

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Monday next ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation and the Riverhurst irrigation project: (1) have SEDCO officials discussed offering financial support to a plan to produce potatoes on irrigated lands near Riverhurst; (2) has SEDCO received proposals for the development of a packaging plant to service this area; (3) has SEDCO received proposals for this plant from Mr. Randy Bauscher, owner of Mountain Seed and Fertilizer of Rupert, Idaho; (4) if so, has SEDCO discussed packing-plant proposals for Riverhurst potatoes with any Saskatchewan- or Canadian-based firms; and (5) has there been any economic analysis of the financial viability of this project.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to be able to introduce to you today, and through you to the other members of the Assembly, a group of 42 constituents. They are from the Grace Lutheran Golden Fellowship Group from Regina Victoria constituency, and they've come to visit us today. I hope that they enjoy the question period and they find it informative. I very much look forward to meeting with them after the question period. And I would ask all members to join with me to welcome them here today.

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Future of Whitespruce Treatment Centre

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Health refused to tell this House that the Whitespruce Youth Treatment Centre would continue to operate after the upcoming provincial budget.

I find this shameful disregard for the needs of our youth and their families. And I'm asking today if the Premier will not reconsider the answer of his minister yesterday, and today give these youth the comfort they need in their already strained situation; give them some faith that they will continue to get the treatment they need here at home, instead of possibly having to leave the province. Will you do that, Mr. Premier?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, to the member's question. I want to reassure that member and all members that the addictions treatment for youth in this province is and remains and will be a high priority of this government, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of decisions that may or may not be related to budget, of course the member will understand those decisions will be announced in due course.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Associate Minister of Health. Follow-up question, Mr. Speaker.

I believe the associate minister is again hiding behind the deficit. And the associate minister really hasn't cleared up the fact that people are concerned regarding the services that they would . . . that will be possibly refused to them.

I ask the minister again: will you not give the youth and their families at this unique treatment centre — and I'm talking about Whitespruce; I'm not talking about the whole program in general, but the Whitespruce Centre — will you not give these families at this unique treatment centre some guarantee for the future of the centre? And I ask you, don't hide behind the deficit. Give the families and the youth of this province some assurances that this centre will continue to operate after the budget date.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I would indicate to the member that there is no sense of hiding behind a deficit in this government or in this budgetary process. In fact, we are doing just the opposite. We are exposing the magnitude of this deficit and what it has done to our province for all of the province to see.

Mr. Speaker, I repeat again: the department, SADAC (Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission), and all aspects of this government, we're reviewing all parts of our expenditures.

Mr. Speaker, announcements related to the budget will be made in due course.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again to the Associate Minister of Health. I find it totally amazing that the minister doesn't seem to really care or understand how serious it is for people at Whitespruce. Tax dollars will be spent by this government helping pay for treatment whether it is here in Saskatchewan or out of the province. Will the minister not admit that if money is going to spent on treatment regardless, it should be spent here in our province instead of sending it out of Saskatchewan, or is the minister's real motive here to just shut down another good project initiated by the former government?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, the motives of this

government are very clear and that is to provide for the people of Saskatchewan, including the young people of Saskatchewan, the best addiction treatment that we can provide given the fiscal circumstance that we're in.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Speaker, when the Associate Minister of Finance says that they will provide the best services available, does that include Whitespruce? That's what we're asking, Mr. Speaker. Does it include Whitespruce?

The Minister of Health refused to tell the public what the future of Whitespruce Treatment Centre is. But maybe she can tell, or the Associate Minister of Finance can tell us, what the future of funding for the treatment will be. Will you, sir, tell the people of our province whether or not, if funding is eliminated for Whitespruce, funding will also be eliminated for people who then turn and are forced to go out of province for this service?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I can indicate to members and to the House that for the past year there have been consultations and discussions going on with people in the addiction field, in the whole field of addiction treatment.

Mr. Speaker, the member's question is a budgetary matter. He knows that we're not going to discuss the budget at this time, and decisions relating to any program or any institution, Mr. Speaker, will be made in due course.

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

#### **Prescription Drug Plan**

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question would be to the Minister of Health or the Associate Minister of Health. Yesterday I was at the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) convention, and obviously it took me a little bit longer getting back than it did you because I don't have the luxury of flying on the taxpayers' dollar.

But a very important question was raised to me which was namely this. A very serious question was raised by the doctors, and they asked this question. They're telling me now that they're being told, they are being told not to advance any prescriptions on a repetitive basis, on a repeat performance, that go beyond March 20 — no prescriptions repeated past March 20.

I ask you, Mr. Minister: does this mean then that March 20 is the death-knell of the drug plan?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, the member brings information to this House that is unsubstantiated. I am not sure of these kind of reports. I can't comment on them. If he, like the member before him, is attempting to discuss budgetary decisions today, he knows that's not going to happen. He will be aware that a budget

will be delivered in this House, if I may say, Mr. Speaker, in the first time in many years before the end of the fiscal year. That budget will be brought down in this House. And there will be ample opportunity, Mr. Speaker, in that context to ask questions or to engage in the budget debate.

#### **Closure of Bus Routes**

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a new question. This one is directed to the Minister of Highways. Mr. Speaker, recently communities along Highway No. 1 and Highway No. 48 that are serviced by Moose Mountain bus lines, were informed that Moose Mountain Lines intends to discontinue service to the area.

And I have a question to the Minister of Highways regarding the Highway Traffic Board's review of the Moose Mountain bus line application to cancel routes along the No. 1 and No. 48 Highways.

The chairman of your board has said that she wants the provincial budget to know . . . awaits the provincial budget to know whether they can subsidize these routes. My question, Mr. Minister: will the minister explain to the House what measures the board is willing to take to ensure these routes continue to exist for the people who desperately need the service?

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

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the hon. member fully appreciates, that Moose Mountain bus operated some 30 years almost on those two lines, down the Highway No. 48 and down Highway No. 1. I want to indicate to you that we have the interests of the people of Saskatchewan at heart. But I want to also indicate to you that I am the minister in charge of STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company), and no company in the history of this province has been so mismanaged as that corporation, nor the finances of this province. And you were a party to that, and you stand in this House today and ask us if we have money to fulfil the subsidization.

I want to say to you that we're putting together a business plan for STC which will address the needs of the people of Saskatchewan within the capacity of our province to supply that service. And we will be communicating with the respective communities in order to get their input, and I say we'll have STC back where it can provide from the wreckage of your administration.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that the Minister of Highways continues to hide behind the doom and gloom that his government portrays to the people of Saskatchewan. In fact, the perception that is being led out there, Mr. Speaker, is the people don't really know whether they can believe what is being said any more by these ministers.

In fact, Mr. Minister, your government has a responsibility for the people along this bus route. They are telling the government they need the service, they need the comfort of being able to be mobile. In fact there are seniors along these two routes, Mr. Speaker, who use that service to be transported from their communities to Regina for medical services. There are small businesses who gain direct access to suppliers in order to meet the needs of their customers.

Question to the minister: is it the government's intention to now use the Highway Traffic Board to subsidize bus companies throughout the province and specifically on these two routes?

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

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — I want to indicate to the hon. member that the Highway Traffic Board is presently holding or just recently held meetings on March 8 in Montmartre and Wawota, and on March 9 in Moosomin.

There has been no decision, and the purpose of those meetings was in fact to hear the position of Moose Mountain bus line. And what I want to say to you is that what we are doing with STC — not the Highway Traffic Board — within the government itself, is looking at providing, after the wreckage that you left behind, a proper system of transportation through STC.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again to the minister. I appreciate the fact that the Highway Traffic Board and certainly Moose Mountain Lines did take the time to meet with people along the route.

But, Mr. Speaker, governments have subsidized STC ever since its creation so that it could service remote rural areas. Moose Mountain bus lines could probably argue that they are at an unfair disadvantage because of the competition — STC and its subsidization.

Will the minister confirm that the province will be subsidizing private companies as well as the public bus line? Or, Mr. Minister, what other plan do you have to continue service to rural communities?

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

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — As I have clearly indicated to the member, that we're looking at a complete business plan. We have had coordinators go to all of the communities throughout Saskatchewan to communicate with the leaders in the communities to get their opinion, Mr. Speaker, as to what service is required under the restraint that we are living under.

I want to indicate that we were able to provide under our days, adequate transportation system. But today we have an accumulation of over \$35 million that you left with STC, plus a \$15 billion debt in the province. Within the framework of the mess that you've left

behind, we will be addressing the transportation problem.

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

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Speaker, a final question to the minister. The minister talks about the fact of consulting with groups, bus services, bus companies, and people in rural Saskatchewan. I want to ask the minister if the minister will take recommendations or suggestions that come from these groups seriously when you develop your policy for rural Saskatchewan. Will you do that, sir?

**Hon. Mr. Koskie:** — All of the people of . . . Mr. Speaker, all of the people of Saskatchewan are important to this government and we intend to serve them. Not as the other members opposite, the few that remain, we are not here to divide people but we're here to again provide the service, the service which they became accustomed to under the New Democratic government and which they lost under the last Tory government.

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

### Lottery and Gaming Policy

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the Minister of Finance. Madam Minister, yesterday you confirmed the worst fears of thousands of volunteers throughout our province. You confirmed that the government is going to take the money generated through the lottery system and put it into the Consolidated Fund.

Madam Minister, do you know that this will be devastating to thousands of volunteers in these charities? What will you tell these people when you cut off one of their main sources of revenue?

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

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for that question. In fact I did not confirm that. What I confirmed was that the government would ensure that there is accountability for the money spent, accountability. One way to ensure that accountability is to have all revenues go through the general revenue fund. It doesn't mean that that is the only way to ensure accountability.

The other thing that I said was exactly what you said, we value the contributions of volunteers and we will work hard to ensure that their contributions continue.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Quoting from the *Star-Phoenix*, Madam Minister, Mr. Speaker, you said this:

She said in addition to the lottery dollars distribution, other special funding avenues will be changed to conform with the general pool premise.

Is that what you are going to do with these lottery funds and then exclude the opportunity of the charities to be able to fund the very essence of providing a lot of benefits to the hospitals, to various organizations throughout the province? Are you prepared to say that?

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

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is trying to put words into my mouth. The government did two things. On the recommendation of Gass we reviewed all special funds. What we are concerned about is that there is accountability. There are various ways to ensure accountability. The other thing about this government, though, is that it is a very consultative government. We are trying to reach a compromise whereby we can satisfy the auditor with respect to accountability, but we can ensure that in cases like the lottery issue we have the participation of volunteers. And I am confident that this government will come up with that compromise.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, and Madam Minister, I have a letter here from Peter Morin to you that he's carbon copied to me, and it says here:

As chairman of the Regina Bingo Association I am not aware of the commission consulting with our association or any of the seven associations which make up the Regina Bingo Association.

That, Madam Minister, is how you consult. And I want to ask you this question. You've taken . . . the minister has a responsibility to tell these people how those funds will be distributed. If you're going to put this into a separate pool through the Consolidated Fund, you have a responsibility to tell those people how their funds are going to be generated so that those charities can continue. That was your responsibility, Madam Minister.

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

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, again the member opposite is putting words into my mouth. He is telling me what I need to do if I'm going to put the revenues into the Consolidated Fund. What I have said to the member opposite is I have made no commitment with respect to where the revenues are going to go — whether they're going through the Consolidated Fund or not.

What I have said is we have two competing propositions. The auditor says he wants accountability. We agree with that. The charities and other organizations involved want to continue the fund in a way similar to what it is now because of the importance of the participation of volunteers.

What I have said is that this government will consult with the various parties and reach an effective compromise. And that compromise may not be

putting it through the Consolidated Fund at all.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, and Madam Minister, if you're going to consult like the people are telling me you're consulting, you're not consulting at all. You're just making major decisions.

You said yourself in your discussion yesterday at SARM that:

. . . in addition to the lottery dollars distribution, other special funding avenues will change to conform with the general pool premise.

You said that yourself. I'm not putting those words in your mouth.

Now you say to me, I'm supposed to . . . or you tell me what you're going to do in relation to these charities and the value of the dollars that they're going to get. What are you going to provide to them? You tell them the benefit that they're going to receive from all of the work that they do on a voluntary basis.

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

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, if we could stop the "he said, she said, they said," what I am saying is this. The Minister of Community Services, who is the minister responsible for lotteries, is in constant communications with the various groups involved. And she understands fully the desire to ensure that there is accountability for the dollars involved in the lotteries. And she also understands, as I do, the value of the contributions made by volunteers. And what we are doing is working at an effective compromise. It's just about that simple.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, and Madam Minister, will the minister not admit that there are various alternatives available? Will you not admit that in those alternatives, that you must consult with those people as to what they're going to do? And I want to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I know I said that, Mr. Premier, and I will say something else that the associations are telling us.

They're saying that over and over again to us. And in fact the last time I raised this question with Madam Minister, the president of the associations for Regina said . . . I was surprised to see on STV (SaskWest Television), Madam Minister, that you said that you had consulted with him. He said it never happened. And that, Madam Minister, is a fact.

And I want you to confirm that you're going to visit with these people to find out what those alternatives are so that they know what you're going to do.

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

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, the member

opposite is mixing apples and oranges. What we're talking about are lotteries. The Minister of Community Services is consulting about lotteries. You're talking about bingos and the Gaming Commission.

And what I said in this House was that I had instructed the chair of the Gaming Commission to do more consultations with the bingos and the charities involved in gaming. That is her responsibility and she has made that commitment to proceed on that avenue.

**Mr. Martens:** — Madam Minister, I want to point out another thing that I received in this letter from Mr. Moran.

And it says that as you were doing your consultative work, which was absolutely zero, you did not ask them about the opportunity that would have been available to them and to you and to the government to allow the new bingo hall to re-establish itself in one of the bingo halls that was already in existence. You did not allow that to happen. And it's in the letter that they sent to you, Madam Minister.

Would you provide us the information as to the reasons why you decided to put a new bingo hall in this vicinity without consulting those people?

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

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, there are two comments here. First of all, ironically one of the few bingo groups I did meet with, because I was concerned because they had complaints, was exactly that group — the combined charities.

The proposition that I had put forward in this House before is a simple one. The Gaming Commission is an independent body. It decides who gets licences. It decides the terms and conditions. What I have requested of them is that they spend more time with applicants explaining the terms and conditions and spend more time with people who have objections to the decisions of the commission. That's what I have done.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — One of the items that the president of the bingo halls pointed out in his letter to you, Madam Minister, was this:

I should point out to you that while the Gaming Commission was busy issuing a new licence, we were discussing how to close or relocate one of the existing halls. If the decision were to close a hall, we were prepared to make room in the remaining halls for those charities displaced.

Madam Minister, will you confirm that that is what they were prepared to do, or will you deny that they were prepared to do that?

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

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, unlike the last government, which did interfere in the operations of the Gaming Commission, we allow these decisions to be made independently by the Gaming Commission.

Let's be clear. This is a battle among charities. That is, there is one group of charities which says we do not want expansion because we are in the system already; there is another group of charities which says we need expansion because we do not have access to bingos. Now the Gaming Commission has to make that difficult decision as to whether or not expansion is justified. But it is the commission that makes that decision; not politicians.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Will the minister confirm that a former member of the legislature, Mr. Reg Gross, was involved in the consultation process in relation to the new bingo hall?

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

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, I have absolutely no knowledge of involvement by Mr. Gross in any part of this process.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, and Madam Minister, would you be able to tell me: did you assign the responsibility of the Gaming Commission, in the order in council, defining that you were responsible for that as a minister of the Crown? Would you tell us in this Assembly that you are responsible for the Gaming Commission?

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite would look at the legislation, what you would find is that there is a minister responsible to the legislature for the Gaming Commission. What the legislation would also say though is the Gaming Commission is an independent quasi-judicial body that makes decisions about things like bingo licences. And what this government is committed to is the integrity of the process. We are not going to politicize it no matter how much you seem to be trying to push us in that direction.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Madam Minister, the Gaming Commission is your responsibility. You told us that just now. That is your responsibility to this Assembly. And I'm asking you, Madam Minister, was Mr. Gross involved in the dealings with the placement and the establishment of that bingo hall that's just outside of the city of Regina?

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

**Hon. Ms. MacKinnon:** — Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying to you is, from what I know, the answer to that is no. But because the Gaming Commission is

independent, I do not sit there and go through with a fine-tooth comb the applications and the process. Independence means that I don't interfere. I know the result, same as the opposition knows the result.

But if you are interested in independence, you don't politicize the process.

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

**The Speaker:** — Order.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### **Bill No. 20 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Superannuation Act**

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Superannuation Act.

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

(1430)

### **Bill No. 21 — An Act to amend The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act**

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to amend The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act.

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

### **Bill No. 22 — An Act respecting the Manufacture, Sale, Use, Consumption, Collection, Storage, Recycling and Disposal of Ozone-depleting Substances and Products**

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill respecting Manufacture, Sale, Use, Consumption, Collection, Storage, Recycling and Disposal of Ozone-depleting Substances and Products be now introduced and read the first time.

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

### **Bill No. 23 — An Act to amend The Electrical Licensing Act**

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Electrical Licensing Act be now introduced and read the first time.

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

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, in regards to question no. 81, I would like to table the answer.

**The Speaker:** — Question no. 81, answer tabled.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

## SECOND READINGS

### **Bill No. 1 — An Act respecting the Conduct of Members of the Legislative Assembly and Members of the Executive Council, respecting Conflicts of Interest and to enact Consequential Amendments resulting from the enactment of this Act**

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Members' Conflict of Interest Act. Implementation of this Act is a major step forward in accomplishing the democratic reforms that this government has undertaken to enact. The people of Saskatchewan have a right to expect honesty and fairness from their political representatives in the discharge of their public duties. During the last government's term of office, significant and sustained public concern arose about conflict of interest situations involving Saskatchewan's elected officials.

Conflict of interest controversies are not just disputes between the government of the day and the opposition, they are violations of the public trust. In order to restore public confidence, an attempt must be made to prevent them. The current conflicts legislation governing members of the Legislative Assembly is vague and outdated and is based on a prosecutions model in which members may be charged with an offence for contravening the Act, but no method is set out for taking steps to ensure that members make every effort to comply with it.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill before the House today takes a totally different approach. It clearly sets out for members of this Assembly and for cabinet ministers their duties with respect to avoiding conflicts of interest. A conflicts commissioner will be appointed as an officer of this Assembly to ensure the Act is complied with.

The Act sets out a clear definition of conflict of interest. A member will have a conflict of interest when the member participates in the making of a decision while knowing that in making that decision he or she may have an opportunity to further his or her own private interests or the private interests of the member's spouse or dependent children.

Where a member has a conflict of interest in a matter that is to be considered by this Assembly, or by cabinet, or by a committee of this Assembly, or a cabinet committee, the member will be required to disclose the nature of that conflict and withdraw from the meeting without voting or participating in the consideration of the matter.

This Bill will provide for broader disclosure of personal assets than presently occurs. Members will be required to disclose to the commissioner all of their personal and business interests and the personal and

business interests of their spouse and dependent children. From this statement the commissioner will prepare a public disclosure statement. That statement will be filed with the Clerk of the Assembly and will be available for public inspection.

Cabinet ministers will be prohibited from being involved in business or other activities where, in the commissioner's opinion, that activity would result in a conflict of interest. All members, all members, will be prohibited from participating in government contracts without the approval of the commissioner.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill will prohibit members from accepting a fee, gift, or a personal benefit connected with their performance of their duties of office, other than gifts received as an incident of protocol. Where the value of a gift of protocol exceeds \$200, or where the total value of gifts received from one source in any year exceeds \$200, the member must immediately file a disclosure statement with the commissioner.

This new Act will also prohibit members from using insider information or improper influence to further their private interests or the private interests of their spouse, children, or business associates.

The commissioner's job will be to ensure that the Act is complied with and to determine whether or not particular matters are a conflict of interest. There are two aspects to this duty. Firstly, members will be able to ask the commissioner for advice when they are unclear as to their responsibilities in specific situations. That's important, Mr. Speaker, because under the present legislation there is simply no place where a member can go to determine whether or not they are in compliance with the Act or in violation of the Act.

Secondly, a member, or indeed this Assembly, may ask the commissioner to prepare an opinion respecting the compliance of any member with the provisions of this Act. Where the commissioner receives a request for an opinion or forms his or her own opinion that an inquiry is advisable, the commissioner will be authorized to conduct an inquiry to determine whether a member is complying with the Act. The commissioner will provide a report on the inquiry to the Assembly, and where the commissioner finds that a member is in violation of the Act, the commissioner may recommend an appropriate penalty.

This Assembly will have broad powers to impose a range of penalties in those circumstances, including ordering the member to comply with the Act, reprimanding the member, imposing a fine on the member, suspending the member, or declaring the member's seat to be vacant.

The government will be prohibited from awarding a contract other than an employment contract, or granting a benefit to a former member for a period of one year after the member ceases to hold office.

Mr. Speaker, I believe all members of this Assembly

will join with me in welcoming this new Act which clearly sets out the standard of behaviour expected in the performance of our duties, and provides for meaningful and effective enforcement of these standards.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act respecting the Conduct of Members of the Legislative Assembly and Members of the Executive Council, respecting Conflicts of Interest and to enact Consequential Amendments resulting from the enactment of this Act.

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

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to introduce guests?

Leave granted.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you, two individuals in the east gallery from the south-west part of our province, Mr. Jerry Ruehs and Neil Dunham. They're good friends of mine and have done a great deal of work in the south-west in agriculture.

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

## SECOND READINGS

### Bill No. 1 (continued)

**Mr. Britton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are generally in agreement with this Bill.

We have some concerns. We would have liked to have had a little more input into the Bill ourselves, which would've probably helped us . . . probably would have helped us move this Bill along a little quicker. We would like to have some input as to who the commissioner will be.

We would also like to have some input, Mr. Speaker, into several other parts of the Bill. We certainly agree with the minister that this Bill is a Bill that's been needed, and I think it's something the public has been asking for. And we on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, are certainly not in disagreement with this Bill. But because it's a far-reaching Bill, we would like to have a little more time to look at it.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

### Bill No. 14 — An Act to amend the Statute Law

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1993. This Act makes several minor amendments to a number of existing statutes. It corrects inaccurate references, typographical errors,

and other minor mistakes in the statutes.

It also corrects errors made in previous consequential amendments or makes consequential amendments that were previously missed. These amendments ensure that minor technical errors in the legislation of this Assembly are removed.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend the Statute Law.

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The opposition would like a little bit more time in going through all of the details because it deals with many different laws, and so on that point is going to adjourn debate for now, Mr. Speaker, and then move to the next Bill.

Debate adjourned.

#### **Bill No. 15 — An Act to amend The Limitation of Actions Act**

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Limitation of Actions Amendment Act, 1993.

These amendments will eliminate limitation periods for commencing civil law suits in two kinds of cases. There will be no limitation period for claims for damages arising from sexual misconduct including incest.

There will be no limitation period for claims for damages arising from non-sexual assaults occurring within an intimate relationship or a relationship of dependency. This will be particularly relevant to cases of child abuse, spousal abuse, elder abuse, and abuse by someone in a position of authority like a teacher, doctor, or even a member of the clergy.

In a well-publicized decision in October of 1992, the Supreme Court of Canada dealt with the application of the general two-year limitation period to a case of incest. It held that in cases of incest the limitation period would not start to run until the victim was reasonably capable of discovering both the wrongful nature of the assailant's acts and the connection between those acts and the victim's injuries or problems.

They stated, that is the Supreme Court stated, that there would be a presumption that this would happen some time during the therapy. The court however urged legislators to reform this area of the law and commented favourably on proposals in Ontario and in British Columbia to abolish limitation periods in certain cases of sexual assault. That led to our consideration of the matter and to the introduction of this Bill before this Assembly.

(1445)

Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that the amendments proposed today will empower many victims of sexual assault and spousal abuse in particular to take action

to hold their assailants responsible for the damage inflicted on them. The reality in so many cases, Mr. Speaker, is that the victims of a sexual assault in particular, that happens at an early age, will block that memory out as children, and not have it in their conscious memory as they grow older. And only when they're in their adulthood, when they're undergoing therapy in respect of all the problems that they're having with life, do they discover that the real source of their problem is something that occurred while they were children.

Under the present law, they have to commence these actions within a period of two years from the date on which they become adult — 2 years from their 18th birthday. Which means they've got to start the action by the time they're 20.

Well if they haven't taken therapy by that time, Mr. Speaker, they don't even know they have an action. And so they may be late in their 20's or even in their 30's or 40's before therapy brings to their mind the real problem; the real cause for all the problems that they're having. And this Bill will enable them to take a civil action against the perpetrators of the assault after it has come to their attention.

So saying, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Limitation of Actions Act.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say that in the general context of the statements that you have made, Mr. Minister, this side of the Assembly will not be standing in the way. However, we will just take some time to look at it and see whether it has some implications that are more far reaching than as you have indicated.

And we will take a look at that and therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move the adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### **Bill No. 18 — An Act to amend The Victims of Crime Act**

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise on second reading of this Bill. This is a companion piece to the Bill that we have just debated.

It has to do with the way in which the victims of crime and the funding arrangements that are available are administered in similar cases to the ones that we have dealt with in the previous Act. Under the present law, those claims have to be made within a period of one year of the date on which the offence takes place. And for the reasons that I mentioned in my previous second-reading speech, that is not appropriate in the cases of some crime.

The purpose of this Bill is to remedy that situation, to open up the situation, and to allow those claims to be made at a later time.



So saying, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of this Bill.

Debate adjourned.

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just . . . I guess in preamble to the remarks that will be made later, it would be a good idea for us, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Minister, if we would have available to us all of the laws in relation to this Bill that would be implicated or involved in where a one-year time period was expanded or narrowed.

And we'd like to have all of the laws that apply . . . that this applies to, or whether the one that we were talking about, The Limitation of Actions Amendment Act, is the only one that it applies to. That's a question that we will be raising in committee. And if I can give you an advance warning of that, you can have some of that information available.

And with that, and among other things, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### **Bill No. 16 — An Act respecting the Interpretation of Enactments and prescribing Rules Governing Acts**

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Interpretation Act, 1993. This Act sets out essential rules for the interpretation of statutes. The main purpose of passing a new interpretation Act now is to update and clarify its provisions. The existing interpretation Act was passed in 1943 and has not changed significantly since then.

This new Act also encompasses the provisions of The Statutes Act. That Act sets out rules respecting such things as the form of Acts, citation of Acts, and the duties of the Clerk of the Assembly with respect to the keeping of Acts, and the authentication of copies of Acts. Those provisions have not changed significantly since they were first enacted in 1898.

The new Act also eliminates the complicated procedures established by the demise of The Crown Act when it was passed in 1912.

A major new initiative undertaken in this Act is to establish in legislation rules for persons serving as directors and officers of public corporations with respect to conflict of interest, duty of care, and a right of indemnity, where they comply with that duty of care.

The rules enacted are much the same as those that apply to persons serving as officers and directors of business corporations and non-profit corporations.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act respecting the Interpretation of Enactments prescribing Rules Governing Acts.

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, as this is a fairly complex Bill, we will be taking some serious look at it. And with that, I move adjournment of debate.

#### **Bill No. 17 — An Act to amend The Fatal Accidents Act**

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Fatal Accidents Amendment Act, 1993.

The Fatal Accidents Act allows survivors of a person who is killed to sue the person who caused the death. There are three components to the Bill before us today.

Firstly, common law spouses are given the ability to make an application under the Act. This is consistent with amendments to other provincial legislation in the last couple of years, which gave rights to claim maintenance to dependent common law spouses.

Secondly, as part of ongoing work in recent years to standardize limitation periods, the time limit for making an application under the Act is extended from 12 months to two years after the death of the deceased.

And lastly, the types of monetary loss for which damages may be awarded are expanded to include grief counselling, loss of income, and other out-of-pocket expenses reasonably incurred as a result of the deaths. The purpose of this amendment is to try to ensure that particularly in cases of children's deaths, the survivors are not financially impaired by the death of a family member.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Fatal Accidents Act.

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say that this is of some interest to me and it has been since my father died in an accident. And I was an older person, although my sisters were not; they were minors. And I want to just say that it is of some interest and we will be taking a look at what the implications are for deaths of children within that framework, as you've outlined.

And we will take a look at it to see whether it is extensive enough. For even as we go into some of the kinds of things in litigation that occur today which were different 20 years ago, at the implication that it has on insurance companies. And I think we need to take a serious look at those items as well. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### **Bill No. 19 — An Act respecting Survivorship**

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Survivorship Act, 1993. This new legislation reflects a growing consensus that the existing principle on which The Survivorship Act is based is not appropriate.

The existing rule is that where two people die at the same time, the older is deemed to have died first. This arbitrary rule was established to deal with the problem of how to determine who is entitled to property in situations where it is impossible to know which of the two people died first. It was intended to avoid confusion; however it can and does create unjust and inequitable results and operates contrary to the probable intentions of the deceased people if they had thought about the situation where they had died in a common disaster.

This new Act adopts as its basic principle respecting the division of property, the idea that where two people die in a common disaster situation, then each is in law deemed to have survived the other; thus, the property of each will be identified separately from the property of the other and will pass to whoever would receive it under the terms of the will, or the intestacy if there is no will, as if the other co-deceased had died first. So the property simply goes to the people who would ordinarily have received it from the deceased person.

A provision is included in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, to deal with the situation where the persons who die at the same time are joint tenants. In such circumstances the estate of each joint tenant shares equally in the property and avoids the difficulties that the law encounters now.

Another feature of the new legislation is a provision which treats people as having died together if they die within five days of each other. The purpose of this provision is to acknowledge that in some cases, although it is clear that one person died before the other, their deaths come so close together, perhaps separated only by a few minutes, that it doesn't make sense to have the property of the person who died first pass to the person who died second, and then to the successors of the person who died second.

It is a common practice to insert a similar provision in wills. In wills the usual survivorship period is 30 days, so that if spouses die within 30 days of each other they are in effect deemed to have died at the same time. The first beneficiary is bypassed.

This five-day period, which has no particular logic to push it other than you've got to pick some period, is one that has been recommended by the law reform commissions in Alberta and British Columbia, and we believe that it would be appropriate in the circumstances covered by this Act.

Some provisions of the existing Act are maintained. The provision, for example, which states that The Saskatchewan Insurance Act governs with respect to insurance proceeds, is not changed. That Act presumes that the beneficiary predeceased the person whose life was insured in the event that they die in a common disaster situation. This is consistent with the new principle in this Bill respecting other property of the testator.

We are also maintaining the provision in the existing Act that states that the terms of a will govern where the will gives direction for the disposition of property in the circumstances dealt with in this legislation, so that people can by their wills bypass the provisions of this Act. And therefore if a will provides for what will happen to the property if both the testator and beneficiary die in a common disaster or within a certain period, then the provisions of the will will apply.

The Act does not interfere in any way with the provisions of wills; rather it provides a new, more equitable approach for determining how property will be divided where two persons die at the same time.

Law reform commissions in Manitoba, British Columbia, and Alberta have recommended that the oldest-died-first presumption in the common disaster situation be replaced with the approach proposed in our new legislation. The provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, and New Brunswick have already made changes to their legislation to incorporate this new approach.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act respecting Survivorship.

(1500)

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I found it very interesting listening to the Minister of Justice, the Attorney General, speaking about these relationships that exist in some of the accidents that occur. Many times those are things that he suggested, that people die within a short period of time of each other and the subsequent relationships that they have in relation to the wills and the other things that are implicated by the very fact that this happens. The estates and those kinds of things.

And I think that some consideration I think needs to be made on whether five days is the right period, and you mentioned something about that being a kind of a number you picked because of other places doing that . . . or using that number.

I think that one of the things that may be of some concern is, as we have talked about spouses in the discussion earlier, would those spouses who have lived in a common law relationship and being still married to another person . . . or divorced from another person and have implication in relation to that. Are those some of the things that maybe need to be dealt with in this Bill?

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, because of all of these things, we are going to take a good look at it. We look at it as a possible . . . well a distinct benefit, Mr. Speaker. And therefore because we're going to take a look at it, I move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 6 — An Act to amend The Prairie and Forest Fires Act, 1982**

**Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to rise in the Assembly today to move second reading of an amendment to The Prairie and Forest Fires Act, 1982.

The purpose of this amendment, Mr. Speaker, is to reflect the government's ongoing practice of recruiting emergency fire-fighters on a volunteer basis, provide clear authority to pay emergency fire-fighters, and enhance the government's capacity to deal with the extreme fire hazards.

Mr. Speaker, effective forest fire suppression is vital to sustainable forests in Saskatchewan — protecting lives, property, and community from the ravages of wild fire and maintaining a forest industry which employs almost 6,000 Saskatchewan residents with an annual payroll of \$70 million.

The sustainable forest concept also includes a wide variety of other forest users and environmental and ecological concerns that defy a dollar value. Each year the Department of Natural Resources expends a great deal of energy preventing, detecting, and suppressing prairie and forest fires. The vast majority of this activity is in or near the northern provincial forest. However, The Prairie and Forest Fires Act also provides authority for rural municipalities to initiate fire protection and suppression activities.

Several sections of this Act are deficient and need to be changed. The amendment which is being brought forward will deal with these deficiencies and changes to the following areas: clarify the definition of fire fighting; reflect the government's use of voluntary as opposed to compulsory conscription in hiring emergency fire-fighters; provide clear authority to pay volunteer fire-fighters; and enhance government's capacity to deal with extreme fire hazards by broadening the authority to institute an open-fire ban when conditions warrant.

Implementing these changes will improve the administration of the statute and provide an increased level of protection for fire fighting, the public, and the valuable forest resources.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I urge all members of the Assembly to support this Bill, and I now move second reading of an amendment to The Prairie and Forest Fires Act.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have a lot of forests in my constituency, but I know that it is of interest to a number of other people. And I now move, Mr. Speaker:

That this Assembly now proceed to consideration of the second reading of Bill No. 10, An Act to Protect Municipal Property Taxpayers in the Province of Saskatchewan through the repeal of The Hospital Revenue Act.

Seconded by the member from Rosthern.

The division bells rang from 3:06 p.m. until 3:14 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

#### Yeas — 6

Neudorf	Britton
Martens	D'Autremont
Toth	Goohsen

#### Nays — 35

Van Mulligen	Calvert
Thompson	Murray
Wiens	Hamilton
Lingenfelter	Johnson
Teichrob	Trew
Shillington	Draper
Koskie	Serby
Solomon	Sonntag
Atkinson	Cline
Carson	Scott
Mitchell	McPherson
MacKinnon	Crofford
Penner	Stanger
Upshall	Knezacek
Koenker	Harper
Lorje	Kluz
Lyons	Langford
Pringle	

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Mr. Speaker, we'll have a lot more to say about the Act, but I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 3

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Simard that **Bill No. 3 — An Act respecting Health Districts** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's again a pleasure for me to stand in this Assembly and to direct a few remarks toward Bill No. 8.

Mr. Speaker, in my remarks today I will and intend to focus narrowly on one aspect of this Bill. In particular, I will focus on the principle of this Bill, the principle this Bill embodies, which through its marriage with The Hospital Revenue Act, provides the provincial government the power to impose property taxes on municipalities without the consent of property owners. Mr. Speaker, that used to be referred to as taxation without representation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and the Premier of Saskatchewan have been spreading a great

deal of confusion around the province about this issue. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that this Bill cannot be discussed without reference to the existing legislation which directly impacts the principles of the Bill.

Specifically, we have the minister and the Premier trying to make out that The Hospital Revenue Act is somehow The Union Hospital Act. Because if they fail to do that, then the principles on which this present Bill are based becomes obvious. It becomes obvious that The Hospital Revenue Act is intimately tied to the principle of this Bill and the Premier wants this fact to be hushed up.

So, Mr. Speaker, members of this Assembly should be aware, as every municipal councillor in this province is aware, that there are two pieces of existing legislation at play here. One is The Union Hospital Act, which no one, and I repeat no one, has demanded be repealed immediately or prior to the passage of Bill No. 3. The other is The Hospital Revenue Act, which must be repealed before this Bill 3 can be passed or the basic principles of the Bill itself will have to be fundamentally changed.

What is the difference, Mr. Speaker, between The Union Hospital Act and The Hospital Revenue Act? Well, Mr. Speaker, the government should understand that union hospital boards include representation from the municipalities which contribute funding. Union hospitals do in fact have representation, and therefore, at least to some extent, the principle of no taxation without representation is upheld, even in the face of the new, centralized health boards.

The Hospital Revenue Act on the other hand simply vests power in the hands of the minister to raise property taxes. Mr. Speaker, the municipalities have no legal representation at all. They are dictated to once more, only this time within the new structures proposed by this Bill — dictated to once more by an all-powerful, big-brother New Democratic government.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that The Hospital Revenue Act, if it exists at the same time as the new health structure that the government is here proposing, provides a dangerous back-door method for offloading of health care funding onto property taxes. That is the message your loyal opposition must raise in this Assembly, at the same time as it is being raised by both SARM and SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) representatives across this province. And, Mr. Speaker, that is the bottom line.

Now we have heard the Premier say he is engaged in consultations with municipalities to come up with alternatives. But, Mr. Speaker, if that is the case, then it is an admission by the Premier that his government is not yet ready to proceed with any dramatic changes to the health structure of the province. If he is not in a position to repeal The Hospital Revenue Act, then he is not in a position to impose health care districts.

The point is that The Hospital Revenue Act and the new, centralized health boards contemplated in this proposed legislation cannot be allowed to coexist. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, in a very real way it can be said that Bill No. 10 on the order paper is consequential to this Bill No. 3. Withdraw Bill No. 3 and Bill No. 10 can be set to the side.

Because, Mr. Speaker, what we are talking about is a fundamental principle in our society. It is a principle that property taxes should be levied only in respect of services to property. Water and sewer, streets and sidewalks, protection of property through police and fire, and like kinds of property services — these are the things that property taxes are intended to support. They not only should not, but, Mr. Speaker, property taxes simply cannot support human services such as is contemplated by this proposed legislation. The financial and economic capacity just is not there.

Municipalities are finding it increasingly difficult to keep the streets safe or even repaired. We just have to look around Regina to see how badly in need of repair some of the streets are, let alone taking on the province's job of providing health care.

And, Mr. Speaker, social services in their various forms are indeed the responsibility of the provincial government in any event. This legislation must recognize that fact.

Mr. Speaker, it is not simply a matter of protecting those who actually own their own home or operate a small business. Unlike the NDP (New Democratic Party) government would have you believe, Mr. Speaker, renters pay property taxes as well.

It is a strange notion that members of the NDP have that property taxes are taken out of the pockets of the landlord. Those taxes, Mr. Speaker, are directly passed through to the renter.

So those who rent their homes should not be fooled by the government opposite. Renters can take no comfort in higher property taxes to take over provincial funding of health care. The rent goes up, and the cost of moving from being a renter to owning your own home goes up as well. So in a very real way, leaving the social service burden, property taxes, in a double whammy for those who rent.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, higher property taxes for any reason, but in particular for reasons of funding provincial responsibilities such as health care, seriously impair job creation. When property taxes are properly used to service property, the economic base of the province can actually be enhanced and the potential for job creation is improved. The appropriate principles of taxation of property can actually contribute to economic development, Mr. Speaker. The economic production for homes and businesses, of the roads and sewers, can support the basic infrastructure and therefore provide more room for growth.

However, Mr. Speaker, inappropriate property

taxation undermines economic activity, depresses job creation, and discourages people from living in the province or investing in the province.

Mr. Speaker, the government has cried over the past few days about \$23 million in revenue being lost if the property taxpayer is protected, if that principle is embodied in this Bill. But, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health said that the 23 million was raised by union hospital districts and not under The Hospital Revenue Act.

Let me quote the minister, Mr. Speaker. I quote *Hansard* of March 4 on page 114, Hon. Ms. Simard: \$23 million that is presently raised through taxation by union hospital districts.

So the minister in this Assembly acknowledged that the money comes from union hospital districts, and there was no conditions or caution to her statement.

I now quote section 4 of The Hospital Revenue Act, which I say must be repealed before the current Bill can be proceeded with. Section 4 of The Hospital Revenue Act states, and quote:

4 The hospital revenue tax shall not be levied in any year in respect of . . . property:

(a) in a municipality or in a portion of a municipality that is included within a union hospital district . . .

I am sure you see the problem, Mr. Speaker. The minister says the 23 million is raised by union hospitals, not The Hospital Revenue Act. I say it's a problem, Mr. Speaker, because if the minister was truthful in this Assembly — which of course we must accept that she was — then the repeal of The Hospital Revenue Act will have no impact on the \$23 million raised pursuant to The Union Hospital Act.

Mr. Speaker, The Union Hospital Act provides the authority for raising revenue to support union hospitals. And I repeat, it is The Union Hospital Act, not The Hospital Revenue Act. The Hospital Revenue Act which offends the proper principles of the proposed legislation is an authoritarian and undemocratic instrument.

It concentrates taxation power in the hands of the minister and does not provide representation for those being taxed. It does not direct the revenues to union hospitals and it is an exposed threat if left in place with the establishment of centralized health boards that this Bill would see.

Mr. Speaker, these are not complicated subjects if they are looked at honestly, and that is all SUMA, SARM, and the official opposition ask — an honest assessment. I say again therefore, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill just in principle alone is repugnant to this Assembly. It attacks one of the most basic elements of our parliamentary system, the element of representation before taxation.

But there are many other problems with this Bill which I know the opposition member responsible for Health will want to explore. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I will take my place and allow my colleagues into the debate, and any other member of this Assembly who would like to enter the debate to speak to this Bill as well. Thank you.

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

(1530)

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Bill, to me embodies what this government is all about. It embodies empowerment of people, the people of this province, to make decisions that affect themselves in their local communities where they live, where they work, where they retire, where we raise our children.

This Bill says it is no longer acceptable for people in the Legislative Assembly to make decisions that affect how health is going to be delivered, how health services are going to be delivered. This Bill empowers people at a local level to set up district health boards that will look at health in a wide-ranging area — not only the delivery of hospital and emergency services, Mr. Speaker, but the whole wellness that can include Meals on Wheels; it can include home care delivery services; it can include a wide range of things.

And we're saying that the local health boards will know what is needed locally far more than . . . Even if those of us in the Legislative Assembly could agree that we're going to do the best we can for a specific district, even if we agreed to that, I may not know, I may not be familiar with, let's say, Norquay, Saskatchewan. I may not know what's needed in Norquay and district. One of my colleagues, I think, would have a much better idea; perhaps several would. But it matters not what the community we pick. The people that reside in that area can decide much better than we can.

It's kind of like . . . In a former life I used to work for Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. I was in the farm service division. And I remember vividly receiving a news release from the head office of Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the head office being right here in Regina, and they were proudly announcing that the new look farm service division was going to include Quonsets. And that was all they were going to build was Quonsets for farm service warehouses.

I was a warehouseman at the time, and I and my colleagues laughed because we knew that a curved Quonset simply did not provide adequate storage needs for what we needed.

It was done with the best of intentions, and unfortunately I came . . . or I should say fortunately I came to know firsthand how that decision that had been made in Regina affected people in Outlook. You see, Mr. Speaker, I was transferred to Outlook shortly thereafter and I wound up working in that very Quonset that was inadequate.

Point being: ask people who are going to be responsible for delivering services or who are recipients of services or who are otherwise involved in a community what it is that they need, and they can tell you.

So I'm very proud, Mr. Speaker, of this particular Bill because, as I've been trying to point out, it does empower Saskatchewan people. And that, I believe, epitomizes what this government is all about.

Starting in August there was "A Saskatchewan Vision for Health" document that was released. And stemming from that was an attempt to have all residents and stakeholders involved in the health reform process. The Health Districts Act results from that and from extensive consultation.

There was one overwhelming message that came through, and that was people were saying they wanted more direction, they wanted more specifics about how they form health districts. How to do it, is what people were asking. They were not saying should we or could we or can we. It's how can we? We want to be part of the solution in the greatest Saskatchewan tradition. But people were saying, but we need our roles and our responsibilities more clearly defined.

The Health Districts Act provides some of that direction, Mr. Speaker. This legislation in fact ensures that boards will be accountable to the communities that they serve, as well as being accountable to the provincial government. It deals with how boards will ultimately come to be elected, the numbers of people involved in the health district boards, who they are responsible to.

I notice in this legislation it sets up that wards will be created through consultation with the districts and may be based on geography and/or population. This will ensure that smaller portions of a district are not left out, and so that the larger centre in a health district board couldn't monopolize all of the positions on the board, but rather you would have representation from throughout the health district.

I note also, Mr. Speaker, that there is a booklet put together, *Working Together Toward Wellness*. It's a "Planning Guide For Saskatchewan Health Districts," and Part I is entitled, "Strategic Planning."

I was reading through it as I was preparing to make my address today and I must compliment the Minister of Health, the Associate Minister of Health, and indeed the people in the Department of Health that put this booklet together. It is a very helpful booklet, well designed, well thought out, trying to address as many of the concerns as people have.

And I think the reason that this booklet is so well designed, in addition to having a very good writer, is that the Department of Health and the minister and the associate minister have, I know, been holding extensive meetings throughout this province talking with people about wellness, talking with people about

health care districts. And the very people that they're meeting with on a regular ongoing basis are saying, we've got some concerns and here they are. Well once you recognize what those concerns are you can address them as the department has done through the minister and the release of this booklet.

I noted on page 6 that with the permission of the Saskatoon Health Board they did a sample statement of the Saskatoon Health Board mission statement. It lists six points that the health board believes. And then it lists the goals of the health board. And, Mr. Speaker, I made a note by it, very good, because the goals of the health board I think are what this Bill is all about. It's going to be enabling us to deliver more effective health care, more effective health prevention right across the whole piece.

One of the goals was:

To bring an effective integration and co-ordination in the delivery of hospital, long-term care and community-based health care services.

Second is:

To ensure easier access by individuals and families to the most appropriate level and form of health care in relation to their needs.

I think it is very laudable that for the first time certainly in many, many years in Saskatoon they have a health board that says, here is the health care needs of our community. How do we best put our efforts towards delivering and meeting those needs? Is it through home care? Is it through building six more hospitals? Is it through hiring more doctors or more nurses? How can we best deliver wellness and enhance the general health of the population?

That's what they're addressing in Saskatoon. That's what they're addressing in Regina. I'm picking on Saskatoon because that happens to be what they used in this planning guide, Mr. Speaker, and it's not because I'm trying to slight the Regina Health Board. I think they're doing very good work here as well.

I note also in this planning guide for Saskatchewan health districts, on the back page there are no fewer than 20 practical tips for obtaining community input. And again I come back to the theme of what I'm talking about — community input; people making decisions for themselves; people being empowered to say this is what we need, and then empowered to go about and see that that happens.

These tips include things like:

7. Develop ways to involve persons with varying points of view, which could include opposing points of view. Learn to value constructive dissension (it says).

Well this is hardly a document that's being put together so that anything can be rammed down

somebody's throat. This a document that says, value people when they don't agree with you; hear what they're saying; try and address their concern; and try and be solution oriented; try and work together in a Saskatchewan way — neighbours helping neighbours, friends helping friends. Let us do that, Mr. Speaker, let us do that as we go about passing this Bill which takes some very good steps towards us enhancing the health care system in Saskatchewan.

I believe the leadership provided in this Bill is just second to none — the very fact that the minister and the associate minister and others in the Department of Health have been out and about consulting with the people of Saskatchewan. Actually it makes me very pleased, Mr. Speaker, because I know that this is in response to what the minister and others have been hearing as they're conducting this consultation process throughout our great province.

I also know that increasingly — not just in Health but in all fields particularly as they are funded by the provincial government — we are being asked to do more with less. I met a member of the Regina Health Board not so long ago. We got involved in a discussion about health and a discussion about government finances. That health board member said, you know you're the first government that has, in the history of Saskatchewan — first government in the history of Saskatchewan that has to provide services with less. We have to make do with less. First government.

I then turned it around and said, yes but we've set up the Regina Health Board, and you people are being the first group that we're saying, not only will you do with less money in total in Regina in terms of health care expenditures, but you must provide more services for less money. It's a pretty difficult challenge, one that I'm confident the Regina Health Board is diligently working towards, Mr. Speaker, and they've made some significant strides — strides that not everyone will agree with, but such is life.

The very fact that we've set up a health board and said, now deliver as rational a system as you possibly can; provide the greatest level of health care to people in the Regina district and to people across the province as they come to the core hospitals, the three core hospitals for surgery or in emergencies stemming from perhaps major accidents.

It's heartening, Mr. Speaker, to see what's happening. It's heartening to see the health board in Regina grappling with the issue. I think that that should be not just restricted to Regina and Saskatoon, but that health boards should be set up and will be set up right across the province.

This particular Bill that we're dealing with today is one that will allow that to happen. It will further the empowerment of the people of Saskatchewan. It will further empower them to make decisions in their local communities where those decisions can be best made.

Does this mean that in the local communities suddenly they're going to have all the money they need? Of course not. With or without the regional health boards, money is going to be an ongoing problem for quite some time, thanks to the former administration, thanks to the \$740 million in interest that we're paying every year.

(1545)

But I'm not trying to discuss about the fiscal situation. I'm trying to point out that The Health Districts Act is a good piece of legislation that empowers the people of Saskatchewan right from corner to corner to corner to corner of this province. Everyone will be included in the health districts.

Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I announce I will be supporting this particular Bill. And I want to again congratulate the Minister of Health, Associate Minister of Health, and all who have been involved in bringing this Bill to where it is today and in preparing the planning guide for Saskatchewan health districts and the users' guide to Health Districts Act.

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

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the health districts legislation that's before us, but also to congratulate the minister and the members in the department and also the many thousands of people across this province who have come together in consultation and have had a chance and an opportunity to speak with us on what they would like to see as health districts legislation.

This has not come up, Mr. Speaker, out of the blue. It has had a long history in its coming and it has the support of many people. It's also a time when I've had a long association with the issue of health reform and the issue of health districts in that I was a former member of Regina City Council and chairperson of the board of health. Its main mandate was to provide preventative health care services and wellness for the Regina community.

And I also sat as the vice-chair of Regina Pioneer Village, which is a seniors housing complex with anything from innovative housing units to provide some independent living for seniors, with a support system behind them, to level 4 care for our seniors in Regina.

And it was at that time that the Murray report was commissioned by the members opposite. It was at that time that our medical health officer, Dr. Hutchison, and her department prepared a very thoughtful, well-researched brief to the Murray Commission that I was pleased to be a part of presenting to the Murray Commission, and had many helpful suggestions.

And it was the kind of thing that our member from Regina Albert North talks about — a community drawing together to give their ideas and their ways to provide effective and efficient health care to their community, but also to look to the wellness approach

to health care.

And an approach that speaks about housing has an important role to play in the health of people, that the way we provide for our people who are greatest in need has a role to play. The economy and the employment that we provide for people has a strong role to play in the wellness and the health of individuals. And that it also provides a framework for people to come together and take control of their health care and be part of a health care system and health care reform.

With that in mind, many people came to city hall forum to present to the Murray report and the Murray Commission. When all was said and done, the commission cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan about \$1.8 million. And what did the members opposite do with that report? Well it was like many reports before it; they went out and asked people to be contributing, and then they shelved it.

Why did they shelve it? Well they shelved it; they shelved other reports. I remember a report prepared by Ms. Schneider on reproductive health and women's health in the community. It was shelved too. There were many, many other health reports that were important to people in Saskatchewan, important to women and children in their communities and their health — all shelved.

At that time our Minister of Health did speak to the Murray report. And there were many areas where, as members of opposition, we commended the Murray Commission and the recommendations in the report. However, there was one thing that we could not agree on, which was a very important principle.

We felt, gone are the days of the big-bang theory where big government comes in, a heavy-handed approach, and tells you what they're going to provide for you and what is good for the community and the health of the community that they've made arbitrary decisions upon and foisted upon the community.

This doesn't speak to the style of government that we want to see. It's the same thing we talked about when we were saying economic development . . . and the economic development authorities were saying consultation with communities and empowering communities to be in control of their health care needs is the way of the future and the way the people are asking us to be involved in a democratic process.

Therefore this legislation is called enabling legislation, and that about says it all. It enables people to be involved. It allows for the integration of health services and increased community involvement, and allows for people to determine for themselves what's the most effective way to deliver services; what is the most effective and efficient way to meet the needs of their communities, and allows them to look at a broad scope of community need that will be immediately involved in the health of the individuals they serve.

So health boards can now under this legislation plan,

coordinate, and provide health care services. They can promote and encourage health and wellness. They can become involved with many providers in their communities and draw them together to assist them in the provision of many services that meet the needs of their community, and employ people. Because indeed provision of health care services for a community is a model of community-based economic development.

It also allows them to appoint advisory committees. And we found that's very important when we look at the working of the Regina Health Board and the advisory committees they have, where they can draw in people with expertise in areas where decisions have to be made. We can allow for a representative from the unions, from labour, and SUN (Saskatchewan Union of Nurses), and so on, to come together with the managers in the system and the health care professionals and providers of health care, and have a broad scope and perspective on the issues that come before the board and allow them to have input to the board decision making.

So indeed, Mr. Speaker, this legislation is legislation that enables people to be a part of reform and to be part of revitalizing the health care system in this province.

This Act empowers people in Saskatchewan in communities across the province and health professionals to take an active role in planning, delivering, and governing as we all move together to build a more efficient and effective health care system.

Now that was the work that was left undone by the people who were the strong leaders in health care, not only for Saskatchewan, but across the country. It was the big-ticket item, and it was the job that was left undone. And we all know it's a difficult task.

We all know that it involved a challenge for all of us. We knew it would be tough, and that's where the members opposite lacked intestinal fortitude, the courage, and more seriously, the vision that's required to carry forward with health reform.

Because we know what their vision entailed. It entailed Fair Share Saskatchewan. It entailed setting up bricks-and-mortar structures across the province so that they could go their random ribbon-cutting ceremonies. And what's that all about? It's easy to see the motivation there is short-term political pork-barrelling. Straight and to the point.

It's not a long-term view. It's not taking a shred of decency so that people could take an impact in their own lives without political interference and without the heavy hand coming down and saying: this is good for you because it's good for me; I can stand in front of a building and cut a ribbon.

It's the reason why they expect that our minister's going to go out and become politically interfering and politically involved in the management of the health



care system, that somehow our government's going to be a duplicate of their model and go out and become politically interfering in every day-to-day decision that happens out there without letting people take power in their own community and manage their own community's needs.

That's not our way. It's not up to us to short-circuit the long-term good of all people in Saskatchewan for short-term political gain. Well they say: we have to do this, we must get involved in the day-to-day management because then there's no accountability. And that's totally incorrect when you look at the legislation that's before us. The legislation states clearly that health boards will be accountable.

They're going to be accountable in many ways. They must provide annual financial statements and estimates to the minister before each fiscal year. Those estimates cannot forecast budget deficits without prior approval of the minister. The boards will provide reports upon the minister's request which supply annual financial statements and which have been independently audited. And therein lies financial accountability.

In terms of health service provision, the Department of Health will be defining a range of core services and boards will be required to either provide those services directly or ensure they're available to residents through the contracting out to other groups in the community. But they must ensure a high standard of service that the department outlines is going to be the core of services provided. And therein lies accountability.

Well another mechanism — accountability — is the outlining of how the boards will be appointed and elected members. They'll be elected by the residents of the health district, which represents the ultimate form of accountability in a democratic system.

The boards will also be required to make their by-laws open to the public and the boards will hold at least two public meetings each year and can hold more open meetings if they require. At the public meeting the boards must present their operation and expenditure plans for the coming year and report on the effectiveness of the programs that they deliver to their community, and therein be accountable to the people that elect them.

Now why the appointed members? Appointed members allow us to look at that and see if there are any aspects of a community that need to be represented and will allow nomination by the districts themselves to say, we need to add representation and provide a broader scope to these boards and we therefore ask you to nominate and will put forward names in nomination for the minister to appoint.

It also helps when you're able to appoint someone from a neighbouring district and then therefore adds to that community spirit, the cooperation and the sharing of ideas, and will allow for districts to cooperate and share with each other in a spirit of

togetherness, and not the politics of division of the past 10 years in this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, The Health Districts Act is very important to the province of Saskatchewan. But we all recognize, because in our own idea change is always very difficult, it's difficult for individuals to grasp and to adapt. But, Mr. Speaker, the people in Saskatchewan told us that they are ready; they're ready for this change; they're excited and enthusiastic; and they're coming together to work on the changes that are needed for health reform in this province.

We can provide the facilitators from the department. We can provide, as has been pointed out to you before, planning guides, and say what works or isn't working in other areas. We can put forward the legislation that helps to bring people together and have a framework to operate in.

But, Mr. Speaker, the real strength of this Act is the people across Saskatchewan who are the leaders, who are the strong problem solvers and the contributors to something that they believe is long overdue. And they feel that the reform that's under way is necessary to the health and well-being of everyone in their community.

Mr. Speaker, we all join in wishing them well in the formation of their new health districts under The Health Districts Act, and we wish them well in the election and the appointment of their board members who will serve them and serve them well, and address the needs of the individual communities in this fair province.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I support the health districts legislation that's before us and ask all members to join together in this important milestone in health reform and health care that once again will provide leadership to this province, and not only to this province but to the nation.

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

(1600)

**Ms. Stanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm proud to stand in favour of this Bill, The Health Districts Act. I want to congratulate the minister for her courage, her wisdom, her determination to carry this Act through.

Watching the Minister of Health reminds me of as a child watching people like Tommy Douglas, like Woodrow Lloyd, like Allan Blakeney doing the things that we knew we had to do to be progressive in this province.

As the minister has said, this is a Bill that is a framework for the health care system that is more broad, more comprehensive, and that provides a more well-rounded health care and system for all the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to congratulate, with the minister, all the stakeholders that have taken part in the process. I want to congratulate the health care workers, the Saskatchewan doctors, the nurses, the CNAs (certified nursing assistant), the home care workers, the community leaders who have met and consulted with the minister, have argued, gone over their plans, and have finally arrived at a consensus for this breathtaking new program.

I want to congratulate the people of the Cut Knife-Lloydminster constituency because these folks work long and hard to try and come together in a new health district, and I think we'll be hearing from them soon. I also want to thank the folks because I think — including the doctors in my area — every level of health care worker recognized that health reform had to take place.

One thing that I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that we can't be afraid of change. It may feel comfortable to stay in the old system but it has become ineffective, it has become expensive, and it isn't providing the care that we know it could provide.

I spoke to a health care worker today. She's a dear friend of mine and she said, we can provide better care, Violet; I am convinced of that because . . . I apologize, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I said my name. The health care worker I was speaking to said to me, I know we can provide a better system because working together in larger areas we can provide care that we can't in small little groupings now.

We were leaders in health before because we had to be. Before medicare people were held economically hostage by their health. One accident, one prolonged illness, and a family could be ruined.

I remember a story of a colleague, 25 years ago, that moved to California. She was covered by the health system with the district board that she was teaching with. She contracted cancer and thought that she was covered. She was covered for the first year and a half, after that no more coverage. This whole family was destitute by the time the lady passed away. These are the kind of horror stories that people in our movement have tried to prevent. A complete family could be ruined.

So we came together under Tommy Douglas and Woodrow and countless other brave pioneers to bring in medicare, and provided collectively what could not be done individually. And I think that's the essence of the things that many of us on the government side of the House believe in — doing things collectively that we cannot do individually.

Now medicare is accepted across Canada, and that system which Saskatchewan fought so heroically to put in place is in danger again. The concept, Mr. Speaker, is still important. But over the years the delivery system has become creaky, inefficient, repetitive, unwieldy, and unresponsive — hence the wellness model.

Folks today want to become involved in their own health. It was evident at a recent meeting in Neilburg with about 150 health care workers and people that were involved in the health system, that they were very enthusiastic. The same applies to government. People want to become more involved, and so they should. People in every system should be more accountable.

Instead of people going to a doctor and having him prescribe what their health should be, I think doctors today, when I speak to them, they want people to become involved in their own health care. So consulting with a doctor, with a person, with the health care workers in your area, we all can become more accountable for our own health.

And I think this is what the wellness model does: a system that will provide integrated services, rationalize them, coordinate them so that a few precious dollars we have — thanks to the giga-Tories — go where they need to go, to the preservation of the system, not the continuation of something unworkable.

Many things to praise in this Act, many sound points, as the minister said yesterday. One of the most important is that it's community based. The throne speech talked a great deal about partnerships. Here is a perfect example. Reform this radical, this important, could not take place unless there were community consent and community cooperation. And, Mr. Speaker, we've got it.

I remember 1962 very clearly, and remember how the people in our government at that time had to fight to bring medicare in. This time it's not that much of a fight because people have come together and realized that there has to be health reform. We are only getting opposition from a few people and I think I don't need to name who they are. I know that stakeholders in my constituency are excited by the challenge given them in the wellness program. They are ready for reform and will make it work.

Cooperation is not just a buzz-word, but necessary, for the simple reason that health is everybody's business; just as government is everybody's business. I think I could make a parallel here on democratic reform and health reform. I think that people in our society today want to be more involved in government and it'll be better if they do become more involved. They want to be more involved in the health system and it will be better because they are involved. If people give up their rights and their democratic rights to a few people, they can expect the system to evolve to the opinion of those few people.

It may be more difficult for us as individuals and as leaders to work in a system where we all have to give our opinion and where we have to fight for what we believe in. But those are the kind of systems that are going to last. And I can tell you when we look globally at the structural changes that are taking place in the world today, we have to be leaders. Whether we are working in a hospital in Maidstone, whether we are an

MLA sitting in this House, whether we are a cabinet minister, we all have to work together if we're going to have the kind of economy, the kind of society, that we believe in.

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

**Ms. Stanger:** — Now I can tell you that taking responsibility for your own health means more than just going to a doctor once a year and popping a few pills now and then. Often we hear great criticisms against doctors and the system. I can tell you that many doctors that I know personally want health reform to happen. Many times people have pressured them to act in the way that they did. Now working together, all of us can come up with a better system.

As has been said many times before, wellness extends far beyond check-ups and hospitals and a spoonful of sugar to make the medicine go down. Wellness cuts across every aspect of our lives, from occupational health to school lunch programs for undernourished kids. As a former teacher, I can tell you it's very difficult to teach a hungry child. In fact, it's almost impossible.

Who better to decide what is needed in a particular region than the people of that area? And who better to elect members of district boards than citizens of that district? This program is exciting because it puts responsibility where it should — right in the hands of the people.

So, Mr. Speaker, reform is necessary because frankly the present system is pricing itself out of existence, not being very effective at the same time. But more importantly, reform is necessary because it returns power to people.

Of course there would be problems to iron out. Mr. Speaker, I can't think of a single program or a single project that a government takes on that runs perfectly from day one. What you need is total commitment and cooperation from the people that are initiating the program and that are involved in the program. And I have enough confidence in Saskatchewan people that this health reform is going to work.

In fact 10 or 15 years from now people are going to be discussing the Minister of Health and lauding her for the courage that she has had to put this program into place. I don't think anybody understands the personal costs when people become committed to something that they believe in. But people are willing to do that because they are doing it for the greater good, not for themselves personally.

So, Mr. Speaker, reform is necessary because frankly the present system, as I said before, is pricing itself out of existence. And remember, as I was saying — I got kind of carried away here, but that's all right too — remember we are going to have some problems in health reform. But we can iron these out. I mean you can never put in a system that answers all the questions initially.

Meeting with some of my health workers, some of the RMs (rural municipality), some of the town councils, there were questions that they were concerned about. Some of them, you can answer. But some of them you can't answer until you're half-way through the system. A lot of these will have to be worked at, and people are going to have to cooperate. But if they're determined to the philosophical framework, it's going to work.

Members on our two sides of the Assembly never tire about talking about cooperation. It's all you hear from our side of the House and the opposition side of the House.

Well okay. If we're all talking about cooperation, how about having some cooperation from members opposite? I mean, they didn't have the courage to start this health reform. It isn't easy for us. Now that we're biting the bullet, let's all do it together.

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

**Ms. Stanger:** — I have faith in Saskatchewan people. I have faith in their vision and their ability to work together for the common good. And I have faith in their determination to make this program work, because it is a good program and because it is their program.

I feel sorry for the members of the opposition who can only say, at least we brought in the health card. Wow. I feel even more sorry that all they can say about this program is only designed to pit urban people against rural people — their old plan. That bothers me more than anything. Because for the restructuring that is going to have to take place in the '90s we are going to have to have urban and rural people working together, not pitted against each other.

Mr. Speaker, I am excited about the wellness model and this first necessary step. I support it. My constituents support it. My health care workers support it. We all are confident we have picked the right path to take us into the health care of the next century.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read something from a man that would have been a constituent of mine if he was still alive. He lived from 1842 to 1886 — Chief Poundmaker. And I think that in these words he sums up what we must do as leaders and what we must do as people of Saskatchewan:

"It would be so much easier just to fold our hands and not make this fight . . . to say (we) can do nothing.

I grow afraid only when I see people thinking and acting like this.

We all know the story about the man who sat beside the trail too long, and then it grew over and he could never find his way again.

We can never forget what has happened, but we cannot go back nor can we just sit beside

the trail.”

And those were words spoken by Poundmaker many years ago. But they apply to the spirit and the essence of what we are trying to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

(1615)

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I’ve been listening with a great deal of attention and interest to the members that have been speaking over the last hour or so.

With one opinion that has been stated I would certainly concur, and that is that the piece of legislation before us is an extremely important piece of legislation. There’s no doubt about it because of the monstrous potential impact that it is going to have on the people of Saskatchewan.

We hear a great deal of talk, Mr. Speaker, about the consultative process. And I would just like to remind members opposite that if they are so involved in the consultative process, then I would just assume that after having consulted with SUMA, after having consulted with SARM, that they would see fit that indeed they will abide by the requests of these organizations and others for some dramatic amendments to the Bill as it is before us now.

I trust also that they will listen to the front-line troops out there delivering the health care services and the concerns that they have, and that the government members will see fit to agree to amendments that they are recommending.

Mr. Speaker, we just heard a request by a member opposite that all people of Saskatchewan should join together and bite the bullet in this particular problem. And I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that if you bite a bullet too hard it explodes, and I caution members opposite on that particular aspect.

Now having listened carefully, Mr. Speaker, to sundry back-benchers strutting forth on the stage here for a brief moment of glory as they recite the lines written by the Minister of Health, that indeed I would urge them to give some serious thoughts to the implications of this Bill. And as we go through it, Mr. Speaker, in further speeches in second reading, that they listen carefully, that they do give it careful thought, and that they are going to be open-minded to the point that they would recognize that not just that we as the opposition members but the people who we represent, and the views of the people in the province that we are representing, that indeed they do have some good ideas and that they will be prepared to accept some amendments that we will be bringing forth as we progress in this debate.

But with those few remarks at this time, Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

## Bill No. 11

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Calvert that **Bill No. 11 — An Act to amend The Wakamow Valley Authority Act** be now read a second time.

**Mr. D’Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have some concerns about the intent of this legislation but we feel that at this time that concern can be dealt with in committee and we’re prepared to let it move to committee.

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

## Bill No. 12

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski that **Bill No. 12 — An Act to amend The Wascana Centre Act** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As my colleague just a moment ago indicated, we really do not have any fundamental problems with the present Bill. And the concerns and questions we will be raising, we’re more than prepared to raise in committee, and we’re willing to allow this Bill to go to committee.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and, by leave of the Assembly, referred to a Committee of the Whole later this day.

## Bill No. 7

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Atkinson that **Bill No. 7 — An Act respecting Social Workers** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to spend a moment on Bill No. 7, a Bill that’s An Act respecting Social Workers. Mr. Speaker, there are many elements contained within this Bill that the official opposition will endorse and that we look forward to endorsing.

Social workers provide very important services to many, many people in Saskatchewan. Most social workers are overworked and strive each and every day to get through the many cases that they have on their desks. Recently, Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of talking with a few social workers who find that the case load that they are facing is certainly increasing, especially in the area of abuse, child and parental abuse, and they find that it’s not within their ability to leave the office at 5 o’clock and go home and be able to sit down and enjoy their families without having the phone ring maybe at 7 o’clock or maybe at 9 or even 11 o’clock being called out to address a situation.

So we here on this side of the House certainly

recognize the problems that many social workers face and we want to compliment them for their endeavours and hard work. Each and every file folder on a social worker's desk is important — important because every file folder represents an individual, an individual with very serious problems, problems that social workers across this province are asked to and must work to resolve.

I admire the dedication and untiring efforts of people in this field. The work that they perform is quite often overlooked and unrewarded. Society relies on social workers, like Mr. Pekrul who was recently recognized as outstanding in his field by the Canadian Association of Social Workers.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that this Bill will enable the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers to establish standards of practice. I have had an opportunity to consult with some of the members of this association on this Bill and we intend to keep in touch with members of the association regarding this Bill's passage.

I understand, Mr. Speaker, from news articles and the minister's remarks, that the association endorses this legislation and had a part in developing it. Although the opposition at this point does not plan on holding this legislation up, I do have some concerns and questions on this Bill that I plan on addressing when the Bill is in committee.

For example, yesterday the minister said that this Bill was necessary in order to prevent individuals who call themselves social workers from using the title to attract clients. This is understandable, Mr. Speaker, yet exceptions will be made for anyone with five years of experience as a social worker. Exceptions will be made for those with five years employed in the practice of social work. I am interested in what the definition of this area of work will be.

Mr. Speaker, I know a number of people currently employed as youth workers and corrections officers who may consider themselves to be employed in the practice of social work. Will the association also consider this social work?

I know that some individuals who work with the handicapped and other special children and adults consider themselves social workers. These people may have some schooling, whether it be a university or SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Arts and Technology) training, but ultimately they consider their profession to be that of a social worker. Will the association share this view?

Who is going to designate who will be allowed into the association? Will those who work in shelters for battered women be allowed entry into the association but those who work with the handicapped be denied?

I also question why the five-year time line is being enforced. Why does five years experience allow you to become licensed as a social worker? Is this an arbitrary cut-off? Will exceptions be made? What

happens to those who will fall through the cracks? Where do you draw the line?

However I will get into this issue during committee and look forward to hearing the answers to my questions at that point.

Another issue that I and my colleagues will spend some time on during committee is how the fee structure will be enforced. Is there or will there be provisions in the Bill to ensure that no qualified member will be denied access to the association because of inability to pay the fee? I think that a provision like this is important.

Of course I will clarify the matter during committee, but I am thinking of new graduates from the Faculty of Social Work who may not be able to afford the entrance fee to the association. New graduates, Mr. Speaker, do not have the ready cash. A lot put themselves through school by holding down a job and have a batch of student loans to pay off as well — student loans which can amount, many university students find, to numerous and a lofty amount of dollars when they get out of school. In order to earn money they will need money to join the association. It is a catch-22, Mr. Speaker. Will these people be denied access to the association?

Another question in this regard deals with social workers employed by the government. Who will be paying the association fee, the employee or the taxpayers of Saskatchewan?

The minister mentioned in her remarks that the standards and ethics established by the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers will be reviewed and approved by the Minister of Social Services and the Legislative Assembly to ensure that they are in the best interests of the public. I am encouraged that the standards will be brought to the Assembly for discussion and approval. I want to confirm this fact as well in committee.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to note that this Bill enforces that the governing body of the association will be duly elected, and this is indeed good. The Bill provides that only one member of the five will be appointed. I recall, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Riversdale, the Premier of this province, I recall when he promised that all government appointments would be approved by a committee of this legislature. He promised that all appointments would be scrutinized by members of this Assembly.

This Bill allows the government to appoint a member of the governing body of the association of social workers. This breaks the Premier's promise. We will be asking why. We will be asking if indeed the government will allow this Assembly to have input into that appointment. I am not surprised by this, but it is something that I will be questioning the minister on in committee as well.

Mr. Speaker, I will also be asking the minister who was consulted in the formation of this Bill, and what

impact the Bill will have on the social workers across the province. I would be remiss if I concluded my remarks on Bill 7 without pointing out the irony of the NDP government introducing this legislation. This Bill will essentially legitimize social work as a profession, a helping profession, a profession that assists the unemployed, the impoverished, the physically and emotionally unhealthy.

Social workers help those people who were forced into this very fate by the NDP government and their policies of today. The NDP government has forced so many people into the welfare rolls that they had to use special warrants to obtain additional funds. They had to use special warrants, something they claim to abhor, something they swore they would never use, in order to obtain money to help the increased levels of people on social assistance. This is a fact and this is something that social workers must deal with daily.

This government is creating more work for social workers. Mr. Speaker, social workers will have even more unemployed, and even more distraught, and even more downtrodden people to deal with after next week's budget, I am afraid. I believe that the lack of vision of this government and pessimistic nature is driving people out of the province and into a position where social workers are going to find that the workload that they are finding difficult to carry today is even going to become greater tomorrow.

(1630)

Mr. Speaker, it's been my pleasure to address some of these important issues. I also know my colleagues would like to raise some of the issues and I will allow them to enter debate, but I will assure you, Mr. Speaker, that we will raise these and other questions as we get into committee as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**The Speaker:** — Order. Why is the member on her feet?

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd ask for leave to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, it's indeed a pleasure to introduce to you, and to all members of the legislature, 42 people who are in the west gallery who are here with the Saskatoon Open Door Society. The 42 citizens are people who've recently arrived in Canada from around the world, as I understand it. It's not unlike the situation that many of our grandparents or parents found themselves in when they first came to our country. And so I'd like to welcome the new citizens to the legislature and to Saskatchewan and to Canada.

Along with the 42 people are their teachers: Donald

Campbell, Jeanette Dean, Barbara Petrie, and Kurt Stang. Welcome to the legislature and I hope you have a safe ride home.

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

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 7 (continued)

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member from Moosomin brought forward many good points concerning this Bill. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the opposition member responsible for Social Services is in the hospital at the present time, and hopefully he will be able to join us next week. I know that he's anxious to take part in the debate, talking about Bill 7. I hope that at such time he will have the opportunity to deal with it.

Because of that, Mr. Speaker, I would move at the present time we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

##### Bill No. 4

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carson that **Bill No. 4 — An Act respecting Local Improvements in Urban and Northern Municipalities and to Effect Certain Consequential Changes** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say a few things about this Bill, Mr. Speaker. The comment made by my colleague about the member from our caucus responsible for Social Services, was it? I met with him and visited with him yesterday, and I can assure you that he's feeling much better. The bone that was pressing on the nerve in his back has been removed. And he says he will be able to kick the dickens out of the NDP when he gets back.

Mr. Speaker, I have a number of concerns regarding the principle of this Bill, particularly in light of recent events surrounding local government and local government finance. The minister in her remarks explained that allocating costs and supporting local improvements financially is central to the principle of this Bill, and I agree. I agree that that is true.

The minister in her remarks specifically said, and I quote:

The Bill offers some municipalities more choices as to how the costs may be (better) allocated to achieve greater equity and better reflect the degree of benefit received.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you that what the Bill does not do, because it is . . . in its own missions it undermines the very principles the minister claims to be promoting. The Bill does not prevent the provincial government from offloading its financial

responsibilities onto local government. Every time the NDP government offloads onto our municipalities, local improvements pay the price.

And I want to explain something to the minister that will be explained in this Assembly many, many times during this session. The central principles of all Bills regarding municipal governments should be a recognition that revenue raised from the property should be used to service property. Revenue raised from property should be used to provide services to the property. And that in particular is what local improvement legislation should embody.

But we do not see that principle in this Bill, Mr. Speaker. We do not see in this Bill any measure to fend off the many ministers of Finance on the government side who are trying to say money that local governments need to use for local improvements must be used to fund social services. There is no resistance on government benches to that political agenda, and therefore there is no resistance to that agenda contained within this Bill.

Local improvements are the lifeblood of any municipality, Mr. Speaker. They are the lifeblood of the urban municipalities and they are the lifeblood of rural municipalities. And this Bill stands in direct contradiction to the government's actions almost across the board — the government's actions in cutting off the supply of that lifeblood.

For example, Mr. Speaker, how can this Bill speak to principles of local improvement in rural municipalities when the Premier is preparing to completely destroy the Department of Rural Development? How can this minister stand up on behalf of that Premier and pretend that she cares about local improvements, when the department that does the most to make the provincial contribution to such improvements is on the chopping block? The chopping block, Mr. Speaker — that means cutting it out altogether and eliminating it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this Bill, with whatever benefits it contains, shows the fundamental characteristics of the NDP government. And those fundamental characteristics can be summarized as follows: an unwillingness to keep commitments; an unwillingness or an inability to be truthful; an uncompromising need to blame others and avoid responsibilities; a deep, reprehensible pattern of unfairness; a complete abandonment of compassion and caring; an unrelenting campaign of despair, and finally, Mr. Speaker, an inability to come to terms with the genuine financial economic management.

These principles are all present in the presentation of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, and I propose to show you how they are present. Let us start at the first characteristic of this Premier and his government and how these characteristics are reflected in the presentation of this Bill.

The first is an unwillingness to keep commitments or what more plainly is called breaking promises. The

NDP, in opposition, made direct commitments to local government, and particularly made promises regarding local improvements which is what this Bill is all about. The now Premier stood on many occasions before the local government representatives and gave his word that if he were to become Premier their worries would be over.

Even more directly and even more shockingly, Mr. Speaker, the woman who is now the minister, the member from Melfort, repeatedly and clearly committed to the increased support for local improvement and spent a great deal of time condemning the previous government for providing insufficient support to local improvements this Bill contemplates. She made speeches, the like of which would never indicate any concern about deficits or fiscal responsibility.

Yes, both the Premier and the minister made direct, clear, and unequivocal commitments that touch on the principles of this Bill.

And what is interesting, Mr. Speaker, is the self-delusion going on on the government benches. Undoubtedly the Premier will have one of his back-benchers stand up and wave the little NDP card and say, we never made any promises and we never made any.

And while they may not have printed the promises to local government leaders on the card, municipal leaders know that this was said to them in a very direct way. The people who had all of these promises made to them, they don't really care what's been printed on anybody's card.

What they want to know is where this promised support for local improvements is. Where does this Bill embody the principles enunciated by the NDP leader when he was so desperately seeking the premiership? It's like the television commercial: if you come up short, use the card. Well that's the slogan for the American Express, Mr. Speaker, and now apparently the Leader of the NDP used the card. But the card, Mr. Speaker, does not help local government waiting for the promises of the NDP to be kept.

And this Bill does not deliver on the NDP promises about local improvements. So that's the first principle, the first characteristic of the NDP as it applies to this Bill — an unwillingness to keep commitments.

The second characteristic is very much related to the first, and that second characteristic has to do with the misinformation, untruths, and unwillingness to be truthful. When local governments ask the province, where is your share of local improvements, where is your share, the Premier of Saskatchewan answers, I have no choice. Now that is not true, Mr. Speaker, not true at all.

The Premier tells local government it has a huge debt, so you'll have to take on all the province's responsibility in this regard. And that is not true either, Mr. Speaker. Local government would be content if

this government simply stopped siphoning off local funds. Just stop taking their money and they'll be happy.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this government claims that its predecessor, the previous PC (Progressive Conservative) government spent too much money on municipal capital projects and local improvements. But that's just ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. Municipalities were cut back dramatically by the previous government. Their funding was reduced year after year, no question about it, but there was some real commitment to local governments, not a complete abandonment.

In fact we heard at the SARM convention the day before yesterday, Mr. Speaker, that the Department of Rural Development is now receiving less money than it did in 1982. This was the presentation of figures by the president himself.

And even retaining the modest commitment this Premier and this government says was too much now, how the tune has changed, Mr. Speaker, how the tune has changed. So local governments know because they lived through it, they know that they have not been getting huge amounts of money from the province, but now they find not only are they being cut back, they now have a provincial government that is directly taking money that is municipal money, directly taking money that's money out of the municipalities and putting it into the provincial kitty — fine revenue, for example, Mr. Speaker.

The government is absconding with the towns' and the cities' fine revenue, and every dollar they rip out of the towns is a dollar that must be replaced with one that could have paid for streets or rebuilt water works.

This Bill is almost a farce coming from this government, almost a farce, Mr. Speaker, because while the Bill itself has benefits within it, it is being presented by a government with no commitment to the principles inherent in the Bill itself, a government with no commitment to local government, let alone local improvements.

Now what about the third characteristic that is reflected in the presentation of this Bill, the need of compulsion to blame others, Mr. Speaker. Now how is that reflected in the principles presented in this Bill? Did the minister stand in this House and announce that central to the introduction of this Bill, she knows that a key principle is that the province accepting responsibility for its share of local government improvements, needs, and local improvement policy?

Did she announce that the government recognizes the municipal revenues should be used for municipal purposes such as local improvements and not for health care? Did she announce any of that, Mr. Speaker? Not on your life and not on mine, not likely.

Instead of presenting this Bill, this government is at the same time offloading responsibilities for all manner of things onto local governments. You know, it is passing

strange that we have a Premier who gets an overpayment from the Government of Canada and the national government says, we understand; you are in tough times. They said, we understand and so we are not going to make you pay it back all at once, and you don't even have to start paying now. And I think that's a pretty good deal for them to get. We all knew that it was likely these overpayments were developing, but despite that, in recognition of your important responsibilities, we are going to adjust things so that you can accommodate the financial situation.

(1645)

And the Premier in response, Mr. Speaker, declared this to be — his words — fiscal terrorism. He cries about Ottawa offloading responsibilities and talks about fiscal terrorism, and then he goes to the local government in this province and he says, well it's up to you guys; don't expect me to take the responsibility. Fiscal terrorism, indeed.

Specifically in regards to local improvements, the federal government offers a cost sharing program to build roads and infrastructure, and this government turns its nose. The towns and the cities and the RMs of this province would give their eye-teeth if this province and this provincial government were to offer them a major cost sharing program to pave the streets and rebuild the water and sewer systems. But what do we see instead? A complete abdication of responsibility. It's not up to us, says the Premier.

What about the next principle, Mr. Speaker? What about the unfairness we see not in the Bill itself but in the principles of the Bill in its presentation to this Assembly?

We see a government that is pitting one local government against another — a government that is set on a divide-and-conquer strategy that is worse and most harmful kind of policy that can be imposed on the province much in the need of community spirit and hope. Instead we have a government that represents Bills and operates policies based on a creation of second-class towns and third-class municipalities — a government that has completely lost any concept of compassion for fairness.

You know, Mr. Speaker, that local improvements do not spring from the ground and build themselves. They need an economic base and a policy base upon which to grow.

Where do we see the supporting principles in the presentation of this Bill that would provide that economic base and those sound policies? We do not see them. Instead we see the government creating winners and losers, those with a modest future and those facing only doom. We see a campaign of despair designed to drive the people into submission — and submission of course it will be, Mr. Speaker. And from despair can come no streets and no fire halls and no police stations. From this despair comes decaying infrastructure we experience in almost every community in this province.



It does not have to be this way, Mr. Speaker. The government does have choices, lots of them, but they are unwilling to make the choices that would give meaning to this Bill. They are unwilling to make the choices that would give life to the words, local improvements. They are unwilling to engage in a genuine financial or economic management, and would rather engage in blame and disaster.

The choices this government is making in regards to local government, as in regard to all of the areas of public policy, are designed only to maximize the interests of the NDP and have nothing whatsoever to do with the well-being of our people.

So, Mr. Speaker, while I say the specifics of this Bill are pretty sound, it is presented on the basis of an unacceptable principle. I know that my colleagues will have some comments to make on the principles on this Bill in the future, so I therefore move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

### Bill No. 5

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carson that **Bill No. 5 — An Act to amend The Planning and Development Act, 1983** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's again a privilege to stand in this Assembly and to speak to Bill No. 5, The Planning and Development Amendment Act.

And as we have indicated earlier, Mr. Speaker, a number of the Bills that have been brought forward, we certainly have a number of questions, a number of concerns, although in many cases most of the Bills before the Assembly, other than two or three, really aren't that controversial. But it is incumbent upon us as an opposition to indeed take the time to look into the Bills, to review the Bills, and review the matter of the Bills before we allow them to proceed through this House.

And regarding Bill No. 5, An Act to amend the Planning and Development Act, 1983, I would like to just make a few comments prior to allowing more of my colleagues or other members of the opposition to as well raise questions and direct some of our thoughts on our second reading speeches regarding the Bill before we would proceed to committee.

In its specifics, Mr. Speaker, this Bill is really not objectionable. The minister said that the amendments were requested by SUMA and that the Bill has been reviewed by SUMA as well. I'm sure that my colleague, the member for Kindersley, responsible for urban affairs will have contacted and certainly, if he hasn't had the chance of really consulting with SUMA, will take the time, and would like to take some time, to review with SUMA representatives the contents of this Bill so that indeed, as we allow the Bill

to proceed, we are indeed following some of the wishes and the guidelines in making certain that any concerns that would be out there are being addressed.

The reason we do that, Mr. Speaker, is because on many occasions we have been led to believe by ministers of this government one thing and, on the other hand, a few days later another concern has been raised. Or indeed one thing that was said in the House may not have really been acted upon; that in fact the other took effect.

I wish I could just take the minister's words for it and quickly allow the Bill to pass into committee. And having been on the government side of the House, certainly as government members and as ministers, it was a lot more appropriate and a lot easier just to allow Bills to come to the Assembly and hope that the opposition would just . . . wouldn't take a lot of time in speaking to the Bills or even raising questions, but allow them to proceed.

But that's not exactly the reasons for the House to sit here and discuss matters such as this. It's our responsibility of all members in this Assembly, not just opposition members, but all members of the Assembly to conscientiously address the questions and the decisions of this House because the decisions made in this House affect all people across Saskatchewan. And certainly Bill No. 5 in its effect may have more and greater concern to SUMA and SUMA delegates, but indirectly it affects each and every one of us as taxpayers. And therefore it's just not that simple for us as members of the opposition just to accept the minister's word as being truth.

We want to do our research and make sure that indeed the minister has taken time to consult with the organizations that will be affected by the Bill. For example, Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind the House of comments made by the Minister of Health recently in her introduction of Bill No. 3 and all the consultation process.

What we have found, Mr. Speaker, is that as the minister has talked of consultation and my colleagues and I are aware of the fact that there have been many meetings around this province regarding health and regarding the regional health boards, but we have also found that as the minister may have led the House to believe that she had been, or had the ability to attend all of these meetings, indeed as we've talked to individuals the minister certainly wasn't able to attend all of these meetings.

We trust that the Minister of Urban Affairs in her consultation process, if she indeed did not have the chance to personally be involved, indeed had representatives from her department and representatives from her office at these meetings so that they could indeed respond and get back to her on some of the concerns that were out there.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has said a lot of things. For example, prior to last year's budget the minister claimed to have consulted with SUMA about \$11

million in recreational grants that disappeared budget day. And we all know the effect that that had on people across this province. To our knowledge, Mr. Speaker, as we talked to SUMA we found that SUMA representatives were not aware at all of any consultation process. They had no knowledge at all of the \$11 million slash on their recreational grants. And to rural communities, to small communities across Saskatchewan, that meant a severe handicap and hardship as they were then forced to put a greater onus on their patrons and on the property tax owners and on the taxpayers of those communities.

The minister has said that she would be open and honest and that her government will run a tight ship with no waste and mismanagement. It's therefore incumbent upon us that we indeed raise questions and raise any concerns that may be out there, so that we can be assured that the minister has been speaking truthfully about running a government that is not running under tight fiscal mismanagement with no waste.

Yet we find, Mr. Speaker, the minister will not admit the real reason she made Carragana, Saskatchewan, the headquarters for SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation). And we went through a fair bit of discussion in Crown corporations as to why Carragana was listed as the headquarters for Saskatchewan Property Management when the executive member was driving out of Regina to Carragana and back. Why not have stayed in the city?

So it's because of some of those concerns and some of those questions that were raised in other areas of discussion, Mr. Speaker, in other committees, that we are reluctant just to take the minister's word for granted. She said she would not engage in patronage yet it ran rampant in SPMC when it was under her responsibility. She hired the majority of her campaign team, Mr. Speaker, to work in her office.

So, Mr. Speaker, you can see why I cannot take the minister's word for it when she says that SUMA was consulted on this Bill, and I know my colleague certainly wants to take a moment to be assured that SUMA was consulted, that SUMA had indeed the opportunity to address the Bill and address the input into the Bill and the ramifications of the Bill because they indeed will be the people that will be instituting the format and the requirements of the Bill.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, deals with municipal infrastructure and problems associated with servicing and the cost of upgrading municipal systems. And all across Saskatchewan, not just urban Saskatchewan but rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, many of our small towns and communities are facing major problems in dealing with the infrastructure and problems in servicing and the cost of upgrading their systems. We see it in their sewer systems. We see it in their street structures and the need that small communities have in arriving at the funding.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, as these communities are developing their budgets they're going to be watching

with interest the government, even next week as it presents its budget. And we are going to be wondering what effect this Bill will have on these communities as they endeavour to put in place the infrastructure that will build their communities for the future. Redeveloping ageing systems is costly and there's no doubt about that.

And just the other day I talked to a manager of one of our communities in northern . . . actually it's in the Yorkton area, Mr. Speaker. A town foreman who was in here, had just spent I believe it was \$17,000 on a piece of equipment that he was needing, or the town was needing, because of all the regulations that are now being put into place, Mr. Speaker, regarding safety, workers' safety. And in their case, Mr. Speaker, they have a fair bit of work that must take place regarding the redevelopment, redesigning of their sewer and water system. And he was in town to buy a cage so that indeed he would provide a safe working atmosphere and a place for the town workers as they were down digging out the streets and digging up the streets to redesign and re-fix the water systems and their sewer systems.

Mr. Speaker, municipalities are struggling with funds to upgrade systems and this Bill allows for what the minister calls, development levies. She says that development levies will be a new source of revenue for municipal governments, a new source of revenue for municipal governments.

Before us today is, Mr. Speaker . . . rather than just a new source of revenue for municipal governments, but it would seem to me, as we've seen over the past number of weeks and over the past year and a half since the government was . . . the NDP party was elected to govern this province, we've seen a new form, and today we see this Bill bringing to play a new form of NDP tax, not just a new development tax.

Their new creation is the development tax, and who is forced to collect it? It is being put into the hands of local government. Mr. Speaker, the question we will continue to ask. Okay, the minister will respond, well we've given it over to the local government to administer the collection of this tax.

And, Mr. Speaker, what happens is local governments are again left with making decisions based on taxation revenue that the province has pulled out from underneath them — the non-conditional grants that are being lowered, the reductions they are taking on non-conditional grants — and they are going to have to go to the taxpayers.

**The Speaker:** — Order. It now being 5 o'clock this House stands recessed until 7 p.m. this evening.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.