

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again on behalf of gravely concerned citizens from the province of Saskatchewan with respect to the Plains Health Centre. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

These people that have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Moose Jaw, from Regina, from Morse, and virtually all of southern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition signed by concerned citizens all throughout southern Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition, most of them I see are from Moose Jaw; many from the Holdfast area; many in Assiniboia; Regina; and obviously from Regina Albert South constituency. Thank you.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan again regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Regina; they're from Moose Jaw; they're from North Battleford; they're from Battleford as well; Mr. Speaker. They're from all throughout Saskatchewan, and they're quite concerned on this matter. Thank you.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also present petitions and the names throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, are from numerous communities throughout southern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of people of Saskatchewan in regard to the

Crown Construction Tendering Agreement. The prayers reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

We your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to: (1) rescind the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement and especially its mandatory union hiring hall formula; (2) prohibit the expansion of this Crown Construction Tendering Agreement or other like agreements to other Saskatchewan Crown corporations or to other government departments and construction projects; and (3) prohibit the expansion of this agreement or other like agreements to other government-funded construction projects with local health districts, school boards, municipal governments, or other venture partners with the Saskatchewan government.

The petitioners are primarily from the Kindersley area, and I would like to table that.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today to present petitions of names from throughout Saskatchewan regarding the Plains Health Centre. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

The people that have signed the petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Regina, North Battleford, Delmus, Battleford, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Marquis, just to name a few.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning I'd like to add about another 500 names to the list of petitioners that I presented the other day with regards to the Cypress Lodge kitchen being moved to the Maple Creek Hospital kitchen, a local issue, and I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to halt this absurd proposal before it is implemented.

And of course these mostly come from the local area of Maple Creek and the surrounding community.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition from the people from Lloydminster, and I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to reverse the decision to raise SaskPower rates and freeze any further utility rates until a three-party utility review committee is in place in order to debate, review, and revise any utility rate increases in the future in order to restore fairness to the utility rate process in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Thank you.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received.

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to reverse the decision to raise SaskPower rates;

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to immediately repeal the Crown Construction Tendering Agreement;

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to allocate adequate funding to the double-laning of Highway 1; and

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to reconsider closure of the Plains Health Centre.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice I shall on Tuesday next move first reading of Bill to deal with the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) pay increase. The short title is An Act Ordering Implementation Negated by the Crown, but we prefer to refer to it by its initials, OINC. We feel OINC is an appropriate name for this Bill because the Premier and his colleagues have been squealing like pigs ever since we first raised this issue.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now the member knows that it's not in order to engage in debate when introducing the Bill.

Mr. McPherson: — Notice of questions, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Friday next ask the government the following question:

Regarding SaskPower Commercial: (1) how much was spent on travel and air fare expenses out of the country since the inception of the company; (2) how much was spent on lodging, meals, entertainment by SaskPower Commercial employees on company business since its inception of the company?

And I give notice that I shall on Monday next ask the government the following question:

Regarding SaskPower: (1) how many industrial class customers have negotiated rate reductions with the company since the government allowed it to go ahead with power rate increases on January 1 of this year; (2) what was the total value of those rate reductions?

Thank you.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Friday next ask the government the following question:

Regarding Mr. Donald Ching's service as a director of SaskTel subsidiaries, LCL Cable and the East Midlands

Cable Group of the United Kingdom: (1) did Mr. Ching receive all of the 25,000 pounds sterling that was annually paid to SaskTel by LCL or the East Midlands Cable Group for his services as a director; (2) if Mr. Ching received only a portion of this money, what was the specific annual amount; (3) how much did Mr. Ching receive for travelling and lodging expenses incurred in serving as a director while SaskTel owned the company; (4) were the fees or expenses paid done so on top or as a part of his base salary as CEO of the Crown Investments Corporation; (5) was Mr. Ching appointed to this position by his own authority as CEO of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) or was he appointed on the authority of someone else; (6) if so, what person made this appointment?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly 10 students from Scott Collegiate who are with us here today. They're grade 9 students and are seated up in your gallery, and I want to welcome them here today. With them is their teacher, Sandra Bellegarde, and chaperon Brad Cyr. I know I look forward to meeting with you after and the discussion we'll have, but first of all, we'll probably wait and watch a lively question period before we meet for a drink. Thanks.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Johnson: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly eight individuals from the Duck Lake area who are seated in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker. They are taking adult basic education and are here to view the activities of the Assembly.

They are accompanied by two teachers, Pat Soiseth and Terry Booker. I'm not sure whether they are with them now or not; I don't count 10 up in the gallery. I would ask everyone in the Assembly to welcome them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the east gallery is a dear friend, Lou Coderre. Yesterday afternoon we honoured his uncle, Lionel Coderre, and it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly a gentleman from Wynyard, Saskatchewan, who is a principal, quite a striking entrepreneur, and a gentleman who has run for the Saskatchewan Liberal Party as a candidate, a very committed Saskatchewan person. Please join with me in welcoming him here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Condolences

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always sad when

someone is killed in a traffic accident, and it's even more tragic when that person is in the prime of his life. Such is the case with Jeff Mengel. I'm sorry to report he tragically lost his life in an accident on Saturday. I would ask that our sympathies from this Assembly go out to the Mengel family of Holdfast and ask that the MLA from Arm River pass along those sympathies to the Mengels, as friends and constituents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

St. Patrick's Day

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Around the year 1647, Oliver Cromwell, the right-wing totalitarian Newt Gingrich of the day, kicked a number of troublemakers out of England into Ireland. Among those troublemakers asking for a fair distribution of the nation's wealth were the Mulhollands, a family on my father's side. That was the day I became a member of the NDP (New Democratic Party), Mr. Speaker.

My Irish ancestors came to Canada along with thousands of other Irish, Scots, and English in a major wave of immigration that eventually changed Canada from a colony into a country, which is a long way around of saying that Sunday is St. Patrick's Day, the national day of Ireland and the day people everywhere wish they had my legitimate claim to Irish roots.

Interestingly, the day is more celebrated here than in Ireland, probably because the Irish in North America, like other peoples from other cultures, have suffered discrimination and therefore have a need to celebrate their uniqueness in the face of hostility.

Today that hostility is gone, but we still celebrate the Irish legacy which has enriched our society — their wit, their brilliant and playful use of the language, their song and dance, and their legends.

One legend says that St. Patrick himself suggested that at his death, to alleviate their sorrow, all Irish should take a small drop of something. So on St. Pat's Day, I invite all of us to do the rounds and "wet the shamrock". Erin go bragh.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Signing of Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement

Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of informing the House this morning of the signing of a Treaty Land Entitlement Settlement Agreement, which took place yesterday at the Cowessess First Nation.

On behalf of the province, the Hon. Joanne Crofford, Minister of Indian and Metis Affairs, signed an agreement with Chief Lionel Sparvier of the Cowessess First Nation, and the Hon. Ron Irwin, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Over its 12-year life the agreement will provide just over 46.5 million to the Cowessess First Nation, to purchase between 53,000 and 189,000 acres of land. In addition, once these purchases are concluded, the Cowessess First Nation may use

the remaining resources for economic development purposes. This agreement fulfils the obligation entered into in Treaty 4 in September 1874. This signing concludes a cooperative process among the provincial government, Saskatchewan first nations, and the federal government to fulfil the 120-year-old treaty obligation.

As with the Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement signed in 1992 with 26 first nations, this settlement allows for the Cowessess First Nation to purchase land from willing sellers. This agreement fulfils provincial obligations and, perhaps more importantly, it provides the Cowessess First Nation with the resources necessary for future economic development that will benefit all of the people of Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before proceeding to the next private members' statement, I do want to remind all members that it is improper to use proper names of members who are seated in this House, and that applies as well to private members' statements.

Saskatchewan Herb and Spice Association

Mr. Flavel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't often get a chance to spice up debate in this House, but today I will.

Some innovative and entrepreneurial farmers in this province are developing a new export industry. They are growing herbs and spices and marketing them to Asia. Now this may sound like selling cedars to Lebanon or deep freezes to the North Pole, but Saskatchewan herbs are in demand.

Brian Petracek, a producer near Gerald, Saskatchewan, has been growing spices and herbs for about nine years. He has seen the Saskatchewan Herb and Spice Association grow from 35 to 275 members in the last few years, and he believes the industry is taking off.

Saskatchewan herbs and spices are growing in demand because this market values natural products, and Saskatchewan is unpolluted compared to other places. Our climate is conducive to high quality products; the bacteria and fungal count is considerably lower than in European countries. Buyers of these products are willing to pay for quality. It is estimated that the herbs and spices could be a \$100 million industry for Saskatchewan within a decade.

I commend Mr. Brian Petracek and others in the Saskatchewan Herb and Spice Association who see a valuable opportunity. They are sharing their knowledge with others in order to build up this new industry, and spicing up our economy in the process.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Maintenance Enforcement Program

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Justice minister announced a new maintenance enforcement program that will improve client access to information. He explained that the new 24-hour access line will make it easier for clients to receive updates on their own files and to receive general information about the program.

I'm extremely pleased that there is now a better mechanism in place to help Saskatchewan families relying on maintenance support. This system will make it easier to collect defunct payments and will in turn save Saskatchewan children from being punished by default payments. According to the minister, since the maintenance enforcement office opened 10 years ago, the default rate has been cut by 60 per cent. And I hope that this program will reduce default payments even more. Today I would ask the other members of this House to join me in recognizing the federal government for funding this important program solely for Saskatchewan families.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Charity Auction in Lloydminster

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again the proceeds from an important auction in Lloydminster will be going to a good cause. Beginning at 4 o'clock tomorrow afternoon, the mid-west all-breed stallion service charity auction will begin at the Dick Jones pavilion. The money raised at the event will be donated to a local women's shelter, Lloyd Interval Home. Last year the auction raised \$5,400 for the Big Sisters and Big Brothers organization of Lloydminster.

Sixteen stallions in 10 breeds will be on the auction block tomorrow, plus a painting from a local artist, Nola Buzuk. Some of the breeds up for auction include Standardbred, Appaloosa, Thoroughbred, Arabian, Quarter Horse, miniature, and hackney ponies. Mr. Speaker, these kinds of events demonstrate the values we cherish here in Saskatchewan — cooperation and caring to those in need.

Congratulations to all the organizers of the charity auction and a big thank-you to the individuals and groups who have donated their time and energy to help others. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Balanced Budget in Prince Edward Island

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like the House to commend the Liberal government of Prince Edward Island for having their second balanced budget in a row, as I see in the *Leader-Post* of today, Mr. Speaker.

It is a positive budget, as we see it. There are surpluses again. And in fact they've done this without having tax increases, and they have in this budget had education increases, school increases, hospital increases. And I just at the same time would like to note that in fact while they were doing this, there was a great job creation program on the way. And I won't quote the

article, but I hope all members do read it today. And also in the article, it makes mention that some of this was achieved by working in cooperation with unions, Mr. Speaker, not in providing preference policies.

And I want to congratulate the Premier, the Liberal Premier, Catherine Callbeck, a good friend of mine; and a very good and close personal friend of mine, Mr. Lynwood MacPherson, also a Liberal MLA from the province of PEI (Prince Edward Island) and thank him for the MacPherson plaid tie that he sent me recently and a nice letter from Catherine to my family.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mine Safety Award Presented to Tyson Mining Corporation

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back here in Saskatchewan, I'm pleased to report that as a former safety officer and as a former miner, I know the importance of workplace safety. One only has to look at the workers' compensation records or the Westray mine disaster to have that point made bluntly.

We all know that the potash industry is doing very well in Saskatchewan. It is also winning awards for safety in the workplace. Yesterday the Hon. Minister of Labour was present for a special award ceremony in Esterhazy. Congratulations are in order for Tyson Mining Corporation, which operates at the IMC (International Minerals and Chemical Corporation (Canada) Ltd.) K2 potash mine at Esterhazy, for being presented with an award for workplace safety.

Mr. Speaker, the workers' job is to control the massive flooding problems at the mine, at times under hazardous conditions. What is truly amazing is there has been no lost-time workplace accident at this mine for six years — a first for Saskatchewan and a first for Canada.

The award is a tribute to the men and women employed by Tyson Mining at this potash mine. It serves as an example of a responsible corporation and responsible employees. They are all deserving of praise and respect. I congratulate them all and urge their continued vigilance.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Wildlife Damage Compensation

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, during this week's SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) convention delegates have spoken a great deal about the damage caused by elk and deer to standing crops, winter hay supplies, and property, particularly in eastern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in both Manitoba and Alberta, provincial crop insurance agencies have well-developed programs to limit and control damage and to provide quick and reasonable compensation. There appears to be a great deal of confusion regarding how this government is dealing with the problem.

Would the Minister of the Environment explain if there is a compensation program in place or being established, and if so what the program consists of.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. member for the question.

The member touts the great programs in Manitoba and Alberta and in actual fact they are very poor compared to what we have in Saskatchewan with regards to compensation. I believe the . . . one of the provinces provides \$6,000 for compensation; we've spent over \$325,000 and will continue to spend money until this bad winter ends. So we will continue to work with landowners in prevention programs.

Mr. Bjornerud: — The minister compares to Manitoba and Alberta that our program is much better. I would like to check with some of the farmers out in rural Saskatchewan that are having problems, Mr. Speaker, and they might have a different opinion.

Mr. Speaker, the farmers of Saskatchewan need and deserve a proper program, but they also need to know the details. Without some form of adequate compensation program, many farmers in this province will not have the money to seed this spring.

Mr. Speaker, one particular farmer, who just happens to reside in the minister's constituency, has had 150 acres of lentils almost totally destroyed by wildlife. This farmer is unaware of any program that exists and will address his concerns. If such a program does exist, will the minister ensure that these details immediately get out to farmers who are eagerly awaiting a response?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again I thank the hon. member for the question. It is certainly no secret that this has been a very difficult winter for landowners. Last fall was wet, and there's about 196,000 acres of crop out in the field, which has never happened before in this province. An early winter in November set in with lots of snow and cold weather which resulted in the animals congregating in unharvested crops and farm yards.

And fortunately we do have a crop insurance program which will cover some of these losses, albeit not all of them. And again we are working with landowners to protect their haystacks and feed supplies.

It is interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, the province of Manitoba has looked at our prevention program as being very acceptable and positive and are wanting to copy it for future years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Forest Resource Management

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Environment

minister tabled a new Act that will affect forestry companies doing business in our province. The minister stated that the new Act will make forestry companies pay part of the cost of managing the forestry ecosystems. We recognize that the forestry companies contribute to the Saskatchewan economy in terms of employment and taxation.

But, Mr. Minister, my question: is this effort to double fees to forestry companies intended to create more profits for government, or is the money going to finance local co-management boards in forestry regions to work with forestry companies in the true management of all forestry resources?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. member for the question. The announcement yesterday was viewed as positive by many people in the province. The press did indicate — the *Star-Phoenix* article — that the fees would be doubling. There is no truth to this at all. In fact there is no agreement on fees doubling.

The CKRM, which had the facts much more credible in this go-around, Mr. Speaker, indicated, if you based our fees on what Manitoba and Alberta fees are, it would be double. But there are many other economic circumstances to take into consideration. But on a simple scale, ours are half the rate of Manitoba and Alberta. What we are prepared to do and have always been prepared to do is look at the fees with other jurisdictions, but more importantly, work with the forest industry in Saskatchewan. There is no doubling of fees; there is no commitment to that whatsoever. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, the government, in their press release again yesterday, stated the agreement will ensure that the treaty rights to hunt, fish, and trap are fully respected. In reference to the Metis and non-aboriginal population of the North, these people are also deeply concerned that the traditional gathering rights, such as picking berries, gathering firewood, and using forestry products for traditional medicines may now be threatened.

Will the Minister guarantee that traditional gathering rights of all people in the North will not be affected by this new Act?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again I thank the hon. member for the question. Section 17 of the Act clearly states that anybody living in Saskatchewan, aboriginal or otherwise, can go and pick berries or collect firewood for their own personal use or for their family. So we have accommodated that, and that is one of many amendments that we've made to the White Paper a year ago to accommodate the people's concerns and interest. Our goal is to work with everybody here in the province, from the people living in the North to the forest companies. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, the people of the North have many concerns with regard to economic and environmental situations in the North. Among these concerns are the state of our parks, the tourism opportunities, and the environment in our areas.

This new Act will be generating more money for the government, and the northern people want to know how this new money will be spent and if they'll benefit from it.

Will the minister responsible for the Environment please tell this House that a portion of this new money coming in as a result of this Act will be put towards northern parks and tourism as well as environmental protection in the North and simply not be put in the government's General Revenue Fund.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again I thank the hon. member for the question. And certainly we are committed to providing as healthy environment and responsible resource management as we can for all people in Saskatchewan and including the people in the North. And again we are prepared to work with the local people in the North through co-management boards which will create job opportunities. We're committed to a representative areas network which will protect some of the areas, environmentally sensitive areas, the hon. member refers to.

So yes, I can assure the hon. member that we are committed to working with people in the North on environmental issues, on job issues, and on economic issues, and health and other things. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Health Statistics Availability

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Health or his designate.

Mr. Minister, a year ago I asked the former Health minister for statistics regarding patients who were dead on arrival. Specifically I wanted to know how many people died *en route* to a hospital as well as how many were pronounced dead at the scene.

Our caucus wanted some tangible means of measuring how well health reform is working in our province and DOA (dead on arrival) stats would certainly be one measure. I was told at that time, Mr. Speaker, that these statistics were not available and I would like to table the letter from the Health minister that I received denying my request.

Mr. Minister, I was surprised to find out these statistics were in fact available and that two reporters received them through freedom of information. Mr. Minister, why weren't these statistics provided when they were requested last year?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, in reference to the member's question and comment about the health care delivery

system in Saskatchewan and how we should measure that, Mr. Speaker, we are being measured by a variety of means, not the least of which is the experience of Saskatchewan people. And across the province people have experienced the health care system providing better benefits to them now than before the initiation of health reform.

In terms of dead on arrival statistics, Mr. Speaker, it is a very complicated—I think as the member will understand—it is a very complicated process to assess this kind of statistical information. That information has been processed now by the Department of Health and is available.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, obviously you didn't listen very carefully at the SARM meeting the other day and many people across this province would certainly dispute your claims of how well the health system is working.

Mr. Minister, I realize that some sixty-some thousand people travel in ambulances every year and an increase of five people dying *en route* to hospitals isn't a significant increase. It is, however, significant that the number of individuals pronounced DOA at the scene rose by nearly 200.

Mr. Minister, we need these same numbers prior to 1993 to be able to compare the before and after of your government's health reforms.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why aren't those same statistics available prior to your closing of 52 rural hospitals? Or am I going to find out later that they were available.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the member will know—as we had this discussion I recall in estimates last year—the difficulty of establishing precisely dead on arrival statistics. The difficulty, Mr. Speaker, as members will recognize, is that individuals may be injured and become a fatality at the scene of an accident, they may become a fatality on course to emergency treatment, but they will not be described as dead on arrival until arrival at a hospital.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what the member will also know, that across Saskatchewan today emergency services in fact have improved—have improved significantly since 1991. We have today, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan an entire network of first responders that are able to respond immediately, or as close to immediately as is possible, to an emergency situation. We have the longest-standing and the best-serving air ambulance system in all the world, Mr. Speaker, and we have improved ambulance services.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Vehicle Damage Compensation

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Highways. Mr. Minister, everyone knows Saskatchewan highways are in a mess. Now even your department is starting to acknowledge this by sending out compensation cheques to people whose cars were

damaged simply by driving on your numbered cow paths, formerly known as highways.

Mr. Minister, what is the policy regarding compensation for people who experience vehicle damage caused by the terrible highway conditions, how does one apply, and how are you advertising this policy so that Saskatchewan people know it's available?

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Thank you. To the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell him that problems with compensation and problems that people receive from a highway situation is done in the normal process of going through the department to find out if in fact there was some responsibility by the department.

But what I want to say, Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, is that we have a federal government here that has changed the Crow payment, that is allowing railways to abandon the rail lines. We have companies that are consolidating their elevator system. And it's certainly changing the traffic on our road system. And it is causing concern, and we're working very close with rural municipalities, with other stakeholders, on partnership agreements in fact to improve our highway situation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, the minister blaming the federal government for everything that his government has done is simply a joke. It was the member from Rosetown who wanted to turn Saskatchewan's highways into gravel paths before the federal government's budgets came down.

Mr. Minister, a constituent of mine recently received a cheque for \$385 for damage to his tire rims simply from driving on Highway 318. I'm sure there are many other people who have experienced similar damage to their vehicles across this province.

Mr. Minister, what is the total amount your department has paid out in compensation claims of this nature, and what is the total amount of outstanding claims against your department?

Hon. Mr. Renaud: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I want to first say that in a situation where there is damage, like I said earlier, that certainly the normal process is to go through the Department of Highways to see if in fact there is some liability on our part.

But what I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that those members opposite in the previous administration spent money like drunken sailors. We've got \$850 million worth of interest that we have to pay each and every year. Certainly that affects what we can spend on roads.

And the other thing, Mr. Speaker, is they did sell most of the Highways equipment, and we are working as best we can. And in fact our Highways crews, Mr. Speaker, do a very, very good job with what . . . with the circumstances.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Rural Economic Development

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's very evident that rural Saskatchewan does not get much attention paid to it by the present government.

Mr. Speaker, I refer again to an internal memo from this government, surfaced earlier this week, confirming what our local leaders have known for some time — that this government has little if any commitment to our rural communities. This memo from the Economic Development minister to cabinet states, and I quote, Mr. Speaker:

There was and still is no intention to provide a grand strategy for rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Economic Development explain how he can, on one hand, state publicly that rural Saskatchewan is a priority when behind closed doors he is indicating exactly the opposite?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition would care to read the balance of the memo or get someone to read it to him, what he would find out is that in the government there are many things happening, working in rural Saskatchewan. And if you read the second page of the memo, and I challenge you to get up and read the eight or ten points on the second page that say clearly that rather than have a grand strategy, as you refer to it in the memo, we have chosen to leave specific programs within departments and agencies of government.

You should be honest and fair if you're going to lead the official opposition. And I challenge you to read the second page of the document, the eight points or so that talk about what we are doing in rural Saskatchewan — regional economic development authorities, the *Partnership for Renewal* which focused very clearly on rural Saskatchewan, all of the work that is done in Ag 2000.

Now if you were being honest, sir, you will get up and I challenge you to read the eight or ten points that talk specifically on the second page of that memo of what we are doing in rural Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given again the actions of this government since coming to power in 1991, the fact that they have very little concern for rural Saskatchewan has been clearly demonstrated. One need only to look back at this government's decision to close 52 rural hospitals, to find a very clear example. This government's decision to close the Plains Health Centre, which serves the people of southern Saskatchewan, continually reaffirms this belief as well.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Economic Development

explain why, when it is the duty of this government to represent all Saskatchewan residents, their priorities begin and end at the city limits of Regina and Saskatoon?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the member need only go into rural Saskatchewan. And I challenge him to go to places like St. Brieux where Bourgault Industries is employing hundreds of people manufacturing air seeders for export around the world. Go to Watrous and look at the vast increase in the number of hog production facilities up in that small area, where farmers have gotten together to build large hog plants. Go to Biggar where Prairie Malt is expanding to produce malt to ship across the world; new contracts being signed in Brazil. Go to Meadow Lake; go to Maple Creek; go to Estevan — everywhere I go I find people excited about rural Saskatchewan.

You are so involved in gloom and doom for political purposes that you can't get your head out of the sand. As the communities out there prepare for the next century, the Liberal Party is obviously wanting to go back to the days of Ross Thatcher or the days of Grant Devine with grandiose schemes where government is going to drive the economy. It doesn't work; never did and never will.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The people that we talk to in rural Saskatchewan are those people that are being denied monies. And there are other examples to illustrate how our rural people rate with this government: the decision to retroactively cancel GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) contracts of farmers; the removal of \$188 million from the GRIP surplus to help achieve the balanced budget; and most recently this government's failure to live up to a promise not to collect GRIP wind-up bills.

Will the Minister of Economic Development explain in this House why he and his government has such contempt for rural people, the very backbone of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the facts stand in stark contrast to what the member is saying. Look at the number of members from rural Saskatchewan who are represented in your caucus versus the number represented from the NDP.

The people of Saskatchewan are not stupid, as you are letting on to be. They know that the economic development policy of this government from 1991 to 1995 are paying dividends.

But let me tell you about your own member, Anita Bergman, who campaigned against, for political reasons, campaigned against closing the Plains hospital, and when she got elected to the board voted in favour of closing it.

I want to tell you that you should be honest. I know why you don't know what is going on in rural Saskatchewan because the member from Cypress, or the member from Shaunavon — from Wood River — went to try to do some consultations before the session in rural Saskatchewan. They had one meeting; three

people showed up. So I know why you don't know what's going on in rural Saskatchewan. But come with us and we will show you where economic development is taking place in many communities. Quit the gloom and doom; join us, and move on to the 21st century.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, laying the blame on health boards once again is not really what should be done. The government controls the purse-strings for health.

Mr. Speaker, one could also make the case that this government has little regard for the people of rural Saskatchewan by highlighting their decision to close SaskPower district offices and Crop Insurance offices, their threats to revert rural highways to gravel and close highway maintenance depots. Or there are the other broken promises, such as that involving the 10 per cent VLT (video lottery terminal) revenues which was to go back to the communities, to the communities that could very well use those monies to determine the needs and look after the needs that they have as a result of millions and millions of dollars that go back to this government from VLT revenues.

Will the Minister of Economic Development commit to working with our rural leaders to develop a proper and meaningful strategy that will ensure a future for our families in rural Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Again, Mr. Speaker, if the member were attending any of the consultation meetings in rural Saskatchewan he would know that *Partnership for Growth* was very much based on rural people's input into that document. Even your own member, the critic for Economic Development, met with our department to have input into that document and gave us some good ideas that you will find included in our concept of regional economic development authorities. So we did consult. We consulted with your own caucus. And if there are more things you have to offer in a concrete, constructive way, bring them forward and we'll look at adding them to the list. But don't sit there and argue that everything is gloom and doom.

Look, so you lost the election by campaigning against the closure of the Plains hospital and the cancellation of GRIP. Everyone knows you lost the election campaigning on that. Get over it. Leap over that hurdle and move on to the new world. Anita Bergman has done that. She campaigned against closing the Plains hospital, lost, and then realized to get on the agenda. Why don't you and the Liberal Party quit worrying, the way the member for Wood River is, that . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Next question. Order. Next question.

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, when people in rural Saskatchewan endeavour to create an opportunity for hundreds of jobs, such as was happening in my constituency in Melville, the co-generation that would have created hundreds of jobs

without any investment of taxpayers' dollars, and yet the government opposite, being coached by the president of SaskPower, refused to allow that kind of a project to go ahead.

Mr. Speaker, all indicators point to the NDP government continuing to take a big stick to rural Saskatchewan now, through forced amalgamation of municipal governments. They are hinting at doing the same thing to our school system. One can only hope that it is not at the same level of carelessness and disregard as they displayed with health reform.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberal opposition believes the future of this province depends on a strong urban and rural presence, a commitment certainly not shared by the Economic Development minister or his government.

Will the minister explain when the people of rural Saskatchewan can expect this government to quit playing politics and get down to work on their behalf?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure who is writing your questions, but you might want to think about getting someone other than the member for Wood River to write your questions. But I want to say this, that your co-generation plant that you talk about was based on burning tires. And I believe that you'll accept that that was the proposal that you're talking about.

The fact of the matter is that there is not enough tires in Saskatchewan, on an annual basis, to produce more than two megawatts of power. What do you propose? That you grab tires off tourists as they run through the province off the Trans-Canada Highway to fire your co-generation plant? It won't work.

Get on the program. Get with some of the things that the regional economic development authorities in your area are doing. They've got good ideas — good ideas. Work with them. Work with the small business loans program. Work with the community bonds, sir. Don't be so negative, negative, negative. Get on the program. Work with your local communities out there. There's lots happening. Only the Liberals seem to be left out of that agenda.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

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

Mr. Flavel: — Mr. Speaker, with leave, to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — We're not at orders of the day yet. I'll recognize you when we get there.

Before orders of the day, I'll recognize . . . The member for Last Mountain-Touchwood has asked for leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Flavel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank the members. I want to, Mr. Speaker, ask the members of the Legislative Assembly to join with me today to . . . a Member of Parliament seated behind the bar, Mr. Simon De Jong, the member for Regina-Qu'Appelle. I want to welcome him here today and ask all member to join with me in welcoming him.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I hereby table the answer to question no. 8. If I could have the assistance of a page.

The Speaker: — The answer to question 8 is tabled.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — I hereby table the answer to question no. 9.

The Speaker: — The answer to question 9 is tabled.

I would like to make a statement about question no. 10. It has come to my attention that part (3) of written question no. 10 asks for information for over a four-year period.

As written questions must be answered in five days, they must ask for information for only one year in each question. Therefore part (3) will be deleted if this item is dealt with as a question. If it is converted to a return, then it is in order to request information covering more than one year to be returned to the House.

The Speaker has not heard what the intention of the Government House Leader is.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We will be converting the question.

The Speaker: — No. 10 is converted to motions for return (debatable).

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 7 — An Act to repeal The Industrial Incentive Program Act

The Chair: — I'll ask the minister to introduce his officials, please.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Here to my left is Donna Johnson. Donna is the manager of financial services; and to my right, Dave McQuinn who's the acting assistant deputy minister.

Clause 1

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome the

officials that are here today to assist us in this matter. And I'd like to speak to that Act.

Mr. Speaker, when the Tory administration announced The Industrial Incentive Program Act in the spring of 1984, they were determined it would generate permanent jobs and long-term investment. That administration's reasoning was that for any manufacturing or processing company that invested \$30,000 and created one new job, the government would donate \$7,500 to a maximum of 25 per cent. That administration talked about long-term investment. As a safeguard, companies weren't given the money until the new jobs were in place for a year. According to the minister at that time, the Hon. Eric Berntson, and I quote:

This kind of program provides a valuable incentive to business, and at the same time ensures the incentive is directed at the creation of permanent jobs and long-term investment.

The minister also claimed:

... the Industrial Incentives Program not only spurs the Saskatchewan company to start acting on its expansion plans, by giving relief on early costs of expansion, but also keeps Saskatchewan as a province competitive with other provinces when it comes to attracting businesses to move here.

Mr. Speaker, those were pretty big words. Those words were meant to bring hope to the Saskatchewan economy. Although this province is definitely in dire need of improvements to its economic climate, this Act obviously did not work. Look at this province, now 12 years later; we are still suffering from job losses on a weekly basis. We are still struggling in vain trying to convince companies to set up shop in Saskatchewan. We are losing our young people because there are no opportunities here. The Act obviously didn't work.

Mr. Speaker, when that Tory administration introduced the Act, it claimed that positive changes would continue well into the future. Again I quote the Hon. Mr. Berntson:

We must raise Saskatchewan's profile and then keep it high. It's a long-term task, Mr. Speaker; it's a long-term investment. But only through such a strategy of commitment will we build the economic future that the people of Saskatchewan want and (truly) deserve.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I agree with his words even if his actions didn't live up to his expectations. The people of Saskatchewan truly do want and deserve a bright economic future.

From my understanding, Mr. Speaker, this Act set aside \$12 million to help businesses. I also understand that it was a program with a one-year time limit, and that applications had to have been received by March 31, 1985. Even back then there were problems.

In the next session of the legislature the main section of the Act, section 5, had to be rewritten to clarify the eligibility criteria for

the program. This is particularly ironic because Mr. Berntson acclaimed this program for its simplicity. And again I quote:

... we are continuing this approach by making sure that new programs achieve their objectives without a mass of red tape. Simplicity, directness, open consultation, ease of understanding — these are our goals, (Mr. Speaker), and they are applied to the Industrial Incentives Program.

Mr. Speaker, this program was introduced well before my time in this legislature. Therefore I cannot dispute the motives behind the Tory administration in introducing the industrial incentives program. What I can dispute though is whether it's achieved its goals for the long-term good of this province. And I guess the simple answer to this is no, it has not.

And so today we must clean up the mistakes made by that past Tory administration. The Liberal caucus support the Act to repeal the industrial incentives program. But before I close, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make one point very clear. The business climate in this province is suffering. It is suffocating under the present government's policies and the high costs of doing business in Saskatchewan.

The old Act was not the answer, but I truly hope, Mr. Speaker, I truly hope we will see other improvements that will turn the economy back to the businesses and that our economy in this great province will once again begin to thrive.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(1100)

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Deputy Chair. Mr. Minister, I'd also like to welcome your officials here today.

And just a few comments on the Act in so far as repealing The Industrial Incentives Program Act. And as my colleague has stated, that no doubt it being just one more former Conservative Act that, you know, many of their programs didn't work, many of their ideas were either expensive or had no clear direction. And we can accept that. And if in fact, as you have told us before, that there's no need to have this Act, then we would support that.

However, Mr. Minister, if I could have you just give us a ... tell the House today, you know, an idea where you're going. If in fact you're going to cancel one incentive, what are your plans to have something to replace it? Perhaps not in the form of an Act, but can you give us some idea before we start repealing some incentives that the province perhaps did have to work with, where you're taking this province?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the member asks what is the economic strategy for the province. He's obviously aware that this Bill, which was introduced just before the 1986 election and used really only in the run-up period, I think many people saw it for what it was — a political Bill that was a cover to give out a bunch of money in the run-up to 1986 election.

When we came to government the program hadn't been used for a number of years, and we didn't use it. So therefore the Bill is simply not necessary, and with the approval of the House will be repealed.

I'm not going to get into a long debate about the economic development program of the government because this really is not the place to do it. We'll do that in estimates when we do the estimates of the department.

But, Mr. Chairman, I don't mind taking a little bit of time just to outline to the member that when we came to government we went through a long process of consultation with business people, with the cooperative movement, and with labour people throughout the province. We probably had 80 or 90 meetings in the run-up to the publishing of *Partnership for Renewal*, which was very, very well accepted by the business community. The then president of the chamber, Mel Watson, referred to *Partnership for Renewal* as the Bible for economic development in the province.

And of course it would be difficult for anyone to say that the Sask Chamber of Commerce is somehow tied to the New Democratic Party. But yet they saw *Partnership for Renewal* as a very, very important document, and with good reason, because they were instrumental in putting the document together.

The same is true of the replacement, *Partnership for Growth*. We held, I believe, 50 meetings across the province. They were well attended. And many of the things that you see in *Partnership for Growth* came directly from the community. The idea of a greater emphasis on entrepreneurial skills training in the school system, which is a theme of *Partnership for Growth*, came directly from the community.

The idea of a trade development corporation, which we will be announcing and you will see the full-fledged corporation coming into being very soon, which will see the department's economic development unit on trade moving out of the department to a free-standing corporation which will be jointly managed by business and government — the first of its kind in Canada, based on a model in some ways that exists in Hong Kong — came as well from traders who need support from an agency because they just don't have the money from many small and medium-sized manufacturers to punch their product into the world market.

So the concepts that we have . . . And I say again — to make sure that you understand grandiose schemes versus just plodding away and getting things done the way we have done traditionally in Saskatchewan — we've had grandiose schemes before and that's why that expression. If that's what you're promoting, is you want to get some grandiose scheme, the people of Saskatchewan will reject that. They don't want grandiose schemes because that's what they had during the 1980s with the Devine government.

You heard all the grandiose schemes — the GigaText, they were going to be able to translate languages using computers. That was a grandiose scheme. Burning tires to make power

plants all over the province. They were going to have five or six of them. There isn't enough tires in the province to build one. But these are the kind of grandiose schemes that we don't need.

What we need are regional economic development authorities which are a concept again from the ground up. The people want them. And they're doing great things in places like Rosetown and places like Nipawin, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon. Where they are up and running, they are doing a great job. I believe government then comes in, both federal and provincial, jointly — not separately, but jointly — to assist the local communities and local entrepreneurs and business people.

The idea somehow that government is going to lead this charge in economic development defies what business people are telling us. Governments shouldn't do that. What they should do though is have proper regulatory and legislative agendas. This is why it's important to get rid of this Bill because it is just an idle piece of legislation that sits on the books.

So that's my idea of economic development. I don't think it is a grandiose scheme. I think it's based on principle that comes from the farmers and neighbours that I know around the province. It's their ideas. It's the chamber of commerce. It's my friends at the Wheat Pool who have written their notes, what they want us to do with cooperatives.

And for that reason, I'd urge you to get into it. Study the document because it is based in sound principles. And if there are things that aren't in that document that you would like to see and personally have that would work, I'm more than willing to sit with you, get the ideas, put them in the next document, and give you credit for putting them in.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm afraid that perhaps the minister here today is encouraging more debate than what he would like and what this Bill should deserve. But I think some of the response that the minister gave also warrants further response.

If he would like us to, I guess as official opposition, to move along a little quicker on some of his Bills, then he should have moved along a little quicker in his response and not get into the grandiose schemes of our party when he's actually talking about some of the grandiose schemes of only a couple a throne speeches ago, when it was the Premier of that government that stood up on co-generation projects; and that Economic Development minister was the one who fully supported and talked at great length of how good, sound programs, policies built around co-generation, built around the burning of tires to create electricity, garbage to create electricity . . . Well, Mr. Minister, you can shake your head, but I recall some of your speeches in this House on co-generation.

And in fact if it wasn't for Jack Messer, the president who reeled you guys in, if you're taking a position that's contrary now, it's because of Jack Messer. It's not because somehow you decided that you have a new economic development program out there. So don't take cheap shots at us when in fact it was your government that really initiated it.

Now as I said earlier, this Bill is getting far more than it deserves. Of course it was a bad Tory idea, as many of the Tory ideas of the past were. And in fact I even see some of the Conservatives over here nodding their head in agreement.

But in fact, let's not carry this on longer than what it needs to be other than to say that some of these things that you're calling grandiose schemes, when you put them out in a context of what's happening in rural Saskatchewan, perhaps the . . . you know, burning of garbage so that it would reduce the need for landfill sites. And with that you perhaps get a co-generation operation, and the steam from that would heat a greenhouse or an operation that would supplement a farm income out there. I don't see that as a grandiose scheme.

At times, Mr. Minister, some of these things will just make good sense to do. And so now we're hoping that you don't go too far the other way just because Jack Messer reeled you in a little bit. We don't want you to go too far the other way and say, well we're not going to do anything for rural Saskatchewan.

And that's really all we were getting at. We accept why you want to repeal this and we're going to fully support that, and it's going to go through here in a matter of a few minutes. But let's not get carried away and try, you know, get a lengthier debate than necessary here.

What the people want are just common sense ideas, common sense programs and policies. Sometimes that will mean boosting an area of the province a little bit. Sometimes it means getting out of the way of business, doing something with regulations.

And so that's all my first question, Mr. Minister, was, in fact are you going to come down with a Bill to replace this? And really I don't need an answer. I can see you nodding your head, and that's fine. And perhaps if you give an answer, it's going to drag out the debate today.

But what I will say, in closing, from the Liberal Party's point of view, is that we would hope that you don't follow in the shoes of the Progressive Conservatives. As you can see, the voting public of Saskatchewan dealt with that party when they continued to abuse the public as they did. But we hope, Mr. Minister, that you, getting closer to an election, also won't perhaps get a little bit carried away with some new-found monies.

And not to say you did that last spring when I was seeing two or three news releases coming across my desk every couple of days where yourself, Economic Development minister, was handing out money to different businesses throughout the province. You know, let's always keep things in perspective. Let's just be common sense, and of course we can let this one go through.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Just to pick up on one theme that the member raised, and that is co-generation. I want to make it very clear that the reason that we're not building co-generation plants in Saskatchewan — and when I refer to co-generation

here, I'm mainly talking about co-generation as it would apply to co-generation as in association with the pulp mill at Millar Western or possibly at some of the pipeline facilities in Saskatchewan where they do make economic sense — is because we don't need the power.

One of the things that the previous administration did that didn't make any economic sense was to build power plants to create jobs. You build power plants because you need power, not to create jobs. And the whole idea that you . . . the argument that they gave leading up to the 1982 election is that they wanted to build a nuclear power plant in Saskatchewan which would have cost close to \$1 billion, even though we had 400 megawatts of power too much.

Their argument was, well we'll export it. There was no market for it. They hadn't done the analysis to know that Manitoba had a surplus of power. Alberta had a surplus of power, and to the south of us there was a surplus. There was no place to sell power from a nuclear power plant. Therefore we would have had an extra billion dollars in debt. We would have created some jobs while the plant was being built. But the main thing about building power plants is, don't build them before you need the power.

I would argue that when we do need power for the next phase, co-generation . . . not burning tires, I don't think, because I haven't found anyone who can give me an economic strategy where there is a bottom line on burning tires. But I think co-generation probably is the next phase of power, in conjunction with some of our industrial plants that now exist or new ones that are being planned.

Mr. McPherson: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. And that of course was much more to the point. And not to say that the day is going to be spent beating up on former administrations because we all remember what their campaign promises were, that they would place a factory in every town, at one point.

And all we're saying as a Liberal caucus is . . . You know, even the people in rural Saskatchewan aren't saying let's place a factory in every town. And it cost them dearly. But we are saying, sometimes you don't have to have these grandiose schemes to think about maybe leaving a hospital or a school in some towns. Like let's not completely forget about rural Saskatchewan.

But having said that, Mr. Chair, we are supporting the Bill.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just delayed for a second to wanting to hear the comments from the Liberal member which of course obviously are important. And we should be considering these matters even though they are set on the side sometimes.

I want to discuss, Mr. Chairman, with the minister, the Bill that he's proposing which of course he is wanting to eliminate some redundant legislation of the past.

Most certainly, Minister, we are supportive of the government in its attempt to clean up the books of the province. Most

certainly if there are Acts in place that are no longer being used and have no particular function, they should be scrapped and taken off the books and simplify the process of legislation and ruling our province and our people.

However when you take a title that suggests such an important area and you eliminate it and you're talking about industrial incentive programs, the title itself suggests not every kind of business, not every kind of job creation in the world; it suggests a particular phase, a particular unit of activity — that particular unit of activity, of course, being in the industrial sector.

(1115)

I'm quite sure that at the time that this incentive program was put into place, it was probably consistent with programs that were in place in other jurisdictions and perhaps had some merit.

All of us probably have looked at the past and studied the past knowing that the past becomes the future, and we all have to realize that the circle of life and the cycle of life goes round and round, the reality being then that we have come to realize that throwing money from government coffers, taxpayers' money, into incentive programs very rarely results in long-term, sustainable job creation.

I'm glad to hear that the minister has realized this and found this out. But there has to be a very realistic look at how do you solve the problem today that they tried to solve back in those days with this particular program.

Now you've talked about the fact that this program obviously didn't work because the past administration had quit using it. And you yourself, by your own words, say that you have never used it. Obviously the plan had to fail if nobody was willing to use the plan or offer the money or the incentives that were there. So it was a plan that was destined for destruction then, probably right from the beginning, and to eliminate it is perfectly sensible.

On the other hand, we must take a look then, at what you're going to replace this with. Where will you find the way to create jobs for our people in Saskatchewan? You say that you've got all kinds of little projects going on and yet the numbers, the minister, show us quite a different story.

We see in Alberta, as I pointed out to you the other day, 103,000 jobs have been created in Alberta during the same period of time that you were able to create 3,000 jobs in Saskatchewan. That is a dismal failure, sir. And that dismal failure, sir, is one that we must address here today. What are you going to replace this Bill with? What are you going to do to provide an incentive for this problem to get up and get started?

You fail to recognize the fundamental problem that we have in this problem, which is that no business will come to Saskatchewan with your kind of programs. They won't come with the old incentive program of \$7,000, or 25 per cent of \$30,000 invested. That obviously was a failure. They won't come for that, and they won't come for anything that you're offering either.

Because you've got the playing-field so out of balance in this province that nobody in their right mind would ever come here to do business when they take a little bit of a study and spend \$10 on phone calls to phone Alberta and Manitoba and find out that they can do business in either one those provinces many times more profitably than they can in Saskatchewan, simply because of the playing-field that you have distorted with your system and with your determination to allow the big unions to become the political powermongers of the province of Saskatchewan.

The Workers' Compensation Board Act, The Occupational Health and Safety Act, the union-preference tendering policy that you now extend too — just a blatant, outright preference tendering policy in this province, Mr. Minister — the Trade Union Act, all of these things have provided for an unlevel playing-field; not necessarily always wrong, but at the wrong timing in history because you've put us out of sync with our neighbours.

And that is why Saskatchewan is not going ahead. It's why your government will fail to create jobs. Because you are determined to ignore the reality that without a playing-field that is level, businesses will not come to this province because you can't hold a gun to their heads and force them to come here. Joseph Stalin doesn't live in Canada and he's not in Saskatchewan, and they will go to Alberta and they will go to Manitoba and they will go to the United States, and they will not come to Saskatchewan because they're too smart to come here.

You have got to smarten up and put into place a piece of legislation that will allow that playing-field to become level and allow people to do business in Saskatchewan and to create jobs on a long-term, sustainable basis. And you haven't done that.

The only thing you've done is create a great educational system that was followed up over the past 20 years that allows us to educate our kids so that they can compete well in the rest of the world and get their jobs somewhere else.

The only people I've heard of coming back to Saskatchewan lately are the people that you people manage somehow to work into a bigger and expanding role in government services. That's the only place we're expanding job creation in this province, is hiring political favouritism through the families and the friends of the people that elected you and who sit in your own very seats.

My friends, we certainly are not going to oppose getting rid of this redundant legislation, but we challenge you today to take a hard look at those things that will create jobs. And when the minister stands up here and wastes the taxpayers' money bantering around ideas about how some past program didn't work and allows the Liberals to get into the debate and waste even more time yattering on about how co-generation might be the thing of the future or might not, when they've gone out and destroyed programs like the windmill powering program that should have been at Eastend, Saskatchewan . . . fair ball.

It might not have made money, but why did you charge all of

the tendering people thousands of dollars worth of investment in order to give you those tenders and then pull the rug out from under their feet and not allow the program to go ahead? Why did you draw them into that kind of thing? Is that the way you attract business to this province, by alienating everyone around you? By making them your personal enemies?

Personal enemies. I've had people phone me on that project, telling me how much they thought you were unfair, how much they believed that you would be honest dealers and honest brokers in the business community. And you allowed them to make their tenders and then promised them that another month or two down the road you'll consider it, and egged them on, induced them, seduced them into spending more money so that they could provide you with the facts and figures of how these programs will work, and then you don't allow the tenders and you pull the rug from under them.

And do you think that the rest of the business world isn't watching? Do you think that the people in the United States and in Alberta and in Ontario that might come to Saskatchewan haven't taken note of how you treated these people? Do you think for one minute that anybody will ever trust you and come to this province again?

It is time that this government woke up to the reality that word of mouth goes around very quickly. And a bad business atmosphere is something that will result in people not coming here. And you're not only going to have to create a level playing-field; now you have to create an ability for people to once again trust the governments of Saskatchewan. And they can't do that under your administration. So for the next three years, we are destined to the doom and the failure of no job creation in Saskatchewan, because they cannot and will not trust this government.

You talk about things like nuclear energy as being the most obscene thing you've ever heard of. You talk about the inability of people to be able to sell power. And you talk about the silliness, the silliness of saying a statement like, you don't produce power until you need it. Give me a break. If you waited until every city in the United States had a brown-out and Vancouver was black and there was no power, I'm sure you would be very popular.

Now come on, fellows. This is serious stuff. You produce power before people's needs. That's why you do studies, that's why you hire consultants. That's why you send people to California to find out if there is a sale for a product.

What do you think we do with our beef in this province? The Liberal member I think might have raised cows once. Did you raise that beef because you already knew there was a market or did you go out there and get that market? Obviously you waited for somebody else to do it for you.

The truth of the matter is that you go out and get markets, you seduce those markets by showing people that you can produce a product and that you have a guarantee that you will be able to deliver it.

Power is no different than beef or wheat. If you can't produce it, you can't sell it. And if you don't have a willingness to produce it, you might as well forget about looking for the market. There is a lot of places where that power could be and will be for sale. Only one example, Mr. Minister, and I'm not going to use any more, because it is redundant to waste our time talking to you on this day when we have to get rid of this Bill. But the day that you put in some legislation that will actually create jobs, we then will be here to help you to cultivate that legislation and to build it into a meaningful piece of work that will provide jobs for the people in Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chairman, with leave, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chairman, I'd like to introduce to this Assembly, through you, a number of students from the Glenavon School, actually 30 students, grade 11, and students who are attending here this morning. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Paul Van Betuw, and I hope I pronounced that fairly close, and Jim, I believe it's, Grella, if I've got it in front of me properly.

I'm looking forward to meeting with the students. I'd like the members of the Assembly to welcome the students that are here this morning.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 7 (continued)

Clause 1

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I do want to respond to the member opposite when he talks about the role of government and his attack on the members of our administration. And I guess what makes me a little bit sad is the first time we get in a chance to have a debate in this session, the first time after the election, it's the same old tired defence of the Devine administration and what they did back in the 1980s.

The defence of nuclear power. And even the former leader of the Liberal Party wanted to build a nuclear reactor. And I just can't for the life of me understand why, when you're 14 or \$15 billion in debt, you're idea is to build a power plant of any type — coal-fired, gas-fired, nuclear-fired, hydro — why would your choice be of spending another billion dollars to build a power plant, when you have 450 megawatts of surplus supply already. Now he says well, because you just keep building it and somebody will buy it. Well that's exactly the reason we got to \$15 billion in debt.

We had a telephone manufacturing company that that administration set up in Melville called Trinitel, I think it was. And they built telephones. And they filled Quonsets full of telephones. And when we came to government they hadn't yet sold one telephone. But every inch of the factory was full of telephones, and the people had invested money. The community had invested money in this grandiose scheme to build telephones. They believed that if you build telephones somebody would buy them.

They simply don't understand how the market-place works. You have to have the market, you have to have the market. . . (inaudible interjection) . . . well you say you do, but the business people obviously don't believe you because they saw what you did with Trinitel and GigaText and High R Doors and Supercart; Joytec, the automatic golf game. All of those things added to the debt because you didn't do the marketing right; you didn't know that there was a market for the product.

And so there's very much more to economic development than simply building and manufacturing. If you don't have sales for that product you better be very, very careful about investing, especially taxpayers' dollars. And that's why the private sector is so careful, and want to establish a trade development corporation that will go out and find the markets and then build their plants into the market. And if you're still back on that track, that all you have to do is build a product and somebody's going to buy it, you haven't learned, you haven't learned anything.

And maybe there's a reason that you're at five members in the House. I had hoped that that would have taught you a lesson. But what I find disturbing today is the same old, tired rhetoric of defence for what went on in the 1980s.

And we can spend all day here defending and attacking. I mean this is simply a Bill to repeal a piece of legislation that hasn't been used for about seven or eight years, which I think we all agree with, getting rid of red tape, which is what this is. We don't need a piece of legislation on the books. But if we want to debate the record of the Conservative Party, I've got till 1 o'clock, so we can carry on.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

(1130)

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 7 — An Act to repeal The Industrial Incentive Program Act

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill now be read a third time and passed under its title.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 13 — An Act to amend The Department of Social Services Act

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Department of Social Services Amendment Act, 1996.

The amendment I address today has to do with the way that personal information concerning clients is handled by Social Services departmental staff. I'm sure the House will appreciate the seriousness of information that comes to the department staff each and every day.

Staff deal with matters which are extremely sensitive and very often personal. Clients can expect, and should be able to expect, to trust that the information will be treated with great care. Department staff take an oath when joining the Department of Social Services that they will not "disclose or make known any matter or thing which comes to my knowledge by reason of such employment" without due authority.

Mr. Speaker, section 18(1) of The Department of Social Services Act has been in place for almost 30 years. The provision requires ministerial consent be obtained prior to disclosing personal information to anyone. Clients have no access to their files without consent even though they themselves have provided some of the information.

Mr. Speaker, over the years there has been pressure from members of the public for improved access to information held by public agencies, particularly government departments. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, we introduced The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act in 1992. On the one hand, our government wanted to reduce barriers and ensure that accessible information was readily available to the public. On the other hand, we felt strongly that we had an obligation to maintain confidentiality for personal information.

While The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act is in place, so too is the confidentiality provision in The Department of Social Services Act. Department staff have been restricted by The Department of Social Services Act from therefore fully utilizing the spirit and intent of the new freedom of information legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I am before you therefore today to resolve this dilemma by simply amending The Department of Social Services Act. Department staff will be able to use the provisions of The Freedom of Information and Privacy Act to release information on client files in some circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure you and all members that this action will in no way compromise the department's commitment to maintaining confidentiality. I can assure the House today that department staff will not be disclosing sensitive and personal details concerning clients' lives. For example, The Freedom of Information and Protection of

Privacy Act prohibits access to adoption, child protection, children services, foster care, and young offenders' material.

There are other restrictions in the legislation which limit the release of information to third parties as well. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act has been implemented throughout government following proclamation. There are now well-developed policies and procedures in place for disposing information. And so, Mr. Speaker, I am confident that we, as a government, will be able to assure department clients that the amendment I am discussing today will not jeopardize their confidentiality and yet will make access of their own information much easier.

Now following the amendment, department staff will be permitted to share information with adult clients more easily and with less administrative process. Those clients will be able to utilize the full spirit and intent of The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, which was the intention of our government when we passed that legislation in 1992.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore move second reading of an Act to amend The Department of Social Services Amendment Act, 1996.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the minister's opening comments on the Bill that he's brought forward, but until we have a chance to consult with third party groups and others that will be affected by this legislation, I now move adjournment of debate on this Bill.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 14 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Income Plan Act

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am again pleased to rise today in the House to move second reading of The Saskatchewan Income Plan Amendment Act, 1996.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, Saskatchewan seniors are a very dynamic and growing part of our province. There are today about 142,000 seniors in Saskatchewan, aged 65 and over, or about 14 per cent of our total population. The number of older seniors, those age 85 and over, is also increasing rapidly. And it is important to note, I think, Mr. Speaker, that the large majority of Saskatchewan seniors live independently in their own homes, apartments, or residences.

Mr. Speaker, members of our government meet frequently with seniors to talk about their priorities, issues and concerns. And we hear from seniors that their priorities are maintaining their independence, being involved in decisions that affect them, and being seen and understood as an integral and very valuable part of our community and society.

In recent times, Mr. Speaker, some of the things that our government has been able to accomplish working with seniors and to support the more vulnerable of our seniors have included increasing benefits under the Saskatchewan Income Plan. We

have been able to protect a lower, prescription-drug-plan deductible for low income seniors covering nearly half of all seniors in our province. We've been able to develop the special support program to assist seniors with an income of less than 50,000 who have high drug costs. We've implemented a number of social, health, and educational tenant-based activities to help seniors remain independent and in their own communities.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan has developed the most comprehensive and people-sensitive approach to community based health care in Canada. To build on our health care reform, new funds were provided in 1995-96 to expand home care services, including nursing, personal care homemaking. As a result of these initiatives and others, more seniors have been able to remain independent in their own homes and communities. And earlier this week, Mr. Speaker, in this House the Minister of Justice introduced some very important legislation in The Direct Sellers Act in consumer protection which has a particular interest to seniors and protecting their interests.

We've always believed that the involvement of seniors in decision making is a priority of our government. Seniors' organizations and individual seniors regularly meet with cabinet and with caucus committees as well as individual MLAs. As the Minister responsible for Seniors, I am frequently meeting with seniors and their organizations. I had a very helpful meeting this week, earlier this week, with Senior Power here of Regina — 50 or 60 seniors with many innovative and thoughtful ideas.

One of the issues that has affected seniors and has been of concern to seniors has been the whole matter of elder abuse. As you will know, Mr. Speaker, our government enacted the legislation, The Victims of Domestic Violence Act, as one step towards providing victims' protection. As well, the Department of Social Services just last spring released a document entitled *Guidelines for the Development of Protocols — Community-Based Responses to the Abuse and Neglect of Older People*. And that document is being worked on and through with a group in Saskatoon and we look forward to further developments from them.

Our government has also made a commitment to help seniors by providing some financial assistance for sport, recreational, and cultural activities through the Sask Lotto, through Sask Lotteries. And indeed through programs like this and working closely with seniors and their organizations, we believe that seniors are maintaining their role as an integral part of our society and communities.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the amendment before us today, this amendment arises again from discussions that we've had with seniors across the province. And here we are working with the seniors of Saskatchewan and with our federal counterparts at the federal government level to essentially transfer responsibility for the delivery of the provincial seniors' supplement program, namely the Saskatchewan Income Plan, for delivery to the federal government.

Each month in our province 20,500 seniors receive the

supplement, and rather, Mr. Speaker, than each of these seniors receiving two separate monthly cheques, one from the province and one from the federal government, we will propose through this amendment to consolidate those into one cheque which would include the Old Age Security pension, the guaranteed income supplement, and the Saskatchewan Income Plan. This would have the ability to eliminate some administrative duplication in processing both a provincial and federal benefit to the very same households and the very same seniors.

We believe this be a very practical approach, as eligibility for the provincial supplement is based on the federal supplement application. There's no application involved with the Saskatchewan Income Plan; payments are simply based on the amount of federal supplement that seniors receive. And as well, the transfer and change will cause no disruption of services. Rather the seniors will continue to maintain and receive the same very efficient and effective service.

This is an idea that has come to us from seniors. It provides administrative efficiencies, savings, and its initiative is an example of our attention to respond to those concerns raised by seniors and a commitment to the fiscal responsibility to the people of Saskatchewan.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Saskatchewan Income Plan Amendment Act, 1996.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm really delighted to hear that the minister is consulting widely with seniors across the province, because I think that's a very important process. But I hope that the consultation process also involves more than a simple one-way attempt at dialogue. Dialogue is a two-way thing which involves using the fact that God gave us two ears and only one mouth, and this government seems to have got it backwards. And what we do is way more talking . . . or you do, is way more talking than listening.

I've heard seniors all across this province, but more particularly in my constituency, express a great number of concerns about their attitude about looking into the future and the concerns that they really have. And the minister is absolutely right, that they're very integral in terms of not only the future of our province, but they have been largely responsible for creating the past work in the province that have brought us this far.

And so, Mr. Speaker, our caucus and the opposition is also widely consulting with seniors to address the issues that are really important to them. That process is not complete, Mr. Speaker, and therefore I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 15 — An Act to amend The Child and Family Services Act

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today again to move second reading of The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 1996.

Mr. Speaker, we have just focused some of our comments and

thought on the seniors of our province. This now focuses our comment and thought on the children of our province. And very often many of us have said we see our children as our most precious resource. They are in many ways our inspiration. They are our conscience. They are our future. If the children of our province are to grow up to be healthy, functioning, and contributing members of our society, we need as a society to attempt to ensure their lives are healthy, that those lives of those children are free from neglect and abuse.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that most families, the vast majority of families in our society, are healthy and provide a protective and supportive environment for children to grow up in. There are however a few families and parents, for a number of reasons are unable to provide this kind of healthy environment for their children. And it is our task as members of this society to support these families to become healthy and functional and to protect those children from harm and neglect. And although it is preferable to assist families to help themselves develop a better environment for their children, sometimes individuals and the government must step in to ensure the safety of children.

In our province, child protection services are provided by the Department of Social Services under the authority of The Child and Family Services Act. According to this Act, every person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection must report this to a police officer or to a child protection worker at either an Indian child and family service agency or in my department.

Right now the Act says that no action will lie against the person reporting unless that individual makes the report maliciously or without grounds. Mr. Speaker, to further ensure the safety of children, we are hereby proposing to strengthen that section of the Act. We want to be sure that individuals making valid reports are ensured of maximum protection from action being taken against them.

The amendment will mean that permission from Court of Queen's Bench will be required before any legal action can be started against the individual reporting. That permission will only be given if an applicant can provide evidence which establishes that the person made the report maliciously or without reasonable grounds. Any legal action started without the permission of the court would be considered void. This, Mr. Speaker, will prevent the person who reasonably reports child abuse from incurring unnecessary legal expenses.

The changes we're making to this Act will further strengthen our child protection services and help to ensure the safety and protection of Saskatchewan children and our citizens.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 1996.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I thank the minister for giving us a few brief comments on the Bill that he's brought forward for second reading. However, until once again we talk to some third party and consult with affected groups, we would like to adjourn debate on this Bill at this time.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 16 — An Act to amend The Highway Traffic Act

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on second reading of The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

This Bill makes several amendments to The Highway Traffic Act. These amendments, for the most part, are of a housekeeping nature. These amendments result from our staff reviewing The Highway Traffic Act as a prelude to its translation into French. I think it's appropriate that we are including The Highway Traffic Act in our translation efforts so French-speaking residents can better understand our traffic law.

The amendments include an update on traffic control devices and rules of the road. This amendment brings the Act up to date with new traffic signs, signals, markings, and the use of flares.

Another amendment improves our current dangerous goods legislation. It deals with transporting dangerous goods in bulk or liquid form. The amendments give us flexibility in assessing new types of agricultural equipment, as to whether or not it should be registered and carry insurance to operate on roads.

As I indicated earlier, these amendments basically bring the traffic Act up to date prior to its translation into French. I will be circulating the draft agricultural implements regulations to stakeholders prior to asking my cabinet colleagues to finalize them. Should the Assembly be sitting, I will table these regulations.

Mr. Speaker, with this, I move second reading of The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 1996.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again on the surface — I appreciate the minister standing in for the real Highways minister — but on the surface it does appear to be a somewhat innocent and, you know, progressive and proactive Bill. However once again, until we can consult with affected parties, we will want to adjourn debate on the Bill.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 23 — An Act to amend The Archives Act

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 23, The Archives Amendment Act, 1996, provides changes to The Archives Act, 1945, which are intended to increase the effectiveness of the Saskatchewan Archives Board. These changes will enable the board to function more efficiently in fulfilling its mandate to preserve the documentary heritage of the province of Saskatchewan.

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to ensuring that the documentary heritage of the province is properly acquired, preserved, arranged, described, and made available to the public. The legislation governing the provincial archives dates

from 1945, when the archives was established, and has not seen any major amendments since that time. The amendments represent the first step in a review of archives' legislation and mandate which will be conducted over the next two years.

The current composition of the board reflects the early role of the University of Saskatchewan in supporting the formation of a public records office for the province. However the mandate and scope of the archives has changed substantially since that time. The proposed amendments expand representation on the board beyond government and the two universities in order to reflect a more diversified client base. To ensure consistency with other government boards, the payment of honoraria will be instituted under the proposed amendments.

As well we are considering the appointment of an officer of the Legislative Assembly. It is felt that this will enhance the accountability and transparency of the process. Amendments will also limit board appointments to no more than two consecutive terms, to ensure continuity, while at the same time allowing for broader participation.

Mr. Speaker, a number of changes have been made to provide greater accountability by the Saskatchewan Archives Board to government. Under the proposed amendments, all board members, including the board Chair, will be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

The two universities will however each be asked to submit one nomination for their designated board position. The responsibilities of the board will be more clearly defined and the board will be required to submit an annual report, including an audited financial statement, to the legislature.

Other changes have been made to the Act which broaden the ability of the board to enter into agreements with service providers beyond the two universities in the operations of its offices and administrative affairs. Such agreements will require approval of the minister. These agreements will not affect the daily operations of the archives or agreements made with donors or users of the archives.

A definition has been added for restricted records and documents. A provision to restrict access and use of such documents has also been added. This addresses the need to ensure the integrity and security of confidential records held by the archives.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of this Bill, Bill No. 23, An Act to amend the Archives Act. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the minister's opening remarks in regard to amending The Archives Act. And from our point of view, and from our caucus, none of us were around in 1945 in this House as some of the members opposite perhaps were. And also the fact that some of the . . . there's made mention of appointments to boards and their record as far as appointments to boards hasn't been all that good.

And so that way at this time I'd like to move adjournment of debate on this Bill until we have time to review it.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 24 — An Act respecting the Prescription of Pharmaceutical Agents and Contact Lenses

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Optometry and Ophthalmic Dispensers Professions Amendment Act, 1996. This Act will amend the two existing statutes — The Optometry Act and The Ophthalmic Dispensers Act. Two issues will be addressed.

First, this Bill will allow optometrists to prescribe and use a range of topical drugs to treat the various eye conditions. Second, it will allow ophthalmic dispensers to prescribe and issue contact lenses based on the visual assessment performed by an optometrist or a physician.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment permitting optometrists to prescribe and use some topical drugs to treat various eye conditions is based on a close review of the issue over the past two years. It has also involved extensive consultations with stakeholders. Optometrists will be required to meet the necessary additional training and examination requirements before they're allowed to treat patients with drugs. Even then, optometrists will be required to adhere to certain restrictions which will be detailed in the by-laws.

Mr. Speaker, this change will provide the option for the public to be treated by their optometrists for some eye conditions. Essentially the optometrist's skills will be more fully utilized. This is expected to be of particular benefit to those in rural areas where access to an ophthalmologist is limited and where family practitioners do not always have the necessary diagnostic equipment to assess some eye conditions.

The second major change, Mr. Speaker, is an amendment which will facilitate the release of contact lens prescriptions by optometrists to consumers. At the present time, the optometrists may refuse to release contact lens prescriptions to their clients. As a result, the consumer may not have a choice as to where they can go to purchase their contact lens.

(1200)

Optometrists and qualified physicians will still be responsible for assessing the acuity of people's eyesight. However, the consumer will now have the choice as to whether they want their optometrists or their ophthalmologic dispenser to dispense the contact lens. With this choice, consumers in Saskatchewan will now be able to shop around for the best price. The amendment is required to facilitate this option.

By-laws pursuant to the optometrists and ophthalmic dispensers legislation will need to be amended. The Saskatchewan Association of Optometrists, The Saskatchewan Ophthalmic Dispensers Association, and the Saskatchewan Health are currently consulting on the necessary by-law amendments.

Simply put, this Bill will assist in better meeting consumers needs with respect to eye-care services in Saskatchewan.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Optometry and Ophthalmic Dispensers Professions Amendment Act, 1996.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We appreciate the House Leader's comments but until we can see our way clear to support this, I would like to move adjournment.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 27 — An Act respecting Architects

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to move second reading of The Architects Act. The Architects Act reflects general government policy regarding professional legislation using guidelines provided by the Department of Justice. The majority of the sections of this Bill are standard sections that appear in all professional legislation.

The proposed legislation is supported by the Saskatchewan Association of Architects, the interior designers association of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan association of professional engineers. While the Act is non-controversial and originates outside of government, I will briefly cover its intent.

In respect to the background, the Saskatchewan Association of Architects was one of the first professions in Saskatchewan to receive self-governing legislation. The last significant revision to The Architects Act occurred in 1968. It is generally acknowledged that the current Act needs extensive change, particularly in the areas of by-laws, of meetings, and discipline of its members. Because amendments of this existing Act are extensive, it is proposed that the new Act be passed. The new Act has been drafted in accordance with the current legislative language and format.

The four key provisions of the changes include: a new definition of the practice of architecture to clarify more precisely what it is that architects do. For example, the terms architect and registered architect have now been removed since they have the same meaning as the term "member". The definition for "building" and "practice of architecture" have been revised to clarify the meaning of these terms to ensure their consistency.

In respect to public appointees, current legislative standards require that two councillors to the association be public appointees. The architects have provided that one of the appointed councillors must be a member of the faculty of the University of Saskatchewan or the University of Regina. This provision has been carried over from the current Act.

Registration of members: The Architects Act recognizes two kinds of students — those who have graduated from the university program and those students who have completed an apprenticeship program. The council may register as members persons who have graduated from an approved school of architecture, who have worked at least three years under the

direction of a member, or who have passed an examination for admission as members.

The proposed Act increases the current work period from two years to three in accordance with the current Canadian and American standards and as required by the current reciprocity agreements.

With respect to the protection of title, the current Act affords protection to the abbreviations of RA, which means registered architect, and the proposed Act also affords protection for the abbreviations of SAA, which means Saskatchewan Association of Architects. These changes are being made because the Saskatchewan Association of Architects has decided to follow other provincial architectural associations in recognizing members by their provincial association letters.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, The Architects Act, 1996 will clarify the management and regulation of this very important profession.

I am pleased today, Mr. Speaker, to move second reading of The Architects Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the minister's remarks in regards to the Bill that he's brought forward. However there are a few concerns.

Firstly in his comments, I notice that . . . I took note that he made mention that it reflects general government policy, which was a real concern to us given some of the policies that the government has caught themselves flat-footed on.

And also the concern that we're not sure how similar this is to the Act that governs engineers, because of the problems that we've known with the leader of the Conservative caucus, who as a welder thought he was an engineer. And we want to make sure that this isn't going to happen again.

So at this time I'd like to adjourn debate, Mr. Speaker.

Debate adjourned.

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

Mr. Jess: — With leave, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Jess: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery are three councillors from the RM (rural municipality) of Douglas, no. 436. And I would like to ask them to stand up as I introduce them: Mr. Alfred Combres, Mr. Wayne Rafuse, and Mr. Dale Anderson.

These rather young looking men have over 35 years of community service between them in the RM council of my own

home, RM of Douglas. And I would ask everyone in the Chamber to join with me in welcoming these gentlemen.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Assembly adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

