

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the construction of a new hospital in La Loche that will provide adequate health care for northern residents.

We have 25 people sign this petition, Mr. Speaker. To name a few, Ralph Lemaigre, Christine Janvier, Kenneth Roth, Martha Morin. And I so present.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to bring forward petitions for people throughout the province that have been plagued by big game damage problems. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to change the Saskatchewan big game damage compensation program so that it provides a more fair and reasonable compensation to farmers and townsfolk for commercial crops, stacked hay, silage bales, shrubs and trees, which are being destroyed by the overpopulation of deer and other big game, including the elimination of the \$500 deductible; and to take control measures to prevent the overpopulation of deer and other big game from causing this destruction.

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

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed these petitions are from Coronach and Shaunavon. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Of citizens petitioning the Assembly to change the big game damage compensation program; and

Of citizens petitioning the government to commission an independent study to review the social impact of gambling.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Tuesday next move the first reading of a Bill, the municipalities VLT commitment Act.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 29 ask the government the following question:

Minister of Environment and Resource Management: (1) how many white-tail deer licences were purchased in 1994; (2) how many wildlife habitat certificates were purchased in 1994?

I'll ask similar questions related to 1995 and 1996, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this morning to introduce to you and all members of the Assembly a group of individuals who are here representing the Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians. Seated in your west gallery, Mr. Speaker, is Mr. Brian Cobbledick. Mr. Cobbledick is accompanied by Jaime Brilltz, who's the executive director of SASTT (Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians), Jim Brandt and Moe Zimmerman, who are past presidents of SASTT.

Mr. Speaker, SASTT is a growing professional group with more than 1,800 members throughout our province. I would like this morning to have all members of the Assembly join with me in welcoming the individuals that I introduced and all the rest of the folks that are there who are employees and members of the association.

I ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming them to the Assembly for the second reading speech later this day.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you, a group of students from my constituency. We have with us today in your gallery 41 grade 8 students, 20 of them from Bruno and 21 from Cudworth. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Jake Jmaeff from Bruno and Mr. Scott Linton from Cudworth; parents Lorraine Hoffman, Wendy Hoppe, Noreen Bremner, Barbara Demong, and Margaret Jungwirth.

I look forward to meeting with these students, their teachers, and their parents after question period and I'd like to ask all the members to join with me in welcoming the students to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, several guests which are here for the second reading speech here later today.

We have Tim Thiele, Saskatchewan manager of Ducks Unlimited — if these individuals could stand and be recognized — Bernie Bolen, president of the Pheasants Forever chapter of Saskatchewan; Sinclair Harrison, president of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities; Alan Appleby, Saskatchewan coordinator of Endangered Spaces Saskatchewan

with the World Wildlife Fund; and Jim Kroshus, project coordinator with the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation.

And I would ask that all members join in welcoming these guests here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to also take this opportunity to welcome members of the SASTT on behalf of the Liberal caucus. Welcome and thank you once again for coming.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to take this opportunity to welcome to the legislature and to Regina the students from Cudworth and Bruno. Having spent quite a number of good years in that area, I have some great memories of them and I hope you enjoy your time in the legislature and in Regina.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll get it right yet — I would also like to introduce Pam Mitchell, executive director of the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, and ask that all members welcome her here as well.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Student Conference Held at Fort San

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'd just like to share with you and my colleagues in the Assembly an interesting event that the Scenic Valley students will be attending today. As a matter of fact, it's probably ongoing now. About 500 grade 7 to 12 students will be spending most of the day learning to pass some of life's biggest tests.

In a first ever student conference to be held at Fort San conference centre, the students will listen to a motivational speech from Alvin Law titled, "There's no such word as can't." After the speech the students will break apart to attend two sessions of his or her choices. The title of the four sessions offered are: "Enduring life in the fast lane;" "All I ever wanted to be is somebody special;" "Sexual harassment: recognize what it is, deal with it;" and, "Preventing sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS awareness."

The topics of this conference came to light from the results of a student survey taken last year, and I would just like to commend the innovative efforts of this school division for acting on these issues and taking steps to provide our youth with these life lessons. I'm sure the students will greatly benefit from this exercise. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

National Wildlife Week

Mr. Koenker: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A little later this morning we will have second reading of The Wildlife Act, amendments that will aid in protecting endangered species here in Saskatchewan, a Bill which by the way, Mr. Speaker, that was to be a companion piece to federal legislation that now appears lost in pre-election shuffle. The federal Liberals got their publicity and then they buried their Bill — typical, I say.

Today in Saskatchewan, however, this Bill is introduced because we are in National Wildlife Week, and during this week the Canadian Wildlife Federation joins hands with federal, provincial, and territorial wildlife agencies to celebrate the rich and irreplaceable diversity of wildlife in our country. And during this week these agencies and concerned individuals across the country engage in a variety of projects and even antics, to raise public awareness to the importance of wildlife and conservation.

This year's theme is, "We're Part of a World Wide Web of Life," and to help focus on the interconnectedness of living things and the importance of biodiversity conservation, the Canadian Wildlife Federation distributes educational kits to schools and youth groups and so does SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management).

Mr. Speaker, National Wildlife Week reminds us that endangered species and spaces are a resource we cannot squander, and all members will join in celebrating this week.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Native Minor Hockey Championships

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to inform the Assembly of a very important event which is occurring in the aboriginal community this weekend.

This weekend in Saskatoon, 60 aboriginal minor hockey teams from all over western Canada will compete in the 9th Annual Western Canada Native Minor Hockey Championships. The tournament often attracts as many as 100 teams ranging from 9 to 17 years of age from as far away as Prince George to The Pas, Manitoba. I am told, Mr. Speaker, that the interest has been expressed by aboriginal teams in Quebec and Ontario.

Tournaments such as these are excellent opportunities for aboriginal youth to come out together, not only to play hockey, but to develop valuable life skills. This tournament is a good stepping stone for young aboriginal athletes to advance in the sport and share experiences with their peers from across Western Canada.

These events are very important, Mr. Speaker, but they do not happen without a lot of hard work, dedication and financial support. The continued success of this tournament can be attributed in a large part to individuals such as Claude Petite, who donate much of their time and their money. Mr. Speaker, I ask the Assembly to join with me in applauding the efforts of the organizers and the athletes involved in this tournament. It is

very important for the members of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, as representatives for all Saskatchewan people, to support events such as this tournament which have such a positive impact on our youth. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Weyburn Redwings Win Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League Title

Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday night in North Battleford the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League title was decided, and I am extremely happy to say that it was the Weyburn Redwings that won it. And I must also add that they had a relatively easy time of disposing of their opponents, the North Battleford North Stars. Matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, it was in four straight wins.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League is recognized as one of the finest Junior A leagues in Canada with many talented players and numerous devoted coaches. So to be top of this league is a real credit to the Weyburn Redwing organization. The Weyburn Redwings have captured the SJHL (Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League) title three times in the last four years — twice in North Battleford — and represented our province in the Royal Bank Cup national championships in '93-94.

With continued hard work and effort I hope that this team will represent our province this year in Summerside, Prince Edward Island. I want to wish the team all the best in their next step to the national championship as they play the St. James Canadians, winners of the Manitoba Junior Hockey League, for the Anavet Cup.

The players, coaches, trainers, the numerous volunteers, and the endless community support have helped the team become one of the finest in Saskatchewan, and hopefully in Canada, at this level.

Mr. Speaker, I will be cheering the provincial champions, the Weyburn Redwings, on in the next round, and I invite all members to join with me in congratulating the Weyburn Redwings.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Grenfell Hosts The Keystone Cup

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this weekend Grenfell, the community of Grenfell, is hosting the Keystone Cup. The Keystone Cup is a competition that brings together teams from across western Canada at the AAA midget level to compete for this cup, and it's a prestigious event. And I think the community of Grenfell needs to be commended for all the work — hard work — and the number of volunteers. It takes a lot of work, a lot of effort, a number of people to put on such a prestigious event.

Mr. Speaker, there are teams from north-western Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and B.C. (British Columbia)

competing in this cup. I had the pleasure of taking in the opening ceremonies last night and watching some of the hockey that was going on. I know that people in that area are going to be treated to some excellent hockey.

I also know that the people of Grenfell are going to look for their team, the Grenfell Play-It-Again Storm, to put together the effort that's needed not only as they showed last weekend, to win the provincial championship, but to win the Keystone Cup and represent . . . I know they're going to represent the community well.

So congratulations to each and every one involved for their hard work and effort.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

In Good Taste Catering Services

Mr. Flavel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan jobs are being created every day. They come about because of bright, innovative Saskatchewan people who see a need and then proceed to meet that need. These small-business people deserve our thanks and they deserve our recognition.

I want to mention one such business, a new business run by three enterprising women in the village of Togo who have put together a business called In Good Taste Food Services. Cheryl Digby, Gaye Lendenbeck, and Gail Ruf began a frozen dessert and catering business a few years ago. Their products were so appetizing and the demand grew so rapidly that they decided to expand the business to include speciality desserts.

With the assistance of PAWBED (Partnership Agreement on Water Based Economic Development), which assisted their expansion, they began production just over a year ago. At first their market was local, but fairly quickly restaurants and hotels began picking up their products because they were unique, because no one else was making them, and of course, Mr. Speaker, because they tasted good.

Now, a year later, the original three have hired three more full-time workers and go through 800 eggs, 200 kilograms of flour, 250 kilograms of canola oil and 200 kilograms of sugar a week, all but the last being Saskatchewan products. Mr. Speaker, this is not IPSCO, but Good Taste Food Service is one more example of how Saskatchewan is thriving.

I applaud the three young entrepreneurs, Cheryl, Gail, and Gaye, and wish them all the best as they make the best.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

"Faded Beauty" Exhibit at Ukrainian Museum

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize two people from my constituency, from the community of Wakaw: David Venne and Natasha Hnidy.

David, a photographer, and Natasha, a young poet, will have

their works on display at the Ukrainian Museum of Canada in Saskatoon until May 25.

The exhibit, entitled "Faded Beauty," is a combination of old and new photographs, poetry, and historical notes. David and Natasha are preserving what is left of old homesteads, farmyards, and history of the pioneers in the Wakaw area. In Natasha's words, this exhibit takes you to a "place you've never been."

David is a freelance photographer in Wakaw. He also collects old photographs from the community and has become interested in the stories of the people who settled in this area.

Natasha is a grade 12 student in Wakaw, who says of her work, when I write I can go anywhere, do anything, and be anyone. She has had her poetry published by the National Library of Poetry in the United States.

Congratulations to David and Natasha. I look forward to viewing your exhibit.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Battlefords Exhibition Family Farm Awards Recipient

Mr. Jess: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have many capable and very successful farmers in our area. One such farmer was honoured recently at a function in North Battleford when he and his family received the Battlefords Exhibition Family Farm Award.

Mr. Nestor Kowalsky of Richard would be the first to acknowledge that such success is not a solo effort and that all family members have played a significant role in such an accomplishment.

I am pleased to congratulate my neighbour, Nestor, and his family on their great success. They have a beautiful farmstead and an extremely well-managed mixed farm. The Kowalsky family was awarded this prize after their name was placed in nomination by a neighbour and was selected by a totally independent committee.

This award to the Kowalsky family, I am convinced, is in no small way due to Nestor's brother's extensive knowledge of agriculture. His brother is of course our own caucus's honorary agriculture adviser, none other than the hon. member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Please join me in congratulating the entire Kowalsky family, now in their fourth generation of Saskatchewan farming.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Timely Tabling of Annual Reports

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, this government makes much about being an open and accountable government, and yet, Mr.

Speaker, there's a lot of talk and very little action. They must realize that the release of annual reports from various government departments and Crown corporations are essential documents that are necessary to hold a government accountable.

For this reason one has to ask why it's taken more than a year to receive reports that cover the past fiscal year. Mr. Speaker, it seems odd that this lack of openness and accountability comes from a New Democratic government that indicated in a 1991 document, *Democratic Reforms for the 1990's*, and I quote:

. . . all annual reports of Government of Saskatchewan departments, agencies, commissions, and Crown(s) . . . be made public no later than six months following the close of (the) . . . year.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain why this government has failed to live up to the commitment to table annual reports in a timely way?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it is the intent and has been the style of this government to release reports from Crowns in a timely fashion, and they will be. And when the member receives them, I think what he will see is that the Crowns in Saskatchewan are in very healthy financial position.

As with any portfolio — many of the members opposite would have mutual fund portfolios — and at the end of the day what you will see with our Crowns is that they are very healthy and doing very well, which is a tremendous change from the way they were under the management of some of the members opposite.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this House the minister in charge of SaskTel confirmed that an internal investigation will take place into the NST fiasco. However, she also indicated that any such investigation will not be made public.

The taxpayers of Saskatchewan, the shareholders of SaskTel, deserve to know how and why this government botched this investment so badly. They need to know the real truth behind this mess. If this is such an open and accountable government, will the minister send a signal to the people of Saskatchewan and make a commitment in this House today to make the results of this investigation public?

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the members opposite get their facts straight first. There's a statutory requirement for tabling the financial statements of Crown corporations, which will be adhered to. The year end is December 31, 1996.

As you know very well, the Crown Corporations Committee, an all-party committee on which members of your party are represented, has done their deliberations based on the year under review, 1996, and in due course the Crown Corporations Committee report will come to this House.

In terms of the review that I referred to yesterday, we always

have an internal review. There's an internal review going on in NST. The details of that will be released in the annual report in due course.

I also made mention of an independent review by the audit committee of the board and asked that they report within 30 days. I did not say that it will not be made public. I said that once I see the report . . . I'll be patiently waiting for the report, and I urge the members opposite to be patient as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Prosecutions Review Report

Mr. Hillson: — Well we've just had some examples of the government's idea of open and accountable government.

But, Mr. Speaker, the trail doesn't stop there. We've just had a review of our Justice department and I think the minister's handling of that review tells us a lot about their commitment to open and accountable government, which doesn't sound a whole bunch different than the Tory commitment previously.

Mr. Speaker, the Justice minister sat on this report for six weeks. Is this his idea of openness and accountability? No one has been able to figure out why it took him six weeks to reveal a report whose most startling recommendation is to provide personal computers to prosecutors — to be matched with, of course, another recommendation that media and opposition politicians should be very careful when they ask questions.

Will the minister explain why the report was hidden for so long? What's so sensitive about it that it couldn't have been revealed earlier? And what does his handling show about open and accountable government that the Deputy Premier says will lead the whole of Canada to elect an NDP (New Democratic Party) federal government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's very interesting to have the comments from the hon. member. I advised him that when the report came, I would be releasing it to the public. It took a couple of weeks longer than I anticipated to put together all of the responses that we had. In that time we released what I would say was a very good budget, which has caused all of the people of Saskatchewan to recognize that we have a fair, open, reasonable government that provides for all of the people of Saskatchewan.

One of the things that I think the hon. member should realize is that any time one does an operational review within a particular department of government, that it does take some time to respond. And we took that time and I think it was a very reasonable time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, with all respect to the Hon. Minister of Justice, we have not had an operational review of the department. We've had an administrative review. There is

absolutely nothing in this report, nothing in anything that's been done in the court cases, which gives us any idea at all of how it happened that the Martensville investigation became so terribly derailed to the point that innocent lives were ruined by scandalous and baseless investigations.

The ongoing court cases will not answer the question of how we can avoid future investigations becoming witch-hunts.

What can the minister tell us that will reassure the people of Saskatchewan that safeguards are being implemented that will prevent a repetition of this sad and disturbing chapter in our province's history?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, without a doubt the Martensville matter has been one of the most troubling criminal cases in Saskatchewan in recent history. It dealt with allegations of sexual abuse by multiple accused of the most vulnerable members of our society. The outcome of that case was neither definitive nor satisfying to either the accused or the families or the victims. And the victims . . . the accused, who are deeply concerned with the outcome, have now launched civil suits. And that's their right under the justice system.

Crown prosecutors who are the subject of those suits have filed statements of defence. Our courts will be making a determination with respect to those proceedings. As I have said many, many times, this restricts my ability to comment on a number of these matters, and it's highly inappropriate for me or for anyone to compromise the proceeding of the Court of Queen's Bench.

As I said yesterday, there's a situation where we're having to deal with the facts, and every time that the hon. member uses some of these words that he does use to describe this case, he further adds to some of the problems.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, I didn't invent the problem, and I don't think the minister's shoot-the-messenger solution is really going to work. I wasn't asking for him to go into the past of what's happened. I recognize that's before the courts and that will be handled in due course.

What I'm trying to ask the minister to focus in on, and have several times, is what can he tell us about the future? What have we learned? What can we do to ensure this doesn't happen again? What can we do to prevent a repetition?

Yes, the past is over and done with, and yes, the courts will have to now deal with it. I'm not asking about the past. I'm asking about what we have learned and put in place for the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you. I finally have a question that's reasonable and makes sense. What this government does, what

this government has done, is recognize, as with all the jurisdictions across North America, that we did not know how to do the proper things with children's evidence.

And that's one of the big issues in this whole case, is how do you interview children. Well this government has spent much time and effort, through the victims' fund, through Social Services, through Health, to look at how do you deal with children and the evidence that they present to the court.

We have an integrated child abuse unit in Regina that's been operating for awhile. I just recently was in Saskatoon to open the Saskatoon Child Centre, which deals with exactly the issue that the member is asking about. And I would encourage him and all the members there and all of the public of Saskatchewan to be fully aware of the kinds of changes that we have made to deal with children and how they present evidence to the court.

And I thank the member very much for that question that I can finally answer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Gaming Corporation Annual Report

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is becoming totally littered by promises which are tossed aside by this government. The NDP indicated in a 1991 document, and I'll quote:

The timely release of these reports (the annual reports) would prevent the government from slow-walking their public review by the Crown Corporations and Public Accounts Committee of the legislature.

This is something that I hope the government is going to pay attention to because we really do need an answer.

What's the government doing? An example, Mr. Speaker, the 1995-96 annual report for Gaming Corporation, only just now released. In the case of Casino Regina there are more than \$37 million of taxpayers' dollars at stake. The general public and the media deserve to know in a timely fashion the true state of this investment — whether it's living up to its profit projections and how much foreign partners are receiving, to name a couple of examples.

We keep asking through freedom of information for information. We get denied, denied, and denied. The opposite of open and accountable is closed and inscrutable. Will the Premier explain why his government is hiding the facts from the people of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why the former leader of the Liberal Party is so grumpy this morning. I don't understand what he's so excited about. I really want to tell him that this is the most up to date the Crown Corporations Committee has been in the last 20 years. Right now. And why the member is getting up today in a grumpy way and saying that we're way behind on Crown

corporations and the reports aren't tabled, where the heck are you coming from? Did you have a bad sleep last night or what's wrong?

The fact of the matter is we're right up to date, we're right up to date. It might be that the federal polling isn't good enough, that Chrétien isn't doing well on some big issues, but don't take it out on the Crown Corporations Committee. They're doing their work. There's an invitation on your desk to the 50th anniversary of the Crown Corporations working committee. Be a little more positive. It's not that bad.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Successor Rights

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Highways. Mr. Minister, your new Highways Act is nothing less than a joke — 15 years to twin No. 1 and the Yellowhead highways. You could promise anything 15 years from now. You certainly aren't going to be in charge at that point. In fact at the rate you're going you won't be the minister 15 months from now. And your plan to deal with short-line railways is to refer it to another committee.

Mr. Minister, there already is a committee. It's called the Southwest Saskatchewan Transportation Committee, and they say the solution is get rid of successor rights. Will you do that today, Mr. Minister, or are we going to have to wait 15 years to see short-line rail development in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Chairman, the member is a few months behind with respect to his understanding of the situation. The fact is that everyone in the industry, everyone concerned with short-line railways, understands that the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board has a lot of discretion with respect to whether or not successor rights apply. There's nothing automatic about it. It will depend upon the facts of a particular case.

Assuming that successor rights do apply — and that is not a certainty by any means — then the railways and a number of short-line operators have indicated that they don't anticipate any problems at all, that they'll be able to make collective bargaining work on the short-lines as it does in every other part of our society.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday something in this legislature was very remarkable that happened — your government actually admitted there were flaws in The Trade Union Act and you waived provisions within that Act, allowing IPSCO to sign a five-year deal with its union. We supported that legislation; it passed in less than an hour.

Mr. Minister, getting rid of successor rights is just as simple. In fact we have a Bill that we could already pass here today that would do exactly that. We could pass it this morning and clear the track for short-rail line development here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Minister, will you show the same spirit of cooperation that you did on Tuesday? What everyone says needs to happen is to eliminate successor rights to develop short-line rails in Saskatchewan. Will you move on that today, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, no we will not. The fact of the matter is that people involved in short-line railways, including short-line railway operators, acknowledge that the successor right question is not a problem.

There are lots of problems around short-line railways. But this is old news, Mr. Speaker. These members of the Conservative opposition are just out of date on the question. The fact of the matter is that collective bargaining can work if indeed it applies. The fundamental question is whether or not successor rights applies . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. All hon. members will come to order. I'm having a great deal of difficulty being able to hear the minister's response because members are shouting from their chairs on both sides of the House. And I'll ask all hon. members to allow the minister's response to be heard.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, the reality is that everyone interested in the short-line railway question understands . . .

An Hon. Member: — Does SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities)? They're right up there. Does SARM think that?

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Will the member listen, Mr. Speaker? I'm going to try and give him an answer.

The fact of the matter is that everyone involved with the short-line question understands that the Labour Relations Board has jurisdiction to determine the question; it is not automatic. It is a question of whether or not they're going to . . . They will decide that successor rights apply or doesn't apply.

Now in the worst-case scenario, it is clear as between the number of short-line potential operators and the unions involved, that they will be able to bargain collectively in a way that is short-line friendly. Now that should be enough even for the members opposite with their anti-union bias.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Young Offenders Act

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question's to the Minister of Justice. And, Mr. Speaker, and, Mr. Minister, people across not only this province but across Canada, are quite concerned with the Young Offenders Act. In fact it's a question that has been raised time and time again.

Just recently a group of students at Miller High School here in city of Regina put their heads together and came up with some suggestions and some proposals, some ideas. Mr. Minister, these students are going to Ottawa tomorrow, and what I would

like to know, Mr. Minister, what you have done to show support.

First of all, Mr. Minister, did you sign their petition to show support for the ideas they have brought forward? And, Mr. Minister, are you in favour of toughening the Young Offenders Act?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to report, as I did previously, that I met with these young people for almost two hours and we had a very fruitful discussion. One of the things that I did yesterday in fact was wish the chaperon who's going along with them, who is Chief Murray Langgard of the Regina city police, I wished him well and it's my understand that they're leaving tomorrow and that they're working together and hope to meet with Mr. Rock Monday afternoon.

Now one of the things that comes out of this discussion is that my sense of optimism about the youth of Saskatchewan has been renewed. And it's very important, I think, that all of us recognize that these young people have done a very good job of identifying and working with a number of the issues. And what we have done as a government is continually work with the various young offender issues. These young people are part of that discussion and we very much thank them for their work.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Echo Valley Construction Site Accident

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the minister responsible for the New Careers Corporation. Now, Mr. Minister, in November, New Careers was fined \$75,000 for violating the occupational health and safety regulations. Just recently, SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) was also fined \$20,000 for this very same incident.

Now New Careers and SPMC failed to provide a safe working environment at a project at the Echo Valley centre in Fort Qu'Appelle. We understand that this resulted in one employee being killed in a fall.

Now, Mr. Minister, how could this happen? Have you determined who is responsible for this tragic accident, and what actions have been taken against these individuals who may have been responsible for the accident.

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The incident that the member refers to is of course a very serious one, and the departments made appropriate responses when they were brought before the courts with respect to the matter. They have pleaded to it and the courts have imposed fines that were commensurate with the gravity of the situation.

I am not able to tell the member what specific actions with respect to individuals have followed from that. But I want to say to the member that it is indeed a serious situation and it must not be repeated. I think we can take it that both SPMC and the New Careers people have learned an important lesson from

this, and the lives and safety and health of the people who are working on projects like that are paramount and must be protected at all costs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a supplemental question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, simply fining New Careers and SPMC seems to be totally pointless. After all, those are government agencies, and the fine money collected is collected by the government from itself basically. So your government is not really penalized at all.

So, Mr. Minister, in addition to this fine, is any further compensation going to be paid to the families of the worker who was killed? What further action are you taking to amend the negligence of your department and the people involved?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Well of course the people who were unfortunate victims of the situation are, like all other working people in the province, covered by The Workers' Compensation Act and they will receive compensation pursuant to that Act.

As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, I'm not able as I stand here today to tell the member what specific actions were taken against employees. That's a management question within the administration of those organizations, and not of course something for the minister to decide.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Child Poverty

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government likes to sell itself to the rest of the country as one which leads the way in the war against child poverty and other social issues. But the fact is that while the Premier accepts accolades, there is a great deal of evidence to prove that too many children in this province are being neglected by a government that makes these very claims.

The Premier pledged to end child poverty in his first term. When asked to explain why this has not happened, his only explanation is that sometimes you reach for the stars and get caught in the branches.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the second-highest level of child poverty in the country. It is incumbent that the Premier recognize that child poverty will never be alleviated if he does not make the connection between the litany of social ills that contribute to this problem.

Yesterday in this House I called on this government to strike an all-party committee so that any issues surrounding children at risk can be referred to the Children's Advocate for review and investigation and subsequent report to this Assembly.

Will the Premier or his designate explain why he does not take

a lead role and adopt these suggestions?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, the member, if she were reading newspapers, including national newspapers, would know that our Premier has taken a very active role on child poverty and has been receiving — and I think in a very proper way — accolades from child poverty groups right across the country.

Now what's interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that the only time you hear Liberals talking about child poverty is when there's an imminent election, which is sad. Mr. Paul Martin, who spent the last three and a half years hacking and slashing social programs for children right across Canada, when the election is imminent, now comes forward with a budget that talks about — and I say talks about — doing something about child poverty, not today, not this budget, but if they're re-elected down the road.

And I say to the member opposite, if you're sincere in this, I would urge you to talk to your federal counterparts. Get on the phone to Chrétien and say, don't wait till after the federal election, do something now. Stop talking and do some action that would help the children of Canada who find themselves in this unfortunate predicament.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier has indicated that he supports federal legislation which would ensure the prosecution of Canadians who are involved in child sex trades in foreign countries. Yet in this province, the child sex trade is one which is growing at a disturbing and rapid pace.

Mr. Premier, it is admirable that you were speaking out on this issue as it affects children in other countries. However, the children of this province are the ones that need and should expect your help and are not getting it.

During this session I introduced a Bill, The Measures to Combat Child Prostitution Act, which would be a first step to assist children who are victims of the child sex trade.

Will the Premier or his designate take the lead in this province — put politics aside and adopt this legislation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I say again to the member opposite, who raises an important issue, and I couldn't agree more with the principle of the question that she asks. One really has to wonder though, when she raises it here, when in large part the issue is not being dealt with properly at the federal level as it would apply to the issues that she raises, that she has provided no opportunity in this House by speaking to the federal government either in written form or in her speeches about lobbying them to get the projects done and completed in harmony and cooperation with the federal government.

But she will have a chance. Next Tuesday, there will be a motion put on the order paper and debated here in the House where we will be watching closely — not to what you're saying, but how you vote on this motion that deals with this most important issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 217 — The Trade Union Amendment Act (Repealing Successor Rights)

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of a Bill No. 217, The Trade Union Amendment Act. I so move.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

Mr. Goohsen: — By leave, later this day.

Leave not granted.

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

Bill No. 47 — The Psychologists Act, 1997

Hon. Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move first reading of The Psychologists Act, 1997.

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

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

Ms. Hamilton: — With leave, to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you. It's my pleasure today, Mr. Speaker, to introduce to you and through you to all colleagues in the Assembly on behalf of the minister responsible for Indian and Metis Secretariat and a member from Lake Centre, seated in the east gallery, Raul Macias Bravo, who is a representative from the Canadian Institute for Friendship with People. He's visiting with individuals and groups across Canada to promote relationships of friendship between Canada and Cuba. Cuba is hoping to establish exchanges of trade, culture, and tourism. He is most pleased to visit Regina and take part in the ceremonies of the Government of Saskatchewan today.

He's accompanied by someone I recognize as well, Ms. Mona Acker. Mona and I have the privilege to work together on a task force for community and women's issues in Regina. And I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, while I'm also on my feet, if I may also join in from my colleague's introduction and say hello to a constituent of mine, Jamie Brittz, who I know has been working for years to see the accomplishment that will be presented to the House shortly. And I ask members to again welcome Jamie to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantfoer: — To request leave, Mr. Speaker, to move some motions substituting committee members from our caucus.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Melville:

That the name of Ms. June Draude be substituted for that of Mr. Rod Gantfoer on the list of members comprising the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Melville:

That the name of Mr. Jack Hillson be substituted for that of Mr. Gerard Aldridge on the list of members composing the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Municipal Law

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Melville:

That the name of Mr. Jack Hillson be substituted for that of Mr. Harvey McLane on the list of members composing the Standing Committee on Municipal Law.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Estimates

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Melville:

That the name of Mr. Rod Gantfoer be substituted for that of Mr. Gerard Aldridge on the list of members composing the Standing Committee on Estimates.

Motion agreed to.

Special Committee on Regulations

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Melville:

That the name of Mr. Gerard Aldridge be substituted for that of Ms. June Draude on the list of members composing the Special Committee on Regulations.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on the Environment

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Melville:

That the name of Ms. Arlene Julé be substituted for that of Mr. Bob Bjornerud on the list of members composing the Standing Committee on the Environment.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Non-controversial Bills

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, gratefully, lastly, I move, seconded by the member from Melville:

That the name of Mr. Jack Hillson be substituted for that of Mr. Ken Krawetz on the list of members composing the Standing Committee on Non-controversial Bills.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 18 — The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Act

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Act. Over the last 18 months our department has been working very closely with this association. I'm very pleased today, Mr. Speaker, to be moving this Bill.

The purpose of this Act is to protect the health, the safety, and welfare of the public by establishing professional standards of expertise and conduct and by identifying competent and qualified applied science technologists and technicians.

The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians 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 association of Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians — as we better know it, Mr. Speaker, as SASTT — is a growing professional group with more than 1,800 members across our province. SASTT is a non-profit, self-governing organization of men and women who have been certified by their peers to have a recognized level of specialized post-secondary academic and practical training in the applied science and technology field. SASTT has four chapters across the province, in Lloydminster, in Prince Albert, in Regina, and one in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, members of SASTT are highly trained specialists who apply fundamental principles, methods, knowledge, and training to solve technical problems. They work in our oil patches, in our mines, in our hospitals, and in our agricultural sector, just to name a few of the employment areas. They have worked in northern Saskatchewan with SaskTel to provide technical protection and assist in replacing ageing switching and trunking equipment with digital fibre-optics cable.

Other duties and responsibilities undertaken by the applied science technologists include environmental monitoring and analysis, quality control and analysis of construction sites, geo-technical investigations of proposed sites, corrective maintenance and safety inspections of clinical and medical equipment.

Mr. Speaker, in 1995 Mr. Howard Derksen of Saskatoon, a member of SASTT, contributed to our agricultural economy by designing and marketing the Freedom Lift. The Freedom Lift is an innovative wheelchair lift system that enables hundreds of farmers and other mobility-impaired individuals across Canada and around the world to enter and exit farm equipment or aircraft unassisted from their wheelchairs.

Mr. Derksen is just one example of an applied science technologist who has made a significant contribution to our Saskatchewan economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, for a number of years now SASTT members have played a significant role in Saskatchewan's growing economy. They have been pursuing self-regulating legislation since 1980s . . . since the early 1980s similar to title protection legislation for applied science technologists and technicians currently exists in the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, and that of British Columbia. SASTT has conducted . . . has consulted with and received positive support from its members as well as other provincial technologists and technicians from across Canada.

SASTT, in its bid for title protection legislation, has also received support from the city of Regina, from the city of Saskatoon, from the city of Yorkton, the towns of Creighton and Shaunavon, Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

Key provisions to The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Act will include: continue the association as a corporation; they will establish a board of

directors to manage and regulate the affairs and business of the association; they will provide for public representation on the board; they will provide a board of directors with the authority to make new bylaws; require the board of directors to keep a register of all of their members; and will provide title protection for the terms "applied science technologist" and "certified technician"; will establish a professional conduct committee and a discipline committee; and will require the board of directors to provide an annual report to the minister.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public, it is necessary to establish professional standards of expertise and conduct and to identify competent and qualified applied science technologists and certified technicians to the public.

Mr. Speaker, The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Act will clarify and manage the regulations of all of these professionals. I am pleased today, Mr. Speaker, to move second reading of The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1100)

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Act. I am speaking on behalf of the opposition leader, Ken Krawetz, who unfortunately could not . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The hon. member will I think immediately recognize that he's not permitted to use proper names of members here — refer to them only by positions. And I'll ask that he'll follow the rules of the House in providing his debate.

Mr. Belanger: — I apologize. I'm speaking on behalf of the opposition leader from Canora-Pelly who unfortunately could not be here today.

As the minister mentioned, Bill 18 would establish a legal authority for Saskatchewan applied science technologists and technicians to create their own professional association. It seems the SASTT association has put a tremendous amount of work into accomplishing this goal, and I would like to commend them on their efforts.

The package supplied by the association to provide background on the purpose and structure of this legislation was extremely informative. And dozens of letters of support from city commissioners throughout Saskatchewan provide this Bill with impeccable recommendations.

Upon reviewing Bill 18, we found that most of the clauses it contained followed the general pattern that is used in legislation creating similar professional bodies. Because the safety of Saskatchewan people is a priority for all members of this House, I do believe that anything that can be done to set and maintain a high standard of safety guidelines must be done.

In accordance with establishing a legally recognized, professional association, Bill 18 proposes the establishment of an association board comprised of elected members and two appointments by the government. The association board is extremely necessary in order to manage the body and administer the bylaws and guidelines.

The main concern that we have with this section of the Act is that while it's not unusual for the government to appoint a few members to the association board, unlike The Legal Profession Act, this Bill does not require the government to consult with the association on its board member choices.

The lack of this requirement could potentially cause future conflicts between board members on the direction that the SASTT association would take. This Act also creates investigative and disciplinary bodies within the association to deal with any allegations of professional misconduct on the part of its members.

Once again, we support any measure that must be taken in order to ensure that a high standard of safety is established in order to protect Saskatchewan people. If the investigation committee determines that a complaint against a member has merit, the member will be subject to a formal hearing during which he or she will have a chance to defend their actions but could also face the repercussions for unprofessional behaviour in the workplace.

The discipline committee can administer expulsion, suspension, or other professional restrictions as a course of action. If Saskatchewan residents are somehow put at risk because a member's actions show a lack of knowledge, skill, or judgement concerning the safety of the public, then discipline is certainly necessary.

However I do find that section 40 of this Bill is a bit unusual. Section 40 basically says that an employer who fires a member of the SASTT association with cause must report it to the association. This would be applied in cases where the employer feels the member has shown professional incompetence or professional misconduct. We are concerned that this requirement on behalf of the employers may, in some cases, lead to further problems. For example, the prospect of reporting to the association could potentially begin to show up as a bargaining chip in negotiations with members who have been fired.

But on a whole, I believe that Bill 18 will provide SASTT members with long-overdue professional recognition. Allowing members to become certified members of the association will hopefully create more confidence in applied engineering technologists and technician graduates in Saskatchewan. This new certification may even create new employment opportunities for some.

We were particularly encouraged by a letter of support for this legislation written by Dr. Art Knight, president of the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology. I quote:

Legislative changes which would recognize the rights of our graduates to practise the work for which they have been academically trained would remove some of the artificial barriers that are now preventing some technical personnel from achieving their full potential.

Mr. Speaker, the passage of this legislation would enable Saskatchewan members of the SASTT association to join professional certification ranks that are already offered in British Columbia, Quebec, Ontario, and New Brunswick.

Overall I welcome the general intent of Bill 18 as it pertains to maintaining a high level of academic qualifications and practise of Saskatchewan applied science technologists and technicians. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address some of the issues brought forward in this piece of legislation. We're particularly happy with the new features dealing with safety. That is very, very important in both our society and in industry generally, Mr. Speaker. Anything that can be done more safely should and must be done.

We're particularly pleased to see the recognition that SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) is making a very positive contribution both on the educational area in this province and again, in providing technologists and trained people for industry. Without industry, without jobs in this province, this economy will certainly falter. We're pleased with their hard work, Mr. Speaker, and we would like to commend them for that.

Technologists and technicians have been quite involved in my life, Mr. Speaker, in various industries that I have worked in, particularly in the oil field. It's just not in education or in the medical fields that we find technologists, but it's across industry, Mr. Speaker, and they play a very vital role in that industry.

We have had however, Mr. Speaker, some groups with some concerns about this particular piece of legislation, and before this legislation moves too far ahead, Mr. Speaker, we would like to confirm our contacts with those groups to ensure that their concerns have been addressed.

In general, Mr. Speaker, we like the thrust of this legislation. We're pleased where it's going to but there are some people in society who do have some concerns and we would like to ensure that their concerns have been addressed to this particular piece of legislation before it moves forward.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate on this Bill.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 42 — The Wildlife Act, 1997

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After my remarks I will be moving the second reading of The Wildlife Act, 1997.

Saskatchewan contains one of the most diverse and unique ecosystems in the world. Our lush prairie grasslands, productive wetlands, diverse aspen parklands, and the wilderness forests and lakes in the North are renowned for their beauty and abundance of wildlife.

Like most parts of the world, human impact has resulted in significant changes to our natural landscape. Consequently, many species of mammals, birds, plants, and other life forms have declined in numbers. Some of the most well-known endangered species in Saskatchewan include the whooping crane, the burrowing owl, and the piping plover. The presence of animals and plants in their natural habitat adds to our appreciation and enjoyment of this province.

How well we sustain native species indicates how well we are managing the province's ecosystems. Soil, air, and water quality, along with habitat, biological diversity, and human activities are all interrelated. When species decline or are at risk, it likely means that the rest of the ecosystem, including ourselves, are also at risk.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I will highlight the Act's major features including a section on species at risk. Mr. Speaker, this Act incorporates the species at risk legislation which will help to focus activities and actions on endangered and threatened and vulnerable species. The department is moving towards focusing on an ecosystem approach to land management which in the future will help to ensure that all species are sustained.

However, ecosystem management is a long-term approach and this legislation is needed to ensure the survival of species currently at risk. The proposed amendments will establish legislative authority to designate, protect, and recover plant and animal species at risk. A new definition of wild species is added to include all wild organisms. This will provide the mandate for the protection of plants, animals, and invertebrates.

The proposed amendments protect endangered species in a number of ways. The Act will facilitate a cooperative approach with landowners through organizations such as the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, and conservation organizations such as the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Nature Saskatchewan, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, World Wildlife Fund.

It will also increase educational awareness and support for species at risk programs. The provisions allow for the preparation and implementation of recovery plans to protect and conserve wild species at risk. The Act makes it illegal to kill, capture, harvest, traffic in, or export wild species at risk.

This amendment also establishes penalties for corporate as well as individual violators of the species at risk legislation. These amendments are a result of the Saskatchewan government's commitment to the national accord for the protection of species at risk which was signed with the federal government in November 1996. Saskatchewan is committed to the principles of the accord and has worked cooperatively with other provinces, territories, and the federal government over the past

two years to develop a national approach to endangered species conservation in Canada.

The agreement requires all jurisdictions to establish complementary legislation and programs that provide for effective protection of wildlife at risk throughout Canada. Four provinces currently have legislation in place and two provinces recently introduced legislation. Saskatchewan is now ready to join them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Passage of this Act will show Canada and the world that the Government of Saskatchewan is committed to meeting its responsibilities in endangered species protection.

The Saskatchewan legislation will not be a conflicting, heavy-handed enforcement approach to protecting endangered species. Rather, cooperation and consultation will be used in working with landowners, conservation organizations, and the public to manage and protect species at risk.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Mr. Speaker, we commend landowners in southern Saskatchewan who have maintained natural habitat on their land. Our native flora and fauna remains here because of the good stewardship provided by generations of farmers and ranchers.

The future of wildlife is dependent upon the continued cooperation and support offered by landowners. That is why Saskatchewan's endangered species legislation is designed to work with the agriculture community. This will be done through cooperative programs that will complement the landowners' efforts to maintain habitat and wildlife on their land.

Another area this legislation will add to in The Wildlife Act is the big game damage compensation program.

Mr. Speaker, last fall the government implemented the big game crop damage compensation program. Given the severe winter conditions we experienced this year, big game crop damage is expected to be even higher than it was in 1995-96. Over 1,350 claims have been filed by approximately 800 producers under this new program and the values of the claims is expected to approach one-and-a-half million dollars.

The Act's amendments provide the necessary legal framework to enable financial administration of the program by, number one, the establishment of a separate fund to hold all revenue from the sale of the \$11 big game damage fund licence; number two, designating the revenue from the sale of this licence to go into this fund; and number three, providing authority to direct revenue from this fund to the Saskatchewan crop insurance program to be delivered through the agriculture stabilization fund.

Farmers and conservation organizations have been pressuring government for a number of years to implement a program to

provide compensation for crop damage caused by big game animals. The government is responding to the needs and concerns expressed by landowners who have suffered financial losses from crop damage caused by big game animals.

Mr. Speaker, in order to ensure that this program provides viable long-term compensation to the farmers of Saskatchewan, the provincial government has recently contributed \$2 million to the big game damage compensation program.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1115)

Hon. Mr. Scott: — This money, along with the approximately \$600,000 collected from hunters in 1996, will ensure that the program will be able to meet . . . be able to cover the estimated one-and-a-half million dollars in claims expected during this particularly severe winter and provide seed money for future years.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we are having discussions with the federal government for a matching federal contribution to the big game damage compensation program

Mr. Speaker, landowners cannot be expected to absorb all of the costs associated with wildlife depredation, nor should only one user group — in this case, hunters — be the only ones contributing dollars to the compensation fund. The \$2 million contributed from general revenue recognizes that wildlife is a public resource and everyone should contribute to the management and conservation of this valuable resource.

The big game damage compensation program along with the publicly funded big game damage prevention program and waterfowl damage and prevention programs clearly shows this government recognizes the significant contribution landowners make towards wildlife management in Saskatchewan. We will continue to work with landowners to resolve conflicts between landowners and wildlife .

We also have a number of administrative housekeeping amendments we will be introducing, Mr. Speaker. The proposed amendments deal with the administrative housekeeping. The Act continues existing interpretation and administrative provisions currently provided for in The Wildlife Act, continues existing licensing requirements and prohibitions related to hunting and trapping, and continues existing provisions related to investigations and search and seizure penalties and offences, forfeiture of property, and regulation-making powers.

Also a number of sections have been updated to conform to current drafting practices or have been redrafted for clarity. The majority of the regulation-making powers remain unchanged; some are amended to include wild species and wild species at risk.

Mr. Speaker, many public meetings and workshops have been held to get input from the people of Saskatchewan on the various aspects of this Act. The Act will support the continued

development of pro-management and partnership initiatives. And this will respect the work which those have already been established with.

This government recognizes the importance of wildlife to Saskatchewan people and in turn recognizes the economic and social benefits and the environmental responsibilities for managing provincial wildlife resources.

This is just a brief overview of some of the many new features of The Wildlife Act, 1997. If our wildlife resource is maintained in a healthy state, it will continue to provide a wide variety of benefits for a long time to come.

The new Act acknowledges that the Government of Saskatchewan has a responsibility for protecting, conserving, and enhancing the wildlife resource for the public benefit. It also recognizes the importance of a strong partnership between provincial and local governments, landowners, first nations, and stakeholders in working together to manage our wildlife resource. The Act will ensure Saskatchewan's unique and valuable wildlife resource will be managed and protected for the people of Saskatchewan today and tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, it is now my great pleasure to move second reading of The Wildlife Act, 1997. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to be able to speak on the second reading of Bill No. 42, The Wildlife Act, 1997. It's a major piece of legislation that will require detailed scrutiny by our caucus. We want to make sure through analysis and consultation with stakeholders that Bill No. 42 has all the necessary provisions to manage and protect our precious wildlife resource — a renewable resource, but only if it's managed in a sustainable manner through conservation integrated with resource management.

We've seen far too many examples of where presumable renewable resources have been brought to the brink of extinction for the lack of political courage to implement sustainable management and harvesting practices. The near destruction of the Atlantic cod stocks and the Pacific salmon stocks is a glaring example of man's mismanagement and exploitation of nature's otherwise potentially unlimited bounty. Let's make sure that this doesn't happen in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'll have much more to say about the prudent stewardship of our resources during detailed examination of the Act.

Wildlife, be it fish, fowl, fur, or plants, brings pleasure to all of us in many different ways — there are the hunters who enjoy the hunt on crisp autumn days; there are the fishermen on sun-kissed Saskatchewan lakes hoping for the big one; there is the photographer who seeks that once-in-a-lifetime picture at sunrise and sunset; and there are the tourists that seek that unique Saskatchewan experience in the Big Muddy, in The Great Sand Hills, the Grasslands National Park, or in our national forests.

It is a way of life that's to be treasured and preserved. Wildlife, if properly husbanded, is a resource that will continue to provide revenue long after our non-renewable resources are depleted.

Tourism, and in particular eco-tourism, are among the world's fastest growing industries and Saskatchewan is no exemption. Saskatchewan, like many industries, needs a variety of resources for its viability. These include natural resources such as forests, water, animals, fish and birds, beautiful scenery, and clean air.

Tourism is primarily a service industry. A successful tourism business does not just sell products such as a hotel room or a meal, but rather an experience, whether it is a high-class urban experience involving museums, galleries, theatres, and heritage sites, or a wilderness experience involving bird-watching, photography, hiking, or fishing.

The healthy state of tourism is dependent on resource protection. The tourism sector must be very careful that it doesn't through exploitation destroy the very wilderness upon which its livelihood is based. Careful planning, monitoring, and cooperation between users will be essential to any development in these areas.

Shrinking fish catches, disappearing natural habitat, declining bird populations, and the depletion of fresh water supplies are now affecting every corner of the world. Saskatchewan is not immune to these developments, all of them are happening here. That is why, Mr. Speaker, during detailed discussion on Bill 42, we will want the Minister of Environment and Resource Management to explain what kind of integrated approach he and his department are taking with respect to agriculture, tourism, oil and gas exploration and extraction, and the exploration and mining of minerals and metals. All of these activities, Mr. Speaker, have a tremendous impact on our wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Does the new wildlife Act provide sufficient protection and the means to sustain and perpetuate these resources is the question. If in our judgement it does, then we'll support it. If it does not, then we'll move amendments to sure that it does. Conservation and sustainability go hand in hand.

The 1992 conservation strategy for sustainable development in Saskatchewan set out eight principles for sustainable development and seven conservation objectives. These were the result of intensive and province-wide grass roots consultations with stakeholders and the general public.

The preface to the conservation strategy put The Wildlife Act in context. Saskatchewan has been blessed with an abundance of natural resources, however in a hundred years of settlement, our natural resources have been degraded. We are borrowing natural resources from our children and we must pass resources on to them in the best possible condition.

To do so, we must recognize that our environment, economy, and social systems are interdependent. A healthy economy can last only in a healthy environment. If our economy is healthy,

we can afford to make wise environmental choices. Our social system also relies on the economy to support our health, education, and social services, and we need a healthy environment for our physical and spiritual well-being.

The purpose of the conservation strategy was to focus efforts by government, industry, interest groups, and individuals to achieve sustainable development. A conservation strategy was intended to provide a framework to help Saskatchewan residents meet their needs without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

We will want to explore with the minister and his department what it has done to implement the strategy since 1992 when it was received by and tabled in this Chamber by the Premier. What has he and the department done to implement those recommendations directed at it; and what has it done to lead by example and to coordinate and integrate its activities with other departments, stakeholders, and the industry?

Sustainable development policies and practice are the responsibility of everyone, but Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, if for no other reason than by virtue of its name, has the responsibility to drive the conservation strategy implementation. The department's failure or success in doing so will no doubt be reflected in the grade it gets from the World Wildlife Fund this year.

Our land, compared with what it was, is like the skeleton of a body wasted with disease. The soft parts have vanished and all that remains is the bare carcass. This lament, which could have been quoted from a contemporary ecologist, was actually sounded in the fourth century BC (before Christ) by the Greek philosopher Plato who was mourning the destruction and erosion of his Attica.

Environmentally related problems have contributed to the demise of entire civilizations. The decline of Mesopotamia, present day Iraq, has been associated with the salinization of soils attributed to unsound irrigation practices. Saskatchewan's aboriginal people have long recognized their stewardship obligations as reflected in the earlier quoted saying of a native elder that, quote, "We are borrowing natural resources from our children and we must pass them on in the best possible condition."

This has been an article of faith with aboriginal peoples centuries before the 1987 release of *Our Common Future* by the World Commission on Environment and Development, which defines sustainable development as, and I quote, "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own."

A native elder stated it even more simply and eloquently. Prior to the arrival of the settlers, aboriginal people had inhabited Saskatchewan for 10,000 years living in harmony with nature not exploiting their environment or resources, but hunting and fishing and trapping to sustain themselves. Not until the settlers arrived was the buffalo senselessly slaughtered to near extinction and millions of passenger-pigeons were hunted into extinction.

Had the settlers and their descendants shown the same respect and reverence for wildlife and the wildlife habitat as the aboriginal people, we would not have lost 40 per cent of our wetlands, 80 per cent of our aspen parkland, and 75 per cent of our native grassland.

There's a lesson to be learned here somewhere. Across Canada, in Saskatchewan, conflicts escalate when more and more people want to use limited resources for a greater number of purposes. Conflicts challenge traditional decision making, and many decisions are protested, appealed, or ignored.

Misgivings are growing about the ability of governments to mediate adequately between competing interests. Appeals, court cases, and civil disobedience create costs, a psychological drain, and additional uncertainty. A case in point is the dispute between our aboriginal people and the governments about hunting and fishing rights.

In court, cases are the inevitable winners and losers. A better way is consensus building, Mr. Speaker. It requires separation of needs from once a willingness to acknowledge the needs of others and the development of trust where none existed before. Decisions by consensus usually inspire commitment, contributing to sustainable development.

A consensus decision can be time-consuming, costly, and sometimes frustrating. However, unilateral decisions such as the imposition of the \$11 surcharge on hunters for big game crop damage always result in anger and frustration and the risk of non-compliance.

Consensus building should be our first approach to decision making to make environmental and economic integration and sustainable development successful. We'll explore these issues further, Mr. Speaker, with stakeholders who we are contacting.

So at this time, I would like to move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1130)

Bill No. 34 — The Young Offenders' Services Amendment Act, 1997

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning I am very pleased to rise today and move second reading of The Young Offenders' Services Amendment Act, 1997.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it's become increasingly evident that the formal court-centred system of dealing with young people who break the law has for at least some individuals met with very limited success both in terms of accountability to victims and in terms of reducing the likelihood that the youth will re-offend. Mr. Speaker, we believe there must be more effective ways and alternate ways to deal with youth in our communities who break the law.

There are, Mr. Speaker, alternate methods commonly being

referred to now as restorative justice, who hold the young people directly accountable to the victim and to the community. At the same time, these restorative justice initiatives, Mr. Speaker, seek to restore harmony between the young person and his or her victim, and within the larger community.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, rather than isolating the young person because of the offending behaviour, he or she is given the opportunity to make up for the offence and become again a contributing member of the community.

Mr. Speaker, it's often an unfortunate reality that victims of crime in our communities often say that they feel ignored and uninformed by our formal criminal justice system. Many will describe how they feel victimized not only once as a result of the crime, but twice — the second time by the formal process itself.

Mr. Speaker, in our experience now, when a restorative justice approach is used the victim and the offender play key roles in resolving the situation. Rather than being ignored, Mr. Speaker, the restorative justice approach affords victims the opportunity to describe to the offender in person how they and their families have been affected by his or her unlawful behaviour. In that context, where they desire, Mr. Speaker, they can freely express their thoughts and opinions as well on how the young person should be held accountable for that behaviour. Family and friends of both the victim and the offender also have the opportunity to participate, and in many cases, interested members of the community may also take part.

Mr. Speaker, having witnessed some of these restorative justice groups, I can tell you this: it is not by any means — by any means — the easy way out for the young person. Young people who have experienced it commonly remark that facing their victim — face to face — and having to listen as the victim expresses, sometimes with a great deal of emotion, their feelings about the offence, was for that person one of the most difficult, if not the most difficult, thing they have ever done in their lives.

And they have said to me, Mr. Speaker, that it's much, much easier to go to a court where they can remain silent, represented by professional legal counsel, and sheltered always from any contact with the individual, the victim that they have hurt.

Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan we have had for some time now, a variety of restorative justice programs operating in our province in communities small and large. For example, a victim-offender mediation program has been available province-wide now for seven years. This program has enjoyed a high level of success, both in terms of youth accountability and victim satisfaction.

More recently, Mr. Speaker, a victims' compensation project has been under way here in the city of Regina. The Atoskata project, delivered by the Regina Friendship Centre, was developed in partnership with aboriginal organizations, community agencies, and government, and deals with youth who have been convicted of property offences. In several instances, Mr. Speaker, as a result of this program, youth have

had to work and have had to pay restitution to their victims.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to report that a majority of victims who choose to participate in this program report now feeling a high level of satisfaction with the both the process and its outcome.

As well, Mr. Speaker, the Regina Aboriginal Human Services Cooperative began last year to provide a family group conferencing as an alternate measure to young offenders . . . as a alternate measure for young offenders, their parents, and the victims of the crime. This program too is now reporting a very high degree of success.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, some of the victims who have taken part in the process have now actually volunteered to work in the program because they now believe so strongly that it is a more realistic, meaningful, and effective way of dealing with some youth in our communities than is the formal court system.

I've had the experience, Mr. Speaker, to join with the restorative justice committee or the family justice committee in the community of Shaunavon, where parents and social workers and the Mounted Police has come together to form this in Shaunavon and they report very satisfactory results, as do the young people of that community.

And so I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that in light of the success that we're beginning to see with this restorative justice approach, we will in this budget year '97-98 provide an additional \$500,000 to support other communities who may wish to develop alternate approaches in dealing with youth who break the law. The partnership approach will be expanded, Mr. Speaker, in direct response to requests from local communities.

By its very nature this approach to youth justice relies on the contribution — the voluntary contribution — of individuals in our communities. And we believe, Mr. Speaker, that our public has a great deal to offer.

Section 69 of the Young Offenders Act provides that the attorney general of a province may appoint one or more committees of citizens, to be known as youth justice committees, to voluntarily assist in administering or delivering programs or services for young offenders. Currently section 12 of The Young Offenders' Services Act grants statutory protection against liability to various individuals and groups of individuals, including employees or agents of the department over which the minister presides.

And so, Mr. Speaker, section 12 protects them against liability while they are acting in good faith in the performance of any individual or collective function or duty imposed by the Act or its accompanying regulations. However presently, Mr. Speaker, this provision does not cover youth justice committees and people in our communities who will volunteer to be part of a youth justice committee.

Mr. Speaker, we truly believe in the involvement of the community and individuals and citizens of that community in dealing with young people who break the law. We believe as

members of the community, they are better aware of the problems and issues within their own community, and problems and issues, Mr. Speaker, which may in some situations have played a role in the young person's unlawful behaviour.

But perhaps most importantly, as members of their community, they may have some very unique and very innovative ideas to deal with the offending young people that come before them. The individuals who have given of their lives to serve in these contexts, Mr. Speaker, are people who genuinely do care about their community and genuinely do care about youth, including youth who break the law.

These are individuals, Mr. Speaker, who are willing to volunteer their time, to volunteer their energy, to make their communities a better place and a safer place and improve the lives of their young people.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to say that the Act now before us, The Young Offenders' Services Amendment Act, 1997, will extend the statutory protection against liability to youth justice committees appointed by the Attorney General of the province and to individual members of those youth justice committees. It will do this, Mr. Speaker, by including them as "agents of the department" over which the minister presides.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to move second reading of The Young Offenders' Services Amendment Act, 1997.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed my pleasure to join in debate on Bill 34 because it does in fact deal with a subject matter that's been much on the minds of the people of Saskatchewan, particularly over the last number of weeks and months.

And, Mr. Speaker, clearly there's a problem with how we've been dealing with young offenders in Saskatchewan. And I'm somewhat encouraged to hear that the government is finally admitting to that.

Once again however, we've seen so many times that the buck has been passed. We've heard the Premier state here in this House that the legislature has simply too much on its plate to deal with these concerns raised by the public. What made this statement particularly galling, Mr. Speaker, is that the Premier said it in front of a group of young people who had come to the legislature to ask the government to do something about the escalation of youth crime in our province.

Mr. Speaker, over and over again we hear this government try to divorce itself from any responsibility with regards to youth crime, and in particular the Young Offenders Act. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Young Offenders Act is a federal statute. In fact what the government proposes to do with this Bill that is before us is to use a provision of that federal law, section 69, a provision, by the way, Mr. Speaker, which has been in place since 1984.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice stated in this House just the

other day in estimates that so far there have been no formal youth justice committees appointed under section 69. Rather, there are a number of informal committees throughout the province put together really as a result of the desire of local people to try and help certain youths, to set them on the right path away from a life of crime. And I applaud the work of the citizens who start and volunteer for these types of committees throughout the province.

As the Minister of Social Services alluded to a few days ago and has mentioned again in his presentation of this Bill, the example of a citizen-backed youth justice committee in Shaunavon located in the constituency from whence comes the member of Wood River. The youth justice committee was established about three years ago to deal with first time young offenders in that community. They are to be applauded for taking that initiative.

It takes the form of youth mediation circle and has as its goal to try to keep these kids from becoming adult offenders which, as you know, Mr. Speaker, ends up costing our society greatly.

Mr. Speaker, as has been pointed out, Saskatchewan has the highest incarceration rate in North America. Simplistic approaches to youth crime, such as stating we can deal with it by just locking up all our youth, are clearly not the answer. That's the approach of the third party. Just lock them up. That makes for a good sound bite, Mr. Speaker, but it certainly doesn't get us any closer to a solution to this problem that we have. Like most of that party's suggestions, however, they must be taken with a very large grain of salt.

Mr. Speaker, Shaunavon's youth mediation circle was a community initiative. Citizens of the community approached the Crown prosecutor with the idea, and that's how the process got into motion.

Mr. Speaker, community initiatives such as this one are important. And this Bill will serve to protect members of the committee from coming under any legal action in the future, as it will make them agents of the Crown as outlined in section 12 of the young offenders' Act that the minister had introduced while speaking about the Bill. So it is positive that the government has at least seen fit to use the provisions set out in the Young Offenders Act to protect these committees which are citizen initiatives.

However, there is still a large question that remains hanging over us. What is this government prepared to do in regards to young offenders? When is it actually going to own up to its responsibility under the Act?

I state once again, while the third party's suggestions get us no closer to an answer, the government opposite, which continues to bury its head in the sand when it comes to young offenders, is not much better. We hear nothing from the government. Clearly there is a bit of a problem here.

The people are telling us that, on almost a daily basis — and we have presented petitions on their behalf — that there is a need for a youth justice committee. Such committees have been used

by the government in the past for The Highway Traffic Act and drinking- and driving-related matters, Mr. Speaker.

This youth justice committee could be comprised of representatives of the police, community leaders, youth outreach programs, and other organizations committed to fight against youth crime. This committee would be a special task force to take a broad overview of all the programs we currently have in place for young people in trouble with the law.

It's clear to us on this side of the House, and it's clear to the people of Saskatchewan, that such a task force is needed to figure out what we can do better when it comes to implementation of young offender rehabilitation programs in the larger sense. The people of this province deserve no less, Mr. Speaker, and neither do our young people.

Is it so much to ask that we have citizens of this province, along with the police and others, simply give the government some suggestions on what it could be doing better, Mr. Speaker. It's happened in other areas of legislation, and it's been proposed, it's been accepted, and it's put into effect, and it works. The input from a lot of people helped come to some decisions. But apparently for the members of the government, that is a little bit too far to go and a little bit too much.

But, Mr. Speaker, this is an idea that doesn't just come from our caucus, but comes from every one of the residents that have signed the petitions — petitions that will continue to come into this Assembly and beyond.

(1145)

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have greeted, so far, this proposal from the people of Saskatchewan with outright derision. Oh, we don't have to study the problem, they say, yet they have nothing to suggest as an alternative. Instead we get the same old song from that crew — let's point the finger elsewhere; let's find someone else to blame, because heaven help us if we actually had to take responsibility that actually happens . . . for anything that actually happens in this province.

The lack of leadership we've seen from that side, and from this Minister of Justice, and the Minister of Social Services, is nothing short of appalling, nothing short of appalling, Mr. Speaker.

At a time when many, many cars were being stolen within a few hours, and during a time when police officers' lives were put in danger, this government had nothing to say on the matter. Absolutely nothing. All we heard was that most kids aren't out stealing cars so it can't be that bad of a problem.

Well I think it's hardly a coincidence that the other day we heard that same minister assert that there certainly can't be anything wrong with his department because most prosecutions don't turn into outright embarrassments for this province. No, only some.

Mr. Speaker, this attitude denies the reality of what's happening in Saskatchewan today. And it shows an outright disregard for

what the people of this province are saying to us — to all of us as legislators. They want something done when it comes to young offenders. And yes, they're asking the same thing of the federal government.

But let's just take a minute to see what has happened federally. First off, the federal government has brought in extensive amendments to the Young Offenders Act. They have increased the maximum sentence for youth who commit murders to 10 years. They have made it easier to transfer to adult court, 16- and 17-year-olds charged with violent offences such as murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, and aggravated sexual assaults.

They have made the sharing of information regarding these youths easier for police, schools, and child welfare agencies. They have given the provinces some alternatives to incarcerations for non-violent offenders. And, Mr. Speaker, the federal government has conducted a comprehensive review of other aspects of this Act to see what can be done better and what must be done better. That's what the federal government has done so far. So is it really too much to ask that the government opposite live up to its responsibility and review its own policies? Youth programs are the responsibility of this government.

Mr. Speaker, more has to be done in Saskatchewan to complement the good work of local people who serve on youth justice committees. A comprehensive review is needed to look over the way we do things in Saskatchewan. The people of Regina, or anywhere in Saskatchewan for that matter, deserve to know that their government really gives two hoots about their concerns, but so far we haven't seen that. And really to be honest, we hardly expect to.

This is a government that has shown itself to be completely out of touch when it comes to this issue as well as so many others. But let me serve those members notice that we're going to keep up the fight for the people of Saskatchewan. We're going to keep speaking out for them. We're going to keep listening to them. After all, at least one of the three political parties has got to have a realistic view of this problem. The third party obviously doesn't, and the government most certainly doesn't.

Mr. Speaker, I know that my hon. colleagues will want to have an opportunity, from the Liberal caucus, to speak to this issue and this Bill at another time, so at this time I move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 40 — The Residential Services Amendment Act, 1997

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am again pleased to rise and on this occasion to be moving second reading of The Residential Services Amendment Act, 1997. Mr. Speaker, as members will well know, the Department of Social Services regularly purchases a wide range of programs and services from community organizations and from private individuals in order to meet the needs of Saskatchewan people.

Historically, in almost all situations where the department requires a service which is available from a community-based agency, community organization, or private individual, we in that circumstance enter into a contractual arrangement to purchase the service.

For example, Mr. Speaker, the department contracts with non-government agencies to provide sheltered workshops and early childhood intervention programs. It enters into contractual arrangements for the delivery of community-based initiatives for young offenders and for group homes for children.

Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, it is necessary to make similar arrangements with community organizations or individuals to provide residential support or care to persons with disabilities or to families in crisis.

Mr. Speaker, these arrangements would be made in order to provide operating monies to such programs as group homes for disabled adults, transition houses, and safe shelters for victims of domestic violence, and independent living programs for adults with some type of disability.

Mr. Speaker, because The Residential Services Act does not presently contain provisions which permit the department to enter into contracts for the purchase of these services, any payments that may be made for these purposes are subject to approval by Lieutenant Governor in Council on an individual and an ongoing basis. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, this is the only major program within the Department of Social Services where operating payments can be made only through an order in council.

Because payments made in this manner are of necessity dependent upon and directly affected by the budget approval process, third parties in our communities may from time to time experience uncertainty and cash flow problems as a result, and we had an example of that only in this past week.

Mr. Speaker, The Residential Services Amendment Act, 1997 addresses these problems by authorizing the minister to enter into contractual arrangements and agreements with third parties to provide for any services or facilities required by persons who are unable to fully care for themselves and by those who are in need of safe shelter and counselling services.

Mr. Speaker, amending The Residential Services Act to facilitate contractual arrangements with third parties will make it consistent with other Acts administered by the Department of Social Services.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, The Residential Services Amendment Act, 1997, clearly separates the minister's authorization to make grants from the minister's capacity to exercise the power of the Act through contractual arrangements between the department and third parties, particularly community-based organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore move second reading of The Residential Services Amendment Act, 1997.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is basically a housekeeping amendment that will hopefully make the Social Services administration a bit more efficient. The amendment proposed will apparently allow Social Services to arrange contractual agreements for the delivery of services such as sheltered workshops, children's group homes, and early childhood intervention programs.

The vast volume of Social Services clients and the variety of services that are needed make this legislation necessary. By passing this legislation, the minister will enable his department to approve such contract agreements for services without having to pass an order in council. And it is my understanding that these types of contracts for service agreements already exist, but that this legislation will simply reduce the paperwork and hopefully speed up the administrative process.

I would certainly not want to unnecessarily delay any legislation that could cut red tape and speed up the process of providing extremely necessary services to disabled adults, and transition homes for victims of domestic abuse, or for independent living programs. However I do have further questions regarding some of the reasoning here, and I am optimistic though that any more specific questions I have surrounding Bill No. 40 can be answered in Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

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

Bill No. 44 — The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act, 1997

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I rise again, this time to move second reading of Bill No. 44, which is to amend The Wakamow Valley Authority Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill implements the budget decision to again maintain the 1997-98 statutory funding for the Wakamow Valley Authority at the same level as last year. This will permit the Authority to continue an excellent level of service in developing, conserving, and enhancing the river valley in the community of Moose Jaw and in the district of Moose Jaw.

This Bill implements a decision to replace the assessment-based funding formula with a fixed statutory funding level and provides for a five-year review of this funding. The share of funding between the parties will remain the same.

Mr. Speaker, I simply want to take this opportunity to commend the Wakamow Valley Authority for its leadership in the development of our river valley park system that is, as you well know, of much benefit to Moose Jaw, to our district, and indeed to the province itself.

And so, Mr. Speaker, with that I move second reading of this Bill.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to

stand on behalf of my colleagues and the constituents of Thunder Creek and speak on the Wakamow Valley Authority Bill No. 44. Anyone who has been through Moose Jaw knows how beautiful the Wakamow Valley Park is. It's one of the most natural urban parks on the prairies and a key tourist feature for the city.

Travellers and Moose Jaw residents walk and cycle along the paved trail and go canoeing and rowing off the launch at Connor Park. It's a site of recreation and relaxation which is so valued by our residents that it attracts dedicated volunteers who organize and promote park activities. Because it is such a valuable tourist attraction and a relaxing place for the people of Moose Jaw, it's a shame that recent flooding has destroyed the Assiniboine bridge, a major thoroughfare to the park, and I might add one that's owned by the city of Moose Jaw in the case of the Assiniboine bridge.

The damage in Wakamow Valley highlights a greater concern, and that is the high level of deductible under provincial disaster assistance which will have to be absorbed by local governments. This in the aftermath of not only flooding, but the reductions in municipal grants as well.

When I called on the government member from Prince Albert Northcote 10 days ago to respond with respect to disaster relief, Mr. Speaker, I've yet to see a follow-through on the commitment. And I'm told at this time that the damage to the one Assiniboine bridge alone could be in excess of \$750,000. And now the member did say that the government would work with local governments to minimize the impact on these areas. And I certainly hope the NDP government makes good on this commitment by waiving the 3 mill deductible and the municipal grant reductions in these extreme circumstances.

Now getting back to the Bill, Mr. Speaker, the main reason the government is making changes to The Wakamow Valley Authority Act is to attach a dollar figure to the amount each level of government contributes. Existing legislation calculates the amount of government contributions as a percentage of the mill rate. With the reassessment this calculation is no longer possible, so this is basically another piece of legislation to try and clear up some more of the confusion that has been caused by reassessment.

But, Mr. Speaker, despite this, it is the intention that The Wakamow Valley Authority Act maintains spending levels consistent with past years. It's hoped that the citizens of Moose Jaw and tourists passing through will be able to enjoy the park for years to come.

Stable funding could mean secure long-term planning and could lead to this end.

But in the best interests of those people who use the parks, we need some more time to further consult on the implications of the Bill, and so I would at this time move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 11

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Mitchell that **Bill No. 11—The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 1997** be now read a second time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise on this Bill as it affects all members of the public, and in particular though, the members of the Legislative Assembly and those who wish to be members of the Legislative Assembly.

In general, Mr. Speaker, we support this Bill. We're encouraged by the changes to redraw the boundaries every ten years rather than every five. Every five years, Mr. Speaker, was simply going to be an unnecessary imposition on the voters of this province. Too often we have elections, federal and provincial, almost back to back. Every two years it seems we're having an election and never, Mr. Speaker, are the boundaries the same or the polling boundaries the same.

So a person never knows, where am I suppose to vote? They are always asking, well I went to Redvers last year to vote; I must vote in Redvers. So they drive over to Redvers, only to find out they should be voting in Antler because the boundaries have changed. And that happens not only in my constituency, but it happens in the Agriculture minister's constituency also, although there aren't that many people that actually vote for him there that have to worry about moving, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if it's 10 years before boundary changes, before redistribution, people will at least have two elections in which to know where they vote. So that the first time they learn it, the second time will be where they go to vote. They don't have to start figuring out, where do I go to now.

Every 10 years, Mr. Speaker, is a good time frame, because every five years means virtually that every election, the constituency boundary changes. Now if you live in the centre of the constituency, it's not a great imposition perhaps, because while the boundaries on the edges shift back and forth, yours stays the same. But in my constituency, after the last redistribution, Mr. Speaker, I picked up a community of . . . Corning is now part of my constituency. Previously it had been in the constituency of the member who is responsible for wildlife, the member from Indian Head-Milestone, when it wasn't even called Indian Head-Milestone; it was something else then, Mr. Speaker.

So people in that community have shifted, virtually every election, into a different constituency. Where do they vote? Who do they vote for? It's a major problem, Mr. Speaker. And going away from 5 years to 10 years will help alleviate that particular problem and it makes it easier for the person who will be the representative for that area, because they have an opportunity to deal with the same voters for at least two elections. It's easier for the voters because they will be dealing with the same candidates virtually every election. So everyone

comes to recognize each other and can judge accordingly, Mr. Speaker. And hopefully they will judge on the Conservative side.

Mr. Speaker, it also makes it very difficult for an elected member to represent the constituents. If the boundaries are going to change every time, a member has to pay attention to representing not only the people who elected him, but moving outside of that, to represent those communities near his constituency boundaries because he may very well be looking for their support in the next election. So he steps on the toes of the member next to him in representing the issues, the interests of the members next door . . . of the voters next door. It takes time away from representing his own constituents, Mr. Speaker, when you run into a situation where every election you've changed the boundaries.

The member opposite says that he's changed constituencies — the member from Humboldt changed constituencies three times in a row. Well, Mr. Speaker, if he would stay at home and work in one constituency, he wouldn't have to keep moving like that.

An Hon. Member: — Now he's Watrous.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Oh, he was Humboldt; now he's Watrous. See nobody knows where he's from, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, this particular Bill though does have some other serious problems. Fixing the time frame to 10 years is good; there are some problems though, Mr. Speaker. One of those is that when you change the wording from voter population to simple population, Mr. Speaker, that's a major concern. That is a very big concern, Mr. Speaker.

Because what happens is . . . The members opposite while in opposition, had some of their friends take the government to court and say that if you have too big a spread between constituency voter populations, you are abridging each one of the citizen's rights to one person, one vote. That was the argument that was presented. The courts threw it out, and said that a certain difference is fine.

The government members opposite have recognized that a difference in constituencies is acceptable, because they have legislated that the two northern ridings may have a major variance from the other parts of the province; that there are geographic reasons for having this difference. And I agree that there are, Mr. Speaker. And the fact is, I have to ask, how can one member represent 25 per cent of the geographic region of this province?

Because that's what we're asking the northern members to do. They are being asked to represent 25 per cent of the entire geography of this province. There may not be a lot of people living in that area, Mr. Speaker, but they are certainly spread very far apart. While you may not have a large number of communities, it's easily a hundred miles between communities and a member simply has not got the ability to quickly move around those areas to meet the people, to talk to them, and to represent them.

But in the rest of the province, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite, while in opposition, believed that there should be no variances in that area between constituencies. And they hooted and hollered and howled loudly, Mr. Speaker, when they believed that there was and that it worked, that it worked to their disadvantage. But some of those with loud voices, Mr. Member from Cypress Hills, were the most vociferous in their arguments.

Well, Mr. Speaker, so the government opposite, when elected, did change the rules to say every constituency had to have the same number of people in it. But it didn't say, Mr. Speaker, the same number of voters. And where there may have been a problem with some of the rural constituencies, while they didn't represent 25 per cent of the geography of Saskatchewan, represented very large areas of the province.

The member from Cypress Hills constituency stretches well over a hundred miles north to south. My own constituency stretches 120 miles corner to corner. The member from Wood River has a very huge constituency, Mr. Speaker. But there's no variation allowed in the number of people that reside in those constituencies.

But what's happened, Mr. Speaker, is while the numbers of people are close, roughly 17,200, 17,300, the number of voters has a great discrepancy — a very great discrepancy.

When you look at a riding, and I'm not sure what the name of it is now — it used to be called Regina North West — in that particular constituency, Mr. Speaker, 20 per cent of the population are under the age of 6. But each and every one of those people, even though they be young, are counted in terms of numbers of voters in each constituency.

So you run into a situation, Mr. Speaker — because of the ageing population in rural Saskatchewan, because of the lack of job creation by the government opposite, the younger people, the young voters have left the province or have moved into the city with their young families — you now end up with a situation where you will have 11,500 on average, roughly, in the rural constituencies; and in the urban constituencies, Mr. Speaker, you're down to 10,000. You now have a 15 per cent discrepancy, Mr. Speaker, in favour of urban over rural seats.

Now there used to be a term that was used, Mr. Speaker, when governments manipulated seats. There was rotten boroughs in England, Mr. Speaker, rotten boroughs, where members would row out in a boat with three people in it and would elect their member to parliament. Because the entire land had sunk out of sight, but they were still entitled to a member in parliament.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we haven't had that happen here, but what we have is gerrymandering going on here, Mr. Speaker, gerrymandering to gain a political advantage while seemingly — seemingly — playing fair.

When you have an equal number of people in the constituencies, who can argue, Mr. Speaker, that it isn't being fair. If we all have 17,000-plus people in every constituency, on the surface it has to be fair. But when you look at the number of

voters, Mr. Speaker, they have been raped. They have been gerrymandered to give certain regions an advantage over others.

If the members opposite had said, we are going to have within plus or minus 5 per cent — which is what the current rules say — of voters in each constituency then there would be less opportunities to argue. But they didn't say that, Mr. Speaker, they said people. And so we have up to 15 per cent discrepancies between the numbers of voters in one constituency to the next.

And that is not fair, Mr. Speaker, that is . . .

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

Ms. Murray: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With leave, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Murray: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and my apologies and thanks to my friend, the colleague from Souris-Cannington.

Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery is a special guest I would like to introduce to my colleagues; it is Rabbi Paul Golomb. He is a native of Long Island, New York and currently makes his home in Toronto. He's the regional director of the Canadian region of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Canadian Council for Reform Judaism.

Rabbi Golomb is here in Regina for this weekend, visiting with members of Temple Beth Tikvah, Saskatchewan's only reform Jewish congregation and a member for the Canadian Council for Reform Judaism.

Members will recognize that accompanying the rabbi is Dave Abbey, a constituent of mine and president of Temple Beth Tikvah. I would ask all members to join me in extending a warm welcome to Rabbi Golomb.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With leave, to also introduce guests.

Leave granted.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to join with my colleague opposite in welcoming the rabbi to our Assembly and to Saskatchewan. I hope he enjoys the visit and we have done our best to try and warm the weather up here.

I would also like to welcome Dave Abbey, who was on our safe driving committee and toured the province with us. So Dave has had an opportunity to see what snow was like around Saskatchewan.

Again, I would ask all members to welcome our guests to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 11 (continued)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the member opposite for giving me the opportunity to review my notes and find out that I was in error in one particular area. We have a difference here of 17 per cent in some cases, Mr. Speaker, 17 per cent.

My constituency, Mr. Speaker, has 11,491 voters. The member from Moosomin's constituency has 11,407 voters. The member from Cypress Hills has 11,014 voters.

Now let's look at some of the members opposite, the people who drew up the rule changes, Mr. Speaker: Regina Dewdney, 10,158; Regina Elphinstone, 10,764; Regina Qu'Appelle, 10,417; — and this one, Mr. Speaker, I find particularly interesting as this was the member who brought in this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, and who seems to have had the most to gain by it — 9,376 voters in Saskatoon Fairview, Mr. Speaker, 9,376.

Over 2,000 voters difference, Mr. Speaker, 2,000 voters out of 11,000. That is a major, major difference, Mr. Speaker, and should not be allowed to happen in this province.

(1215)

Saskatoon Riversdale, Mr. Speaker, 9,820, again almost 2,000 voters less. So what this means, Mr. Speaker, is that 2,000 less people voted for the Premier than for the rest of the members of this House.

Mr. Speaker, a 17 per cent difference between rural and urban seats — 17 per cent. Mr. Speaker, according to the members opposite while they were in opposition that is too large a discrepancy, should not be allowed. Their friends even went to court to try and change that, Mr. Speaker, to stop that from happening, and yet they are the members who made these rules and brought this in, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, only one word comes to mind — this was jerrymandered to the benefit of the government who drew up the rules.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other problems also in this particular piece of legislation. But at this particular time, Mr. Speaker, we believe that we need to give the government some more opportunity to reconsider this particular piece of legislation, to come to their senses, to realize that this type of jerrymandering is not acceptable in the province of Saskatchewan. Therefore I would move that this Bill be

adjourned at this time.

Debate adjourned.

The Speaker: — I wish all hon. members an eventful weekend in your constituencies with your families.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

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