

The Assembly met at 10:00.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. Kwiatkowski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the surplus from the Saskatchewan Fish and Wildlife Development Fund being transferred to the General Revenue Fund. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to refund the \$1.6 million intended for the Saskatchewan Fish and Wildlife Development Fund and discontinue its present policy of using this money for other government purposes.

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

And there are a couple of hundred signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, almost entirely from the city of Regina.

I so present.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition today to do with overfishing at Lake of the Prairies. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to work with the federal government, First Nations representatives, and with other provincial governments to bring about a resolution in the Lake of the Prairies situation and to ensure that our natural resources as a whole are used in a responsible manner by all people in the future.

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, have come from the communities of Langenburg, Roblin, Manitoba, and Marchwell.

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise this morning to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the deplorable and dangerous condition of Highway 58. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 58 in order to avoid serious injury and property damage.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals all from the community of Shamrock.

I so present.

**Ms. Bakken:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned about crop insurance. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon.

Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to halt its plan to take money out of the crop insurance program and hike farmers' crop insurance premium rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Weyburn, Saskatchewan and of Ogema.

I so present.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to improve Highway 42.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to make the necessary repairs to Highway 42 in the Arm River constituency in order to prevent injury or loss of life and to prevent the loss of economic opportunity in the area.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed the citizens from Tuxford, Tugaska, Central Butte, Regina, Keeler, and Eyebrow.

I so present.

**READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS**

**Deputy Clerk:** — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions, being sessional paper no. 7, 11, 22, 23, 146, and no. 165.

**NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS**

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 67 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Highways: how much funding is allocated for this year on Highway 42; if so, which sections on Highway 42?

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 67 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for the Crown Investments Corporation: has the provincial government written off any long-term debt in TML Foods; and if so, how much has been written off?

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before I introduce the guests that are here to watch our proceedings this morning, I want to just remind everybody, and I'm sure everybody knows, that we are blessed in this great province of Saskatchewan with people who are certainly talented and bring a great deal of pride to our province.

I also just wanted to mention that, on the occasion, that it's appropriate that these visitors have come to be with us this morning. It's the 25th anniversary of Elvis Presley's death, Mr. Speaker.

But having said that, what . . . I'd like to introduce to you and to all the members of this Assembly and people that are watching, in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Rory Allen who is a world-class entertainer and Elvis Presley tribute artist. And I had heard some rumour that someone had seen the king in the hallways of this hallowed building. So I wanted to assure people that Mr. Rory Allen was here.

Mr. Rory Allen has performed internationally on stage, radio, and television. And, ladies and gentlemen, he was born here in Saskatchewan — at Colonsay as a matter of fact — and from Colonsay. He attended Davin and Balfour. Gospel music and singing in church was a huge part in developing his success.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are an awful lot of things that I could say about this talented entertainer who's with his lovely wife, Lorie, and manager as well. And there are many, many accolades from many groups and communities that Mr. Allen has performed for. But the ultimate, the ultimate Saskatchewan compliment I must read, Mr. Speaker:

I just wanted you to know that I shut down the combine in the middle of harvesting to catch your show. It was worth it!

This comes from a Yorkton area farmer.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask everyone to welcome Rory and Lorie here today and I'd also like to remind folks that there . . . some very talented artists from the United States, the Jordanaires, that some of you older folks would remember, that backed up Elvis Presley, are now backing up Rory Allen. And they will be performing here in September as well.

So what I'd like to say on behalf of everyone here to Rory and his wife Lorie is — and ask you all to welcome him — is, thank you, thank you very much for being here today.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, as an avid fan of Elvis Presley's music, we . . . on behalf of the official opposition, I would just like to also extend our greetings to Rory and his wife here at the legislature.

You know we were just — literally, Mr. Speaker — we were just talking about Rory, several members of our caucus and myself, yesterday at lunch, myself and the member for Indian Head-Milestone and the member for Cypress Hills. I was talking about a gospel disc that Rory has recorded, and indicated that it sounds so much like Elvis it would almost defeat the purpose because it sounds so much like Elvis that people might just think, well I should just get the Elvis disc. But there's a few tracks on there that Elvis never recorded and it's an excellent one indeed.

So on behalf of the opposition we also want to thank him for his work and welcome him here to the legislature.

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

**Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in your gallery this morning I'm pleased to introduce to you Linda Burkowski. Linda lives in Regina Dewdney. She is a rehabilitation consultant with Co-operators Insurance. She is also part of the power team our party is putting together in Regina Dewdney. I don't know what the member for Regina Dewdney is doing in his next life, but my recommendation is he start sending out his resumés right away.

I'd ask all members to kindly welcome Linda Burkowski.

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

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to also introduce this morning to you and through you to the Assembly, some guests in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, who are here to watch this morning's procedure. They are members of the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance and the artistic community. And I would like to introduce them to you and ask them to stand.

It's Mr. Allen Lefebvre, president of the Alliance; Ms. Brenda Niskala; Mr. Patrick Close; Mr. Bill Siggins; Mr. Michael Millar; Ms. Sheila Roberts; and Ms. Marnie Gladwell.

I would ask all members to join me in welcoming these fine people to our Assembly this morning.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You may have noticed, Mr. Speaker, since we began the introductions that some 50 students have quietly taken their places in the west gallery; and it's my pleasure to introduce them, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly.

Seated in the gallery are students who are grade 4 and 5 students from King George School in Moose Jaw. They're accompanied today by their teachers, Sandi Kerney and Donna Humbert; and chaperones, Dara McIntosh, Brian Wilson, Mark LeBere, and Brenda Winch.

After being here in the gallery for a while, Mr. Speaker, they're going to be taking a tour of the buildings, and I look forward to meeting with them for a photo and the possibility of a short visit later this morning before they head away from the building.

Mr. Speaker, it may be of interest to members of the Assembly to note that these students from King George, at one and the same time, go to school every day in the oldest . . . one of the oldest and one of the newest schools in all of Saskatchewan. King George School was renovated just a couple of years ago from being one of the — on the outside — one of the absolute oldest schools in the entire province to, on the inside, one of the newest. And they are well known for their enthusiasm about school.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all hon. members to join me in welcoming these students, their teachers, and chaperones from King George in Moose Jaw. Good to have you.

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

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I also would like to join the member from Melville in welcoming the members of the Arts Alliance here to the Assembly this afternoon for the second reading of The Status of the Artist Bill. So again welcome on behalf of this side of the House.

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

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

##### Father's Day

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the Assembly today to ask all members of the House to recognize the hard work and many contributions of one of the most important people in our lives.

Mr. Speaker, this Sunday is Father's Day and we would be remiss if we did not take this opportunity to say a warm and heartfelt thank you to our dads for everything they have done for us over the years. Mr. Speaker, all of us in the House know the important role that our fathers and our fathers-in-law have played in our lives throughout the years. Their strength, guidance, help, and on the odd occasion financial support has always been given in good faith and on our part gratefully received.

Their words of wisdom, acts of discipline have helped in shaping us into becoming responsible and contributing members of society. For those that will be remembering their fathers in memory, we respectfully acknowledge your loss and we know that time cannot erase the special place that a father holds in your heart.

For those that will be fortunate enough to spend this Sunday with their fathers and their fathers-in-law, may you enjoy the day and treasure the moments you are able to spend together. From all of us here in the House to our fathers, wherever they may be, we say thank you, we couldn't have done it without you.

And on a personal note, Mr. Speaker, I'm very fortunate to still have my parents, and my father will be 85 years old this year. So I'd just like to say Happy Father's Day, Dad. I love you.

Thank you.

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

##### New Science Labs for SIFC

**Mr. Goulet:** — Mr. Speaker, of course first of all, as well, Happy Father's Day from the government side.

Mr. Speaker, more good news on the building of strong partnerships between First Nations people and the province of Saskatchewan.

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

(10:15)

**Mr. Goulet:** — Mr. Speaker, funding from this government has allowed Saskatchewan Indian Federated College to proceed building new labs that will train the next generation of scientists. The provincial government is contributing \$602,000 from its Innovation and Science Fund to build and equip eight laboratories in SIFC's (Saskatchewan Indian Federated College) new building. SIFC is contributing 2.4 million for the labs and its new interdisciplinary research facility for Aboriginal science and health. Science will therefore become an integral part of First Nations self-determination and education.

Mr. Speaker, Aboriginal students will be ready to join the Saskatchewan workforce of tomorrow and there will be many jobs for trained young scientists in this great province.

Funding of these new labs speaks to two directives of this government. One is supporting research and development through education, and the other is innovation partnerships and fresh approaches to have First Nations and Métis people as full participants in the new economy.

Mr. Speaker, we salute Eber Hampton, the staff, and the board of Saskatchewan Indian Federated College for this tremendous success story.

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

##### Municipalities Declare Drought Disaster Areas

**Mr. Wakefield:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to relay to the legislature a message that I received very recently from the deputy reeve and councillor for the RM (rural municipality) of Turtle River No. 469. And I quote:

I wish to inform you that the RM of Turtle River has declared itself a drought disaster area. It's the second year of drought in a row.

The message goes on, Mr. Speaker, to say that:

We have had less than one-tenth of precipitation since our very small amount of snow cover.

The message also contains a plea for assistance for water development and for assistance for transporting feed for livestock.

Mr. Speaker, while the vast majority of the province has been blessed with either an abundance or certainly an adequate amount of rainfall, the northwest region around Lloydminster received none whatsoever in this last 10 days.

Other municipalities in the area have now also included themselves in this disaster drought area list. It's the RM of Eldon, the RM of Hillsdale, the RM of Senlac, and the RM of Britannia. The situation continues to be most serious for these farmers and ranchers and continued consideration should be directed to their current and ongoing predicament of deteriorating crop and feed conditions, Mr. Speaker.

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

### New Food Distribution Processing Centre in Saskatoon

**Hon. Mr. Melnychuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, the CEO (chief executive officer) of the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority, Dale Botting, and the president and CEO, Erla Glesby, of Westco Storage Ltd. announced another exciting addition to Saskatoon's already dynamic economy . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Melnychuk:** — A \$5 million investment in Saskatoon's growing food processing industry.

Westco, a successful and established company based in Winnipeg, will begin constructing a state-of-the-art, multi-temperature food distribution facility this summer, on 60th Street in my constituency of Saskatoon Northwest.

The facility is expected to be up and running by January 31 of next year. The investment will create new jobs with more to come with the possibility of a phase 2 expansion. The 60,000 square foot facility will provide value-added services to Saskatoon's expanding food processing industry, such as inspecting meat imports and exports, stock rotation, inventory control, material handling, and storage.

The Westco project marks the start of an exciting new phase for food processing in Saskatoon and across the Prairies — the creation of a food park in which Westco would become the hub. This new food park is already well on its way to becoming a reality. Westco's food distribution centre will complement the recent \$34 million investment by Centennial Foods located immediately east of the new 8.75 acre site.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in congratulating Erla Glesby and Dale Botting in this exciting new project for the city of Saskatoon.

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

### Trade Injury Compensation Federal Responsibility

**Mr. Hillson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, agricultural support and emergency payments required due to natural disasters are rightfully shared between the two levels of government, federal and provincial. However, international trade is not a shared responsibility. It falls solely under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

For that reason my party and I are strongly of the view that trade injury compensation required for Canadian farmers is exclusively a federal responsibility. Following the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations, Ottawa eliminated many grain subsidies including the historic Crow benefit.

The European community and the United States did not follow suit. Both increased the subsidies they pay their farmers culminating in the US (United States) farm Bill this spring.

According to Agriculture Canada, 25 per cent of the collapse in grain prices is directly due to subsidies paid by our trading partners. This translates into a loss to Canadian farmers of 1.3

billion, or for Saskatchewan 470 million.

The federal government's own figures show that the request of a 1.3 billion trade injury payment is fair and needed, and I call upon the federal government to recognize its responsibility and do the right thing.

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

### Woodland Campus Graduation Ceremonies

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I'm on my feet, our colleague from Prince Albert Northcote, Minister of Industry, is attending the awards presentation at Woodland Campus of SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) in Prince Albert. This afternoon the graduation ceremony will occur as graduation exercises are also taking place across the province in Saskatchewan in high schools and post-secondary institution.

During the morning exercises, SIAST Woodland will present 130 scholarships and awards with an approximate value of \$62,000. This afternoon about 800 students will graduate from the more than the 50 certificate and diploma programs offered at SIAST. This is good news for students who have successfully completed their course of study in applied science or in technical and paraprofessional fields. One of those professions is forestry management which was talked about earlier in the Assembly this week.

But it's even better news for Saskatchewan because, as we know, 92 per cent of the students who seek employment will find it within six months, and a huge number of them will find jobs right here in Saskatchewan.

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

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Mr. Speaker, 2,000 students attend Woodland Campus plus several hundred other part-time and extension students. It employs 300 faculty and staff and contributes about \$3.8 million annually to the Prince Albert economy.

I know, Mr. Speaker, and the minister would want me to ask all members to congratulate these graduates and wish them well as they enter the workforce. Thank you.

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

### SARCAN Depot Reopens in Moosomin

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Monday I had the privilege of joining with the members and clients of the Moosomin SARCAN centre as they officially opened — or reopened — a brand new SARCAN depot, and then shortly after, opened a thrift store.

Mr. Speaker, the new depot certainly replaces one that was becoming very crowded, and I believe will meet the need of the recycling that is taking place in the Moosomin and surrounding area. The new depot is a much larger and in fact, Mr. Speaker, has a much brighter receiving area as the customers bring their cans and their plastic containers in to have them recycled. So I

believe it will certainly serve the community and area well.

As well, Mr. Speaker, the district opened their new thrift store. And this isn't just another avenue whereby we remove recyclable articles out of our landfill systems, and it's certainly a plus for our environment, the way we address the environment.

As well, it becomes another avenue whereby individuals with abilities that really cause them . . . and they need the aspect of reaching out to the community, we give them the avenue whereby they can feel worthwhile. And this thrift store, Mr. Speaker, as they were reopening it, was something that everyone was really proud of.

So this morning, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend a special congratulations to the Moosomin ability centre and the reopening of the SARCAN depot and the opening of their new thrift store. Thank you.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Investigation of Harassment Complaint

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has still not told Saskatchewan taxpayers how much they paid for the investigation of the harassment complaint against the Environment minister. To the Premier: how many taxpayers' dollars did the Premier spend to investigate why the minister's personal birthday cards did not get mailed in time?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, Ms. MacKenzie has not yet invoiced the cost of her work. When we receive from her the cost of her work, we will of course pay that cost and we will make that figure known to the opposition and to the public.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — It seems awful odd, Mr. Minister, that you would — Mr. Speaker — that you would sign a contract and not at least get an estimate before doing so — open ended.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we asked the Premier whether the independent investigator he hired had found the Minister of Environment guilty of workplace harassment. The Premier refused to answer this question. Instead the Premier said that in his judgment there was no harassment.

We would like to know how the Premier came to that conclusion. He has no background in this area. He didn't follow the Public Service Commission harassment policy. Mr. Speaker, what set of criteria did the Premier use to decide the minister was not guilty of harassment?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, simply again to review the course of events. An incident occurred in the minister's office. We sought the services of Ms. Marilyn MacKenzie, a noted Canadian in the field of workplace complaints. We asked Ms. MacKenzie to do an assessment of the event. She provided her

report to me, the full report. She provided to the public a shorter statement of her findings based on both the public statement made by Ms. MacKenzie and the findings of her report. It was my conclusion that there was no harassment here.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier is potentially spending thousands of taxpayer's dollars to hire, in his words, an expert in workplace harassment to investigate this incident. And yet, at the end of the investigation, the Premier himself decided whether harassment took place — not the independent investigator. The Premier has no background in this area; he won't say which criteria he used, yet somehow he has ruled in favour of his minister and against her former employee.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier hired this outside . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. Order.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — The Premier is paying the expert thousands of taxpayers' dollars, but won't rely on her judgment.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier come clean and release the investigator's findings on whether or not the minister was guilty of harassment?

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — I want to inform the House, so that the member doesn't repeat the mistake, that the member has today provided me her resignation from cabinet.

In terms of the question: it's an interesting turn of events because since this event occurred and the investigation was reported, the Leader of the Opposition, when he's here, says no, that report should . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm sorry. The Leader of the Opposition has consistently said that the report should not be made public, understanding the importance of confidentiality in workplace complaint; he has said that consistently, Mr. Speaker.

Today, the House Leader stands in the House and demands now that we make the report public. The fact of the matter is as follows, Mr. Speaker: the report, as in any other report concerning a workplace complaint, will not be made public.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to hear that the Premier is now announcing that the minister has resigned. He could have done that on the first question, Mr. Speaker.

He is saying that we are asking for the full report. Mr. Speaker, we're asking for the expert's conclusion that she recommended to the Premier. We're asking, Mr. Speaker, that the costs be released to the public. Those are the questions we're asking, Mr. Speaker. The Premier and the Deputy Premier have had ample opportunity . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. I would ask

members to allow the questions to be put.

(10:30)

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They have had ample opportunity to present those results. Why have they failed to do so?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, initially this morning, the member has asked me about the cost of this work and I have assured he and the opposition and the public that when that cost is known, it will be made . . . it will be made public.

Now I think, Mr. Speaker, I think I understand why it is that the opposition changes their positions, makes some attacks on the person who did the investigation. I think I know what's going on here. It's because, Mr. Speaker, this opposition does not want to talk about what's going on in the province of Saskatchewan.

They don't want to talk about the optimism that's in Saskatchewan. They don't want to talk about 11,000 new jobs, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — They don't want to talk about a credit upgrade for this province from Moody's. So that's why they have questions like this today, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Investigation of Insurance Claimants

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). And now we're going to find out what's actually going on in the province of Saskatchewan as the Premier wants to talk about.

Last night, CTV (Canadian Television Network Limited) reported another case of a Saskatchewan no-fault insurance victim who was also the subject of video surveillance by SGI; only this woman was completely terrorized by the realization she was being followed before she discovered it was really SGI.

Mr. Speaker, Shannon Babiarz is a single mother of two small children. There were rumours in the neighbourhood of a suspicious vehicle. On a routine day, Ms. Babiarz discovered she was being followed to her daycare, to her doctor's appointment, to her home by a van matching the description of the suspicious vehicle. This experience left Ms. Babiarz terrified until she learned that it was SGI and then the terror turned to anger.

Mr. Speaker, how is it that SGI's surveillance policies are leaving Saskatchewan insurance claimants terrified to leave their own homes?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well again, the member will know of course that I'm not able to comment on a specific or individual case.

But let me say generally, Mr. Speaker, that it certainly is not the intent of SGI, Mr. Speaker, to harass people, Mr. Speaker, to indiscriminately do surveillance on people, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, it is their intent — it is absolutely their intent, Mr. Speaker — to ensure for the . . . for the public and for the people who are customers of SGI, Mr. Speaker, that their interests are protected, Mr. Speaker.

And where there is concern or where there is a belief, Mr. Speaker, that fraud has been committed, Mr. Speaker, or where misrepresentation has taken place, Mr. Speaker, they, like any responsible insurance company, are going to investigate, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Shannon Babiarz, who incidentally is sitting in the east gallery this morning, was injured in a car accident on November 27, 1999. She suffered injuries but in particular dislocated her right wrist.

After two weeks of rest at home, Mr. Speaker, before beginning therapy, she met with her SGI rep and asked if she had permission to go to do some Christmas shopping for her two children. With SGI's approval — approval, Mr. Speaker — she did so, only to discover three days later she was being followed by not one but two investigators and was under video surveillance by SGI.

This, Mr. Speaker, is entrapment. Is this how SGI regularly treats their no-fault victims?

Mr. Speaker, this invasion of her privacy has caused Ms. Babiarz and her family tremendous grief. Why would SGI give permission, only to use that opportunity to spy on Ms. Babiarz?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well when I stood up in the . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. The minister will start over.

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well when I stood up in the House the other day and quoted from the *Leader-Post* of June 11 where I thought the member said that he now believes that investigations should take place where fraud was believed to be committed, I think he's now saying, Mr. Speaker, that they should no longer do that again now, Mr. Speaker. I wish they would stay on one position.

I think also, Mr. Speaker, he's not made his position clear as to whether or not, when there is a belief that fraud or misrepresentation has taken place, as to whether or not those individuals should be contacted.

I can't believe, Mr. Speaker, that that party really believes that where there is a belief that fraud or misrepresentation has taken place, we should actually phone them in advance, get their permission to find out whether or not it's convenient for them to do an investigation.

I think in most cases those individuals would say, please don't

do an investigation on me, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, isn't it disgusting that right in front, right in front of the victim, right . . .

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

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. Order. Members of the Assembly, while we welcome all visitors and guests to the Assembly, it's important that members take special care not to involve guests directly into the debate or draw them into the debate in any way.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That minister would get up and tell the people of Saskatchewan that SGI is prepared to tell people it's okay to buy Christmas gifts for their children, and then when they've given that permission, they take that exact opportunity to spy on those individuals.

That, Mr. Speaker, is disgusting.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will the minister agree to add this case to the review SGI is currently undergoing on Virginia Cook's case and their surveillance practices?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I'll tell you what is disgusting to me, and I know what is disgusting to the public of Saskatchewan — that is when that party stands up and says when there is a belief that fraud has been committed that no investigation should take place, that SGI should just willy-nilly pay out claims, Mr. Speaker. That is disgusting, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Mr. Speaker, let me say again, that while I can absolutely not comment on this case, and the opposition has the prerogative to bring in cases, I can't comment on those, Mr. Speaker.

But let me say with some sympathy, Mr. Speaker, that it is clearly the position of SGI . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. I would ask the members to come to order.

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me say that SGI — and I'm sure every insurance company — has regret when individuals feel that in some way they're being victimized or terrorized.

Mr. Speaker, the intent for SGI is to protect the interests, Mr. Speaker, of their customers — clearly that's their intent.

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

#### Hospital Bed Closures This Summer

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my

question is for the Minister of Health. After 10 years of gross mismanagement of our health care system, the NDP (New Democratic Party) has given Saskatchewan by far the largest waiting lists in Canada. In the 1999 provincial election the NDP promised to cut the waiting list by 25 per cent. But waiting lists have doubled over the last three years. And now health districts are again, across the province, are announcing that they are cutting major . . . summer shortages and hospital bed shortages over the summer which will lead inevitably to even longer waiting lists.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Health is simple. How many hospital beds is the NDP closing for the summer in Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, this is a very interesting day. I finally get a question from the critic for Health about health, and we actually have an issue that is a normal question period issue. So I'm very pleased to get . . . be up on my feet to answer that question.

Mr. Speaker, all of the health districts across the province are reviewing their vacation schedules for their very valuable workers to make sure that they all can get some rest during the summer. They are looking at the kinds of services that can be . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please, members. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, the health district management, along with all of the staff, are looking at what kinds of services will be provided over the summer. As everyone knows there is usually a slowdown over the summer.

My understanding is that there will be more beds open this summer than last summer in most areas because of a number of the retention and recruitment issues that we've dealt with. We are continuing to make sure that we deal with the issue of the waiting lists and the other kinds of concerns, working with the professionals in the field.

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we were giving the Minister of Health some opportunity to let the fires die down that he created about the long-term care fees that he created.

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, with things being as dry as they are in Saskatchewan we didn't think he could stand any more heat at this time.

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Members, order.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, now that the NDP government is again closing hospital beds for the summer,

how many more people are going to be on the long-term waiting lists as a result of this action?

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, we have very many capable people within our health care system who look at the ebbs and the flows, who look at the ebbs and the flows of the usage of the whole health system.

And so we know that every summer that there will be a reduction in the number of procedures, and that's how the planning goes. So what we are going to continue to do is to make sure we get more people working here.

Now what I would say, Mr. Speaker, is that I very much appreciated this chance to answer the question, but I know my colleague, the Minister of Highways, has been waiting a whole session . . . he has not had a single question. What's wrong with our opposition? There must be some question for that poor lonely Minister of Highways.

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health should know that as a result of the misguided comments from the Minister of Highways about health issues, he doesn't have enough gravel left in his budget to do anything with the highways.

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please, order. Order, members. Order, members. Order. I have to ask some members, specifically the member for Regina South, to please cease continuing to engage members opposite when the Speaker has asked for order.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's understandable that in order to give badly overworked nurses some time off that they have to have some vacation. But now we're hearing right across the province that nurses are being asked to have shorter vacations, and when they get back, they're being asked to provide more overtime and longer hours in order to keep the system together.

Mr. Speaker, this government promised to hire 500 more health care workers and instead, in the last three years we've lost over 1,200 nurses. How in the world is this misguided policy of this government going to relieve the workload of our badly needed nurses in this province?

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

(10:45)

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, this morning on the radio, CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) Radio host Sheila Coles asked the question of Ed Sorsdahl, who's the CEO of the Pipestone Health District, and she said to him, do you see any hope that things are going to get better long term? Ed Sorsdahl says, long term I think it will. There have been a number of

initiatives that the provincial government has started in recruitment, retention, the bursary program, additional nursing . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Those kinds of things. And I think in the long run it will get better.

In the short run it will get better as well.

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The new collective agreement for nurses here in Saskatchewan makes our wage rates very competitive and we believe that will be a factor in attracting some nurses to the province.

Mr. Speaker, we are working with the professionals in the system to make sure that we provide the care that the people of Saskatchewan want and we will continue to do that despite the lemon-eating members opposite.

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

#### Cost for Policing of G-8 Summit

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Yesterday we raised the concerns of municipalities whose police resources are being reduced due to members who are going to the G-8 Summit in Kananaskis. Swift Current, in particular, is going to be seven officers short during their busiest time of the summer which is Frontier Days. So, Mr. Speaker, other officers are going to have to be double shifted.

Mr. Speaker, that results in significant costs for the municipality, and the staff sergeant in charge of the detachment has told Swift Current City Council that they will have to absorb the increased local staffing costs.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has confirmed that the salary costs of the officers attending the summit are going to be covered by the federal government but, Mr. Speaker, are they also going to pay the additional costs incurred by municipalities who are going to have to pay overtime to the officers left at home?

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

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the way that it works, as the member well knows, is that the salary for those — in the case of Swift Current — Swift Current officers will be paid by the federal government.

Vacation leave has been cancelled so much of the work will be done by other police officers at their normal rate of salary. There may be some, there may be some requirement for overtime to be paid but, Mr. Speaker, our experience is, in the past when this happened with Calgary, that in fact there was a net credit to police services because the amount of overtime paid was far less than the amount of salary which they were no longer responsible for, Mr. Speaker.



But, Mr. Speaker, let me ask the member this question. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite constantly, as do we, ask the federal government to help Saskatchewan farmers, Mr. Speaker. Here the federal government is asking Saskatchewan to help them protect government leaders from across the world at the G-8. Does he not think, Mr. Speaker, that when we ask Canada for help we should also respond when they ask us for help?

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, let's go one step further then. Right now the local municipalities are asking you for help and your government for help so maybe you should give them some help.

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order please, members. Order please, members. Order. And I would remind the member that all statements should be made through the Speaker.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Mr. Simple . . . Mr. Speaker, I'm going to make the question really simple for the Minister of Justice.

What we're talking about here is overtime for the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) officers and other officers left at home. In the case of Swift Current to cover for Frontier Days — the busiest time of year — what they're asking, what we're asking, if the federal government does not pick up this overtime, will you as the minister . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Order. For purposes of the record, would the member restate his question through the Chair.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, will that minister and that government backfill the dollars that the local municipalities need to pay overtime for the members left at home?

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

**Hon. Mr. Axworthy:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, our expectation is that the amount of money saved for those salaries of officers in Kananaskis will be more than the amount of money that might be paid in overtime by the city of Swift Current or by the province, Mr. Speaker.

So at the present time there appears to be no challenge to the city of Swift Current. They can jump the gun if they want. And the member opposite can say the fall is . . . the sky is falling or the fall is skying, for that matter. And, Mr. Speaker, if there is a challenge we will deal with it.

But, Mr. Speaker, I should also remind the member, as I'm sure he knows, that when Swift Current signed its contract with the RCMP, it undertook to provide these very kinds of services if they were required, Mr. Speaker. This is no surprise to Swift Current. It's happened before, Mr. Speaker, and it didn't involve Swift Current in a financial obligation last time. We don't think it will this time, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the member

could just wait for a week or two and see what happens.

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

#### TABLING OF FURTHER ESTIMATE

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm also before orders of the day, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to submit further estimates accompanied by a message from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

**The Speaker:** — Would all members please rise for the message from the Lieutenant Governor.

The message is as follows:

The Lieutenant Governor transmits the further estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 2003, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly. (Signed), Lynda Haverstock, Lieutenant Governor, province of Saskatchewan.

Please be seated.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you. Today I am tabling a further estimate to increase the Department of Health budget for the 2002-03 fiscal year.

Later, during Committee of Finance, a motion will be introduced to adjust the budget for Highways and Transportation.

These changes are occurring for two reasons. First, this government will continue to live within its financial means. Second, we listened to what people had to say respecting long-term care fees and we are acting accordingly.

Earlier this year, long-term care fees were reviewed and a proposal to revise the fees was introduced. The objective was continuing to provide quality, affordable health care.

Concerns were raised, Mr. Speaker, that the change in fees would cause significant difficulty for some people. We listened and we acted accordingly.

On May 10 the Premier announced we were cancelling the proposed fee increase for long-term care residents. Living within our means requires matching revenue to spending. Increased support for long-term care therefore meant making other choices — either getting more revenue from another source or revising spending in another agency.

The choice was made to revise downward the projected spending in Highways and Transportation for 2002-03. This still leaves Highways spending well above historical levels. In fact it remains at the second highest level in history. And if our revenue picture improves, it may well be possible to restore Highways funding to its original budget level.

In the interim, today I am tabling a further estimate for the 2002-03 Department of Health budget. Mr. Speaker, I move,

seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader:

That Her Honour's message and the further estimates be referred to the Committee of Finance.

Motion agreed to.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of order.

**The Speaker:** — Would the member state his point of order.

#### POINT OF ORDER

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Mr. Speaker, the point of order deals with the Deputy Premier, the member for Yorkton, deliberately misleading the House, and I would like to quote his statement from June 12 *Hansard*. Deputy Premier, and I quote:

Thank you. I want to, Mr. Speaker, table to . . . (this) Assembly the work of this government and this Premier and this ministry for the past year and a half.

Another paragraph, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

And so today, Mr. Speaker, I want to table a series of reports that go back to June of last year right now; where this minister has made a presentation to Ottawa on two occasions, where I've made a presentation to the federal ministries on behalf of Canadian farmers. And what the Premier has submitted, Mr. Speaker, on A Fair Deal for Canadians, and I want to table that this afternoon.

Yesterday I sent a letter, Mr. Speaker, to the Clerk's office requesting those tabled documents, and I received this reply this morning.

Regarding your letter of June 13, 2002. I wish to inform you that the Minister of Agriculture did not (I repeat, did not) table any documents in the House on June 12. Therefore I am unable to provide you with the requested copies.

Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier clearly said that he was tabling the documents right at that time, that afternoon. He clearly stated that in his own words, Mr. Speaker, deliberately misleading this House in failing to provide those copies and tabling them to this House.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, that you rule that he did so, that he apologize unequivocally to this House, and that he table those documents.

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

**The Speaker:** — Order.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, I think it is more than coincidence as the Opposition House Leader stands today — and we're dealing in a moment with The Status of the Artist Act — that he engages in dramatics rather than in parliamentary procedure. Because that's clearly what he's doing.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — We'll leave it to others to decide about his dramatic ability, but his parliamentary procedure is off the mark by a fair mark, Mr. Speaker. And I ask you to rule that.

You will know, Mr. Speaker, that on a point of order there are several parts of the rules that apply and I ask you to be cognizant of the words of the House Leader of the opposition. He brings a point of order . . . Mr. Speaker, it is standard procedure in bringing a point of order that it must be brought at the earliest possible opportunity. Mr. Speaker, he quotes from a *Hansard* of two days ago. Mr. Speaker, that alone, that alone makes his point of order out of order.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, if he wants to, if he wants to make a complaint about exercise . . . abuse of his privilege, there is a way to do that. It's a different procedure. It's got nothing to do with point of order.

Mr. Speaker, thirdly, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member would bother to check, he would know that those reports are in fact tabled.

And, Mr. Speaker, on those grounds, I simply ask that you will find that the member, although he may be dramatic, is off the mark and clearly his point of order should ought not to be well taken.

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

(11:00)

**The Speaker:** — I would thank both the member for Cannington and the member from Moose Jaw North for raising the point of order. I would accept the member's timing in terms of I do believe that this was probably the earliest time that it could be brought forward. However I would also advise the members that the member . . . the minister, Deputy Premier, had voluntarily made his statement that he would provide the documentation. There is no rule in the Assembly requiring that to happen and there is no basis on which the minister — order, please, order — and there is no basis on which the Speaker can rule about the tabling of the documents.

I am advised by the Clerk that the documents have been submitted and I think that should put the statement to rest.

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

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely pleased today on behalf of the government to stand and table written responses to questions 318, 319, 320, 321, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, and 333.

And, Mr. Speaker, to convert for debates returnable questions no. 322, 334, 335, 336, 337, and 338. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has tabled questions

318, 319, 320, 321, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, and 333, and requested conversions to motions for debates returnable questions 322, 334, 335, 336, 337, and 338.

**Mr. Yates:** — I stand to just correct that 329 was converted for debates returnable — question 329. My apology.

**The Speaker:** — For the record, question 329 has also been converted to motions for return (debatable).

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 73 — The Status of the Artist Act/ Loi sur le statut de l'artiste

**Hon. Mr. Osika:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm truly pleased to rise and speak to Bill No. 73, The Status of the Artist Act 2002, which provides for the recognition of our professional artists and cultural workers as important contributors to our social, cultural, and economic life here in this great province of Saskatchewan.

This is an important first step and provides a platform for further discussion of issues important to artists and cultural workers. The proposed legislation recognizes the contribution of artists and artistic creativity in Saskatchewan life, culture, education, economy, and heritage, Mr. Speaker. It affirms the principle of fair compensation for artistic workers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring attention to the words of the late Anne Szumigalski, one of our great Saskatchewan poets who said, and I will quote:

Artists should have as much attention from government as anyone else . . . they should be on a par with everyone else, no more no less . . . parity is really the key to what artists need.

Mr. Speaker, through this government's leadership and example, this Bill will set the groundwork for artists' equity in the broader community. This legislation outlines principles that affirm freedom of speech and artistic and cultural expression as well as the right for artists to be treated fairly by government and society. It also affirms the desirability of making artistic works available to the public. These principles will guide further work on issues important to artists.

The Status of the Artist Act also allows the minister responsible to establish advisory committees to research, study, and report back to government on more substantive labour and social equity issues for artists. The arts sector will be consulted on the advisory committee process.

Mr. Speaker, artists have been requesting formal recognition since the early '90s. Specifically I would like to acknowledge the work of the board and staff of the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance who have been a consistent and thoughtful voice on artist equity issues.

Using this Bill as a platform for further dialogue, government looks forward to working with the arts and cultural sector.

Mr. Speaker, we all know how people in the rest of Canada and indeed the world have the opportunity to see what Saskatchewan is all about through the excellent work being done by people of the cultural community. We recognize that cultural workers are the ambassadors of what we are as a people — our diversity, our distinctive abilities, and our hopes and aspirations.

The legislation will put Saskatchewan on the map as the first English-speaking province in Canada to enact legislation on the status of the artist.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased and proud to move second reading of this Bill No. 73, The Status of the Artist Act, 2002.

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

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to rise today and respond to the second reading of Bill No. 73, The Status of the Artist Act.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity about a year ago or a year and a half ago to meet with the Art Alliance in our caucus. We had sent out a number of invitations, and a number of groups came in, in the arts, culture, and recreation field, to bring us up to speed. As a newly elected member, I was not real familiar with how all the structure worked.

But this is one of the issues that they brought up, right off the bat, is that they wanted to be recognized for what they did as artists in this province. And there was no formal procedure in place at that time, and it was one of the issues. So it was really good to see and I was glad to see that the government is moving forward with this legislation as they have been asked since the early 1990s, I believe the minister said, for some recognition.

I think any time we move forward with this legislation and it deals with concerns of a group, whether it's the Art Alliance or whomever, to put them at a par and to put them at a level . . . on a level playing field with the rest of the province, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm glad to hear, as the minister mentioned, that we'd be first English-speaking or the second province in Canada, I guess, to move forward with legislation of this nature.

It's certainly good when we can say, on this side of the House, that we are the second province moving forward in the Dominion with legislation as opposed to the last province moving forward. And quite far too often, it seems to be that we're in . . . having to say that we're the last province. So I would applaud the government for moving forward on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as with every Bill that comes before this House on second reading, we adjourn debate until we can study the Bill a little bit further. But from our side of the House it doesn't look like, at first blush, that there'd be any reason to be holding this up much past that.

So, Mr. Speaker, at this juncture I would move to adjourn debate on this Bill.

Debate adjourned.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

## SECOND READINGS

## Bill No. 61

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 61 — The Regional Health Services Act** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with pleasure that I rise this morning to comment on Bill 61, the regional health authorities Act. Mr. Speaker, this is a very significant Bill in the field of health in this current sitting of the legislature and I would like to take a little time to comment on this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it isn't all that long ago when this government was formed that they decided to consolidate the authority of the delivery of health care services in this province from the myriad of local boards and autonomous agencies in the province that looked after nursing homes and hospitals and were very much a part of the mosaic of the Saskatchewan communities. And they did that by creating 32 district health boards across the province and closed a good number of facilities right across this province, not the least of which was the Plains Health Centre right here in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, when this initiative was undertaken, the government of the day, this current government under a previous administration, recognized at least in part that it was important that these local district health boards attempt to maintain the connection between the community and the decision makers that were going to happen on now, not so directly a community basis, but on a district basis.

And they said that it was important that this connection be maintained. And the way they did that is they made sure that on the district level there was going to be board elections. Now the sentiment was noble and the principle of having local representations who were elected by the people they served was admirable.

The government of the day decided that they'd only allow that half of the positions would be elected and the other half would be appointed by the Minister of Health. And, Mr. Speaker, going way back to that decision in 1993, I believe the official opposition expressed concerns about the fact that there were not fully elected health boards.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think that it's been important to recognize that these health boards with their mix of appointed and elected members functioned reasonably well. And when you talk to people who have served on those boards in the past and, indeed, currently continue to serve until this regional authority becomes in effect, they would say that, by and large, they were able to work out the problems that were created by two groups of board members — one elected and one appointed. And there was at least some resemblance of connection to the community.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the government then looked at these district health boards and they said now we've got to build a working relationship somehow with these district boards. And in some

instances, I think the government was disappointed in that these district boards worked very hard to create some autonomy for themselves and to exercise some local decision making that would reflect the priorities and needs of their local communities.

And, Mr. Speaker, what happened is that very often the department was disappointed with decisions that these district boards were making. But, Mr. Speaker, when you create an environment whereby you empower people, they're not always going to do exactly what you want them to do. That's natural.

But what happened as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that shortly after the structure was created in the initial health care reform, the government just simply abrogated its responsibility of leadership. And after Louise Simard was no longer the Health minister — and you can agree or disagree with the direction that was taken by the government under Ms. Simard's leadership, but it's pretty clear where she wanted to go at least; there was indeed a plan, arguable or not, it was a plan — but after she left the office of the Minister of Health, it seems as if this government, this NDP government simply dropped the ball and let the whole situation drift.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it created a really unbalanced situation. Because on one hand the government expected district health boards to carry out certain initiatives, and on the other hand the government was not prepared to provide the necessary funding for them to do it. And so what they ended up with a situation is conflict between the Department of Health and the district boards as to how these initiatives were going to be implemented and how they were going to be funded.

(11:15)

The district health boards have no taxation authority so there is no option for them to look at other sources of revenue; they simply had to accept what the Department of Health was giving them.

And so, Mr. Speaker, what happened in many instances, there was a conflict between the department and the district boards. And to make matters worse, the whole budget process was absolutely convoluted and bizarre. Because district boards would start their budget year from April 1 to March 31 to the following year and they had to submit these budgets for approval of the Department of Health.

Well the Department of Health in many instances didn't approve these budgets until 9, 10, or 11 months of the actual year had gone by. And so then they said to the districts, well now you can't run the deficit or you've got to do something about your budget because we don't like what we see. But three-quarters of the year already had passed; three-quarters of the expenditures had already been committed. And so it was an absolutely unrealistic expectation by the Department of Health of these district boards.

Mr. Speaker, it was an impossible situation and it actually got worse, not better. Under the leadership — or lack of leadership — of the former minister of Health, the situation got even more bizarre. And in addition to not only presenting and approving the budgets in a timely way, the minister of the day, the

member from Saskatoon Nutana, I believe, would sit there and micromanage and second guess all the little detailed decisions of the district health boards.

And so now you had a situation where not only was there no leadership coming from the Department of Health, there was no appropriate budget approval process that looked forward and give the district something knowledgeable and meaningful to work with. You now had a situation where the minister of Health of the day was micromanaging the day-to-day decisions of most of these district health boards. And so it created an environment of extreme frustration on everybody's part.

When I travel around the province and talked to district health boards and say, what was your experience under the minister from . . . of Health, the member from Saskatoon Nutana, they said it was an impossible situation because she went from issue to issue, detail to detail, and simply overrode and micromanaged and second guessed all the decisions of district health boards.

And then what she did is she said, now what you've to do is control your deficits; you've got to do it in an environment where we're not approving your budget till three-quarters of it is already expended. And then to make matters even more convoluted and bizarre, she said to them, you cannot make any significant change in the way you deliver health in order to balance these budgets. And so these district health boards were absolutely caught in an impossible situation.

And what happened? The minister of Health and the Department of Health said, well this isn't very good because they're not doing what they're told. Well they were put into a position where they couldn't do anything. And all they were being asked to do is to be a buffer between the bad decisions that were being made by the Department of Health and the people of the province that this Department of Health is supposed to serve. Mr. Speaker, the situation was absolutely bizarre and convoluted.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the great difficulties that we have said has occurred in this whole situation, and historically over some period of time in this situation, is there was an absolute vacuum of leadership coming from this government. So finally, finally as they went from crisis to crisis, the interventionist Minister of Health, the member from Saskatoon Nutana, got things worse and worse and worse.

She micromanaged the decisions of the district health board. She tried to overrule the educational decisions that the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association was making about their educational requirements for nursing professionals in this province, and then she had to back up from that situation. Waiting lists have doubled since the government promised in 1999 to cut them by 25 per cent; we've lost over 1,200 nurses in the last three years; and then the government is sitting there saying we're supposed to have things improving.

So what do they do? They come out and they end up with one report and one study after another and they try to come up with a way of fixing the mess they've created and somehow blame the whole problem on somebody else. And right now, Mr. Speaker, the scapegoats are the district health boards.

The government has said, oh no, this is the dysfunctional system but it's a system they've created. They blamed the fact that there was no support for elected boards on the fact there was a low voter turnout for these elections to district health boards.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the answer is very simple. They set the elections in the middle of the fall when everybody is busy. They set it at a separate time from when municipal governments or school board elections are being held. They almost set it up in such a way is that the voter turnout would be very low and they set it up in a way where you could easily point to it and say, obviously people don't care if they have elected boards or not because nobody's turning out to vote.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you could have upped the turnout, the voter turnout, by three or fourfold, by simply making it convenient and held at a time when other municipal and education board elections were being held. That would have been a very pragmatic, simple solution to ensure a higher voter turnout.

Mr. Speaker, when you think about how this province's health care system was developed in the province, it didn't come from Regina. It came from the people. It came from communities right across this province. The health care system evolved as very much of a community ownership, a grassroots, caring involvement in the delivering of health services to people in their communities. It didn't originate with the bureaucracy in the Department of Health in Regina. It originated with the communities right across this province and, to this day, there is a great deal of interest and concern and commitment to the health system by people in our communities.

The ownership of the health system is not the Department of Health, Mr. Speaker. The ownership of the health system in this province are the people of this province and the communities that they live in. This is a fundamental building block of a health care system.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that are being talked about, not only in Saskatchewan but across Canada and North America and, I believe, actually internationally and worldwide, is a very fundamentally simple concept. It's a concept that this government has finally been willing to understand and to implement in their action report, and it's the concept of primary health care teams working in collaborative practice.

Mr. Speaker, contrary to what people think, this idea didn't originate in the Saskatchewan Department of Health. It's originated across the country and across the world as a way of delivering fundamental health services at a community level.

Mr. Speaker, the fundamental drivers of health care reform and the need to adjust and adapt to a changing environment in health care is not coming from centralized governments. It's coming from communities and people in communities who recognize that the current model of centralized and regionalized control is not meeting their needs, that they need to change the way health care is delivered in their communities.

And one of the most fundamental concepts of the changing delivery model in these communities is the concept of primary health care teams where we have health care professionals from

many disciplines — doctors and nurses and pharmacists, physiotherapists, licensed practical nurses, technologists, radiology and lab techs — all of these people working together in collaborative purpose to deliver health care at the community level.

And, Mr. Speaker, all the literature you read about primary health care reform across the globe says that in order for primary health care to work, it has to be and is essential to have a connection and an ownership between the primary health care team system and the community that they serve. If you had a disconnect, the process is simply not going to work, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to highlight that connection. It's important to say clearly that all of the literature that you read that's available on the subject of primary health care teams stresses the importance of the connection between the community that's being served and the primary health care teams that provide that service. It's absolutely critical to success.

So, Mr. Speaker, I felt it's important to kind of paint this backdrop in terms of looking at Bill 61, these regional health authorities, and to see what direction the Government of Saskatchewan is taking in light of this overwhelming evidence and literature that's available around the world about primary health care reform and the connection of communities to the primary health care teams that serve those communities.

Mr. Speaker, in that backdrop with all of that evidence and all of that literature available to this minister that currently serves and this Department of Health, what is proposed in Bill 61? Well, Mr. Speaker, in simple language, it's 180 degrees wrong than what all the literature says. What it is, Mr. Speaker, is a massive consolidation of power and authority and decision making, not into the communities that are being served, but into the Department of Health and the Minister of Health. That's what's happening in this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, since this legislation was first tabled in the legislature, I've taken the opportunity — excuse me, Mr. Speaker — and taken the responsibility to try to discuss what the issues are with district health individuals and regional health districts right across this province.

Mr. Speaker, I've conducted a fair bit of that discussion and there's more people constantly wanting to have their input. And to a person that has commented back to me about this legislation, when I asked them what is the overriding concept and philosophy in this legislation, people say to a person that it's a massive consolidation of power and authority in the hands of the Department of Health and the Minister of Health. That's pretty clear by the way it goes.

We can talk about the details of the clauses and all the rest of it when we get to Committee of the Whole. But philosophically, in principle, this is what's going on. It's an absolute 180 degree direction from what all of the literature is saying about primary health care reform. It's absolutely opposite to what the literature says is going to be important to engage communities in a meaningful way with the primary health care teams that are going to be needed to serve those communities. It's 180 degrees

around from that.

Mr. Speaker, it's almost as if this government has said . . . there is an elitist attitude among the minister and the Department of Health and it's saying to the communities, thank you very much, but we know better than you do what's good for you. We are the people that know what's going on in health. And there's this massive consolidation of authority and decision making away from the communities that are being served and into the hands of the government.

Mr. Speaker, this is 180 degrees wrong and it's absolutely opposite to where the official opposition would approach this topic from.

Mr. Speaker, in this legislation, instead of maintaining the 50 per cent elected proportion of the district health boards and at least having that number transferred to the regional health authorities, 100 per cent of the people that serve on the regional health boards are appointed by the Minister of Health. It's that simple. There is no connection to the communities any longer.

There is no indicated legislation. The legislation is absolutely silent in terms of even if these board members have a dual responsibility. The legislation is clear that it says their responsibility is to the Minister of Health and the Department of Health. It doesn't even talk about the dual role that these members may have in that they have a joint or a balanced responsibility to the Minister of Health and the communities in the region that they serve. It's absolutely silent on that issue, Mr. Speaker. And that is philosophically and directionally wrong for the future of health care service delivery in this province.

What we have now, Mr. Speaker, is we have people who are sitting on these regional health boards . . . And let me say right from the beginning, Mr. Speaker, these are well-intentioned people who desire to do the very best job that they can to serve the health system in this province. They are. And I appreciate everyone that has served on a district health board, and I appreciate the approximately 400 people that put their names forward for consideration on the regional health boards.

But what they have to understand is that when they look at this legislation, it is clearly a one-way accountability process from the regional health authorities to the Department of Health through the Minister of Health. And, Mr. Speaker, time and time again when I've talked to people of what they think about this legislation, they say this is going to be a problem.

And I want to say on the record today, we believe it's going to be a problem and we think it's 180 degrees wrong in terms of a philosophical direction about where the health system should go in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what it's going to take for this government and this Department of Health to understand that what's necessary to engage the people of this province in a meaningful way in the decisions that are going to be made about the health care system in this province is not to take away responsibility and authority from them but to empower them, Mr. Speaker, at a community level. This is why Saskatchewan has a health system at all in this province. It's because people in

the communities over the years were empowered to be involved with the health care system.

It wasn't because the minister and a bunch of bureaucrats in Regina were telling them, we know what's best for you, we know how you're going to develop your needs for acute care and long-term care and community care. We know what's best for you and we can do a better job of telling you what there's going to be for an emergency measures system.

We know what's better for you; we can tell you how your nursing system should work. We know what's better for you and we'll tell you where you should have a doctor working in private practice on a fee for service or on a salary.

We know what's best for you and we'll tell you where you're going to have a community health nurse program or a public health nurse program or we're going to have advanced clinical nurses.

We know what's best and we're going to tell you what's best for you. So take care, relax, and don't worry about it.

And do you know what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker? Communities and community people are going to be disengaged from the health care system. They're going to look at it as something that is just provided for them from Regina. Instead of having community ownership and involvement and commitment to the system, it's now being taken away from them by the direction of this Bill 61.

Mr. Speaker, at the very least . . .

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

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member from Melfort-Tisdale for allowing me to stand to introduce a group of students from the Shaunavon Public School. Mr. Speaker, there's 18 grade 4 students sitting in the east gallery, and they're with their teachers, Heather McPherson, Brenda Gartner, Sheila Scansen, and Val Wilkins.

I hope you had a good tour and I'll be talking to you in a few minutes. What we're doing in the House right now is our member from Melfort-Tisdale is debating one of the health care Bills, and that's the point of the House proceedings that we're doing at the moment.

So I would ask all members to join me in welcoming the visitors from Shaunavon.

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

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 61 — The Regional Health Services Act (continued)

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and welcome to the students from Shaunavon as well. I appreciate that they're here to watch the proceedings of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I was saying that philosophically the direction of this government and this legislation is creating a massive disconnect between the communities that are being served and the decision making and the authorities process that is occurring through Bill 61.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when the students were being introduced, the minister said across the House, well let's talk about the community advisory committees. Well let's do that indeed, Mr. Speaker, and let's think about this very reasonably and rationally.

Mr. Speaker, I've outlined the clear, underlying purpose and authority structure and direction of authority for the regional health boards, where it's going to be massively under the control and the thumb of the Minister of Health and the Department of Health and that these regional health boards are going to be in a clear . . . And there's clause after clause in this legislation that talks clearly about this authority direction.

Well the minister says, oh but we've provided for community input because we have community advisory bodies. Well big deal, Mr. Speaker. Here you've already got a situation where the regional health authority board members have no real autonomy and empowerment, and now the minister is going to pretend that one tier down the way and another way you're going to have any meaningful input, any meaningful involvement by these community advisory boards. Mr. Speaker, that is just doubling the nonsense. If there is no authority and empowerment at the regional health level, there's even less at the community level because the direction goes in the same way — to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, when I've talked to people about this . . . and the minister always says, well we consulted. Well yes they did. They had meetings. They proposed what this legislation was going to look like. They had meetings at the regional level and I'm told by a number of district board levels that no one on the district board level was consulted.

But here's what the regional people even told me, Mr. Speaker. They said, we were shown what the legislation was; we were invited to comment, which we did. The department listened and you know what? They changed nothing. They changed nothing. And that's not consultation, Mr. Speaker, that's window dressing. That's going around and pretending to people that they have a meaningful input so that you can say that they had consultation but nothing changed — not a single word or clause changed as a result of this so-called consultation process, Mr. Speaker.

So let's make sure we understand when the members opposite talk about this meaningful involvement of communities and

consultation, it simply in a de facto meaningful way did not happen, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are all kinds of other instances within this legislation — clause after clause, page after page — that sets out and codifies and clarifies the authority and the control in the minister's hands. The minister has the authority under this legislation to fire a board, has . . . the minister has the authority to oppose programs, the minister has the authority to withhold funding. Mr. Speaker, those are the kinds of clauses that are in this legislation when I say it's a massive consolidation of power in the hands of the minister. Those are the kinds of clauses that are in there.

And you know what? It even says it extends that . . . those tentacles of control not only down to the regional and community level, it extends the same tentacles of control to the affiliates, the affiliate health service providers — the Catholic hospital system and the Catholic long-term care delivery system and the other denominational delivery system. Those same tentacles of authority extend right down to that level, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when you have people look at this legislation, the consensus is very clear. This is a very clear direction by this government. It's a consolidation of power and decision making in the hands of people who think they know better than what community leaders believe that they know. They think that they have got all of the answers for health care.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? They're saying that the reason they need that authority and control is because the district boards did not act responsibly. Well, Mr. Speaker, the district boards acted in the best fashion they could given the vacuum of leadership and given the ridiculous budget process and the ridiculous decision-making constraints that were placed on it. And, Mr. Speaker, it's an absolute crime that now this government is almost accusing these district boards for the decisions they made.

Mr. Speaker, they complained about the deficits that districts had. A lot of the districts worked very hard to live within the constraints, the fiscal constraints, set upon them. Many of them made very difficult, appropriate decisions in order to keep their budgets in line. And, Mr. Speaker, you know what the government did? They said, well no problem, we'll be happy with what you're doing; and those districts that didn't make those hard decisions, we'll cover the deficit.

So when you talk to the CEOs and the boards of those districts that did the work that was required to have a responsible budget, they said, why did we do that? Because when we made the tough decisions out here in the community level in order to meet those challenges by the Department of Health, Department of Health just said, we'll cover everybody's deficit anyway. So why would you care? And, Mr. Speaker, in this last year or two I've heard time and time again where districts said, why would we try so hard to balance the budget when the government simply writes it off for those districts that don't try anyway?

So now we end up with a situation where the message and the incentives going out are 180 degrees wrong. They're backwards. We end up with a situation where the government

tries to blame the districts for their shortcomings of policy. And now as a response to this ridiculous situation that the government itself created . . . And remember at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, the government approved every single deficit budget in every single district. So for them to be passing the buck on to district health boards, and now saying this massive consolidation of power and authority in the hands of the minister is a reaction or a necessary action in order to sort of balance the irresponsible districts, is disingenuous at the very best, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when I said that the official opposition, the Saskatchewan Party, would approach the need to provide regional services in this province from almost 180 degree different direction than what this government has said, I would like to outline a bit how we would approach this issue instead of this massive consolidation of power.

Mr. Speaker, we've said all along that it makes sense to provide services in this province on a regional basis. We've supported that concept and that principle from the very beginning. Mr. Speaker, when it was announced that there was going to be a change in the number of health districts and regions, I stood up in front of the media and in public and said, we support that concept of regional service delivery. Mr. Speaker, that's simply a logical and sensible way to go.

But we also said some fundamental things that are totally different than what this government has proposed. We said that, first of all, that the people that serve on these regional authorities are going to be elected by the people that they serve, that these elections are going to be held on a ward based system to make sure there's fairness and adjustments for community and population centres within a region. We said, they're going to be elected by the people that they serve. That's the first point.

Mr. Speaker, we also said that if these regions are going to work we have to think of how primary health care is going to be delivered. You need the ownership of the community that I talked about, the literature all supports. But when you think about primary health care, it's not just health professionals. It also has to deal with the primary indicators of health in a population.

It's very clear that issues of poverty and education and those kinds of things are also important to provide healthy outcomes. It's just not just treating disease; it's also creating an environment where people have a healthier lifestyle and have healthier opportunities, or more wholesome opportunities to improve their health.

And so we said health care cannot be dealt with in isolation. The determinants of health — thank you — have to be appropriate across the piece, and it involves more than the Department of Health. It involves government services on a number of levels. It involves the services of Education, of Social Services, of Justice, and many other kinds of community services.

So we said when you do these regions, wouldn't it make sense if these regions were made coterminous so all of the service delivery of the Government of Saskatchewan was done on the same boundaries? Far too much energy is expended to try to



figure out who's in and who's out, and who should be at the meeting and who shouldn't, because the boundaries are all over the map.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we said we not only believe in regional authorities and regional boundaries, we said there should be a mechanism for creating whereby government services are delivered on a coterminous way across those regions. Fully elected boards serving on health and other jurisdictions in a coterminous service delivery model. We think that makes sense, Mr. Speaker.

The third thing that we said needs to happen is we've got to go away from this ridiculous ad hoc budget process that's going on where in a de facto way you're going to end up with a situation where boards are having their budgets approved when three-quarter of the current year is already passed.

And we said that what's needed is, for lack of a better word, a three-year rolling budget where boards are actually able to anticipate, with some degree of accuracy, budget expectations three years forward.

And as you get closer to the current year, the accuracy gets fine-tuned so that boards know and can expect exactly what their funding is going to be so that they can make appropriate long-term planning budgetary decisions. Not ones that are made after three-quarters of the current year is already expended. So we said that that's important.

Mr. Speaker, if we're going to have true health care, meaningful reform, and improvement, we've got to engage our communities again in that process. There is a huge disconnect happening, and it's going to get worse under the terms of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, we support the idea that we should have these regions. But, Mr. Speaker, we cannot support the way this government is approaching it because we believe and are convinced, as are hundreds of people across the system in this province, that this system simply will not work, that this simply is the wrong way to go, and this simply is going to provide a framework for disaster and consolidation of authority in the Department of Health and a bunch of Health bureaucrats that are going to disconnect our communities from this essential service that we all desire.

Mr. Speaker, it is gratifying to me to know that people across this province are continuing to want to be consulted about this issue, who are continuing to call our office and are continuing to want to comment on this issue. And I know that there are many of my colleagues that want to comment as well because this has major concerns and implications for communities right across this province.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that these people have the opportunity to reach us and to confirm the concerns that I've outlined already this morning. Mr. Speaker, and to allow them to have the time to that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

### Bill No. 62

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 62 — The Health Statutes Consequential Amendments Act, 2002/Loi de 2002 apportant des modifications corrélatives à certaines lois sur la santé** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, Bill 62, the consequential amendments are really part and parcel of Bill 61. There are some technical reasons why it has to be presented as another bit of the legislation, so I would like very much to have this legislation follow in parallel to Bill 61. So for all of the reasons that I've outlined in my speech on Bill 61, I would like to adjourn debate on this as well.

Debate adjourned.

### Bill No. 57

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Sonntag that **Bill No. 57 — The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today and participate in the second reading debate on Bill No. 57 — what most people in the province, or what many people in the province are calling the PIPP (personal injury protection plan)/tort Bill. Of course the two things — one — the PIPP standing for the personal injury protection plan or no-fault insurance and the tort, of course, being the tort system of auto insurance that many provinces continue with today.

This is truly a very, very important piece of legislation that has been introduced by the government this session. It literally affects everybody — well almost everybody in the province — everybody certainly that drives, everybody that wants to ensure a vehicle and drive in the province of Saskatchewan; and also motorists that travel through the province, that travel on our highways and byways, it affects them as well. So it is a, it is a very important piece of legislation.

I think fundamentally what this legislation represents, Mr. Speaker, is a recognition on the part of this government that change was needed; that the no-fault insurance plan that was introduced by the government in 1995 in the province of Saskatchewan was failing the province.

The Bill makes that statement in two ways — in two ways. It improves no-fault significantly in terms of the benefits that are available to motorists. That's the first thing it does.

So it's a recognition of the government — even, even those members on those benches that believe that no-fault insurance is the way to go, they must too also recognize that the no-fault version we had in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, wasn't as good as it could be.

And so this Bill sets out to improve no-fault as it will exist in the province of Saskatchewan. But it will also set out to give people a choice, to be able to move to the tort system if they so choose with their own personal decision that they're going to

have to make.

And we have to ask ourselves, Mr. Speaker, why; why has the government changed its mind? The government was, throughout the no-fault years and even throughout the review year or years, I guess, it kind of . . . the review process got away on the former minister of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan), frankly, a little bit.

But throughout the review of no-fault and the years heading into that review, the government was pretty intransigent that what they were doing was the right thing to do; that even the opposition within their own caucus by as prominent of people as the Minister of Finance currently — at the time not a minister but currently the Minister of Finance — a very prominent member of the NDP caucus, was pretty clear about his opposition to no-fault insurance, to NDP-style no-fault insurance as it was brought into the province in 1995. So much so, Mr. Speaker, that he wrote his own internal proposal to the NDP caucus. He drafted a memo. He made an argument, Mr. Speaker, against — against — the NDP's plan to move into no-fault insurance.

And of course, that memo has now . . . is now part of the public record. It has been leaked. It has been leaked to the media and we've certainly seen copies of it, and I'm sure you have too, Mr. Speaker. And the members that have seen it will know that it provides a very detailed, and I think, salient argument against the government of the day proceeding with the implementation of PIPP or no-fault insurance as it was first constituted and developed in the province of Saskatchewan.

It was his position then — and ours now notably, Mr. Speaker, it's ours now — that we could achieve the benefits to the tort system we want, the affordability of the tort system that we want without depriving people's ability to sue, their access to the courts by moving to no-fault insurance. But the government of the day ignored the advice that it was receiving — at least from one MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) that we know of and maybe others — they ignored that advice and they implemented a no-fault system.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, people, people like Ralph Nader — who is well-known across this continent and arguably around the world for being a consumer advocate — other consumer groups, legal groups, and those who fight against no-fault insurance identified the no-fault system that they introduced in '95 as the most restrictive, the most draconian, in North America, Mr. Speaker. In North America.

They said that the jurisdiction, this province of Saskatchewan here, our version of no-fault was so restrictive in terms of limiting the rights of people that it was worse than any other no-fault system in that regard, in any other jurisdiction in North America, because it deprived people even of the right to sue a third party for some clear negligent act or omission of an act that had caused somebody harm. Very few, if any, other no-fault systems go that far.

Their no-fault system, the NDP style of no-fault, Mr. Speaker, protected the rights of the criminally negligent in terms of vehicular crimes ahead of the rights of the victims, of accident victims.

The same was true, Mr. Speaker, the same was true for impaired drivers. If someone was an impaired driver and got involved in an accident and caused somebody bodily harm, the NDP were more than happy to stand by while the victim was deprived, deprived of any right, any access to the courts to gain compensation for pain and suffering. They would even protect the rights of impaired drivers and those who are criminally negligent in some vehicular incident than they were . . . they were more worried about their rights than they were about the rights of the victim.

They didn't step in right away though, Mr. Speaker, the government didn't. The government stuck to its party line. It said we're going to give this five years. We're going to give it five years. Never mind how many people's rights are trampled on. Never mind how many people's fundamental right to some compensation for harm done to them by someone involved in a criminal act. No matter that. We're going to stick to this until the five-year period has run out — an arbitrary number picked by the government of the day.

And then a review was going to take place. We're going to conduct a review, an independent review, they promised. And, Mr. Speaker, the review did occur of course in 2000, and there were all manner of troubles and problems that the government had with that. The minister had been interfering in the review process. In fact he had been interfering specifically with the chairman, the first chairman of that review process. And the chairman had enough of it; the chairman quit. The chairman didn't want any more to do with this government's supposed arm's length review of the no-fault system, Mr. Speaker. And so he quit the process.

But the review continued anyway, Mr. Speaker, and it made several recommendations that basically gathered dust, because we understand that there was this great internal debate and squabble and wrangle within the NDP caucus about whether they would stick with no-fault insurance as it was, whether they would improve it as the review had recommended or make changes as the review had recommended, or whether they would scrap it in favour of something that would return us to a tort system.

And we know, Mr. Speaker, and we understand, that the province waited and victims' rights were denied for so many months because this caucus, this NDP government that in so many instances we've seen even in the last couple of weeks have clearly demonstrated their inability to govern, this same caucus couldn't get their act together. They were wrangling and they were arguing and they were fighting over the kind of insurance system we should offer. Meanwhile we were stuck with a most archaic and draconian no-fault insurance you can find anywhere in North America.

I think, Mr. Speaker . . . I think, Mr. Speaker, that they knew the current — that no-fault system — the current no-fault system was wrong. I think they knew it. I think more than the Minister of Finance knew it. The Minister of Finance clearly knew it well before they even introduced no-fault insurance, but I think many MLAs across the way understood fundamentally that the no-fault system, even for those MLAs across the way that still thought that no-fault was a good idea, I think some of them understood that this particular style of no-fault insurance

was so draconian, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member from Moose Jaw North on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I'm listening carefully, which probably puts me in a relatively unique position, but I'm listening carefully to the words of the hon. member from Swift Current in his debate, and, Mr. Speaker, as I listen, it seems to me that he is engaging in character attacks on Minister of Finance and others, and that that's highly inappropriate.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard him infer in, or some would say directly accuse, ministers of acting contrary or misrepresenting information that . . . (inaudible) . . . understood, seems to me, Mr. Speaker.

And I would ask that you would bring the hon. member to order and require him to continue debate with the proper level of respect and decorum that is expected in this Chamber.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, in response to the point of order from the Government Deputy House Leader. He was talking earlier about theatrics — we've just seen another example of the Government Deputy House Leader's theatrics.

The member from Swift Current was quoting from a memo from the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, in reference to the no-fault and his concerns about it, Mr. Speaker — clearly, a document that is available.

Mr. Speaker, there is no point of order here.

**The Speaker:** — I thank both members for their raising the point of order. I have been listening to the debate and I did not find that the member was going beyond the usual bounds of debate. But nevertheless, the fact that the matter was raised, I'd bring that to the member's attention that things can get sensitive and keep that in mind.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I appreciate your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and I also understand that the members opposite are sensitive because the fact . . .

**The Speaker:** — I would ask if the member wouldn't comment on the ruling. Just continue with the debate.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I intend to do that. We have several more comments to make on this particular Bill, Bill 57 as it regards no-fault insurance.

Just prior to getting into those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave of this Assembly to introduce some guests that have come into the Assembly.

Leave granted.

(12:00)

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to introduce to you and through you to the members of this Assembly, sitting in the opposition gallery today, two constituents of mine, residents of the city of Swift Current, long-time community activists or people that have been involved in the community of Swift Current in any number of capacities; and as well, Mr. Speaker, business people, employers in the city of Swift Current. They are Wayne and Lynn Regier, and they are perhaps, Mr. Speaker, here to watch the debate, or they may be here to take their son out for lunch because their son is one of our Pages — Dean Regier.

And I just ask all members to welcome them here to the Assembly today and to let them know that we're very much enjoying having Dean here in the Assembly. We're enjoying the special treats that he and his colleagues place in our water glasses, including goldfish and other things. And just ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to the Assembly.

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

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 57 — The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2002 (continued)

**Mr. Wall:** — So what we know, Mr. Speaker, today is that there was not complete unanimity within the NDP caucus from the beginning of the no-fault process that this was the right thing to do. We know that because the then — well the Minister for Finance currently, he wasn't a minister of the Crown at the time — but the Minister of Finance was very unequivocal in his belief that they could achieve a better insurance system for the people of the province without moving to a no-fault system.

We understand that there remained a debate within the organization opposite, as there was across the province, throughout the five intervening years that we could achieve some other, some other system, or at least some substantive improvements to no-fault insurance.

And so I noted with interest the minister's second reading speech, Mr. Speaker, where he clearly highlighted how this government believed that the existing no-fault system wasn't serving the province. So even with this new choice Bill, that allows people to move away and move to the tort system, even with that they've made some significant improvements to no-fault, not the least of which, Mr. Speaker, relates to the impaired drivers, as I mentioned.

As the minister noted in his second reading speech, it's going to give an injured person the right to sue an at-fault and convicted impaired driver for pain and suffering. And the government is to be applauded for that change.

The government is also to be challenged, Mr. Speaker, as to why it took seven years for them to make that fundamental improvement. Why in the world would it take seven years for a

government to realize how unfair it is to deprive a victim of the right to access some remedy in the courts after they've been injured by someone who's been criminally negligent or an impaired driver?

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the minister went on to note that an injured person will now have the right to sue for pain and suffering in cases where the driver is convicted of using their vehicle to deliberately harm the injured person. And that's a good change, Mr. Speaker. We understand the rationale for that change, but it again begs the question: why would it take seven years — seven years, Mr. Speaker — for the government to realize . . .

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

**Mr. Prebble:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And my thanks to the member for Swift Current for giving up the floor for a moment so I could make this introduction.

Mr. Speaker, through you I'd like to introduce to all members of the Assembly, 28 students from Lakeview School, that are in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to say to the students that I'm making this introduction on behalf of your member of the legislature, the member for Saskatoon Southwest who's not — Southeast — who's not able to be in the Assembly at the moment.

So, Mr. Speaker, in addition to us having 28 grade 7 and 8 students with us from Lakeview School, we also have two of their teachers, Mayda Zaluski and Louise Gagnière. And we also have a chaperone, Mr. Speaker, Jan Russell.

So I'd like to welcome the students. We're currently discussing the amendments to The Automobile Accident Insurance Act and, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if all members of the Assembly could join me in extending a very warm welcome to these students, their teachers, and their chaperone. Thank you very much.

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

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

#### **Bill No. 57 — The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2002 (continued)**

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And we on this side would certainly want to welcome the students from Saskatoon as well.

The change that the minister referred to in his second reading

speech, these two changes — and certainly there's more than that — but these two changes: one that allows people to sue if they've been harmed by a drunk driver; the other that they have the right now to sue for pain and suffering where the driver is convicted of using the vehicle to deliberately harm or injure a person, are positive changes, Mr. Speaker.

But why in the world would it take any government, regardless of its stripe . . . why would it take any government seven years to recognize how fundamentally wrong that is? Seven years it took for them to make the realization.

And I guess some would say, well better late than never. But I think that would be cold comfort for the people in those intervening seven years that have had their rights denied because this government didn't make the change that they knew they should make earlier in the process. I think it would be cold comfort to those victims, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's also a change in this Bill with respect to the no-fault part of the insurance plan that allows . . . it allows people the right to sue:

. . . for pain and suffering against certain institutional third parties whose negligence contributes to a crash.

And I'm quoting from the minister. And that too is a positive change. And that too begs a question. Seven years have passed. Why did it take till now to make that change?

I think this is the element of the no-fault program that Mr. Nader himself was most shocked at, I believe. That's my recollection. And my recollection is imperfect as you know, Mr. Speaker. But that's my recollection.

That's what he was most concerned about; that was perhaps more draconian, more restrictive than any other no-fault jurisdiction in the world. That if some third party, a manufacturer perhaps, was blatantly and negligent . . . negligently responsible for an accident occurring and harming somebody, that there was no remedy in the courts; that that person could seek no pain and suffering and go before the court and make their case and win or lose, but at least the chance to make their case.

So, Mr. Speaker, this seeks to change that portion of the no-fault program. And I guess that's a positive step, albeit seven years too late for many, many people in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the . . . SGI and Saskatchewan Justice, the minister noted in his speech, are also going to be working with . . . working to develop a new appeal system where the injured will have some right to access — this is even under the no-fault portion of the Bill, Mr. Speaker — will have some access to the courts, either some sort of an independent, sort of quasi-judicial, panel or Court of Queen's Bench. And that too we think is a reasonable thing.

But more substantively perhaps in this Bill, the government has sought to give people a choice. They can either choose the improved no-fault insurance, as it will be improved by this particular Bill 57, or they can move to a tort system. But, Mr.

Speaker, it is very important for us to note that the tort system they'll be moving to is also greatly improved in terms of the no-fault benefits it offers than the no-fault . . . or than the tort system that existed prior to 1995 in the province of Saskatchewan.

And the reason it is improved is that the government has adopted the premier option, something that's referred to as the premier option in Saskatchewan. And it's referred as the premier option, Mr. Speaker, because that is the name given it by its authors, the Coalition Against No-Fault here in the province.

The coalition worked very closely with accountants and with the Law Society and with different consulting firms to develop an alternative to no-fault insurance that they could credibly propose to the government, to the opposition, and to the public, and say look, we don't need no-fault insurance. We don't need it because we can improve the no-fault benefits available in a tort system and we can restore people's rights to the courts. We can give them back their legal access to remedy.

That was the case they made with the premier option and the work that they did. And they made that presentation to the opposition, as they did to the government, and as they did to the entire province. And they answered questions, Mr. Speaker, that we had of them. And I'm sure they answered questions that members opposite had of them about that program and about that plan. And they answered questions that the media and the public had of them about their plan.

And it must have stood the test, Mr. Speaker. It must have been able to stand the light of day because it is that very premier option that is going to be the choice given Saskatchewan drivers by this government. This government is going to be saying, if this Bill is passed, they're going to be saying look, you can choose between a no-fault program that's improved in terms of some benefits and some rights to sue, some rights . . . some new access to the courts, and you will be able to also choose a tort system that's improved. That tort system they're talking about, Mr. Speaker, make no mistake, is the premier option.

And I think members of the House will remember that last year about this time, as the critic for SGI, I stood in this House and asked questions of the minister and we sent out a press release and indicated what our position would be — knowing, Mr. Speaker, it wouldn't be enough to simply criticize no-fault, knowing that we would have to develop our own plan.

And we too looked at the premier option and we engaged some outside advice, Mr. Speaker, and we worked very hard with the coalition. And within our own caucus we had a debate and a discussion and we announced, Mr. Speaker, about a year ago that we would, as government, proceed with the premier option or what we were calling the modified premier option. We would make some changes.

We wanted to ensure completely that it was as affordable a system as possible, that people's rates would not go up because we went this direction. And so we made a change to the premier option.

In the premier option, Mr. Speaker, there is a \$5,000 deductible

for pain and suffering. In other words, if someone wants to sue for pain and suffering under that system, they're going to have to be prepared to live with a \$5,000 deductible, the thought being that many of the pain and suffering claims that are made are relatively small in nature, under \$10,000, but taken in an aggregate they account for a huge cost to the auto insurers — these small pain and suffering claims.

And so the premier option set out to give a \$5,000 deductible that people would have to incur before they proceeded or before they were able to receive their . . . the receipts of the decision in the courts. We wanted to increase that, Mr. Speaker, and we increased that deductible to a level that we thought would even further ensure the success of the tort system of the premier option.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, the other change that we made was to exempt municipalities from lawsuit unless they were grossly negligent. And, Mr. Speaker, we checked into this as well. We wanted to make sure we did our homework as best as possible with the resources we had. And it was confirmed for us that there is a precedent, even in Saskatchewan statute, for being able to define this — what grossly negligent might be. And so with that comfort, we went ahead and said look, one other change we'd make to the premier option is that we would exempt municipalities — rural and urban — unless there was an indication of gross negligence, and then injured people could make their . . . could have their day in court, if that was their choice.

And so that's the position of the Saskatchewan Party. And that's the filter through which we're looking at this Bill, at Bill 57.

And it's interesting to note because you know, what I think this Bill represents, it's . . . this is a government, and certainly a minister, that prefers PIPP. The minister's made no bones about it, that he prefers the no-fault insurance program. The president of SGI says he thinks no-fault's better for the province. And I don't know how many people on the benches over there agree with that, but clearly the lead minister and the president of the company, they like no-fault.

Fair enough. We asked them in committee well, why would you recommend that there be a choice system if you feel, if you're convicted — this was to the president, Mr. Speaker — if you feel convicted that no-fault is the right way to go, why don't you make your improvements to no-fault? Why would you recommend choice? Did you recommend it? He said, well, we listed all the alternatives to the government and the government chose the alternatives led by the minister.

But the minister said that he also prefers no-fault. So that makes us wonder, well why are we now debating a Bill that provides choice, that does both?

Was it driven politically, Mr. Speaker? The government was taking a lot of heat from the Coalition Against No-Fault, from the victims of no-fault, from the families of no-fault. There may have been some discord within their caucus. And so they've come up with this choice system.

And the question a lot of people have, Mr. Speaker — because

we will be the first to have it — the question a lot of people have, the earnest question they have is, is it going to work? Can it work? Can you have your cake and eat it too, with respect to auto insurance?

We're not sure that you can. We're not sure that you can. The Law Society is working on studying this. We're interested to see what they think of the workability of the plan.

(12:15)

I've talked to insurance companies that are very concerned about this. Is it workable? Is it worth sort of trying to figure out . . . to stay in the province and try to figure out?

I mean these are all very, very important questions. Because on any public policy initiative, you'd like to be able to give the people their cake and let them eat it too. But you know the nature of government is choices and you make those choices not because you want to sometimes, Mr. Speaker, but because you're the government and you have to.

And that particular debate or discussion needs to happen with respect to this Bill, is we have to be sure that this will work — that it will be workable for our brokers in this province, that it will be workable for SGI itself, that it'll be workable for other insurers in the province of Saskatchewan, that it'll be workable for municipalities. We need to make sure that's the case. And that is what we intend to do in this debate, Mr. Speaker.

Other members of my caucus are . . . of our caucus, my colleagues, are going to want to speak to this Bill, Mr. Speaker. And they want to do that during second reading. And then it's going to get to committee and it . . . We just want to serve notice to the minister that we will have very many questions about this particular Bill and its workability, and how sure we will be, and what are some exit strategies. If it isn't working, Mr. Speaker, if it's letting motorists down, if it's resulting in rate fluctuations, how are we going to deal with that as a province. We're going to need to talk a little bit about that.

We're going to need to talk about how, have we done enough to exempt brokers from liability in this. Let's recall . . . Let's remember that most of us are going to go to our brokers and rely on their advice as to which system to use.

I will be. We have excellent insurance brokers in Swift Current, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to be relying on their advice. And I know that they're pleased that the government, that SGI has committed to help provide some training. And I guess I'm pleased about that too and we are — as the critic — and we're pleased as an opposition.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure that SGI follows up on their word because, frankly, they've been a little suspect in that lately. They've been letting people down lately in terms of their promises to Saskatchewan people made either through the minister there, Mr. Speaker, or through their Crown president. And so we are a little worried about that.

We're a little worried about what will happen with the brokers and we want to be conscious of the fact that they have . . . they're . . . they've committed to do the best job they can. And

SGI's committed to help them do that and we want to hold SGI to that.

So these are the kinds of things that we want to talk about in second reading debate as well as in committee. But I know that many members on this side of the House wish to speak to this Bill, and so at this time, Mr. Speaker, I'd move that we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

### Bill No. 14 — The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act, 2002

**The Chair:** — I would invite the minister to introduce his officials.

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Seated to my left is the president of SGI, Larry Fogg; immediately to my right is the assistant vice-president of the motor vehicle division, Bernadette McIntyre; and seated directly behind me is Elizabeth Flynn, the legislative advisor.

#### Clause 1

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman . . . a few questions on this Bill and a few comments and that. It's quite an interesting Bill because it deals with quite a few different amendments on there, from ignition lock to dealing with dangerous . . . or impaired driving and maintenance orders and that.

So I guess the first question I'd deal with is finding it . . . more on the maintenance order, how that works. My question to the minister, through the Chairman, is what are the parameters involved in this? How will a person have their licence revoked if they don't keep up maintenance enforcements? How many payments do they have to miss? And how will that person be informed — will it be through mail or somehow will it be by their licences being revoked, somewhere along that line? If they could kind of start going into how that will be affected?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Essentially, Mr. Chair, to the member there is really no change. We would just receive advice from the Department of Justice as to when the licence should be suspended and it would be directed though by the Department of Justice.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is some Bills dealing with Justice on that. Can you tell me how that is going to affect SGI? How it's going to affect drivers if . . . the new Bills that will be affecting . . . what rules and regulations that I guess they put in place that will affect SGI?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Again to the member, I think I understood his question. Justice advises us as to when we should suspend the licence and they'll also advise us when we should reinstate. And we would just follow under the direction of the Department of Justice. There's essentially no change from what currently exists.

I believe that was your question, but if it's not quite, please clarify.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Well I knew there was two Justice Bills here. Was there maintenance orders before on licences? I guess that's what I'm asking.

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Yes there was. We've been doing that for quite a few years already.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Mr. Chairman, okay, I never handled a case before. I always thought that this was all voluntarily . . . or the province's.

How long do they suspend the licence? Is there a set period time until they start making payments? Or is there a six month or a year it's automatically suspended?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — No there's not. It's totally dependent on what the department . . . when the Department of Justice advises us to remove the licence and when to reinstate it.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When the suspension takes place, is it taken at time of renewal? Or is it just if an order comes through, you just suspend it halfway through even though that person has paid for his licence for a full year?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — The Department of Justice gives the individual usually 21 days notice that they have to make payment or their licence will be suspended and then they would notify SGI if the payment wasn't made obviously.

**Mr. Brkich:** — If that payment wasn't made, would they be refunded the licence if they'd bought it for the full year?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Yes absolutely they would be refunded. It would be prorated and they would get the full refund.

Just on your last question to the member, I should clarify this. That the person is sent, first of all — this is in reference to your last question exactly — the person is, first of all, sent three written notices from Justice over a period of 90 days and then if the payment is not made, then Justice sends a letter giving the individual 21 days notice and if they don't make the payment then, then they notify SGI.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chairman, a question to him. Is the letter sent by registered mail or is it just . . .

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Can't answer that question. That's Justice procedure; you'd have to ask the Department of Justice.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. How about licences, out of province, of people that are working here? Would you also be informing them, let's say, if it was a Manitoba licence, if they're in that program? Does SGI . . . If Justice contacts you that somebody that's living here in Saskatchewan for — and working here — for, let's say, on a six-month period, do you do . . . suspend the licence for that? Or is it only if they hold a Saskatchewan licence?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — It is only if they hold a Saskatchewan licence.

**Mr. Brkich:** — So if their licence was revoked at the Saskatchewan licence and, let's say, they did work six months in Manitoba and went there, could they get a Manitoba licence and still legally drive back in Saskatchewan on a Manitoba or an Alberta or an Ontario licence?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — There is an interprovincial record exchange that exists, and if the licence is suspended in this province, or if the licence is suspended in other province for that matter, every other province would access that exchange and they would have knowledge that the licence was suspended and they would not give the licence to the individual.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Yes. Thank you, Mr. Minister, Mr. Chairman. Dealing with another amendment, I think there are some amendments here dealing with the administrator and the removal of the requirement to hold a hearing when suspended, revoking, cancelling, or changing a driver's licence for medical reasons.

Who did you consult when . . . in deciding to make this decision? Did you have any third-party discussions with that? And also, give me some more background information with that part of the clause in the Bill. I don't fully understand it.

(12:30)

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — There was actually quite extensive consultation in coming forward with this amendment. We certainly had consultation with the Saskatchewan Medical Association, the Canadian Medical Association, the Highway Traffic Board, law enforcement agencies, who felt that we should streamline the process much better than it currently is or was, that there were too many hoops to go through to either suspend a licence or put conditions on a licence when it was appropriate.

But also when somebody had a legitimate case for some special circumstances around restriction of a license, that it took just too long to get them through the mechanisms that existed and that's why this amendment is being proposed.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What kind of a requirement . . . Would you need to hold a hearing? How many . . . Is there board members? Are they volunteer or is it an SGI official's look at it?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — In this amendment, we're proposing that it would go to the Highway Traffic Board and that board, you may be aware, is . . . Also makes it more convenient, which references back to your last question. They are located, many of those individuals — the whole board doesn't have to congregate but — they, they're located across the province.

Under the . . . under the — well I was going to say the old . . . old mechanism — but what . . . what currently exists until this amendment is approved, is that essentially the hearings are in Saskatoon and Regina under the . . . What we're proposing through the Highway Traffic Board, in fact it would be much more accessible for individuals across the province.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Mr. Chairman, I guess, dealing a little bit with this, I had a constituent which we were dealing with a couple of months ago that had his licence, class 1 with air, revoked because he had a medical condition. He'd passed out once. But the doctor, after several tests, couldn't still find the reason for it.

And I know then he'd appealed it and even the doctor had said, you know, we did a battery of tests, we can't find any logical medical reason why he blacked out at that time, it could have been just stress at that particular time. And I know he went through the appeal process and he still couldn't get his class 1 driver's licence back.

Will this be dealing a little more with it? In a situation like that, is there a little more appeal process? Would it streamline that kind of process a little easier?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — I think we're short of paper over at SGI. Let me say first of all to the member, if there's a specific case I would encourage you just to refer that because I think we could look into that for you.

But let me say generally as well that's here the process as it currently exists for class 5 or class 1. If there's a seizure, the licence would be pulled for three months. Then there would be follow-up, medical follow ups, every three months. And if there's nothing . . . if it appears that there's no problem, if the diagnosis is that there doesn't appear to be any additional problems, then they would receive their class 5 back for three months . . . after the first three months, that's right.

But for commercial they wouldn't get their class . . . they wouldn't get their commercial driver's licence back for 12 months. They'd have to be seizure-free for a full 12 months before they got their licence back.

But again, if you have a specific case, please refer that to SGI.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Okay, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister. I have. We've gone through the hoops on it before. It was like . . . dealt with this one, probably with your office, probably in January.

So I mean the question on the Bill is . . . and the same thing. You've given me . . . laid out them same examples on it. But he's been seizure-free and he'd gone through the appeal process and the appeal process had still said no. And whatever reasons — they really didn't supply a reason — they just said no. He still has to wait his full five years. And I contacted your office and you basically had said, well he has the appeal process and if that has said no, there's not much we can do about it.

So what I'm asking on this end of it . . . And I mean, if you want we can rehash. I can give the re-stuff on it, the person's name afterwards, and it should refresh your memory because it will be in your office on that.

But I guess what I'm asking with this Bill, is there any more changes coming with that, that would affect cases like this one in general, or are the rules exactly the same as they were last year?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — There's no changes in this Bill, but we did — I don't know if these are the right words — but we

relaxed the standards as of June 15, 2001. Now it's possible . . . And again, if you can give me that case, we'll gladly look at it. It may just be — we're just in our discussion here — it just may be that that individual was sort of caught up in the old regulations, if you will, so we'd be happy to look at that case again.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman . . . and I will. And basically he probably was because I know he brought it to me in January; I think it was January when we discussed it. But it had happened probably two years prior is when the whole situation had been going through kind of an ongoing thing. So afterwards, I'll give you the individual's name and we can kind of go over it again.

I think at that end of it, I'm done questions.

The next amendment that I'm looking at is there is . . . the Bill also talks about giving the administrator the power to downgrade a commercial licence if the operator does not provide a medical as required. Can you tell me the rules before that and the rules now with this Bill?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — The change is that under the old system, if you will, a commercial driver who had his licence suspended lost all of his driving privileges. Under this proposed amendment, starting January 1 of '03, they will be downgraded just to a class 5. So they can continue driving but it'll be reduced to class 5 privileges.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Okay, that's for commercial. How would he then go about getting back his commercial? Does he have to redo a medical then?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — The short answer is as soon as they submit their medical, it'll be reinstated.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Minister. Also in reading the explanatory notes, there was a piece in here:

. . . the offence of failing to stop for a peace officer to those offences for which an operator may be subject to administrative suspension.

Could the minister explain what exactly is being done with this change, and what do they mean by administrative suspension?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — This is, first of all, this is really specific to high-speed chases, and it's about standardization. It's about upgrading or updating, if you will, our legislation to standardize it with the federal legislation so that we're operating consistently.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chairman, my question to you I guess . . . through you to the minister, I guess. Dealing next will be with the interlock program and the whole discussion I guess around impaired driving and efforts to lower the instances of which this occurs.

What changes are being made here? Is it extended to repeat offenders or is this just for first-time offenders — the interlock system?



**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Three things actually. First of all, what's contemplated here is to extend this to repeat offenders. And that's to comply as well again with the changes that the federal government made in December of 2001.

Also we're putting in place, or recommending putting in place, repercussions for continued repeat offenders. And lastly, to move the appeal process to the Highway Traffic Board.

**Mr. Brkich:** — What would be the cost of putting in such a device and who pays for it? Does SGI or does the person putting it in pay for it?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — I'll just give you the exact breakdown. It is paid for by the individual. The cost is \$125 plus GST (goods and services tax) — can't forget that. There would be a higher fee charged for power units and luxury vehicles. There's a one-time administration fee of \$30, and then \$95 plus GST again for monthly rental. And then there's a \$25 de-install fee.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I have a question to you is how about PST (provincial sales tax) — is that included in it too? Is there a charge for PST?

(12:45)

There also . . . there's a little bit regarding zero tolerance for new drivers — a 90-day immediate roadside suspension. Can you go over the proposal on that end of it?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — I'll try this. What we're really doing here is updating this legislation to reflect the changes that have taken place as a result of the 90-day suspension.

So we have a process where vehicles can be impounded for a whole host of reasons. And not included in this legislation to this point in time was the issue of the 90-day administrative suspension. We're bringing that into this legislation to put in place the process for impounding a vehicle as it relates to the 90-day administrative suspension.

**Mr. Brkich:** — The 90-day administrative suspension, is that dealing with just new drivers or is that from anything from seizure for johns, high-speed chases, things like that nature?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — The 90-day suspension only applies to .08 or refusing to give or provide a breath sample.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've been rather enjoying the last half-hour of questioning because it's been amazing to see this minister being so succinct and brief and to the point. And getting a different answer for every question. It's been quite a treat.

I do have sort of three areas I want to deal with a little bit, and one is a follow-up to some of the questions that were asked earlier.

On the informing an individual that his licence is going to be suspended — so the individual may have moved to a different location and there is no way to contact him, but let's say it's still within province — at what point is that licence suspended but he hasn't been informed, or do you not suspend it until you

know that he has been informed?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Before I answer the question, I'd encourage the member to also be very brief in his questions as well and to ask a different question every time as well — follow my lead.

I believe your question is specific to maintenance orders. And again, I am going to . . . (inaudible) . . . just to repeat the answer I did before, which is that we are directed completely by the Department of Justice. So I think that was your question.

But if we receive notification from the Department of Justice that a licence should be suspended, we suspend it and reinstate it when we get notification from them again.

**Mr. Heppner:** — How actively do you pursue the individual — and I think you mentioned earlier on there are a number of letters written when you're going to withdraw the licence — how actively do you pursue the individual on the reinstating? Or do you just, say one letter and if you didn't get it, well then you're without a licence because you haven't been informed?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — We send them a letter notifying reinstatement. If we get the letter back, then we follow every mechanism available to us to try and contact the individual — I mean Henderson Directories and all those sorts of things. But it is, at the end of the day, it's the individual's responsibility to provide notification of change of address.

But having said that, we try and do everything we can to find out where they're currently living.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you. I want to spend some time discussing the situation where people are asked to do some retesting for their licences. And we'll start off with basically the 1A group. Are 1A . . . people holding a 1A licence, are they required to do some retesting from time to time? And what are the situations that exist that requires that?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — With respect to 1A licences, no, there's no retesting. I guess if there's issues of medical concern, that's a bit of a different issue. But no, there's no requirement for retesting on 1A licences.

**Mr. Heppner:** — So SGI would never send a licence to . . . or a letter to an individual saying that your 1A licence is going to be revoked unless you do some retesting?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Those cases, I'm advised, would be very exceptional, where retesting would be required. And again it would only be related to medical or where the individual has had a record of very bad driving, I guess, then there would be some instances where they would require retesting. But that would not be at all commonplace.

**Mr. Heppner:** — I would suggest that you sort of check what's actually going on because I do know of an instance of a person that had virtually a perfect record, without an offence within probably the last 10 years, no medical problems, well under half a century old, received a letter saying exactly that. I happen to be that person, and that's why I asked that question.

So then what I did — and this, being under half a century, was obviously some time ago — I wrote a rather snarky letter to the minister and was all reinstated. But I have to admit I was a little frustrated with that. Suddenly, with a very good record, I was supposed to take my 1A over.

But on an issue that I think is one that's probably more commonplace, and that's individuals who because of their age . . . And I know this is a very sensitive one because the seniors in the country — and I'm not quite there yet — the seniors in the country get very upset when retesting is something that's sort of discussed. But the question is: if you get a letter from family members or let's say somebody in the community that says, this individual is really fairly hazardous in their driving situations, how do you assess that and how do you react to that?

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — The answer to the question is really not age related although the incidents might occur more frequently as our drivers get older, but it's not really age related.

So first of all, we would only accept a written and signed letter from somebody indicating that they have a concern about a specific individual. We would then contact them and require them to have a medical. And then we would assess the medical and the process is . . . the review is done by trained nurses within . . . who are employees of SGI and then the assessment and recommendations would flow from there.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you. And I know this is a very sensitive area and that's why the minister was very careful how he answered this one because we don't want all the seniors in the country, including the ones sitting behind you, getting very upset with having their licences checked. But I think it is a concern that is out there.

And I just want to mention one other instance without a question; it's just sort of a comment on a situation that happened where we did have an individual in the community that had had something like four serious accidents in a period of about two months — each one in excess of 3, \$4,000. And that was just because of inability to handle a car properly. When received some notification from SGI that the licence was going to be withdrawn, had jumped in the car with his son, came down here, talked to the minister — this was a couple of years ago, you weren't the minister at that time — and had his licence reinstated, much to the fear of the whole community.

So I'm saying there seems to be some political involvement in some of these situations. And I thought our community found that very frustrating that when we knew what the driving abilities were, he could come down to Regina, have that licence reinstated and went till he had another accident and then finally both he and the car quit. And that is the way that story basically ended and that was a little bit frustrating.

With that particular comment, Mr. Chairman, we're ready to see the Bill move on.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 12 inclusive agreed to.

**The Deputy Chair:** — I would ask the minister to report the

Bill without amendment.

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Before I do that, I'd like to thank the opposition members for, I think, good questions. And I'd also like to take the opportunity to formally thank the officials of SGI for their good advice here.

Mr. Chair, I would move The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act without amendment.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 14 — The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act, 2002

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, with appreciation from all hon. members of the House to our Page, Frederick Khonje, who I understand is serving the House for the last day today. And best wishes for him as he goes to take on other employment.

I would move that this House do now adjourn.

**The Speaker:** — Before I put the question, I would ask . . . invite the member from Swift Current for a statement.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With leave to make some comments of interest to the Assembly.

Leave granted.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the opposition, we'd also like to acknowledge the work of Fred here in the Assembly and thank him for his service to all of the members.

Fred, as you know, is from Swift Current and we very much appreciated being able to work with him here in the Assembly. And we want to wish him much success in his future endeavours, in a new job he's going to be starting on Monday in Saskatoon.

So on behalf of the opposition, we'd just like to thank Fred and wish him the best.

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

The Assembly adjourned at 13:03.