

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have petitions here from various people from across Saskatchewan. They deal with health care. And I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker. It says:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that the communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government;

That the entire health care system is being restructured and that the people in the communities affected have not had time or opportunity to properly have input into this process;

And that with legislation involving far less dislocation and potential for social ill, your Assembly has seen fit to defer consideration of the legislation until a long process of consultation by the Assembly itself;

And that there is little more disruptive and threatening to a community than the threat of having basic health care services removed or placed under the control of non-local authorities.

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

I have signatures here from Rama, Invermay, Sheho, the areas of Macklin and Denzil and Margo and I want to present them to the Assembly here today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would present petitions today. Many pages here from Saskatchewan citizens. I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, today I have petitioners from the communities of Invermay, Margo, Margo, Invermay, Hazel Dell, Lintlaw, Buchanan. It looks like communities all up and down the west side of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I would so table these petitions today.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I as well have petitions from all over rural Saskatchewan with respect to health care in the province. I'll just quickly read through the prayer.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions come from places like Margo, Saskatchewan; Kerrobert, Saskatchewan; Kindersley, Eston, Eastend, Frontier, Shaunavon. Mr. Speaker, primarily on the west side of the province, these ones are from. I present those before the House now.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to present a number of petitions to this Assembly. Allow me to read the prayer into the records:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, there are petitions here signed by individuals from Luseland, Kerrobert, Dodsland, Major, Springwater, and Wolseley, Mr. Speaker, and Invermay.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have several pages of petitions I would like to lay on the Table today. And I would like to read the prayer into the record also, Mr. Speaker:

And wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitioners are from places like Invermay, Saskatoon, Yorkton, Regina. We have gone into Buchanan, Lintlaw, Saskatoon, Shilo, Rama, Springside, on and on through Hodgeville, Vanguard, and pretty well through that area, Pambrun.

Mr. Speaker, I now lay these on the Table.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a large number of petitions to present to the House today. I will read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

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

These petitions come from Kerrobert, Major, Climax, Bracken, Shaunavon, Swift Current, Eastend, Consul, Ravenscrag, Weyburn, Maple Creek, Dollard, from all across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this very important day it gives me pleasure to present petitions to the Assembly. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

From various communities around the province. Saskatoon city is represented here; Macklin, Vanguard, Invermay, Hodgeville, Pambrun; just a whole host of places like Oxbow, Alameda, Alida, lots of places down that side of the province. In all, I have 28 pages of about 400 names to present to the Table today.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is also a pleasure for me to lay on the Table petitions pertaining to this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, as you request, I'll just read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts

Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have approximately 15 pages full from . . . it looks like they're all from southern Saskatchewan; Neville — two pages from Neville; Vanguard was here today; Pambrun; there's even some from Moose Jaw; Eston; Eston. You look all through that same area, Mr. Speaker.

Most exciting to me, Mr. Speaker, is approximately — just gathered up in a few days — is from my home town of Craik, approximately 300 names here, and it's a pleasure for me, Mr. Speaker, to lay these on the Table.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too have some petitions that I'm very pleased and proud to be able to present to the Legislative Assembly this afternoon on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

I will read the prayer. This is slightly different than the ones that my colleagues have been reading:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to urge the provincial government to provide proper funding to continue the operation of Souris Valley Regional Care Centre because it provides special services for persons with special needs which are not available anywhere else in Saskatchewan.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, these are mostly from Weyburn, and certainly from towns surrounding Weyburn. And indeed, when you page through them, Mr. Speaker, right across the province. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure now to hand in a total of 5,674 signatures on behalf of those people in Saskatchewan concerned about Souris Valley Regional Care Centre.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

The Clerk: — According to order, the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 11(7) they are hereby read and received:

Of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan, humbly praying that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to order SaskPower to facilitate the production of non-utility generated power in areas of increased demand.

Of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan,

humbly praying that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce some guests in your gallery. They are here from the town of Cabri. I know I can't talk about any policy, but I know they're here today to witness the scene in the Legislative Assembly and around the building. And I want to welcome those people from Cabri here today who are seriously concerned about the process that's going on. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure today to introduce to you and the members of the legislature the mayor of the town of Craik, Ted Obrigewitsch. Ted, if you would stand in the gallery, please, in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. And along with him is his wife, Loretta, and Joan Maier from Craik.

These people have been very instrumental in our community, and I'm very glad to have them here today for the cause that we're talking about here in this House today and surrounding the buildings. And I ask all members to welcome my people from Craik here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm truly happy today to introduce people from my constituency who are in the galleries. It isn't often that we have the pleasure to introduce through you and to the Assembly people from our constituency simply because of the geography and the number of miles that it takes to get here.

In the Speaker's gallery we have with us Les Potter who is an old friend from Gull Lake, Saskatchewan, who is on the health board and the RM (rural municipality) council down there, and of course is taking part in the festivities here today.

Close beside him is Jo-Anne Elmslie. She is a nurse in the Gull Lake hospital. Very concerned about our province. Her husband is the mayor of Gull Lake and couldn't make it up the steps because of his bad hip. But we know that she will be happy to report to him what is happening in the House today.

We also have in the opposition gallery Walter Laberge, the theatre operator down at Gull Lake who is also very much interested in the businesses that go on in our province.

We have Colleen Smith from Abbey, and she's in the Speaker's gallery and she's the hotel owner and operator in both Abbey and Cabri.

And so I hope that all of the members will join me in welcoming these people to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to . . . through you to the Assembly I'd like to introduce two of my constituents from Alida that have travelled to Regina today — Jeanne and Garnet Ball up in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. And I would ask that the Assembly welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to all members of this Assembly I'd like to introduce a group of individuals who have again joined Vonda Kosloski to come and take the time to — they're sitting in your gallery — take the time just to witness the proceedings in this Assembly. We're glad to see that there are people in this province who are interested in what's taking place here. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Health Care Changes Deadlines

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today my question is to the Minister of Health.

Madam Minister, you've just had the opportunity to listen to hundreds of Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan taxpayers, many of whom have travelled great distances to bring a message to you today. Right now, Madam Minister, you have a unique opportunity to stand in this House and show that you are listening to that message.

My question, Madam Minister, is a very simple one and I think it's a question that all the people who came today deserve a straightforward answer to. Madam Minister, will you slow down your process of health reform. Will you postpone the closure of 52 acute facilities, give the decision making back to the communities where it belongs, and give these people time to develop community-based solutions that will keep people and health services in their community? Yes or no, Madam Minister? Will you give these people what they are asking for?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order. Before the minister answers, I will ask our invited guests please not to participate in any way either by applause or comments, in the activities on the floor.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, a few short months ago, the members opposite were saying that we didn't have enough direction and should be making these tough decisions. A few short months ago the members opposite were saying that health reform . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — A few short months ago the

members opposite were telling us that we needed to move health care reform along with more directions, more guidelines, and more information as to when district boards should be in place. The hospitals and the integrated facilities that are affected have six months to make alternative arrangements and to talk to other communities within the district — well till October 1.

There is time. This isn't happening overnight. There is time for them to look at ways of dealing with any of the problems that may exist in the conversion. And the members opposite are fully aware of that. However it is either from their point of view we should be making the decisions, and when we do, we shouldn't be; or that we should be speeding up health reform, and then when we do, we shouldn't be. It is simply a political stance the members opposite take, not one of principle, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister. Madam Minister, it is becoming very painfully obvious that you don't listen very well. I mean what do people in this province have to do to get through to you? They're simply asking for more time, more information, and more authority to make their own decisions to determine the future of their communities without your heavy hand in place. Is that too much to ask?

I mean your government got elected, Madam Minister, to be open and accountable and by promising to protect health care. Now it's time, Madam Minister, that you show you know how to listen. Will you postpone those closures and allow these decisions to be made at the local level and take the closure off this Assembly? Will you do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are the ones that weren't listening to the people for the last 10 years. The members opposite were drumming up a debt in this province that is virtually crippling this province and making it impossible, making it impossible for us to maintain medicare as it has been in the past. It is therefore necessary for us to look at reform and we described at length the reform.

It's the members opposite who don't listen and who play political games. We are listening to the people. We've been throughout this province. There is a lot of support for health reform. There's a lot of support throughout this province to move health reform quickly because the financial situation in the province brings an urgency to it and because health reform is right.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister. Madam Minister, your officials go around this province and tell the folks in these

communities . . . 15,000 at the present who've met together to question your people: is this going to save any money? And your officials say no. Don't throw that out at us.

Madam Minister, you are creating two classes of citizens when it comes to health care in this province. Yesterday you were caught trying to create two classes of citizens when it came to children's dental care. Today you are telling the people in this province that they are second-class citizens; that they have not the same rights to quality health care as other residents.

You can't call this fair, Madam Minister. All these people are asking for is to be treated fairly. Give them the right to make their own decisions without you holding the hammer all the time.

You said out there today, Madam Minister, that you were going to meet with people for the next two weeks all over this province. It's simple, Madam Minister. Give them that right. Take the closure off, go meet them, and then be prepared to come back to this Assembly with a sane plan. Will you do that, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest problems here is the fact that the opposition members have been fearmongering and spreading misinformation and doing a disservice to their constituents. And I hear from their constituents — especially from the member from Kindersley — people who write to me and people who phone me and tell me that the misinformation that's being spread throughout his constituency is doing a disservice to the people in that constituency. It's fearmongering, it's irresponsible, and it's scare tactics, Mr. Speaker.

Now with respect to the district legislation, we need the district legislation to set up boards so we can do the kind of planning that has to be done in health reform, so that local communities can have a say. And the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association sent — representing hundreds of boards throughout this province — sent a letter saying: our membership is concerned about the length of time it is taking for the legislation to be passed.

Many areas are ready to form their district and it's essential . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I would like to ask the member from Arm River not to interject that often. Order. Give the member a chance. You've asked your question. I think the people in the galleries, it's very difficult for them to hear in the galleries if there's a constant interruption. Give the minister a chance to answer the question. I think she's sufficiently answered on this one. Next question.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, that last answer is simply misleading. I mean that's saying to people in this province that yes, that you're improving services. They don't believe that

because nothing you've said to date is going to keep a doctor in a community when all the diagnostic services are shut down. Without a lab they simply can't remain in their communities. How can you maintain quality health care if you can't keep a doctor, Madam Minister?

Madam Minister, that's what they were saying out there today, is that this thing has to be rethought. Because what it's doing is driving out the doctor and it's driving out the diagnostic services and it's driving out the health care professionals who are absolutely fundamental to maintain the service in the community.

Madam Minister, these people are in favour of change. I want you to tell them today that your changes won't mean the doctor leaving, the lab leaving, the diagnostic services leaving, and the health care professionals leaving. I want you to tell them that today, Madam Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I want to finish the quote I was reading from the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association, the Saskatchewan Health-Care Association that represents hundreds of boards throughout this province:

Many areas are ready to form their district and it's essential that a legal framework be in place to enable them to do so.

They are asking for the district legislation.

With respect to X-ray and diagnostic services, it's not us saying they won't have availability to that — it's the members opposite. And that's the kind of misinformation they're spreading throughout this province. X-ray and diagnostic services can continue to be used within a hospital facility. Six per cent, on average, of a doctor's income is in-patient acute care. It's not a big part of the income. Doctors shouldn't leave their communities and their towns for that proportion.

And talking about doctors, I only have to remind the members opposite of a letter they received from Dr. Kendel last year, decrying the political manoeuvring and manipulation and the misinformation that they were spreading — the misinformation. The fact . . . this doctor thought that the way you were behaving about trying to destroy health reform was absolutely unforgivable. And that's what you continue to do. You haven't listened. You haven't learnt your lesson.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister. Madam Minister, there's going to be places in this province where you'll be able to get a veterinarian quicker than you will a doctor, and that's the truth — a veterinarian. People's dogs will have better service than what you're proposing for rural Saskatchewan.

Madam Minister, Tommy Douglas and the people that you so revere brought medicare through this Assembly without closure hanging over the heads of the people of this province. Today, Madam Minister, you have an opportunity to go out and consult as your predecessors did, without closure hanging over this Assembly. The people of this province deserve as much.

Madam Minister, why don't you stand in your place today and say that closure has no place while you do your homework? Would you do that today, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite would study things to death. They spent 1.8 million on a study by the Murray Commission which they then put on the shelves. And they'd study it and they'd study it to try and keep people pacified and busy studying and not doing anything, nothing to save medicare, nothing to save the province. Spend, spend, spend, bankrupt the province — it doesn't matter. Don't accept any responsibility. Stand up here and blame somebody else — that's their philosophy, that's their political philosophy, Mr. Speaker.

I want to quote from Dr. Kendel's letter that was sent to the member opposite from Rosthern, where he said:

We do our rural citizens a grave disservice if we continue to support and foster the idea that maintenance of a hospital in their community is the only basis for assuring high-quality accessible health care. That is (and I quote, that is) frankly, dishonest.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Care Cost Savings

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And yes, you're correct, that flushed me out. Because when that Madam Minister gets up and makes accusations like that and considers me to be dishonest, Madam Minister, I cannot let that go unchallenged. You are dishonest, madam, because you're only giving half the picture, half the picture.

That letter from Dr. Kendel, you are accurate in what you are saying. He is the executive director of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. You forgot to quote from the letter that was subsequent to that from the president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, where the College of Physicians and Surgeons disown themselves from Dr. Kendel's remarks.

Why do you not quote and give the whole picture, Madam Minister? There's the other letter involved that you conveniently forgot to talk about.

Now, Madam Minister, there has been an uproar outside. There has been an uproar that we heard from inside this Assembly. There has been an uproar from

the people in this Assembly — although it was a mild one — because, Madam Minister, like your Premier said, the people of this province are decent people. But you are testing their patience, Madam Minister.

Now outside — I'm coming to the question, Mr. Speaker — outside you said there was a \$5 million saving — \$5 million saving. The province of this debt is \$16 billion.

The Speaker: — Order. I want the member to put his question please.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, I will do as you have instructed.

My question to you, Madam Speaker, is: what proportion is 5 million on 16 billion? Is that worth the destruction of the medicare system as we know it in Saskatchewan? Is that worth it, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — First of all, Mr. Speaker, it's a \$20 million saving annualized, not 5. Secondly — the members opposite agree with me, it's 20 million annualized — secondly, it is not the destruction of the health care system. That is exactly the kind of fearmongering and scare tactics that we've witnessed over the last few weeks in this province. The destruction of the health care system? Come on. Let's not be ridiculous.

What we hope to do by organizing communities on a district basis is to create a larger population so that we can deliver more services to smaller communities in the long run.

Look at some of the other health centres in the province. The matron from Delisle said on CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) the other morning that they provide better services than their hospital did.

Look at the opportunities within the change, the potential within the change to channel dollars from the institutional sector to more community-based services. But not the members opposite; they don't want to change. Not because their own commission didn't tell them to change, but because for selfish, political reasons they want to grandstand, they want to fearmonger, they're vying for political . . . Each of them — one, two, three, four, who knows how many, maybe back there — wanting to be the leader of the next PC (Progressive Conservative) Party. They're vying for attention . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — It's rally time again, Mr. Speaker. When the minister gets into trouble, the caucus gets in full support there, to try to damage control.

Madam Minister, you say we are fearmongering. You

say that we're spreading mistruths. Take a look around you, look those people in the eye. Look the people of Saskatchewan in the eye, Madam Minister, and tell them that they are wrong. Tell them that they have no fear. Tell them that there is no fear, that they will continue to have quality health service throughout this province under all conditions. Madam Minister, we'll come to that in a subsequent question yet.

But, Madam Minister, I want to ask you a question that I find appalling. That you cannot find \$5 million . . . There's your deputy minister sitting beside you; he's getting \$800,000 extra this year in his ministry to run the federal NDP (New Democratic Party) election — right there alone, 500 . . . \$800,000. Why don't you use money like that to restore the dental plan for the children, Madam Minister?

There are choices to be made, Madam Minister. You are making the wrong choices. And like my colleague, the leader of this party, has said, you are not giving them enough time.

And I ask you once more, Madam Minister: will you do as these hundreds of people today in front of the steps of this legislature and inside have requested to you to do — is to give them time to have proper input, meaningful input. Will you do that, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the people in Saskatchewan will have quality health care in every corner of Saskatchewan. They will have access . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — They will have access to quality health care services.

And we never said the people in the galleries were fearmongering. We said the PC opposition was fearmongering. And for you to suggest and twist the words is just an example of your . . . of PC tactics, scare tactics, fearmongering, and misinformation. Another example.

They know it's 20 million annualized. They said that's next year. But they're still talking only 5 million. Another piece of misinformation by the PCs opposite, Mr. Speaker.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, people will have time to develop their plans and to work through this in the context of a district. The department will be working with them. I will be meeting with people. There will be time for communities to get organized under the new directions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — It's kind of interesting, Mr. Speaker, when we hear the member get up, and the Premier on other occasions, and talk about fearmongering. They should recognize it when they see it, I suppose, because they are the experts in it.

Your Premier told us, and told the people of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, all five hospitals would be closed. You remember Social Services said, when we put in a \$125 deductible for drug plan, that people would now have to choose between drugs and food. Now you've got it up to \$1,720, Madam Minister, you are running around the province saying that our government at the time was responsible for the death of people. That's what you did, Madam Minister. You talk about fearmongering.

But, Madam Minister, I hope that one thing that this rally today has done for you, and that has made you realize that people out there are not here because of politics. People out there cut across the political stream. Everyone was there from whatever, even your own party, where some members from your own party were your strongest critics on this plan, Madam Minister.

They voted for you at the one time because . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Does the member have a question? The member put his question please.

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister, is it any wonder that these people today, in Saskatchewan, are hurt — feel hurt; feel frustrated. They feel angry and betrayed, as my colleague says. How do you justify that betrayal, Madam Minister? How do you justify closing 52 Saskatchewan hospitals, considering the commitments that you and your Premier and colleagues made across this province during the election, that you would do more with less, that you would spend more on health and education, full well knowing the amount of the deficit being \$14.2 billion at the time.

You knew it and yet . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Let the minister answer.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have always refused to put the real picture out. In 1986, prior to the election, they predicted the deficit to be \$365 million. And after the election they said whoops, it's 1.2 billion. That's the kind of information this province has had. That's the kind of information the Premier and my other colleagues in government have had through the years as we have spoken to Saskatchewan people. Leading up to the election in 1991, the New Democratic Party said that first and foremost we'd get a handle on the deficit and when money was available we would use it to improve programs. And that's our commitment today, Mr. Speaker.

Now let's just talk about the members opposite and their record and what Mr. Grant Hodgins had to say about their record. On June 17, 1991, Mr. Hodgins had this to say about those members, Mr. Speaker:

We have a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to deliver government services to the people in

the most efficient manner possible. This province is on the verge of bankruptcy . . .

Verge of bankruptcy. That's because of your mismanagement, it's because of your overspending, your deficit budgeting, deficit after deficit after deficit, 11 years in a row.

This province is on the verge of bankruptcy, and we cannot afford to do otherwise.

That's what he said then . . .

The Speaker: — Next question.

Mr. Neudorf: — I have a letter here, Mr. Speaker, that was hand-delivered to me today. It's dated April 19 and it's addressed to the Hon. Louise Simard from a Joy Moe. And I'm going to pass on some of her comments to you now, Madam Minister — and you have received this letter as well. And she says:

I am writing to you as a concerned parent and resident in rural Saskatchewan. We have a daughter who is now nearly seven years old and has been handicapped from birth. In the past we have had nothing but praise for life in rural Saskatchewan.

On two occasions our daughter has suffered near fatal seizures where we believed immediate treatment saved her life. The 80 kilometre trip to our nearest hospital suggested by your recent cuts would in all likelihood have cost us our daughter's life. And we are not alone. There are many people, young and old, in our community and others like it, whose lives have been . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Does the member have a question? Does the member have a question?

Mr. Neudorf: — I do, Mr. Speaker, and the question is based on this last sentence:

There are many people, young and old, in our community and others like it, whose lives have been saved by immediate medical care in our town.

You have received that letter, Madam Minister. How are you going to answer that lady and her daughter?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — First of all, Mr. Speaker, I have answered this question in this legislature numerous times. The members opposite know the answer, but they want to continue to spread misinformation.

The emergency services that are available to that person today will be available tomorrow. We will be maintaining emergency acute care services in those communities. We've said it a hundred times. Health centres throughout the province have the capacity to

do emergency acute care services, and so do ambulances do that. Those services will be provided.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister, you and your troops did a pretty good job out there in the crowd, working the crowd, telling them that they didn't have to worry, that they were a special case. Every one of your men and women out there said this to everybody who had approached them: don't worry, don't worry, you will be taken care of; your town is going to get special treatment; your town is going to get special consideration; nothing adverse will happen.

Well, Madam Minister, you can't have it both ways. Either you're going to try to save money, which your own hospital utilization report that you're holding off till the end of May says there is no saving of money, and yet out there you're telling them you're doing it to save money.

Madam Minister, how do you square that? How do you square that, Madam Minister? I'd like you to get up and tell the people in this province which it is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, with the establishment of district boards that have already taken place there have been economies of scale and savings realized. It's already happened — several million dollars in Saskatoon and Regina. Midwest and Twin Rivers are looking at that; P.A. (Prince Albert) is looking at saving; Moose Jaw. Wherever there has been a district board, Mr. Speaker, there's a plan being put in place and there will be efficiencies realized.

However, we are not embarking on health reform for the purpose of cost containment only. It is also for the purpose of coordinating and integrating services in Saskatchewan, and it is for the purpose of moving institutional dollars to more community-based services so that we can provide a broader range of services and more appropriately meet real health care needs. It is also for the purpose of spending more on health promotion and disease prevention, filling in gaps, and providing a much more comprehensive health care system for Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order.

An Hon. Member: — I'd like leave to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, in your gallery a couple of gentlemen I'd like to introduce to the Assembly — a former reeve of the RM of Walpole, Dennis Lamontagne, and another businessman from my area, Orville Swayze. We'd just like to extend a welcome to

them today for having taken the time to come into the gallery.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Martens: — I'd like to have leave to introduce some guests also.

Leave granted.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the gallery we have some people from the community of Vanguard which is a very enterprising young community. And they have had a fair degree of representation in the Assembly here today, in the galleries, of students and young people. And they closed the school down there, Mr. Speaker, to come to the Assembly today, and I want to welcome them here for their efforts and thank them for coming.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Beechy

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill to restore health care to services out of the community of Beechy.

The division bells rang from 2:45 p.m. until 2:50 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 10

Swenson	Toth
Muirhead	Britton
Neudorf	D'Autremont
Martens	Goohsen
Boyd	Haverstock

Nays — 33

Van Mulligen	Lyons
Thompson	Pringle
Tchorzewski	Lautermilch
Lingenfelter	Murray
Teichrob	Hamilton
Shillington	Trew
Koskie	Serby
Anguish	Whitmore
Goulet	Roy
Atkinson	Cline
Kowalsky	Crofford
Carson	Stanger
Mitchell	Knezacek
Upshall	Harper
Hagel	Langford
Koenker	Jess
Lorje	

A Bill to restore health care services to the

community of Eston

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was a pleasure to move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Eston.

The division bells rang from 2:53 p.m. until 2:54 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 9

Swenson	Toth
Muirhead	Britton
Neudorf	D'Autremont
Martens	Goohsen
Boyd	

Nays — 31

Van Mulligen	Pringle
Thompson	Lautermilch
Wiens	Murray
Lingenfelter	Hamilton
Teichrob	Trew
Shillington	Serby
Koskie	Whitmore
Anguish	Roy
Goulet	Cline
Atkinson	Crofford
Kowalsky	Stanger
Carson	Knezacek
Hagel	Harper
Koenker	Langford
Lorje	Jess
Lyons	

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

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — To ask leave for the introduction of guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the other members of the legislature, a couple of groups of guests here. My uncle Lorne and aunt Lorraine Dickson, who are in the gallery opposite here. And John and Lindy Buhr from Lucky Lake, and Lois Lowe from Kyle — friends and committed Saskatchewan citizens. I welcome you to the legislature and thank you for taking the time to watch the proceedings.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Bengough

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with a great deal of pleasure today that I move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community

of Bengough.

The division bells rang from 2:56 p.m. until 2:57 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 10

Swenson	Boyd
Muirhead	Toth
Devine	Britton
Neudorf	D'Autremont
Martens	Goohsen

Nays — 23

Van Mulligen	Lautermilch
Wiens	Murray
Lingenfelter	Trew
Teichrob	Serby
Shillington	Roy
Anguish	Cline
Kowalsky	Crofford
Carson	Stanger
Koenker	Knezacek
Lorje	Langford
Lyons	Jess
Pringle	

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Grenfell

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with a great deal of pleasure that I rise in my place today to move the first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Grenfell.

The division bells rang from 2:59 p.m. until 3 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 10

Swenson	Boyd
Muirhead	Toth
Devine	Britton
Neudorf	D'Autremont
Martens	Goohsen

Nays — 24

Wiens	Lautermilch
Lingenfelter	Murray
Teichrob	Trew
Shillington	Serby
Anguish	Roy
Kowalsky	Cline
Carson	Crofford
Mitchell	Stanger
Koenker	Knezacek
Lorje	Carlson
Lyons	Langford
Pringle	Jess

A Bill to restore health care services to the

community of Cupar

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Cupar.

The division bells rang from 3:02 p.m. until 3:03 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 9

Muirhead	Toth
Devine	Britton
Neudorf	D'Autremont
Martens	Goohsen
Boyd	

Nays — 22

Wiens	Lautermilch
Lingenfelter	Murray
Teichrob	Trew
Shillington	Roy
Anguish	Cline
Kowalsky	Crofford
Carson	Stanger
Mitchell	Knezacek
Koenker	Carlson
Lyons	Langford
Pringle	Jess

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

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — With leave, to make an introduction of another guest, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through to the other members of the legislature a friend I met in 1980 on a farmers' exchange to China, Homer Beach, in the east gallery. Homer is a long-time committed farmer and cooperator, a member of a co-op farm in the Ernfold district, and I'd like to welcome him to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Macklin

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take it as a great privilege to move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Macklin.

The division bells rang from 3:05 p.m. until 3:06 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 8

Muirhead	Toth
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Neudorf
Martens
Boyd

Britton
D'Autremont
Goohsen

The Speaker: — Could we ask all guests in the galleries to please remove their hats or caps. Thank you.

Nays — 19

Wiens	Murray
Lingenfelter	Trew
Teichrob	Cline
Anguish	Crofford
Kowalsky	Stanger
Carson	Knezacek
Mitchell	Carlson
Koenker	Langford
Lyons	Jess
Pringle	

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Langenburg

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Langenburg.

The division bells rang from 3:08 p.m. until 3:10 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 7

Muirhead	Toth
Neudorf	Britton
Martens	Goohsen
Boyd	

Nays — 18

Van Mulligen	Pringle
Wiens	Murray
Lingenfelter	Cline
Teichrob	Crofford
Kowalsky	Stanger
Carson	Knezacek
Mitchell	Carlson
Koenker	Langford
Lyons	Jess

A Bill to restore health care services to the community of Kincaid

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure that I rise today to move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Kincaid.

The division bells rang from 3:12 p.m. until 3:13 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 7

Muirhead	Boyd
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Devine
Neudorf
Martens

Toth
Britton

Nays — 20

Van Mulligen
Wiens
Lingenfelter
Teichrob
Kowalsky
Carson
Mitchell
Koenker
Lyons
Pringle

Lautermilch
Murray
Cline
McPherson
Crofford
Stanger
Knezacek
Carlson
Langford
Jess

**A Bill to restore health care services to the community of
Cut Knife**

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's again a pleasure to move first reading of a Bill to restore health care services to the community of Cut Knife.

The division bells rang from 3:15 p.m. until 3:16 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 8

Muirhead
Devine
Neudorf
Martens

Boyd
Toth
Britton
D'Autremont

Nays — 19

Van Mulligen
Wiens
Lingenfelter
Teichrob
Kowalsky
Carson
Mitchell
Lyons
Pringle
Lautermilch

Murray
Cline
McPherson
Crofford
Stanger
Knezacek
Carlson
Langford
Jess

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

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, to facilitate matters and being able to continue on on other House business, I would request that you move from item 12 to item 46 and we will stand all those Bills at this time.

The Speaker: — Items 12 to 46 are stood.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

**Bill No. 27 — An Act to amend The Association of School
Business Officials of Saskatchewan Act**

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to explain the purpose of this Bill which is very simple and straightforward. The Association of School Business Officials of Saskatchewan is the professional organization for individuals employed as treasurers, secretary treasurers, superintendents of administration in our school divisions.

The association has requested that the name under which it is incorporated be changed to the Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials. The acronym by which the association is commonly known would then change from ASBOS (Association of School Business Officials of Saskatchewan) to SASBO (Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials).

Mr. Speaker, the association has indicated that its members feel that the new name would be more suitable and that it would parallel the name of similar organizations in other provinces.

This Bill involves no amendments other than the change in name of the association and a couple of consequential amendments to other statutes.

I'm therefore pleased to move that Bill No. 27, An Act to amend the Association of School Business Officials of Saskatchewan Act, be now read a second time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a moment to comment on the fact that till we really see the Bill and what it really means, and I take the minister's words with great . . . We've listened to what the minister has said and the fact that she has indicated that the Bill before this Assembly, other than a name change, really doesn't imply that there's major changes to the Bill before us, or it's just an amendment to the Bill.

It would appear to me just from the comments that there really isn't a lot that the opposition would really see wrong.

But it would also be fitting, I think, for the opposition to take a little more time to review the Bill and have a closer look at it to indeed verify that what the minister is saying is true and adequate so that at the end of the day everyone will feel that the amendment, the motion, and the Bill has been properly dealt with and school officials, business officials across the province of Saskatchewan, will feel that they have had a proper voice and have been heard and listened to effectively in this province.

Therefore at this time, Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

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

Mr. Martens: — Could I have leave, Mr. Speaker, to

introduce some guests?

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Martens: — In the east gallery, Mr. Speaker, are a family from Glenbain, Murray Janis and his family, and I want to recognize him. He's contributed significantly to the Sask Wheat Pool and also to the constituency and I want to thank him for it and acknowledge his work — and welcome here. And I want the members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming him.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 28 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation Act

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've got a few brief remarks concerning this Bill which is basically housekeeping in nature.

Mr. Speaker, the Act corrects an oversight contained in the underlying SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) Act. At present the Act enables SPMC to provide and administer facilities and services which are defined in the regulations. Therein, Mr. Speaker, lies the difficulty because there are no regulations; none were ever created.

The result is that our friends in the Department of Justice tell us there is a possible legal argument that SPMC doesn't have the authority to provide many of the services and the facilities it currently offers to its clients. Obviously this places the corporation in an untenable position.

One solution would be to pass regulations, which we believe to be unnecessary, and it would also require an exhaustive listing of all the services and facilities that SPMC currently provides or would conceivably provide in the future. The result would inevitably be further complications down the road.

Repealing of the offending sections is a similar and a complete solution. It affirms SPMC's authority to do business both today and in the future. It does not enlarge on the corporation's powers, nor does it further burden the system with unnecessary regulations. And that is the intent of the legislation, Mr. Speaker.

It repeals two sections of the existing Act which contain the definitions of the terms "facility" and "service", which refer to the non-existent regulations, as I referred to earlier. Repealing the definition will mean that the ordinary common-law definitions of service and facilities would prevail in interpreting the Act.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, the current Act refers to regulations that do not exist. The omission may limit

SPMC's authority to do business and the amendments correct this by removing references to regulations, allowing terms to take their common-law definitions.

I am therefore pleased, Mr. Speaker, to move second reading of An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regarding Bill No. 28, the Bill to . . . An Act discussing the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation amendment Act, to bring the amendments forward to this House, I can appreciate some of the comments the minister made regarding the fact that possibly SPMC doesn't have the authority that maybe they felt they had in administering and looking after . . . providing responsibility to administer facilities and services around this province and the fact that it might have been, as the minister indicated, simple to just bring in the appropriate regulations. And I think over the time many governments have gone to the regulations. But I also realize when you're bringing forward regulations, that is time consuming as well.

And I think, as I've heard the minister introducing the reasoning for the . . . and the rationale behind this Bill, that the idea was felt it was much easier and a cleaner process to just amend the Bill in the Assembly rather than going through the whole format of bringing in regulations to address the shortfalls in the original Bill. And I can see nothing wrong with that process, Mr. Speaker.

However I think it would be fair to allow the opposition an opportunity to get the actual Bill and review it, and then at a later date to, if there are any concerns that maybe — or additional pieces of information that we would pick up — maybe we would like to raise them. And certainly I'm sure the government and the minister would be more than willing to accept any recommendations we may have so that indeed as we amend the present Bill before the Assembly . . . or the new Bill that's being brought forward — and indeed addresses all concerns that are apparent today and maybe even apparent tomorrow.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 28.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 37 — An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act, 1984

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to move second reading of Bill No. 37, An Act to amend the Urban Municipality Act, 1984.

Among the provisions of this Bill are amendments to restore the ward system in Saskatchewan for urban municipalities. Members of this House will recall that two Bills were previously introduced on this subject. They were referred to another second . . . after another second reading, to a Standing Committee on

Municipal Law, chaired by the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

The standing committee held public hearings on the wards Bill early in 1992. This committee evidently agreed with the substance of the Bill. However, the standing committee made two suggestions for improvements, both of which are incorporated into this Bill.

One suggestion was to require the wards commission to hold public hearings on establishments or alterations for ward boundaries. In previous legislation these hearings were optional.

The second recommendation was to place a numerical limit on the population variance between wards when territory is added or withdrawn from a community through annexation. This is a technical change, but it is also reflected in this Bill.

Because the legislature prorogued, the wards provision have now been introduced again, Mr. Speaker. Let me say a word or two about the purpose of these provisions.

They restore the ward system that the previous government abolished in 1988 and that had been in use in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. The ward system had become popular in these cities by bringing the members of council into a closer relationship with the voters.

Prior to 1988, plebiscites were held in all three of these cities, Mr. Speaker, and each time the voters demonstrated their support for the ward system. For example, in 1977 about 70 per cent of Regina voters supported the retention of wards, and in 1988 the support rose to 74 per cent.

Despite these votes of support, the wards legislation was replaced with a Bill that permitted cities to return to the at-large system or to use a split system. None of the cities accepted the split system which would have seen half of the council elected at large and the other half, wards.

Instead the cities, SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association), and other groups immediately began an effort to have the wards restored. SUMA passed resolutions. Nine of the cities formally requested the use of wards again be permitted in legislation. The Provincial Association of Resort Communities and other community groups also called for legislation that would permit use of wards.

(1530)

With the abolishment of wards in Saskatoon voters were faced with a ballot containing 70 names. Similarly in the election of 1991 in Regina, voters were confused by a large list of 48 names on one ballot. It was no longer possible for voters to make informed choices with so many candidates on a single ballot. Nor was it easy for voters to hold council

members accountable as there was no identifiable council member for any specific area. Moreover it was difficult for candidates of ordinary financial means to shoulder the cost of a citywide campaign.

In addition the loss of wards resulted in a loss of representation for some areas of the city by resident council members. A study by the city of Regina in 1988 surveyed some 25 cities throughout Canada that had a population of over 100,000. Of these, 19 used a ward system; 4 used at-large system; and only 2 used a split ward/at-large system. Thus about four-fifths of large cities, over 100,000 in population, had ward systems in place.

Let me make one final note respecting the provision of wards restored in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert, where they previously existed and are optional for all other municipalities. The mandatory feature reflects the fact that in these centres wards had been previously shown to be desired by residents. These provisions we have today simply restore that to effect.

Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of a Bill No. 37, An Act to amend The Urban Municipality Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I was listening to the minister of Community Services speaking, or Municipal Government, I guess it is now, Mr. Speaker, in introducing this Bill to the Assembly, I think back to the debate that took place about — I think it was approximately four years ago — and this whole question of the formation of wards, in this Assembly. And certainly a number of ministers sitting across the floor and members in this Assembly at the time got involved in the debate.

And if I can recall, Mr. Speaker, one of the major concerns raised at that time regarding the former government was the lack of possible consultation and the lack of allowing communities the ability to manage, if you will, their own affairs and make their own choices.

Now if I understand, as I was listening to the minister, if I understand correctly I believe the government in this Bill is basically reinstating the ward system in large communities such as Saskatoon and Regina, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw, and allowing for other communities to decide whether or not they want to . . . or would like to have a ward system.

Now from what I have heard in the debate that has taken place to date in some of the communities, the discussion regarding the ward system and the reinstatement or the re-establishment of the ward system in these large centres, it seems to me that most communities are asking for the ability to make their own choice.

Now if indeed the government is saying fine, the legislation here that we are proposing will allow communities to choose whether or not they want the ward system; or whether they're going to just say yes,

in certain communities the ward system will now be reinstated and in other communities you had the choice, it would appear to me that possibly the government has failed again to listen to people and listen to a number of people in the communities.

Now when I listened to what was said, it seems to me that a lot of people were indicated . . . as the minister indicated, the statistics will show that many of the people would like a ward system. And there's no doubt, no doubt there's an advantage in having a ward system and allowing for people to vote on the basis of boundaries and maybe have some feeling of being . . . having their councillors more accountable or more accessible.

And I guess the major question that we want to know, is the government allowing, through the Bill, communities to make the final choice whether or not they adopt and design their own ward systems, or is the government going to lay out what they believe is an appropriate ward system for, say, the city of Regina?

I think it would be more appropriate for the council and for people and residents of the city of Regina to decide and design their own ward system and how they plan on implementing it, and even in Saskatoon and even in Prince Albert and Moose Jaw.

And as the minister has indicated in bringing this legislation forward, that it's a process of allowing these communities to develop a system that would be adequate, that would work within the communities, then, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe we really have any problem with the Bill before this Assembly. But we just want to remind the minister, remind the government of the fact that as we introduce legislation into this Assembly at any time that is going to affect people on the outside, let's be careful and make sure that we had indeed allowed them to be the people that implement the changes that will be made in their own communities.

And if indeed that's what the Bill is going to do just by creating the avenue and the ability for communities to do this, then certainly, Mr. Speaker, I don't really have a lot of problems with it. I don't believe my colleagues have as well.

But just to allow for a little more debate, we will . . . I'm going to move adjournment of the debate at this time so that we can look at the Bill and certainly come back having reviewed it more carefully. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 30 — An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to move second reading of Bill No. 30, An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act. This Bill includes companion provisions to the wards provisions in the Bill amending The Urban Municipality Act, 1984.

This Bill now before the House makes some necessary amendments to the local election Act law to permit elections to be held on the basis of wards. The Bill contains two specific amendments. It repeals all provisions that set out election procedures for the split ward/at-large system which will no longer be in use. Previous legislation contemplated a system where half the council would be elected by wards and half from an at-large system. No city in fact used the split system during the years it has existed as an option since 1988.

These election procedures are no longer needed because a companion provision in the amendments to The Urban Municipality Act, 1984, will remove the option to use a split ward/at-large system.

Mr. Speaker, the wards-related provisions of this Bill were referred to the Standing Committee on Municipal Law after second readings when originally introduced. The standing committee found no problems with the Bill; however the earlier Bill died on the order paper when the House prorogued, therefore the provisions are being reintroduced.

Mr. Speaker, we have added one provision to that original Bill. This new feature permits the two cities with populations in excess of 100,000 to delay filling any vacancy that might occur in council until the next regular civic election in 1994.

This is a transitional provision only. It would be costly in these centres to elect a candidate for a by-election from a city at large in this interim period, while the local electoral system is changing over to the ward system.

Each by-election in the two large cities costs about \$100,000. When the ward system comes into effect in Regina and Saskatoon in 1994, this transitional provision will no longer be in effect.

Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of an Act to amend The Local Government Election Act.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I understand the minister correctly, Bill No. 30, basically I understand, goes hand in hand with Bill No. 37, and is addressing some of the questions that were raised regarding the split system that was allowed in the former Bill, and I believe is eliminating that, if I understand, that split system of government was really never used and utilized in the province of Saskatchewan.

And it would appear to me that that is certainly a move well worth taking. As it is not much point in having regulations or points into a Bill that no one is really interested and looking forward at utilizing.

And so in my opinion, I don't think there is a lot here to really dwell or take the time of the Assembly on it at the present time. However I would like to allow the critics the ability to at least peruse the Bill. And therefore I move adjournment of the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 31 — An Act to amend The Heritage Property Act

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Act is to improve the efficiency of The Heritage Property Act, particularly as it relates to the creation and the operation of municipal heritage conservation districts. As well, these amendments clarify the procedures for disposing of heritage property and palaeontology objects.

Finally, changes are proposed which will reduce both the workload and the costs for municipal governments involved in designating heritage property.

With these few comments, Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of Bill No. 31, The Heritage Property Amendment Act, 1993.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few comments regarding The Heritage Property Amendment Act. I believe the Act is indeed allowing for creation of municipal districts, or heritage property districts in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we're all aware of the fact that across this province we have a rich heritage. And many communities, many individuals, have over the period of time, at least the time that I've been involved as an MLA, have come and requested at times assistance and looked towards the government, or looked to the government for some help then in preserving some of that heritage that we have right across this province.

Now as . . . when I look at heritage, and I look at the heritage property we have across the province, I look at some of the old school districts that are still remaining in the province, and some of the health areas and regions, sometimes I wonder, Mr. Speaker, in what people really hope to achieve regarding the establishment of and trying to preserve some of the district, some of the old structures and buildings we have right around this province.

And I think of a community in my area that are looking at restoring an old school. And I've had a number of people have come to me with some major concerns because one of the problems they see happening as we look at maintaining our heritage, by just restoring facilities out in rural areas of this province, facilities that aren't even close to existing farmyards, or farm sites, or communities, and as we just continue to just pour money into municipal heritage and property sites, Mr. Speaker, one has to begin . . . has to ask themselves, is it frugal handling of our financial resources to put funding into facilities and buildings that are far removed from individuals, or communities, or people who would take the time to make sure and maintain the upkeep of these facilities.

And one of the areas that I know, a community that is looking at restoring an old schoolhouse and adding . . .

possibly picking up and bringing the old livery barn back to the school yard, are very concerned about the fact that dollars would be spent in restoring this property and not having anyone there to maintain and to keep track of it, and observe whether or not that property is being looked after, and in some cases, Mr. Speaker, protecting it from vandalism.

And as we look at the municipal districts, as we look at heritage properties across this province, I think, Mr. Speaker, we all have to decide at the end of the day how much . . . how many of these properties, or these old school districts, or whatever people are looking at, old church sites . . . to maintain them in their present format and at the present location, if it would not be more appropriate to recognize some of these areas, say through our museum system that is already in existence across the province and in our communities where people can keep an eye on what has been established and built up.

And I say that, Mr. Speaker, because I'm quite well aware of circumstances where people have gone to a lot of hard work, where government dollars have been spent to restore properties. It's out in a rural area that's not very accessible and yet because no one has been there to oversee and to keep an eye on the property, people have moved in, individuals who maybe haven't had a lot of respect for the work that has gone into restoring of that property and have vandalized it. And a lot of people are saying to me, is that the way we should be using our tax dollars?

(1545)

Now I'm not exactly sure what all The Heritage Property Act has in it, what all it is going to allow for, but it would . . . I think I raised a number of concerns here, just to bring to the minister's attention, that certainly as we get into further reading and debate on this Bill, Mr. Speaker, I think some of my colleagues would also have something they would like to add.

Therefore I move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 34 — An Act to amend The SaskEnergy Act

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to move second reading of An Act to amend The SaskEnergy Act. The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 1993 proposes two changes in The SaskEnergy Act.

Firstly, the proposed amendment to section 12 is necessary to clarify the corporation's position with respect to exposure to liability. The corporation is liable only in the activities causing damage when it's carried out unreasonably, whether the activity occurs during supply, transportation, or distribution of natural gas or whether there is a failure to supply prior to or beyond the point of delivery.

Secondly, the proposed amendment to section 59 of The SaskEnergy Act is necessary to clarify the

corporation's position with respect to payments in lieu of taxes for direct sale customers. The amendment will distinguish the obligation of the corporation regarding direct sale customers and full service customers with respect to payments in lieu of taxes.

Without this amendment the corporation is obligated to make a global payment in lieu of taxes to municipalities regardless of the corporation's ability to collect the surcharge from direct sales customers.

This amendment eliminates difficulties the corporation may encounter in collecting the surcharge for the payment in lieu of taxes from direct sale customers.

The proposed amendment will further empower SaskEnergy to carry out its mandate more effectively for the people of the province. Natural gas will play a key role in fulfilling Saskatchewan's energy needs in an environmentally sound manner. SaskEnergy is ready for that challenge and will be part of the economic solution in revitalizing our province.

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the comments the minister has made regarding the amendments to . . . The SaskEnergy Amendment Act.

First of all, we're all aware in this province and all aware of the liability suits that are taking place and that are coming into play not only in the province of Saskatchewan . . . maybe not as much here as in other jurisdictions. And it is only fair that SaskEnergy certainly look at a way in how it may cover itself to protect itself from any liability suit that may come at it.

And in view of the fact that in delivery of gas to the province of Saskatchewan, whether it's to large businesses or to farm families or to communities, Mr. Speaker, we must be aware of some of the complications that may arise in the delivery system.

And I know that SaskEnergy is doing everything in its power to ensure that the piping is adequately entrenched and that the delivery system has very few, if any, flaws. It's doing everything it can to make sure that gas is delivered effectively, cheaply, and that they're protecting the citizens. But at the same time they want to make sure that they are protecting themselves too in case an accident happens beyond their control, making sure that they are covered off and that they have . . . any liability that would be brought against them is covered off.

And so I think it sounds to me like it was appropriate that section 12 be changed and addressed, also for other sections in the Bill.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague, who has a little more information, would like to add more as we have a greater ability to review the Bill. Therefore at this time I move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 44 — An Act respecting the Inspection of Gas Installations and Gas Equipment

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour today to speak in the Legislative Assembly to several changes that the government is proposing to The Gas Inspection Act of Saskatchewan.

As members know, The Gas Inspection Act outlines the duties and responsibilities of SaskPower's gas inspection division. This government is seeking the approval of the Assembly for changes that will improve The Gas Inspection Act by introducing additional safeguards for public safety in the gas sector. If I may, as minister responsible for SaskPower I would like to highlight a few of the significant changes that the government is proposing in this legislation.

For the first time in this province, propane services will come within the purview of The Gas Inspection Act. Although there has been no legislative authority over propane, the gas inspection division at SaskPower, in conjunction with the industry, has developed and enforced high safety standards for its use.

These amendments will provide the statutory authority to these practices and procedures that have been in place in Saskatchewan for some time. We are proposing amendments to The Gas Inspection Act that will enhance the ability of gas inspectors to carry out their duties to maintain the highest public safety standards.

We are asking this legislature to extend the coverage of The Gas Inspection Act to include the design, manufacture, display, advertising, sale, and use of gas equipment. If these amendments are passed by the Assembly — and I hope they are, Mr. Speaker — a permit will be required before a gas supplier can connect to a gas installation. This is to ensure that the installations have been safely installed.

To further public safety, we are proposing to give gas inspectors the authority to halt construction of a propane container or gas installation if its safety requirements are not being met.

In the interest of public safety in the province, I hope this legislature will approve the amendments before you to The Gas Inspection Act. The proposed amendments that are being considered today will not impose any additional burdens on either industry nor the general public. These amendments, in my judgement and the judgement of the government, will in fact contribute to the comfort and safety of Saskatchewan people.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act to amend The Gas Inspection Act.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Just a couple of comments regarding The Gas Inspection

Act. I think most people of the province will agree that it is important that we have legislation laid out that gives the proper authority for individuals to act as inspectors to properly inspect gas installations around the province, indeed to protect and safeguard the public of Saskatchewan. And no one will question that fact.

In fact most people would feel quite relieved to know that we have a proper inspection authority in place, that we have individuals that are qualified and well trained to take out . . . perform these duties and to indeed inspect the gas hook-ups and delivery of the gas service; not just gas, I understand, propane and any flammable goods, I believe will be covered basically under this Act.

And I believe it's appropriate for the government, for this legislature, to bring in proper amendments to cover all aspects of inspection in the province of Saskatchewan. And I move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 45 — An Act respecting the Inspection of Electrical Equipment, Installations and Materials

Hon. Mr. Anguish: — It's my honour today to speak to the changes that this government is proposing to The Electrical Inspection Act of Saskatchewan. As members know, The Electrical Inspection Act outlines the duties and responsibilities of SaskPower's electrical inspection division.

The government is seeking the approval of the Assembly for changes that will improve The Electrical Inspection Act by introducing additional safeguards for public safety in the electrical sector.

If I may, as minister responsible for SaskPower I would like to highlight a few of the significant changes that we are proposing to the legislature. As I suggested a moment ago, these amendments will enhance the ability of the electrical inspectors to enforce safety standards. We are proposing to give the province's electrical inspectors statutory backing to order the repair of an electric hazard within a reasonable period of time. Public safety must come first.

The proposed changes before us today also clarify the legal circumstances under which electrical permits can be issued and cancelled. Under the new Act the circumstances leading to the cancellation of an electrical permit will be listed.

In the interest of general electrical safety, we hope this legislature will support the changes that will make all electrical equipment subject to inspection.

And through the amendments before us today we are making it possible to prevent the display or advertising of electrical equipment that is neither approved or certified. Here we are taking steps to further protect the public from the purchase of potentially dangerous electrical equipment.

In the interest of electrical safety in our province, I hope that members of the Legislative Assembly will approve the amendments to The Electrical Inspection Act that are under consideration.

These changes, I am pleased to say, will not impose any additional burdens upon either the industry or the general public. In my judgement, Mr. Speaker, these changes will contribute to the comfort and safety of people in the province of Saskatchewan.

I hereby move second reading to an Act to amend The Electrical Inspection Act.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, regarding Bill No. 45, an Act to amend The Electrical Inspection Act, I think as an opposition we are appreciative of the fact that the government is taking the time to review the process of inspection and giving the inspectors the ability to indeed uphold the standards of electrical inspection and electrical installation in the province of Saskatchewan.

I believe the minister made a comment about enhancing the ability of inspectors to force the standards. And one of the areas that I believe as an opposition we will be certainly following up as we take a moment to review the Bill is to indeed make sure that the Bill complies with the rights of the people as well.

And we're not only talking about protecting people and protecting individuals and businesses, but we do not want to just freely pass amendments to a Bill that may indeed give inspectors added abilities to enforce rules and maybe go against the rights of individuals and protection of their property.

I think it's also appropriate that we clarify the issuing of permits to make sure that the inspectors and certainly the electrical contractors of this province fulfil the responsibilities that they have as they are constructing homes and providing services to the people of Saskatchewan — that they are protected, that they are following the standards. And therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1600)

Bill No. 48 — An Act to amend The Police Act, 1990

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Police Amendment Act, 1993. This amending legislation is intended to address certain issues which have arisen in the operation of The Police Act, 1990.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police have indicated that as a matter of policy they will not enter directly into new policing service contracts for policing services with municipalities which have a population of less than 5,000 people. This will not affect municipalities currently contracting for policing

services.

It does, however, necessitate an amendment to the Act to provide that the minister may enter into an agreement with a municipality having a population of 5,000 or less for the services of the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police). This change will facilitate communities with populations of less than 5,000 choosing the option of having the RCMP deliver their policing services.

This is very topical, Mr. Speaker. This amendment is very topical when you consider the situation of the town of Martensville which does have a population of less than 5,000 people which did make a decision the night before last to disband its own police force. And the amendment will make it possible for myself as minister to enter into an arrangement to provide RCMP services to the town of Martensville, and that will be done if this legislation receives the approval of this House.

The Bill also provides for an amendment to the definition of the term municipality to include only northern towns for the purposes of this Act and not northern villages or resorts.

This amendment recognizes the current policing practices in northern Saskatchewan and removes what is an unintended definitional overlap so far as northern communities are concerned. Currently only the communities of La Ronge and Creighton are northern towns which provide policing services. Where in the future, communities express a desire to provide their own policing services, such communities may be added as required.

This Bill also clarifies the relationship between a local municipal police board and its chief of police. The Act is amended to specifically provide that a police chief may be hired pursuant to the terms of a contract directly with the local police board; and to provide that the terms of that contract may displace the statutory, disciplinary, or dismissal procedure in case of termination.

This amendment recognizes the special relationship which a chief of police has with the elected officials of a municipality and allows the terms of a duly negotiated contract to govern where appropriate.

Finally, the Bill amends the process through which the population of a municipality is determined for the purposes of the Act. The change will provide for ministerial discretion to determine the population of a community where that is appropriate. The existing procedure for determining population is somewhat unwieldy in that it relies on the data contained in the *Saskatchewan Municipal Directory* to determine population levels. This process is and will continue to be effective for the majority of communities.

However, where municipalities are close to population break points, additional discretion on behalf of the minister is required to avoid requiring police services to be provided by municipalities that

have dropped below the population of 500, until such time as a municipal directory can be amended. In the interest of fairness this provision will allow for much more timely recognition of sudden population changes or small population shifts which are close to important break points.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act to amend The Police Act, 1990.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister as he was making his comments to the Assembly, talked about the problem that many small communities and municipalities have in trying to acquire RCMP services in their communities, especially for a community that has under 5,000 people or less.

And I guess one of the areas and questions that possibly we'd like to be raising with the minister as we get into committee is when we're talking of communities under 5,000, I wonder are we basically talking of the urban centre, or are we talking of an urban community with a surrounding area of . . . including the rural municipality as well and achieving that 5,000 factor?

Because policing in rural Saskatchewan is a subject that has been of major concern for a period of time, and certainly the minister for municipal government will be quite well aware of it. And it's been a debate that has taken place over the last period of years on a number of concerns that communities have in trying to provide adequate policing to their area, and to their communities, realizing the problems that everyone is finding, as they're confronted with a greater burden of some of the costs.

And I'm pleased to see that, even as I noted on the news last night, certainly the town of Martensville has now entered into a working relationship with the RCMP due to some of the problems that were created in circumstances that we're quite well aware of that have arisen, and possibly a lack of trust in some of the people that had responsibility.

And I think it's appropriate, in view of the fact that the tradition of the RCMP in this country and in this province, has been one of great respect. People have shown respect. They respect the RCMP for the police services they provide.

And I believe it's also appropriate that the minister is given the ability to offer the town of Martensville a working arrangement, or a way in which they can work together with the RCMP to provide adequate policing services, and at the same time to build up a relationship of trust as well again with police services across not only our province, but certainly in North America.

Mr. Speaker, I really don't at the present time see a lot in this Bill that we would be opposed to, other than a few minor questions. However I would just like to take a moment to peruse the Bill. And therefore at this time, I move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 49 — An Act respecting Correctional Services

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Correctional Services Act.

The existing corrections Act has been in place since 1967, and has not undergone significant amendments since 1973. The time has come to implement new legislation which will update the existing Act and allow for future improvements in the delivery of correctional services.

The Correctional Services Act provides a framework for the delivery of correctional services to offenders who are serving sentences within the community; for example, persons placed on probation by the court. The Act also provides for the delivery of services to individuals who have been sentenced to a period of incarceration of less than two years, or who are incarcerated for a provincial offence.

Mr. Speaker, in general terms this new legislation focuses on programs which seek to reintegrate offenders into the community as law-abiding citizens. This intention reflects a change of emphasis between institutional and community-based correctional programs.

Whereas in the past corrections legislation was structured around institutional custody, the new Act will allow for stronger and more effective cooperative community-based programs. The institutional programs will of course continue for those offenders who must be incarcerated for reasons of public protection and for general deterrence.

With respect to community-based correctional programs, this legislation allows local community organizations to have greater opportunity to participate in the design and delivery of correctional service programs in order to ensure those programs are relevant to local community needs and conditions.

In more specific terms, this Bill will further facilitate agreements between the province and individual persons, agencies, or organizations to assist in research, development, and improved delivery of correctional services.

Currently the Gabriel Dumont Institute is operating a community training residence in Saskatoon for incarcerated women. And it is hoped this type of cooperative delivery of correctional services can be expanded.

The legislation also provides for a greater role for volunteers in the delivery of correctional services. For example, a volunteer could be used to assume temporary custody of an inmate to escort that inmate to a funeral or to participate in a rehabilitation

program offered in the community. In addition, it is hoped that volunteers can be used to participate more broadly in the development of sentencing alternatives.

This Act will provide for more flexibility in funding arrangements in the delivery of correctional programs. This will allow correctional services to enter partnerships with communities and to share scarce resources. One example of this type of program is the community development worker who is currently hired and paid for between the Prince Albert Tribal Council and the corrections branch of the Department of Justice.

A further amendment provides for the transfer of the legislative provisions regarding probation and other community correctional programs from The Summary Offences Procedure Act, 1990 to the correctional services Act.

This Act also sets out formal recognition of the highly successful prison industries program. Prison industries programs recognize the shared responsibility of government and the business community to provide productive work experiences for inmates seeking to re-enter society.

Mr. Speaker, this Act also legislates a mandate for greater emphasis on the pre-release preparation of inmates who have higher rehabilitation needs. Through community training residences and reduced custody programs, inmates will have an ability to learn to successfully perform practical tasks under a 24-hour-per-day supervision by staff prior to actual release.

A further example of innovation in correctional services are amendments that will allow correctional officials to require the electronic monitoring of an inmate as a condition of an authorized absence from a correctional facility. Through fostering a better balance between institutional and community corrections programs, we believe that inmates can be released with increased opportunity for reintegration into the community.

Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the dual responsibility it bears to ensure the protection of the general public and to provide a reasonable opportunity for rehabilitation to each inmate. This legislation strikes a balance between community and institutional-based delivery of correctional services in an effort to better achieve this dual responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act respecting Correctional Services.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to rise on this Bill today. Changes to the correction services, Mr. Speaker, are indeed important, and since they have not been looked at since 1973, perhaps it is indeed time that we do take a look at them because people in the public do have a concern as to how the people, the inmates within our systems are treated, how they are released, and under

what kind of supervisions do they come out of those facilities and what impact does that have on the community.

There is a concern, Mr. Speaker, about those that have violent histories and those that are a danger to society, and in what kind of times do they get out of our institutions and how are they assessed before they leave that institution. And perhaps the minister is planning on having a look at that.

I believe that the community input that he has talked about, that those are part of the things that should be discussed with the communities.

We do have one concern, Mr. Speaker, as to the cost of the research that he has talked about. What kind of research is going to be done at what kind of a cost? That is one of those items that needs to be reviewed, Mr. Speaker. The idea of using volunteers within the corrections system does have a significant amount of merit, Mr. Speaker, and that is one of the areas that I believe that there could be some cost savings and could be some integration of the community and those that are incarcerated.

(1615)

One of the ideas that the minister mentioned was flexibility of funding, of using communities to provide some of that flexibility of funding. If the minister is talking of using those which have caused some problems within society, using them within the community to provide some work programs, then, Mr. Speaker, that is a good idea. This would allow those people to maintain some skills or learn some skills which would have some application once they were no longer wards of the state. It would also provide some benefit for those communities that would have the opportunities to utilize them.

Down at Moose Mountain Provincial Park over the years, Mr. Speaker, there has been a program there of using those that are short-term residents, guests of the province, to provide some of the services within the park, and it has proven out to be a very worthwhile program for the park and for those which are given that opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

The critic, I'm sure, would like to have the opportunity to debate this Bill with the minister. Therefore I would move that Bill 49 now be adjourned.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 14

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Mitchell that **Bill No. 14 — An Act to amend the Statute Law** be now read a second time.

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

Bill No. 15

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Mitchell that **Bill No. 15 — An Act to amend The Limitation of Actions Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments regarding this Act prior to allowing it to proceed to committee.

As I review the Act and as I look over some of the areas that the Act is addressing regarding limitations of actions that can be taken and the fact of opening up a period of time which a person could bring forward actions against an individual or individuals that they feel may have certainly abused their rights and privileges, and especially as young children, it would appear to me that some of the major concerns we have in our society today is the accessibility or the ease in which accusations can be brought forward. And the fact that we do not seem to have a system in place that protects an individual until . . . our laws basically say that individuals are innocent until proven guilty.

But when we look at child abuse and we look at sexual abuse situations that arise, and certainly we don't take them lightly and we do not want to take lightly at any time the suggestion by an individual or the accusation by a person, be they young or old or be they male or female or whatever the terms are, Mr. Speaker, we do not want to take lightly the fact that someone would suggest that their rights as an individual, maybe that they were taken advantage of.

And as the minister has indicated, the fact of setting time limits may not be appropriate, especially in view of the fact that it's very difficult for an individual to really determine whether or not their rights were interfered with.

It's hard for a child who maybe has a lot of respect and love for a parent or an adult. And in a lot of cases some of the child abuse cases that arise up before us happen to take place amongst or between people and individuals that that child knows, and it's hard for them to determine exactly whether their rights were offended.

And therefore I can see why the Act would allow for a greater time, wouldn't place a limitation on the process, so that if down the road and later time in life when a person is maybe facing some other problems and going through therapy recalls some act of childhood that had taken place, it indeed gives that individual the opportunity to at least go back. Because in the healing process sometimes it's a matter of getting some of the long-term matters out of the way, and addressed.

But I would also like to suggest that I think it's

appropriate that our system of democracy should allow for people to speak up freely even as quickly as possible, as well as recognizing the fact that any time an individual is maybe accused of a crime or accused of an indecency, that their rights are protected. And we all know the difficulties that creates, especially in situations of child abuse or sexual abuse or spousal abuse.

Certainly the public in general, if a person is challenged and an accusation is brought against an individual, even the neighbours find it very difficult to accept that individual as a person who is having not overly taking advantage of the situation, and they begin to question whether or not that individual rights are protected. And a lot of times young children or women or other individuals in society can be shunned by their community.

And very recently — I believe it was just the other day — I just read an article in one of our . . . a community in this province where an accusation was brought by a young teenager against a very well-respected individual.

And what happened, it basically split the community because it was hard for people in the community to really determine whether or not that individual could have interfered with the rights of that teenage girl in imposing his will or his way on that girl. While at the same time, other individuals in the community were wondering if the girl was not using her position to try and get some public exposure.

And I think we must be very careful when we're looking at this. Number one, Mr. Speaker, we must be sure that we protect the rights of the innocent, but at the same time, Mr. Speaker, we must be very cognizant that we give people the ability to raise questions and accusations and come forward to public officials to make sure that their rights are not interfered with.

And the fact of extending the limitation period, I'm not exactly sure how effective it will be in the long run or if indeed at the end of the day we are going to stir up, if you will, old wounds that may in the long term prove to be . . . accusations that are brought up say 20 or 30 years down the road. We may run into situations where at the end of the day a person's livelihood is put on the line, their ability to work with people is put on the line, simply because 30 years ago someone may have determined all of a sudden that an action was not appropriate. And I think that it would be only fair, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when we amend the limitation Act and extend limitations, that there are safeguards to protect individuals all along the way.

And knowing the minister responsible for Justice, I'm sure that the minister has probably addressed some of these concerns already, but I think there are some questions that we can get into. And we'll allow the minister to give his assurances that as we open the doors and extend the limitation period, that some of the areas and concerns that I've raised at this point have been addressed, have been dealt with, so that the

rights of individuals from the accused to the accuser are protected so that at the end of the day people are treated fairly.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I'll allow this Bill to go 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. 18

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Mitchell that **Bill No. 18 — An Act to amend The Victims of Crime Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a couple of comments. I believe this Bill allows for “. . . the one-year period mentioned in subsection (2) begins to run when the victim understands the nature of the injuries and recognizes the effects of the misconduct”.

And what it does is extends the time period for a victim to make claims. And I really don't see a lot of problems with this Bill, Mr. Speaker, and I'll therefore allow the Bill to 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. 16

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Mitchell that **Bill No. 16 — An Act respecting the Interpretation of Enactments and prescribing Rules Governing Acts** be now read a second time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This Act deals with a number of different issues, one of which is the times set out in an Act for certain things to happen. And when that time falls on a statutory holiday, Mr. Speaker, then the Act moves the action required on that particular day to the next day which is not a statutory holiday. It also extends it to the next working day.

Mr. Speaker, I would contend that this should also apply to Crown corporations actions. What I'm particularly thinking about here is SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), as an example. People's licences run out on the last day of a particular month. At times that time frame runs out during the weekend when SGI offices are not open to renew your licence or on a statutory holiday. That time frame should be moved back to the next business day to allow those people who are affected by that time frame running out to have access to fulfil the business necessary.

It also deals with concerns of liabilities of officers and directors of Crown corporations. And this may have a large impact on the business community of this province, Mr. Speaker, so this needs to be reviewed.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we should take a look at that and delve into it more deeply to find out what the implications are going to be to those people who may be affected by this.

But at the present time, Mr. Speaker, we feel that these kinds of questions, these kinds of concerns, can be brought up to the minister in committee. Therefore we're prepared to allow this Bill to go 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. 17

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Mitchell that **Bill No. 17 — An Act to amend The Fatal Accidents Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the questions that we have on this Act we certainly can address in committee. So therefore I'm prepared at this time to allow the Bill to move to committee.

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

(1630)

Bill No. 19

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Mitchell that **Bill No. 19 — An Act respecting Survivorship** be now read a second time.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm sure this Act is an area that a lot of people probably have some questions on and some concerns about. It's an Act that addresses the fact of survivorship, and one of the things over the past number of years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think most people have been very concerned about . . . and we're all aware of the fact that accidents do happen and can happen and they're not intended to happen — but I'm sure many people have wondered at the time when an accident takes place and say a husband and wife involved in that accident are both killed, it's very difficult to determine whether or not . . . which person survived or was the last person to die in the accident. I think that we've always taken for granted that it's the female person who possibly died after the husband.

And there's always been a question. There's been a question over the years as to survivorship and who the inheritance would go to. And in today's society many people are quite concerned about the relationships and about where inheritance should go. Unfortunately a lot of people today have always believed, and maybe there's many people in this Assembly as well who seem to think that at a young age, why should we even think about whether we should be planning wills or whether we should be worried about survivorship or inheritances.

And what the Bill does with this Act here is just lays out the definition of the survivor and tries to determine the whole process of where . . . who the survivor is and how they should be treated and tries to address some of the concerns we have there. A lot of the concerns aren't that great and therefore I'll allow the Bill to 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. 32

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Mitchell that **Bill No. 32 — An Act to amend The Family Maintenance Act** by now read a second time.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I guess one of the major concerns that many people have today, especially when we look at the breakdown of the family, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is how people are taken care of and especially how children are taken care of. And one of the major areas that always comes across my desk is specifically, say, the wife in a relationship where it has broken down and where the courts have awarded compensation or were awarded a monthly sum to be paid for maintenance of children, many times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we find many women find it difficult to get access to these funds and to even allow for or have the funds transferred to their accounts and to maintain and look after their children.

And I believe it's appropriate that the government look at ways in which it can follow up. And we've certainly over the past number of years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, governments of the day have brought forward pieces of legislation that have made it easier for individuals and courts to follow through and make sure that indeed people who are becoming delinquent in their accounts are indeed carrying out their responsibility or whether it be fathers.

So we also are aware of the fact that we need to have reasonable child support available for individuals because in our society it's difficult for especially single mothers to raise a family and even try to find a substantive job to maintain a home, to clothe and feed their children, and provide the home environment for that family. And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I review the Bill, I believe what it does is addresses reasonable child support and how it should maintain and be offered to individuals.

Another thing that I think is very important, another area of concern that is raised in separation, the separation process, is access to the children. And, Mr. Speaker, certainly I think most of us would feel it would be much greater if families and couples would look at a way of possibly maintaining a relationship rather than taking the route of separating, then trying to decide, divide up the spoils, and also have access to children and whether they have received fair access or not.

And I think it's important that we raise this question, that we make sure that there is fair access, that the husband has equal access to his children, to spend some time with them, just as much as the wife.

And therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are a few things that we wanted to just have clarified by the minister as we get into committee. And therefore I'll move that this Bill 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. 6

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter that **Bill No. 6 — An Act to amend The Prairie and Forest Fires Act, 1982** be now read a second time.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have been reviewing the Act on The Prairie and Forest Fires Act, and while it will be our intention of course to allow this to go into committee, we do have some concerns that we want to discuss in order to provide the minister and his deputies the opportunity to search out the answers so that when we do get into the committee, they can facilitate us with the things that we need to know in order to show us that in fact this Act, amendment to the Act, will provide for the people of the province a better working tool.

In the explanation we have some concern, as we have with other Bills, Mr. Speaker, about the somewhat subtle move in the Bill to get more power for the minister. Now we understand that it's important for ministers to have the power to make regulations and rules work in the province, but there is always, it seems, built into each one of these Acts a few lines that gives the minister extreme power. And we worry about this. It seems to be a trend.

And I'm sure the people of Saskatchewan want our province to work and operate in a fair and reasonable way without unnecessary halts or obstructions, but at the same time to provide ministers with more power than they need seems to take away a lot of the rights of the people in a democracy.

And I'll just want to read the explanation part of this Bill so that the folks will know exactly what they're dealing with. It says the proposed changes will correct a drafting deficiency in the Act. Normally definitions are merely used to define the meaning of specified terms and are not used to make a substantive law. However the definition of burning permit area in The Prairie and Forest Fires Act, 1982 purports to give the minister authority to expand the burning permit area.

This is more than defining the term and involves substantive law. Consequently it is recommended that an additional section be added to the Act to give the minister clear authority to expand the burning permit area rather than relying on the purported authority

provided in the definition.

Now it's obvious, Mr. Speaker, that when you have a fire situation, people do have to have the authority to do what's necessary in order to contain a fire. And we're not saying that in this case it would be altogether bad to expand this, but what we're saying is we want everybody to clearly examine all areas in every Bill where ministers' powers are being expanded.

Because we have the feeling that, as I mentioned before, that this subtle move to giving more and more power to ministers is actually creating a situation where we're losing our democracy and our freedom to challenge the rights of the ministers. And it's extremely difficult once it's set into law to ever change these kinds of directions of power. So we want folks to be aware that this subtle move is again in this Bill. We've seen it in just about every other Bill, and we really are concerned about this movement throughout the entire tenure of this administration.

Now I'm also concerned with the implications that are in the explanation on section 6, this section of the Bill. The Prairie and Forest Fires Act has an existing provision — 13.1, 13.2, and 13.3. I think I'll just read the explanation part because we don't want to get into the whole thing, but so people will understand where my argument is coming from. The existing provision is based on the compulsory conscription, which means that individuals can be forced to fight forest fires against their will. Now because the Act does not specify the circumstances under which compulsory conscription is available — i.e., emergencies, etc. — the section is almost certainly contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Now I'm not sure if that's reality or not, Mr. Speaker. Who am I to say what the Charter of Rights and Freedoms would be interpreted as by the Supreme Court justices if they were put to the test? However I'm prepared to accept the fact that possibly there could be a problem there.

So what it says that even if the authority for the compulsory conscription were limited to emergency situations — for example, involving potential loss of life or property — it is uncertain whether such a provision could be demonstrably justified under the charter. Well I suspect that . . . when I read that, the first impression that came to my mind, Mr. Speaker, was that if life and limb of people are at stake, I'd really doubt if judges, even at the Supreme Court level, would say, no you don't have to be there, you don't have to help these folks. Somehow I think that in our country we believe that if you can help somebody that needs help, you've got to do that.

I know that there are laws if you run away from an accident and don't help an accident victim on a road, if you hit and run somebody and don't help them, there are laws that say you have to help. So I'm wondering if the rationale is totally there.

However they do go on to explain why they think they

can get around this, and I'll read it to be fair. It says: however in truth, compulsory conscription is no longer used in northern forest fighting practices.

Now I suspect that for the most part, that's true. But I suspect there's also a chance you might have an exception. You might have an exception where you do have a fire and you don't have anybody professional around, and you may have to ask some local folks to get in there and do the job.

If you, in law, prohibit the minister and his authorities from being able to commandeer those people to do the job, I wonder if you're really serving the best interests of society, because there's always an exception to every rule. And in the mainstream, I'm quite sure that as this explanation goes on, Mr. Speaker, I'm quite sure that for the most part it is accurate. But there are these exceptions that worry us.

Now it says, as it goes on here: fire-fighters, including conscripted fire-fighters, are usually trained and experienced individuals who voluntarily provide their services to the department.

And that's true. And I think it has to be that way. No question about the fact that you don't want somebody that doesn't know how to fight a fire getting caught in a backdraft or something like that. And I think most of us have had some experience with fire as kids, and one thing and another. We've all probably tried the trick of throwing a little bit of gasoline on a fire and watched how it can explode and blow up in your face kind of a thing. And we've all learned our lesson very well that you don't fool with that kind of stuff without knowing what you're doing.

So the idea that you're going to mostly be using trained professionals is a good one, and it's a fact of life. But there are always these exceptions, and to sort of hamstringing the minister and his people in this area by not allowing them the opportunity to bring in people in an emergency has me worried.

Fire is something that I've had a little experience with, not as much as a fire chief or people that fight fires, but I've had occasion to have a little fire on my farm and I know that if you don't get it under control within the first two or three minutes, then it becomes a really difficult situation to get under control.

I think forest fires and fires on prairies are probably very much similar. If you can contain them when they're small or before the wind catches them and whips them up, you probably have a pretty good chance of saving a lot of trouble. If you can commandeer a little bit of help very quickly, then you have no problem with it. So we're worried about this idea.

We also wonder, as I read through the rest of this, and I don't want to read any more of it, Mr. Speaker, because the day is getting on and I want to get on with the business of the House, but I have a concern that we may be heading in the direction with the bottom part of this explanation to providing a situation where

the workers in the fire fighting crews might, by necessity then, have to become union workers. And we could end up finding ourselves in some serious problems in that area.

(1645)

If we find ourselves in a situation where only union workers then would be allowed to fight fires, we would even hamstringing the minister and his authorities beneath him a lot further. And I think we have to be careful of that. I have nothing against the unions bargaining for negotiations of salaries and things, but I would have a lot of trouble if we ran into a situation where we had supposedly a strike or something like that and we couldn't fight the fires because of that kind of a problem.

So I'm cautioning the government not to put themselves into a corner here with this legislation. Having the unions put into a position where they might be put in a corner would also be bad for them.

So we have a lot of serious concerns about this Bill, but we do want to move it on to committee and we do want the minister to know that we will be going into some depth on it when the time comes. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Bill No. 21

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter that **Bill No. 21 — An Act to amend The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here we have an amendment to a Bill, and I think for the most part again it's meant in a positive vein.

We like the concept, obviously. I'm sure that anyone who realizes which side of the House we sit on would have to understand that any kind of a program that helps people to invest in the very business that their job is connected to has to be a positive factor in our view.

The amendments of course though do go into some areas that are going to need some discussion and they're going to need some questions answered to make sure that we don't wreck what is already a very good idea. We want this to be encouraged; we want it to be developed.

We want people to know in our province that they will be rewarded for extra efforts. And when you go to the extra effort of getting your colleagues together and forming a group that's willing to not only do the manual labour of a business but you're willing to do all of the other work of marketing and manufacturing and building and creating that you should be

rewarded for it. And we want to be sure that that reward is not taken away from the folks through amendments.

If people are going to go to this kind of trouble and they're going to set things up to make things work — we can use the brewery in Saskatoon as an example — we'd hate to see that legislation somehow affect the way that they're able to succeed.

So we want to go through this very carefully, Minister. We want to check this out as we go. We want things like the amendment that permits a type A corporation to raise capital from individual residents in Saskatchewan as opposed to only those who are employed by an employer having five or more employees . . . we want that kind of thing checked out very carefully as we go here because obviously when we start spreading the ability of ownership in these kinds of venture capital corporations, we start spreading the ownership . . . if we spread that ownership too thin, it may very well happen that the people who started the thing might not be in control after awhile.

I know that the members opposite would not want to have that happen because they believe in the workers having control of their own destiny. And we believe in that too and we don't want it spread too thin. I would hate to see a lot of these shares end up offered for sale. To be quite honest with you, in spite of the fact, member, in spite of the fact that I'm on this side of the House with this opposition, I wouldn't want to see these shares sold in New York or Hong Kong to somebody else. I want these kind of venture programs to stay in Saskatchewan for Saskatchewan workers and Saskatchewan people. So that worries me a little bit.

And just . . . we'll hurry right on. I had a couple of more points. So long as the control and the ownership remains with Saskatchewan people, is the note I have written here, and we don't shift away from our community too far. To say we'll let it expand within the province is okay, but once we start to expand it we've got to be really careful that we don't turn the whole thing loose and end up losing the whole effect of what we're trying to accomplish, which is to have workers owning and controlling their businesses within Saskatchewan and have that pride and the profit that goes with it.

We have a restriction being removed of \$5 million in the existing provisions; that too needs to be carefully examined. I know that a lot of people say that big is better but the reality is that if we let things get too big, sometimes we go so hard after efficiency that we lose our job-creating potential.

And even though I'm a Conservative, I want you to know that we're concerned about trying to save extra jobs in this province right now because we're in that kind of a turn in the cycle of our economy where we have to create jobs and get more job base. And so we want to be careful that we don't destroy that potential in this whole process as we go through these

amendments. So I hope government will take a look at that and resolve it.

The sections here, 4(e), (f), and on, all deal with RRSPs (registered retirement savings plan) and the ability to invest money through your RRSPs into these kind of programs. I think that's excellent. I think the government is bang dead right on here, and I give them a pat on the back for getting into this area of allowing people to invest their RRSPs at home here in the province through this process.

Let's be careful, though, that we set it up so that it is fair, so that it works well and all those kinds of things, and we'll do that in Committee of the Whole.

I wanted to mention the 4(j) here. It says this amendment permits early redemption of shares of type A corporation prior to the five-year holding period if the tax credits are repaid.

Now we've got to be really careful, Mr. Speaker, when we do this kind of thing because you can, if you allow people to bail out of a contract on an investment, while it's nice for the investor to have that freedom and that latitude, it also can put a corporation into serious financial trouble if people bail out at the wrong time.

So if you have too many people bailing out all of a sudden, you can leave a corporation or a small company that's been formed into a cash-strapped situation where they have no cash flow in fact and they'd have to go and borrow a bunch of money. It could break them. So we have to be careful that we don't let people bail out of contracts too quickly. So let's be careful of that. Let's take another look at how it's going to work. Let's look at the other provisions in this. We're talking about risk capital under number 7. And we have to be careful of how we define that and how far we let those things go. And we want the minister to know that we're going to question these things very carefully.

The one last explanation I want cover here is this amendment permits the RRSPs of an eligible investor to purchase shares of the labour-sponsored venture capital corporation directly while allowing the tax credit to be issued to the individual. I have to admit that I'm not quite sure what that is and I want the minister to be sure that he explains that to us when we get there because we have to know and understand what's going on before we can support you completely. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

The Assembly adjourned at 4:53 p.m.