saying but I guess I find it unacceptable. This has been going on for several years and, as this is transpiring, the people in Pangman and area are having to drive for services that Dr. Oberholzer and Dr. Helms are willing to provide within the Pangman Health Centre. They are willing to work with Dr. Wong and arrange for times that would suit both doctors so that they do not overlap and that they can provide the care.

In the absence of this arrangement being made, people in the Pangman area are having to drive instead of Dr. Oberholzer being in their facility. It makes absolutely no sense. And I

would like to refer you to the Saskatchewan action plan for primary health care of June 2002 where it states, each person will continue to choose their own family doctor just as they have in the past.

And what the people of Pangman and area are asking is to have a choice in which doctor that they have to provide their care. And Dr. Oberholzer and Dr. Helms are willing participants in making this available to them. It is the Department of Health that is the problem here.

And, Mr. Minister, you did indicate to me yourself, March of last year when I spoke to you behind the bar in this House, that you agreed that this should happen. You indicated to me that privileges would be granted to Dr. Oberholzer in the short term and then in the long term the primary care model would be put in place.

Neither has happened, and I'm asking you, Mr. Minister, today to make it possible to grant these privileges to Dr. Oberholzer and Dr. Helms immediately so that they can start offering services in Pangman.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you for the comments. I will acknowledge that the discussion with the SMA has taken much longer than anybody anticipated. And part of the discussion was to make sure that there were clear rules and clear arrangements around setting up primary care, health care teams, in regions where a number of physicians will work together and make sure coverage is available in quite a number of the smaller communities where they may not have a physician resident.

So this was anticipated that we would have this — almost a year ago — have this in place. But there have been long and hard discussions, and we're very close to having it available, which will allow us then to go forward with the primary care facilities across the province. The specific issues that you're asking around privileges relate to the regional health authority, and I think that they are most likely waiting on the province-wide memorandum of understanding because I know that's happening in other parts of the province.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Well, Mr. Minister, there needs to be yourself to take action to see that this is put in place. Everyone wants to pass the buck. The local board who answers to the government, who receives their funding from the government, are saying that it's the Department of Health and the Saskatchewan Medical Association. You tell me that it is the local board.

No one wants to make a decision, and at the same time what is happening is that the people that require the services are the ones that are paying the price. Either in economically they are paying the price because they have to travel. And secondly they do not have access to their choice of a doctor in their area when we have willing doctors.

How long do you think that we are going to retain doctors in rural Saskatchewan if nothing is done by your department to encourage them to stay there and to enable them to provide the services that they want to provide? Dr. Oberholzer has had nothing but road blocks put in his way since he started practising in rural Saskatchewan. He could be offering many,

many more services to the residents of Radville and area and to the residents of Pangman and area. He could be offering services that people are hard pressed to receive in Regina and Saskatoon because of wait lists and shortage of beds. And your government stands in the way of that happening.

Now what he is asking here, and the people of Pangman are asking, is simply that he be able to provide the services that he is now providing in Radville to the people in Pangman in their own town, to provide a needed service for them instead of an inconvenience. Will you commit to working to make this happen and grant privileges for Dr. Oberholzer.

[16:45]

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I appreciate the comments made by the member, and she's identified a number of the kinds of issues that have been at the table as people discuss a template for setting up of these kinds of practices. It relates to compensation. It relates to how that should compare with compensation across the province. It relates to how the privileges can be granted in various places. These are all very challenging issues. And we will continue to work with the SMA to get a template that can provide solutions for this, and we had hoped that that'll come out very, very shortly.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Well, Mr. Minister, I hear what you're saying but it's been three years almost since the action plan was put forth. And while that has been happening, people have been put on hold. And this is not about compensation because Dr. Oberholzer is presently being paid to provide the services in Radville.

What it is about is allowing him to provide them in Pangman, to provide service, good quality service to the people of Pangman and area so that they don't have to travel to Radville. It would not mean an increase in fees that the Department of Health would have to pay. So it's simply a matter of no one — including yourself — willing to look at this issue and to come to a resolution of it, to provide adequate services. And that is what I'm asking you because you did commit a year ago to making this happen, and nothing has happened since.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the minister and to your officials, I would like to ask a number of direct questions from my constituency.

And I'm going to start with the LPNs. I understand that you've had some discussions with the LPNs in the last while regarding discontinuing the licensing of LPNs who have not obtained their medication course as of 2006.

I know at the annual general meeting in April, 2004 their members voted to discontinue licensing LPNs who had not attained their medication course, and as minister, you did not approve this motion. I know that after discussion it was determined that you felt that this should be grandfathered but since . . . It's been 12 years since the medication course was first initiated and that most health districts actually had funding in place to attain this education. And they feel as an association that in order to be progressive and recognized, it would be more

appropriate if everyone was on the same level. So I'm wondering what your intention is dealing with this issue?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you for that question. I spoke to the annual meeting of the licensed practical nurses last week in Moose Jaw. And I told them that I would not approve the bylaw that they had brought forward because it would have the effect of disenfranchising 400 workers in the system now who are licensed practical nurses.

And so what I encouraged them to do was to continue to provide the conditional licences that they are now so that those people can continue in their jobs and provide good service like they have for many, many years and work with them to encourage them to take the medical course if they need it. Sometimes they don't need that medical course for the kind of work that they're doing, and that can be arranged so that these people can effectively continue and finish off their careers. They're often people that have been working for a long time, and this would be an added burden to go back and work.

So what the discussion then becomes, well how do you accommodate people who have served the province well, served their patients well, and also recognize the fact that the training has changed? And I think there is a system that they have been working out around how they can keep those people employed, but make sure that the standards for the new people who are coming in to work meet the kind of standards that they have set.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. What percentage, or do you know what percentage of the people at the annual meeting actually approved this resolution?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I'm not sure. Are you referring to the resolution from last year's annual meeting? I'm not sure what the percentage was, but it appears that it was approved by the majority because it came in effect, but I don't know that.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I have a number of concerns addressed regarding this licensing issue as something that appears to . . . being that there is a great concern.

Mr. Minister, I just want to ask you a question regarding a remark that you made in the House the other day about the crystal meth conference that was held in Saskatoon earlier this year, the chemical dependency workers conference. How much money did Sask Health put into that conference?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — It's my understanding that it was primarily organized by the care providers in Saskatoon and so that most of the funding . . . actually as a province-wide basis we don't have very much conference funding anymore that we provide through the provincial government. But conference funding is sometimes provided through the regional health authority, and so I'm not sure if Saskatoon Regional Health Authority contributed in some way.

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Minister, in the House on April 21, you indicated that you had brought in one of the world's experts to Saskatchewan, Dr. Rossen, to talk about the sort of leading treatment program dealing with crystal meth.

I had a call from the chemical workers executive council

afterwards. They were very frustrated that you had indicated that we, meaning the government, had brought in somebody into this conference when the Government of Saskatchewan didn't put one penny into this conference.

It was put on by the chemical workers themselves, and they'd brought in the doctor themselves, and there were people from the Department of Health there, but this government did not put one penny directly into this conference. So to indicate to the people of this province that your government had some involvement with this conference is basically sending a message that perhaps is not altogether true, is not correct, Mr. Minister.

I think that the frustration that the workers are dealing with right now is the fact that they are trying to do the work that should be the work of this government and yet when they are doing something . . . [inaudible] . . . then I believe that the chemical workers actually have every right to be frustrated.

There was a lot of work involved in the conference. The attendance was overwhelming. The number of people that needed this training was overwhelming. And then to have the government take credit for it, I think, was adding insult to injury.

On top of this, Mr. Minister, I was also told that the funding was cut for the inter-agency conference this year. It wasn't a large amount of money, but they needed it to fulfill their work and their duties as chemical workers that are doing a great job out there in the midst of a growing problem, not just with crystal meth but with other addictions as well. And they feel that they have been left in the cold by this government.

So I'm wondering if there is some kind of comments you'd like to make to the people that have worked very diligently to put on this conference and someone else is trying to take credit for their work.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Well what we did around reducing the funding for conferences went right across the board, but I do acknowledge that this particular group had less funding than the previous year around their particular conference. But that's true for quite a number of groups across the province, and that was part of a budget decision that we made. And what we will continue to do is work with all of the people.

What we acknowledged in the information we provided is that this group has shown leadership and that they did organize this conference. I think it's really important that this world expert did come to Saskatchewan, and I think we should celebrate the fact they've done that, that we're all working at this together. And if we're going to start taking credit, each of us for different parts of this, then I think it's a problem.

**The Chair:** — I recognize the Government Deputy House Leader.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move we rise and report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

**The Chair:** — The Government Deputy House Leader has

moved that we rise and report progress and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed? Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That's carried.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair of committees is recognized.

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

**The Speaker:** — When shall it . . . may sit again? I recognize the Government Deputy House Leader.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting. The Chair recognizes the Government Deputy House Leader.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that the House do now adjourn.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Government Deputy 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:** — The motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:57.]



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