



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

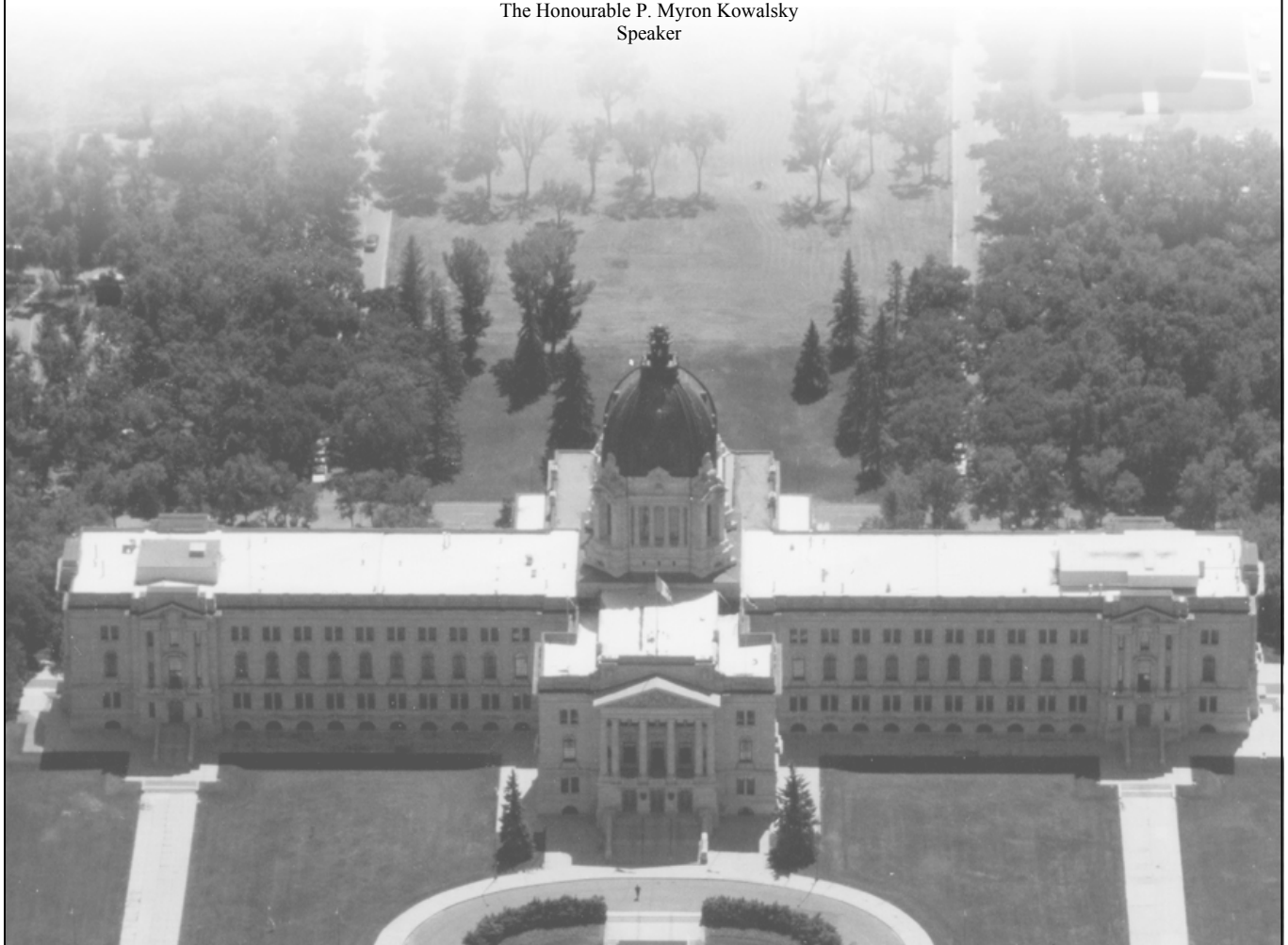
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky
 Premier — Hon. Lorne Calvert
 Leader of the Opposition — Brad Wall

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Addley, Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Bakken, Brenda	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Borgerson, Lon	NDP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Calvert, Hon. Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Cline, Hon. Eric	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Crofford, Hon. Joanne	NDP	Regina Rosemont
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Dearborn, Jason	SP	Kindersley
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Gantfoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, Glenn	NDP	Moose Jaw North
Hamilton, Doreen	NDP	Regina Wascana Plains
Harpauer, Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Ben	SP	Martensville
Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Higgins, Hon. Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kerpan, Allan	SP	Carrot River Valley
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Kowalsky, Hon. P. Myron	NDP	Prince Albert Carlton
Krawetz, Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lautermilch, Eldon	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Ted	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Morgan, Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, Hon. John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Prebble, Hon. Peter	NDP	Saskatoon Greystone
Quennell, Hon. Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Serby, Hon. Clay	NDP	Yorkton
Sonntag, Hon. Maynard	NDP	Meadow Lake
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Hon. Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Thomson, Hon. Andrew	NDP	Regina South
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wakefield, Milton	SP	Lloydminster
Wall, Brad	SP	Swift Current
Wartman, Hon. Mark	NDP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I present a petition on behalf of constituents from Cypress Hills concerning crop insurance premium increases. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all necessary actions to reverse the increase in crop insurance premiums and the reduction in coverage.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by producers from the community of Eastend.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are concerned about the NDP's (New Democratic Party) talk of cutting long-term care beds. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that long-term care facilities in Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency are not closed or further downsized.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Viceroy, Ogema, and Pangman.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again I rise with a petition from citizens in my constituency that are extremely concerned about the condition of Highway 43 and the safety thereof. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair Highway 43 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth in rural Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the good citizens of Gravelbourg and Lafleche.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens opposed to possible reduction of services Davidson, Imperial health centres.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that Davidson, Imperial health centres be maintained at their current level of service at a minimum of 24-hour acute care, emergency, and doctor services available, as well as lab, public health, home care, and long-term care services available to users from the Davidson, Imperial areas and beyond.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Kenaston, Simpson, Davidson, Saskatoon, Green Lake, and Imperial.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition from constituents opposed to possible reduction of health care services in Wilkie. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Wilkie health centre and special care home maintain at the very least their current level of services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Wilkie and district.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again in the House today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan concerned with senior citizens having facilities to bridge from long-term care and independent living. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that citizens of Unity and district remain in the community for this necessary service that will bridge the gap between independent living and long-term care.

And as is duty bound, our petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by the good folks from Unity and Luseland.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents who are very concerned about the condition of Highway 22 between Junction 6 and Junction 20. The prayer reads as follows:

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 22 in order to address safety and economic concerns.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Southey and Craven.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received:

A petition concerning low-interest cash advance program to stabilize the current herd numbers;

And addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional papers nos. 47, 63, 69, and 72.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 25 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Community Resources and Employment: for fiscal year 2004-2005, what are the names of individuals, groups, or businesses that rent or lease office space in the town of Biggar to this department? And further to that, for what purposes is this being done, and what are the rent or lease arrangements?

I also have the same question for the previous four years and the same question for five years to the Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation and also to the minister responsible for Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization and to the minister responsible for the Environment.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 25 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: what are the current salaries respectively for the following positions in Saskatoon Regional Health Authority — CEO, executive advisor, VP physicians, VP business development, president and CO St. Paul's Hospital, chief financial officer, chief medical health officer, director of communications, senior vice-president of nursing and health services, senior vice-president human resources and support services, vice-president of hospital services, vice-president primary health, vice-president support, vice-president clinical and operation support and vice-president rural health?

Mr. Speaker, I have similar questions for each of the health authorities.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 25 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization: for the fiscal year 2002-2003, what were the department's BSE-related programs, and what were the total costs of each of those programs?

And I have a similar question for the fiscal year 2003-2004.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 25 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: does the legal agreement implementing the CFIP program state the provincial government must match federal funding for the program on a 60/40 ratio? And if so, how does the fact that the federal government contributed more to the CFIP program recently and the provincial government did not affect this legal obligation? Will you provide a copy of the legal agreement signed in relation to the CFIP program?

And, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on day 25 I shall ask the government the following question:

Also to the Minister of Agriculture: for the year 2000-2001, what federal-provincial cost-shared water programs was the department involved in? What were the names of these programs, and what did each cost the provincial department?

Mr. Speaker, I have similar questions for fiscal years 2001-2002, 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — Members of the Legislative Assembly, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you a group of teachers who are here in the legislature to attend the Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy. These people have given up a weekend; they've got a head start

on this already. And they're looking forward very much to meeting with their individual MLAs (Member of Legislative Assembly) and various people that are associated with the government, with the legal system, and also with the Lieutenant Governor in Regina here.

I would ask them if they might just give a little wave as I mention their names. Alphabetically we have first of all Ms. Phyllis Barbier, from Ashley School in Swift Current. We have Ms. Diane Brayman, who's the manager of outreach program . . . of pardon me, education outreach, Library of Parliament. She's one of the coordinators of the Canadian institute on parliamentary democracy. Also, Mr. Curtis Chester, of Elizabeth School in Kindersley; Ms. Teresa Chicoine of Chaplin School in Chaplin; Dr. Gerald Farthing, assistant deputy minister of the Manitoba Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth, and he's here to observe and participate . . . and planning to start their own institute by the year 2006.

Ms. Heather Findlay, student, University of Regina; Mr. Jim Hack, Foam Lake School; Ms. Patricia Hack, Foam Lake School; Ms. Lisa Koch, Maple Creek School; Mr. Stephen Krause, a student at the University of Regina; Ms. Lynette Laird, T.D. Michel School — a community school at Big River. Mr. Ryan LeBlond, St. Pius, here in Regina; Mr. Scott Meunier of McLurg School in Wilkie; Leanne Morrison of Gravelbourg Elementary School; Ms. Jan Olesko of W.F.A. Turgeon Community School in Prince Albert; Ms. Nicole Oscar, Eastview School in Gull Lake; Miss Erin Quail, École W.S. Hawrylak, here in Regina; Ms. Beth Reynolds, Vanguard Community School; Mr. Bryan Schlamp of Morse School.

And with them as well are the steering committee who are made up of Marea Olafson of Eston School; Larry Mikulcik of William Derby School in Strasbourg; Tim McFadden, Robert Usher Collegiate in Regina; Armand Martin of the Department of Learning; Brent Toles from the Department of Learning. Also from the Department of Learning are Ray Robertson, Gail Saunders and Anna Schmidt.

I ask all members to welcome these teachers to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I want to join with you and on behalf of all members of the Assembly in welcoming these teachers to the gallery today. I had an opportunity to have lunch with them and faced many good, somewhat tough questions in some cases, but it was certainly a very good discussion about how we can make our parliamentary system more real to students and youth in our system.

This is a very unique opportunity — the teachers' institute — for legislators and teachers to share experiences back and forth. And I know it's something that all members in the House certainly look forward to. So I want to join with you, Mr. Speaker, in welcoming all of these teachers. And I would just indicate to members, be careful; I think they are grading us on our performance over the next couple of days.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Learning critic, the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with you and the minister in welcoming the members of the Saskatchewan Social Science Teachers' Institute here to the Assembly today.

I know you will be observing today and tomorrow, and it's always interesting to meet with the groups. I've had the opportunity over the last couple of years as the . . . formerly as the party whip, to sit and try and explain some of the goings on in the House and to try and help them make sense of it all.

But I know, Mr. Speaker, after seeing some of the teachers that have been through the institute over the last couple of years . . . I ran into one just through hockey season, and she was saying what an interesting three or four days they spent here in the legislature. So I hope you can find the same experience as that person did . . . and when you go back and are talking to the classes, perhaps explain the workings of this House maybe a little bit better, which helps us all. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Massey Place.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Tim Gitzel, who's seated in the Speaker's gallery, and he's known to many people in the legislature.

Up to now Tim has been the president of a company commonly known as COGEMA in Saskatoon, but now called AREVA, and he has also been serving as president of the Saskatchewan Mining Association. Tim is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan College of Law which I'm sure you know, Mr. Speaker, produces the finest lawyers in Canada, and also has worked in this building as a ministerial assistant in the past.

He recently was named as AREVA's president of its uranium and gold division and, fortunately for him, but unfortunately for us, will take up residence near Paris, France, in that capacity. And Tim is the first non-French national, I believe, to head up an important division of COGEMA or AREVA in France.

(13:45)

And so our loss in Saskatchewan, both in terms of having Tim running COGEMA here and being president of the Saskatchewan Mining Association, which of course we deal with very extensively, is France's gain.

But the good news I think, Mr. Speaker . . . And we all congratulate Mr. Gitzel on his promotion, really. The good news I think is that the Saskatchewan mining industry, which is thriving in Saskatchewan and will continue to do so, has a very good friend in Tim Gitzel as he continues in an important role in AREVA which will continue as an investor in our province,

and so it's a mixed message.

And I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming Mr. Gitzel to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the minister in welcoming Tim Gitzel to the legislature. Tim is a neighbour of mine, a friend of mine, and a constituent of mine in Saskatoon Silver Springs. His kids and our kids spend a lot of time together so I'm often seeing Tim at the rinks and he will be missed.

I'd also like to indicate that Tim was named one of the 10 Saskatchewan men of influence by *Saskatchewan Business* magazine recently and Tim's new role is going to see him take on the position of worldwide sales for uranium for COGEMA and the new parent company.

Tim and Bonnie and their kids, Ty and Bailey, have been a real credit to Saskatoon and to the province and to the communities of Erindale and Arbour Creek. And members wish Tim and his family well and we look forward to your return. And good luck finding a hockey rink to play in, in France.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

National Volunteer Week

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Chair of the Voluntary Sector Initiative, I'm pleased to say that today marks the beginning of National Volunteer Week.

Mr. Speaker, many of us have experienced first-hand the value of volunteers. Saskatchewan has the highest percentage of volunteer participation in the country with 42 per cent of Saskatchewan residents aged 15 or older volunteering each year. This is clearly a reflection of the values that are important to us and these values reflect our co-operative spirit.

Mr. Speaker, this year's theme is Volunteers Inspire by Example. Not only do volunteers inspire others, but they also make a difference in the lives of those they serve. In Saskatchewan, thousands of people throughout the year give of themselves to make our communities and our world a better place to live.

Our voluntary sector is a vibrant and valued part of the social fabric of this province, and this government recognizes the contributions of our volunteers. Through the Voluntary Sector Initiative we are working to enhance the co-operative relationship between the public sector and the many components of the volunteer sector in Saskatchewan. This initiative is also helping to create awareness of the benefits of

volunteerism.

Mr. Speaker, let us recognize how all our lives are enriched by the tireless efforts of volunteers. I ask all members to join me in acknowledging their contributions and thanking them for their hard work.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to rise in the Assembly today to ask all members of the House to recognize National Volunteer Week occurring April 18 to 24 across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we can't begin to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to thousands of volunteers who lend a hand and support the many worthwhile causes in our communities. It's a well-known fact, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan's volunteer rate is one of the highest in Canada, and we are very proud of our citizens' commitments to the various non-profits and charitable initiatives. Literally hundreds of thousands of hours have gone into assisting many organizations, and we know that there are hundreds of thousands more yet to come.

While we depend on our volunteers 365 days a year, 7 days a week, we're happy to set aside this week of April 18 to 24 to recognize the invaluable contributions from the volunteer sector here in Saskatchewan and across Canada. I ask all members of the House to acknowledge Volunteer Week. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Primary Health Care

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ms. Lucille Auffrey, the executive director of the Canadian Nurses Association, recently visited the province. She was here as a guest of the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association, and over the course of her visit she toured several of the 21 primary health care team sites in the province.

Mr. Speaker, the concept of primary health care teams is all about improving access to care — a cornerstone in our Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care. So impressed was Ms. Auffrey with what she saw that she felt compelled to write to commend the Saskatchewan government in its commitment and vision for health care.

Here's an excerpt from her letter. Quote:

I personally want to congratulate you on the innovative leadership you have shown on matters related to health reform.

Ms. Auffrey says that the vision and commitment shown in Saskatchewan will profoundly influence the health of Saskatchewan people and will be an example for the rest of Canada to follow. And again I quote:

The well-balanced approach to primary health care in operation in Saskatchewan is, I believe, leading the way in our country.

Mr. Speaker, well-balanced, innovative, leading the way. To their shame, the Saskatchewan Party doesn't want to hear it, but that's the truth about this government's approach to health care in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Emma Eberhardt Celebrates 100th Birthday

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make the Assembly aware of a constituent of mine. Emma Eberhardt, née Domes, was born on April 19, 1904, in Lang, Saskatchewan. That would make her 100 years young today.

She has lived her whole life in Lang, which is quite a feat. She completed her grade 7 education before returning home and helping her mother who was suffering from arthritis. She says one of her biggest regrets is that she didn't continue on in school. But as was so often the case at that time, it was just not possible.

Emma was married on February 21, 1922 to Martin Eberhardt, and they were blessed with four children. Martin died in November 1961. Emma's three surviving children live in Yellow Grass, Weyburn, and Regina. She has 7 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, and 2 great-great-grandchildren.

She continues to live in her home doing all her own work: her own cooking, laundry, ironing, baking, pickling, and tidying. Her kids insisted a few years ago that she hire a housekeeper to do the vacuuming and washing the floors. Two years ago Emma put an extension on her home, or supervised the extension being put on her home — not that she couldn't have done it herself. When asked why she didn't put a main floor bedroom on years ago, Emma said, I didn't need it years ago.

Her family celebrated her birthday on Saturday — family and friends in Lang. And I do hear that there may be a celebration of her birthday here today, later on this evening at the Lang Hotel. Everyone is welcome, I guess. Congratulations, Emma.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

Engineers Raise Money for Charity

Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, for almost two decades the University of Saskatchewan institution of electrical and electronic engineers have been hosting a road hockey tournament called, appropriately enough, the High Voltage Classic.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things that distinguish the

HVC (High Voltage Classic), as it is commonly called, from other road hockey tournaments: the fact that this was the 19th annual; the fact that it draws over 1,000 participants, 64 teams, often sporting crazy outfits to vie for the best-dressed team award; the fact that there's a 32-hour marathon.

But what really sets the High Voltage Classic apart is that it is one of the largest student-run charity events in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, in its first year the HVC raised \$3,400 for a local charity. Last year it raised over \$22,000 for Care and Share, a charity that offers services and support for underprivileged children. All told, the institution of electrical and electronic engineers has raised over a quarter of a million dollars so far. This year, Mr. Speaker, the tournament raised over \$22,000 for the Saskatchewan Hemophilia Society. The money will be used to help support families and children suffering from bleeding disorders.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that all my colleagues will join me in thanking everyone involved in the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers) High Voltage Classic for their outstanding commitment to a couple of long-standing Saskatchewan traditions — road hockey and community service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Kindersley Junior Klippers Achievements Applauded

Mr. Dearborn: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to applaud the achievements of the Kindersley Junior Klippers hockey team. This 2002-03 season the Junior Klippers have won the SJHL (Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League) championship, and as well they are celebrating their 10th year anniversary as a hockey club.

The Klippers began the SJHL season projected to be a middle-of-the-pack team with a lot of young talent, but very little in the veteran department. Competing all season in a division that featured the defending Royal Bank Cup champs, Humboldt Broncos, and the defensively strong Battleford North Stars, the Klippers were expected to take third place in the Dodge Conference. True to form the Broncos battled for first and won the war in the end.

Some keys to success for Kindersley in the regular season was the play of forward Curtis Bazylinski, and Troy Schwab. Both players averaged over a point per game. And Jesse Fischer — labelled by head coach, Dave Hunchak, as the toughest player in the league on a pound-per-pound basis — emerged to score 16 goals.

The Western Hockey League allowed 18-year-old Casey Lee to return from playing with the Kamloops Blazers. He potted 14 goals and 42 points in 34 games. And defenceman Josh Pokol came back from the major junior ranks and fought through serious injury to contribute in 24 games.

And on a personal note, I'd like to mention Bredy Larock who plays for the Klippers and is from my hometown of Eatonia,

and I know that he did just great.

Mr. Speaker, I caught the third period and play-by-play action on CJYM on Friday night. They went into the third period at 2-all with the Weyburn Red Wings. Kindersley went up by a goal, Weyburn caught up, and on . . . at the very end of the game Kindersley won 4-3. And I'd like all members of the House to applaud their achievements.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw North.

Yorkton Schools Win Fitness Awards

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Physical Education Association is a non-profit organization whose goal is to positively influence the lifestyles of Saskatchewan's children and youth.

One of the ways the association accomplishes this is through a series of annual awards and scholarships they present to individuals, students, schools, and professionals for making significant contributions to physical education.

On behalf of my good friend and colleague, the hon. member for Yorkton who would much prefer to be giving this statement himself, I'm pleased to advise the Assembly that three Yorkton schools recently received awards from the association.

Mr. Speaker, M.C. Knoll, Columbia, and Dr. Brass each received a Quality Daily Physical Education award from the SPEA (Saskatchewan Physical Education Association) in recognition of their high quality physical education programs, including extracurricular and intramural activities.

Mr. Speaker, the physical activity is an important part of a healthy lifestyle; we all know that. And it's no secret that keeping our kids active and physically fit is becoming more and more challenging.

I thank all those involved with the Saskatchewan Physical Education Association for all their good work and support of fitness in the province. And I'm sure all my colleagues will join me in congratulating these three Yorkton schools on receiving these prestigious awards.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

Policing Resources

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Justice.

This year's Throne Speech talked about improving the safety and the security of our neighbourhoods. On April 8 the Regina

city police received a 911 call reporting a woman screaming inside a Regina apartment. Unfortunately police did not make it to the scene for 30 minutes and when they arrived, it was too late. They found the woman dead. Police attribute the delay in responding to the 911 call on a lack of resources.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP have now broken both their 1999 and their 2003 promises to hire 200 new police officers. And the people of this city and of this province would like to know what this government is doing to ensure that that this will not happen again due to a lack of police resources.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, Ms. Kinna's violent and premature death is a terrible tragedy, and on behalf of all members of this House I would like to extend the deepest sympathy to her family for their terrible loss.

On the issue of resources, Regina Deputy Police Chief, Clive Weighill was interviewed this morning on CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) radio. And he referred to the number of high-priority phone calls that came in all at one time. And when asked if this was unusual said, yes, it is unusual that that would be . . . that would be a rare occurrence.

(14:00)

And then he was asked, does it say anything about the number of police officers in Regina. And Deputy Police Chief Clive Weighill said:

. . . we're trying always to set that optimum rate of officers on the street so that we can answer the calls expediently and yet not have too many officers on the street with not a lot of things that they have to work on.

If asked if there was the optimum number now he went on to say:

I think we're staffed very well. You know the Board of Police Commissioners and the province and Regina have expanded our resources . . .

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From the Minister comes the same old story that's all too familiar. The government will say anything to avoid taking responsibility for the real issue. I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, to know . . . for members opposite to put themselves both in the shoes of the neighbour who made the call as well as the family who now have to live with the effect.

In the last five years the NDP government has not once, but twice, promised to provide 200 new officers and there's very little evidence to suggest that we'll see that in the future. Mr. Speaker, when is this government going to stand up and fulfill

the promises that it made to provide the additional officers that are required in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, Deputy Police Chief Clive Weighill said this, not I.

I think we're staffed very well. You know the Board of Police Commissioners and the province and Regina have expanded our resources quite significantly in the last four to five years. So our sworn strength has come up quite a bit.

Since 1999, Mr. Speaker, we've increased provincial funding for police services by a record \$21 million, including funding 142 additional policing positions up to that point. In the 2003-2004 budget included funding to put 10 more police officers on the streets and our rural communities to support integrated targeted community-based approaches to reduce crime. And in the last budget — the 2004-2005 budget which the hon. member across the way voted against — we budgeted for another nine additional police officers, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Martensville.

Long-term Care Beds

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, the end of last week, the member from Arm River-Watrous asked the NDP member for Saskatoon Eastview if she supported a closure of long-term care beds. She said, we are overbedded in this province and that long-term care beds are not the solution for seniors. She said that her advice to seniors was, and I quote, "to live healthier and die quicker." Die quicker, Mr. Speaker, that's what the member from Saskatoon Eastview is telling seniors.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier over there support that view? Does he support the closing of long-term care beds and telling seniors to die quicker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House, and I think all people of Saskatchewan, have a great deal of respect for our elders and we wish all of them a very long life and a very long, healthy life. And I know from the information that I heard the other day that was the clear intention of the member who was speaking. It supports the government position that we provide good care for people at the end of life but the main goal for all of us is to have a long, healthy life, independent living, and enjoying families, friends, the whole of Saskatchewan, right to the end of your life.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Martensville.

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, that wasn't the issue. The NDP member for Saskatoon Eastview was responding to a question

about the number of long-term care beds and she said long-term care beds were not the solution. No, the solution, she said, was for seniors to die quicker. That's the NDP solution. Those are her words, Mr. Speaker, not mine. In fact, Mr. Speaker, she said it twice — twice.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier over there agree with his MLA advice to seniors to close long-term care beds and to die quicker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, and I think throughout Saskatchewan — maybe except for the member opposite and the members opposite — we wish all of our elders a long life and a fruitful life and a good life here in Saskatchewan. And we're going to continue to work to provide that care.

We all know that many of the most expensive parts of our health care system do relate to the last years of life of people, but that's exactly why we are working very hard locally, on a provincial basis, on a national basis, to make sure that we have the kind of sustainable, long-term care that we need for everybody.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Martensville.

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we abhor a philosophy, a public policy that says the best way to cure the long waiting lists for seniors for care beds is for them to die quicker.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note who made these comments. The NDP member for Saskatoon Eastview is a . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please, members. Order. The member for Martensville.

Mr. Heppner: — . . . is a former associate minister of Health. She is the current Chair of the health and human services committee and she is telling seniors to die quicker. Mr. Speaker, the NDP member was responding to a question about the health centre in Imperial. Right now all 15 beds are full and there's 10 people on the waiting list.

Mr. Speaker, this is the situation in many places in Saskatchewan. And that NDP member says there are too many long-term care beds in Saskatchewan, so live healthy longer and die quicker. Mr. Speaker, how many long-term care beds will the NDP be closing?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to read *Hansard* from Friday on page 573, and this is the quote from the minister from Saskatoon Eastview:

But my view, for myself, I would prefer to live healthier

longer and die quicker.

Mr. Speaker, that's a reference to a person's personal choice about her own situation.

In this province we pride ourselves on the kind of care that we have provided for our people from birth to death, and we're going to continue to provide that kind of care. And we're going to work together as citizens of this province to make sure that we have a good health care system for all of us for the long term.

I ask the members opposite to come and join that process and help us get something that we can all be proud of.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Martensville.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That member's reference on Friday was not to herself; it was directed to the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I will quote from *Hansard*, page 573, the whole thing:

When I speak to seniors, I . . . (tell) them . . . (that) if they change the way they eat, they change their exercise, they add exercise to their regime, they will live . . . longer and die quicker. There's . . . I know . . . (everyone) goes . . . they gasp.

There was a gasp of abhorrence from the Sask Party side that she would recommend for them to die quicker.

Mr. Speaker, it's unacceptable that she would give that advice. The Minister of Health said there will be long-term bed closures as a result of this year's budget. So clearly the government must have a goal in mind.

As to the optimum number of long-term . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order, please. Would the member put his question.

Mr. Heppner: — The question is simple: how many long-term care beds does the NDP plan on closing? How many?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we are working with the people throughout the health system in Saskatchewan to make sure that we have the best and most appropriate use of all of the dollars that we have available. We are also working within the province to have the appropriate resources. We're working on a national basis to get a proper sharing from a national level.

I ask that member, and all members opposite, to possibly call a policy conference in their party so that they can discuss this issue so that they can have some public positions that we can actually debate. Because, Mr. Speaker, it's very clear on this side of the House where we're going. We ask them, where are they going?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Martensville.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's talk about the NDP policy. Their Department of Health right now is working with their health authorities to develop their plans for the coming year. The minister has said those plans will include bed closures and facility closures. Clearly when the NDP was drafting its health budget, it must have had some plan in mind regarding how many beds would be closed and how many facilities would be shut down.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Saskatoon Eastview said Saskatchewan had too many long-term care beds and long-term care beds were not the solution. The solution, she said, was for seniors to die quicker.

How many long-term care beds is the NDP going to close?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, on budget day we allocated money for health care which included a \$160 million increase. This was a substantial increase to all of the regional health authorities. But there are many demands for health care dollars, and all of those regional health authorities are working very carefully to look at their budgets and all of the services that are provided in the various regions.

They're working on that right now and we're continuing to have discussions with them. And what we will do is make sure that we provide care for the people of Saskatchewan using the dollars that we have in the most appropriate way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

Extension Agrologists

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday I asked the Minister of Agriculture a question about the NDP's recent decision to cut the province's extension agrologist program. The minister said, and I quote:

. . . with these changes we will begin to see even more development in terms of processing in this province . . .

Mr. Speaker, some producer organizations in this province are calling our office to tell us that the expansion of value-added processing industry is exactly why communities need these agrologists in the community. Does the minister not think the extension agrologists help facilitate the expansion of the value-added processing industry?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have very carefully looked at what is happening in rural Saskatchewan, the kind of resources that are needed.

We've been consulting with a wide variety of groups, not least of which has been ACRE (Action Committee on the Rural Economy). And we've realized that in order to meet the needs of the 20th century that we have to have . . . or 21st century, we

need to have a 21st century system. So we've run Internet out into rural Saskatchewan. And the fact is that the farmers and the people in rural Saskatchewan are using e-mail, Internet, telephone, to gain most of the information that they're needing from agrologists these days.

Agrologists are indeed important in terms of providing information. And they are providing this information through 21st century technologies to the people in rural Saskatchewan. We believe that we can build for the future, that we are building for the future, and that we're putting the resources in the right place to do that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, this Wednesday in Saskatoon, the Meacham Hills Forage Club, the Punnichy Beef Producers Club, and the Twin Rivers livestock, economics and forage club are holding an emergency meeting on the termination of the Saskatchewan extension agrologists program. People throughout the agriculture community are upset at the termination and want some answers from this NDP government.

The groups have invited the Agriculture minister to attend this important meeting. As Agriculture critic for the Saskatchewan Party, I am more than happy to attend this meeting with the minister.

To the minister: will he be attending this emergency meeting in Saskatoon on Wednesday?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there are a number of groups who are raising issues around the value of the agrologists and the service that they have been providing. And we've been listening to what those people have been saying.

And we recognize that we have a lot of information that can be provided and service that can be provided. We've restructured. We still have a significant number of agrologists who are on staff in each of the regional resource centres. And at the call centre we will have a significant number of agrologists who are there providing information and providing the kind of support that is needed to help our agricultural community move forward into this 21st century.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, the population of Saskatchewan has been shrinking, investment in this province has stagnated, our economy's on the skids, and our fiscal house is in disarray in this province.

Since most production in this province originates in rural Saskatchewan, since the people of rural Saskatchewan say they need extension agrologists in their communities to facilitate

value-added processing, and since rural Saskatchewan is in an economic development tailspin the likes of which has never been seen in my lifetime, I ask the minister: does he or his NDP government care?

Will that minister meet with the agrologists in Saskatoon on Wednesday or leave them in place in their jobs in our communities?

(14:15)

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, it's hard to believe the litany of negativity that we're getting from the other side over there — the view that's portrayed, the distortion of numbers and figures.

In this province we are seeing tremendous investment in rural Saskatchewan, and that investment in rural Saskatchewan is paying off as we build systems for the 21st century. We will continue to support the agricultural community and the agriculture industry through those systems that we have set up.

Mr. Speaker, there is a meeting up there. There is a meeting here. I will be at this meeting here doing the work that I'm called upon to do as Minister of Agriculture here in this place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization Program

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, the minister doesn't appear to know or care much about the loss of extension agrologists. Maybe he'll have better luck with this question.

Officials in Ottawa are saying Saskatchewan is refusing to sign off on changes to the new CAIS (Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization), agricultural assistance program. The former NDP Agriculture minister, the member from Yorkton, held out on signing the original program because he wanted an increase in the program funding cap and he wanted the program to cover negative margins.

Now federal Agriculture minister Bob Speller said he agrees and has included both an increase in the cap and consideration of negative margins but Saskatchewan is still refusing to sign on to the program changes.

The phrase, be careful what you ask for, comes to mind. Why is this NDP government refusing to sign on to this important program?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, indeed the member from Yorkton worked very, very hard to make sure that there was consideration of negative margins and caps, held off on signing the APF (agricultural policy framework) so that we could get that considered and in fact

there are a number of provinces who have signed on.

But, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that we must be good stewards of the resources that we have here, the dollars that we have here. And therefore . . . and therefore, Mr. Speaker, when we agree to the program, we have to set a dollar amount that we can do. And so we are in discussion with the federal government to make sure that . . . to make sure that when we sign on to any program that we are able to follow through by the rules of that program.

And, Mr. Speaker, at this point we have designated \$99 million for the CAIS program, and on a normal year that would cover negative margins and caps. But, Mr. Speaker, we have to work with the federal government to find out what happens in those non-normal years.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, the new NDP Agriculture minister said he is opposed to the proposed changes in the CAIS program even though the changes are exactly what the NDP has been asking for because, the new Agriculture minister said, the government doesn't have the extra money needed to pay for the program changes.

Mr. Speaker, why would the NDP fight for changes in the CAIS program before the provincial election when the NDP clearly had no intention of actually supporting the changes after the election?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said, the former minister worked very hard to make sure that these programs were considered. We do believe that they are good programs for the industry, but we also have to deal with the resources that we have, Mr. Speaker. I cannot imagine that anyone with good common sense would want us to sign a blank cheque over to the federal Liberal government.

Mr. Speaker, we will provide the funding that we are able to make sure that these programs work effectively for rural Saskatchewan. We are putting \$99 million into the program and we want to work with the federal government to make sure that the resources that we have will meet the needs here in conjunction with their resources. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, agriculture in this province has never been in the sort of shape it's in right now and partly — partly due to the efforts of this government.

During the election campaign and before, they promised that they would cover — that they would cover off an increase in the cap in the CAIS program and the negative margin provisions. And they bargained and they held out and they wouldn't sign on and they were resisted, and they held out and they bargained with the federal minister until he finally agreed.

And now, after the election, they take a look at their books and say: oh well, we're not going to do that for farmers. Mr. Speaker, this is disgraceful. And will this minister reconsider and will this government reconsider and help our farmers out? This is a serious, serious situation. Will that minister reconsider?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have supported the people of Saskatchewan — rural Saskatchewan — very significantly over these last few years. At this point, we're putting something like \$500 per capita into rural Saskatchewan to help the agricultural sector.

We are there big time; we will continue to be. And, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the agreement, we believe that this is a better agreement because of the work that the former minister of Agriculture did. It is a better agreement and we will, with the resources that we have, support this agreement and support the rural economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Funding for Post-Secondary Education

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Learning. In the last election the NDP said keeping young people in Saskatchewan was one of its main priorities and implicit in that commitment was a commitment to the province's universities. In order to keep young people in and attract young people to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, our universities need to be competitive. They must offer competitive tuition rates, competitive research opportunities, and competitive academic programs.

Mr. Speaker, Saturday's *StarPhoenix* reported the University of Saskatchewan is talking about cutting academic programs, slashing administration, and hiking tuition fees to avoid a \$12 million debt resulting from chronic underfunding from this NDP government.

How does this minister expect the U of L . . . U of S (University of Saskatchewan) to help attract and retain young minds when the NDP is forcing the university to cut off its own legs?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I'm glad that the member opposite likes reading papers because I found a very interesting comment in the Canadian Association of University Teachers' paper. It's a paper that shows university funding across this country from 1992 to 2002. It's a paper that shows a 12 per cent increase — the single biggest increase of any province in this nation. That, Mr. Speaker . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, those figures show that Saskatchewan is one of only three provinces to increase its funding on a per student basis and that speaks to this NDP government's commitment to the universities and to young people, and the member opposite should recognize that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, once again a selective quote from members opposite, a selective quote. A 12 per cent increase over 10 years. That's a 1.2 per cent increase. Only this government and this minister would brag about a 1.2 per cent per year increase to our universities. Mr. Speaker, stand up and take a bow.

In this year's budget they said they were making significant cuts to departments and hiking taxes for the benefits of health and education. The benefit to the University of Saskatchewan was 1.7 per cent. Yes, above the average that the members opposite talk about of 1.2 per cent — 1.7 per cent, Mr. Speaker. This after the university asked for 6.7 per cent just to maintain the status quo. How can this action be described as a commitment to education?

To the minister: how does this government expect to keep and attract young minds in Saskatchewan when tuition rates will go up again, and there'll be a funding for the universities of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, tuition rates are a concern for members on this side, and indeed I have met with the University of Regina and will meet with the University of Saskatchewan to discuss this issue with them.

I'd point out to that member opposite that the Canadian Association of University Teachers does indicate how other provinces stack up. I think it may interest him to know, because they always love to point to how things are better in Alberta, while Saskatchewan saw a 12 per cent increase in that time period, Alberta saw a 28 per cent decrease, 28 per cent decrease in funding on a per pupil basis — oh, what it would be to be in Alberta — BC (British Columbia), minus 25; Ontario, minus 17.

The member opposite mocks Saskatchewan's commitment

which is the best in this nation, and our government remains committed to young people, it remains committed to the universities, and it will continue to put our funding where our priorities are.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 30 — The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine

The Speaker: — Order, please. I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 30, The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 30, The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

Bill No. 31 — The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal (Regulatory Reform) Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 31, The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal (Regulatory Reform) Act, 2004 be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 31, The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal (Regulatory Reform) Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

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

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day I ask leave to move a motion of urgent and pressing debate. Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to my attention . . .

The Speaker: — Will the member just state the purpose of the motion?

MOTIONS

Birthday Wishes for Sergeant-at-Arms

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to my attention that a very important officer of this Assembly celebrated another milestone this . . . in fact I believe yesterday. The Sergeant-at-Arms, who has been offering his services to this Assembly, celebrated a birthday. I believe it was 50 plus 6; I believe it was in that neighbourhood anyway.

And I would like to move, seconded by the member from Moose Jaw North:

That we extend birthday wishes to our Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Patrick Shaw.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — That was a fantastic chorus, and I'm quite glad that I wasn't asked to be the conductor.

There's a motion . . . Is there leave to move the motion, leave of the Assembly?

It has been moved by the member for Moosomin, seconded by the member for Moose Jaw North:

That we extend birthday wishes to our Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Patrick Shaw.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Why is the member for Melfort on his feet?

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, with leave to move motions . . . regard to substitutions on committee.

The Speaker: — The member would like to move motions with respect to substitutions on committees. Leave granted.

The member may proceed. The member for Melfort.

Substitutions on Committees

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Humboldt:

That the name of June Draude be substituted for that of Randy Weekes on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melfort, seconded by the member for Humboldt:

That the name of June Draude be substituted for that of Randy Weekes on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Humboldt:

That the name of Randy Weekes be substituted for that of Michael Chisholm on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melfort, seconded by the member for Humboldt . . . Order, please.

The motion is:

That the name of Randy Weekes be substituted for that of Michael Chisholm on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Finally I move, seconded by the member from Humboldt:

That the name of Michael Chisholm be substituted for that of Ted Merriman on the Standing Committee on the Economy.

(14:30)

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melfort, and seconded by the member for Humboldt:

That the name of Michael Chisholm be substituted for that of Ted Merriman on the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table written responses to questions no. 168 through 171 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses for questions 168, 169, 170, 171 have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 12 — The Purchasing Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise before you today to move second reading of The Purchasing Act, 2004. Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to optimizing the benefits that can be gained through the purchases of goods and services made by the Government of Saskatchewan by the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, the government's purchasing agent.

Each and every year, approximately 1,800 competitions for goods and services, valued at \$120 million, are tendered through SPMC's (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) purchasing branch for various government departments and agencies. Of these competitions, approximately 81 per cent are awarded to Saskatchewan suppliers. This volume of purchasing activity has a significant impact on our provincial economy. And yet we believe that there is more that we can do which is why we're introducing this new legislation.

This new Act builds on the work started by SPMC in the year 2002, when it introduced its action plan on procurement. Since then, SPMC has consulted with its clients and members of the Saskatchewan supplier community to explore ways to make it easier and less expensive for Saskatchewan suppliers to sell to government, while at the same time adhering to the agreement on international trade . . . internal trade.

Several changes have been introduced in the pursuit of that goal. For example, the dollar limits for non-tendered purchases has been increased from \$1,000 to \$5,000, making it easier for departments and agencies to support local suppliers as well as simpler to make low-dollar purchases. SPMC also introduced SaskTenders.ca Web site, providing Saskatchewan suppliers with free access to public sector procurement opportunities, making it both easier and less expensive for these suppliers to compete on Saskatchewan tenders. And later this year, SPMC

plans to duplicate the success of last year's purchasers' showcase — a one-day event that put more than 400 Saskatchewan suppliers in contact with several dozen public purchasing agents.

Today we build on these initiatives by introducing The Purchasing Act, 2004, an Act which updates and enhances the existing legislation. This Act is important because it provides a legislated framework to govern purchasing activity and to ensure that all suppliers are treated consistently. And it's important that we have a transparent process, one which outlines what the supplier community can expect when it seeks to compete for government tenders.

Under this new Act, it is abundantly clear that bids will be assessed based on best value as defined by a range of considerations including but not limited to price, quality, ability to service, and warranty. This provides suppliers with clarity about how decisions to award tenders are made. It also provides purchasers with the flexibility to clearly define those elements of a purchase that matter to them most, and thereby ensure that they are receiving goods that truly meet their requirements.

This, along with the introduction of gender-neutral language, represents the modernization of our purchasing Act. But the new Act also introduces several other changes that help ensure we are making the most of our opportunities to derive the maximum benefit possible from the purchasing activity that we do.

These other changes include strengthening our mandate to make it easier for other public agencies to work with the province on joint purchasing activities; introduction of options for preferential awarding on tenders that fall below the thresholds set by the Agreement on Internal Trade for the environmentally friendly products or Saskatchewan suppliers; the ability to apply the same policies and procedures to tenders for services as those used in tenders for goods; and expanding the options for disposing of surplus goods to include donating items no longer required by government.

These new aspects will support the province in fulfilling its commitment to making the most of the opportunities afforded it as a major purchaser of goods and/or services. For example, SPMC is already engaging in some joint purchasing initiatives with other public agencies. And through this new legislation, we clearly state our desire to make the public dollar stretch farther by strengthening the ability of other agencies to benefit from this co-operative approach.

The new legislation clarifies that any agency which provides services to government may utilize the services of SPMC for their purchasing activity if it is clear that either party will benefit from such an arrangement. And so as a result of this new legislation, health regions, school districts, municipalities, and other public agencies that choose to pursue this option will reap the benefits of an increased purchasing power and the reduction of administrative effort that goes into making these purchases.

The second major change under this Act is that it provides public purchasing agencies the ability to give additional consideration to environmentally friendly products or

Saskatchewan suppliers when a tender falls below the threshold set by the agreements on internal trade. By introducing this option, we increase the ability of departments and agencies to make choices that support the government's dedication to supporting our own economy, as well as our commitment to a green and prosperous economy. By making this an option rather than a mandated policy, we maximize the flexibility departments and agencies have and, at the same time, are able to encourage purchasing decisions that enhance the opportunities to support key government priorities.

The third major change within the legislation sets the stage for a new chapter in the disposal of surplus goods. This spring SPMC will officially launch a new program that will provide non-government and non-profit organizations across the province the opportunity to receive donations of office furniture and equipment no longer needed by government. This program will provide in-kind support to the meaningful work done by the many community-based organizations across our province. By saving these organizations the expense of basic furnishings, they will be able to redirect their funding toward more other program priorities.

The fourth noteworthy addition under the new legislation is the way it allows the principles that apply to tendering for goods to be extended to tenders for service. Over the years, there has been a significant increase in the number of service-related tenders requested. And by replacing legislation that was created at a time when the procurement of services was not nearly as common as it is today, we will provide a framework for applying the same principles to the tendering of both goods and services.

Mr. Speaker, the new Act before the Assembly today is a continuation of work started in 2002 to ensure that Saskatchewan is seizing every opportunity afforded to it as a major purchaser of goods and services. With this new legislation, the province is proud to make another step towards fulfilling that goal.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to move second reading of The Purchasing Act, 2004.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) that Bill No. 12, The Purchasing Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments before we adjourn the debate and then allow for some more in-depth review of this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to first of all acknowledge the fact that what the minister is talking about in many cases is nothing really new. The minister may wonder, well where am I coming from.

Mr. Speaker, at one time I had the privilege of serving on an RM council, and I was asked to represent the council on one of our local health boards and hospital boards as well as our heavy care home board. And at that time, Mr. Speaker, in view of the restrictions that boards were facing and trying to find ways in

which they could just utilize their dollars more efficiently and ensure that the dollars that they had available to them were being used effectively to maintain the services, our local boards looked at ways in which we could go — not just within our community and between the local health authorities, but also expanded to other communities — and began a process of buying in larger orders under one health hospital board. And then that hospital board basically managed the purchases and passed the purchases on to all the other hospitals and care homes and home care boards in the district.

And what we saw from that, Mr. Speaker, was the ingenuity of board members, appointed board members, and how they looked at the dollars that were available to them in their smaller level of responsibility. And the fact that they had determined that it was important that they look very carefully and strategically at how they expend those dollars so that they had the sufficient funds to really provide the needs of individuals.

So what the minister is talking of here is expanding SPMC's role in purchasing, and purchasing on a larger scale. I think that certainly is important. I appreciate and I like what the minister talks about when she mentions Saskatchewan goods and services. Certainly our caucus is not opposed to showing support to Saskatchewan businesses and agencies, manufacturing and processing, in supplying services to our communities and to the many entities in this province whereby they have the products and the services available that would help meet the needs of those individual groups such as our public institutions, our health districts, school boards, and any other agency who would find it to their advantage to join together and jointly purchase items that they need to service their facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I believe as we enter this new era and as we look forward to the year . . . the 2000 century, it's important for us, Mr. Speaker, to recognize that we need to look beyond where we were yesterday, although it doesn't hurt for us to look back at things in the past where individual groups and bodies found convenient ways of efficiently utilizing the dollars that were placed at their disposal and handed to them as their responsibility.

And I think what the minister was indicating in this piece of legislation certainly brings to mind, as I indicated earlier, some of the processes that were taking place even a number of years ago through individual agencies as they looked at how they could expand beyond from where they were and how they could buy more conveniently and certainly more efficiently.

Mr. Speaker, it's important for us to realize, as well, if we want to grow this province that we need to encourage investment opportunities in the province of Saskatchewan. We need to be aware of the endeavours by individuals, by communities, by small businesses to establish here in the province. We need to be aware of the fact that there are individual manufacturing plants that are providing the types of services, the types of product, and the quality of product that many of our public agencies are looking for.

And it's important, Mr. Speaker, that in recognizing that, we not only recognize the fact that they're doing an excellent job and possibly marketing outside of the province, but as a

province, as well, it's important that we do take the time and we give them every opportunity to have the same abilities to market within the province that they've decided to call home.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the things that we would certainly want to ensure that does happen however is that we look very carefully, and as SPMC as a buying agency is not just given the . . . or the orders or the wherewithal that basically suggested that you purchase Saskatchewan-based products over any other product, especially if the Saskatchewan-based product may be priced way out of whack compared to other products that might be available.

(14:45)

And I say that, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that this government over the past number of days has been talking about how difficult it has been for them to come up with a fair and equitable budget. And they've been complaining time and time again about the pressing matters that they are being faced with in the realization of the shortage of financial dollars in the province of Saskatchewan.

And certainly health care is an area, as my colleagues mentioned today, we see in this year's budget the government talking about the . . . while they've put \$160 million additional into the health care budget, they've also indicated in the budget that they would have to look very seriously at the number of acute and heavy care beds in the province of Saskatchewan.

And I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that if indeed the province is looking very carefully at how it's providing services, how it's meeting the needs of the residents of this province in providing for their health care — providing the services and, Mr. Speaker, how it's going to attain their goal of reducing waiting lists in the province of Saskatchewan — cutting beds is not going to be the answer.

I think, Mr. Speaker, as we noted back in the early '90s, the reduction of beds across the province of Saskatchewan, the reduction of 52 health care centres, plus the Plains health care centre here in the city of Regina, certainly did nothing to alleviate . . . In fact what we have seen, Mr. Speaker, while we reduced and cut those number of facilities and number of beds and job positions out of the health care field, in that period of time, Mr. Speaker, while we talked about reducing costs in order to meet needs of services to patients, we actually have found, Mr. Speaker, the costs of health care have gone up significantly. The waiting lists have gone up significantly, the waiting list for MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) or the CAT (computerized axial tomography) scans certainly have gone up.

And so while we talk of efficiencies in this piece of Bill by expanding the ability of SPMC to purchase and work together with other entities, that's all fine and dandy, Mr. Speaker. But it would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, we would hope that as a result of this piece of legislation, as agencies working through SPMC are able to better utilize the dollars that are at their disposal that we would find some savings on that end that we could actually see moving to meet the needs of the . . . the costs of health care on the other end, Mr. Speaker.

And I think the people of Saskatchewan would be quite

favourable and acceptable of the fact that we indeed number one, we support our Saskatchewan-based industry. We support our Saskatchewan-based manufacturing as long as that product and the products that are available are . . . certainly meet the quality, meet the standards and are cost effective.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned a moment ago, it's important — and I think we all would agree — it's important that, that they be fairly economical as well, because if all we're doing is putting together an agency that's going to make a determined effort to purchase more Saskatchewan products, and yet it's going to eat up any savings we might have found, Mr. Speaker, then one will ask at the end of the day, exactly what advantage have we found at this time.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation talks about, and the minister mentioned in her speech, that it was the aim to increase efficiencies and save money by enabling the government to work with other public institutions. And we applaud that.

Mr. Speaker, the minister I think also indicated the Act will allow government to give preference to environmentally friendly products. And we all know in today's age and at this time and period since Kyoto that a lot of people have become and are becoming more aware of the need to look at our environment and how we address our environment, how we protect our environment and how we care for our environment, and the fact that many products that we use in our public facilities end up as waste products which, if we're not careful, Mr. Speaker, end up in waste disposal sites that can create a problem for us. So it's important that we look very carefully at ensuring that we are purchasing environmentally friendly products.

So, Mr. Speaker, at a first glance this appears to be something that may be a help. There could be questions arising as well as I . . . (inaudible) . . . by giving preference to tenders that are not at the lowest cost.

Mr. Speaker, as we have done in the past and we will continue to do so with this piece of legislation as well, we have also indicated that we want to touch base with agencies outside of the Legislative Building that might be impacted by this piece of legislation to get their input and their understanding of how they view this Bill No. 12, An Act respecting Government Purchases.

Mr. Speaker, another thing that I believe we need to consider is how this government is going to utilize this particular piece of legislation. And while the minister talked about the joint purchasing, and the minister talked about environmentally friendly products and finding efficiencies. What we have seen in the past, Mr. Speaker, while the minister has talked about finding efficiencies, while this government has talked about finding efficiencies, at the end of the day we have to question how they have arrived at some of their efficiencies and whether or not we have actually seen efficiencies arising out of government commitment to the people of Saskatchewan.

In the news release the minister mentioned by making it easier for government to work with other publicly funded organizations such as health regions and schools, we are creating opportunities for increasing efficiencies and cost

savings. And with that, Mr. Speaker, we can certainly agree with that. We certainly agree that we need to find efficiencies and cost savings.

However, Mr. Speaker, we believe it's important that we also scrutinize these pieces of legislation very carefully to ensure that the objectives that this government and the minister are talking about, that there's an opportunity to achieve those goals. And at this time, Mr. Speaker, we would like to take a little more time to consult with other groups and affected groups that might be impacted by this piece of legislation. And therefore I move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Moosomin that debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 13 — The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise this afternoon for second reading of The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act. Labour-sponsored venture capital funds have shown promising growth in Saskatchewan over the past few years.

These funds provide benefit for both investors and business. Investors who purchase the funds are investing money locally, helping out local economies, and at the same time receiving attractive tax deductions for the investments. Businesses that need capital investment to start a business or that wish to expand an existing operation can access these funds.

The result is more jobs, more capital investment, and a stronger Saskatchewan economy. The growth of the funds over the past few years is good news for the province's economy and obviously a trend we would like to see continue. In the 2002 tax year over \$19 million was invested in Saskatchewan. Although final figures are not yet available, in 2003 investments are expected to rise to about \$22 million.

The amendments in this legislative change are needed for two reasons. The first is to reflect recent changes to the federal government's Income Tax Act. The second is to ensure that growth in labour-sponsored funds continues in our province.

Consultation with the fund managers and the financial industry resulted in the recommendation of minor technical and administrative changes to the Act. These have been incorporated into the legislation before the House today. Included in the legislation are minor changes that will allow more flexibility for provincial labour-sponsored venture capital funds to partner with or merge with other funds. The changes also authorize the transfer of the funds from a Registered

Retirement Savings Plan to a Registered Retirement Income Fund.

In closing, labour-sponsored venture capital investment is an important part of Saskatchewan's success. Our goal is to encourage investors to continue putting money into the funds. By attracting further investment, we'll secure the long-term success of small and medium-size Saskatchewan businesses.

Mr. Speaker, therefore I'm pleased to move second reading of The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Industry and Resources has moved Bill No. 13, The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2004. I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise in the House today and speak to Bill 13 on the labour-sponsored venture capital amendment Act.

It has come to my attention through business and whatnot, that venture capital in the province is something that many entrepreneurs have problems accessing. And to that end, we are pleased on this side of the House to see the government taking any steps towards allowing capital to come into existence for entrepreneurs in Saskatchewan. And because of that, we believe that entrepreneurs are the driving force of the economy, so their access to capital, through whichever means, is always a positive thing.

There are a few questions which are raised from the Bill in general. First is how the proposed changes in the legislation will help grow Saskatchewan's economy, create jobs, and increase our population.

We do have concerns with the performance in the past of various ventures and we would hope that in the future venture capital will be made available to companies from this fund on the merits of their business plans, so that profit, at the end of the day, is the best answer and that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that from that we can have sustainable growth and companies.

There are some other questions about this Bill. It appears to make it possible that . . . easier as the minister just stated for companies started to partner with other venture capital funds. This is a good idea, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as in some cases this will allow for the distribution of risk between other funds which exist and this particular labour-sponsored venture capital funds, which is a good thing because again it makes more access available to entrepreneurs looking to have capital to invest in their business.

We have some questions which relate to companies that are seeking access to the venture capital funds regarding their location of their head offices. Will they be needed to be based in Saskatchewan or will just some of their operations need to be based here? These are some things that I think need to be cleared up.

In general, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that if a company is bringing jobs in, setting up, establishing production, whatnot, in Saskatchewan, it would be a very wise thing for the deputy . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the government to look at expanding the venture capital to include companies like this if they are operating in Saskatchewan. In fact, Mr. Speaker, if they are operating in Saskatchewan, the spinoff from that is they're employing Saskatchewan employees, they're helping our towns, our communities, and our tax base grow. So we hope that this is something that the government will give consideration to.

We have, Mr. Speaker, questions about, has the investment fund brought investments and jobs to our province, and what has been the relative cost to the treasury? If it is absolutely in the positive that it's . . . at the end of the day, these are not situations where the government is paying for business, we're very much in favour of that. If we have a situation, however, where the investments in venture capital have been in an ongoing losing rate, this is something that we feel responsibly — and I'm sure the members opposite may agree — that it needs to be reviewed if that is the case.

We do have some other questions regarding the cap. I understand that the cap for this venture capital fund is set at \$60 million. And the first question that would come up is why? If we're looking at expanding the economy and entrepreneurs are in need of this access to capital, why would we prevent it from going above \$60 million, Mr. Speaker? Especially when we have a large part of our economy is agrarian-based moving towards value-added. I know that value-added firms often are these types of entrepreneurs looking for this venture capital, and it's a good thing again if it stays local in your own provinces providing workers.

(15:00)

Why would we put a cap on this at \$60 million? Is it the cost of the tax credit that the provincial government has to issue? Do they feel that that is not a . . . it would be too expensive to go above that? How was this \$60 million cap derived?

If these funds are successful, it would seem to me it would be something that needs to be explored — the expansion of that cap — so that again venture capital is made available to companies looking for that.

I mention value-added, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It also comes under the fact that often in downturns in the farm economy, progressive farmers will look at capturing some higher market share in the end use for their products. And this does move into the value-added sector.

When you have a downturn in the agrarian economy however, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it sometimes makes access to capital through traditional lending institutions such as credit unions or the commercial banks more difficult because of the current fiscal situation. And with agriculture in general, the cash flow crunches that often occur make the larger institutions somewhat more reluctant to lend, which makes the venture capital available in this province even more important. And hence with . . . as regards to any type of venture capital but with labour-sponsored venture capital, if there's more of it, it means that there's going to be more investment, it means that there's going to be more entrepreneurial activity, which at the end of the day is what I believe drives our economy, Mr. Deputy

Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't have a great deal more to add to this, so I would move that we now adjourn debate on Bill No. 13, and thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Kindersley has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 15 — The Workers' Compensation Board Pension Implementation Act

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in support of The Workers' Compensation Board Pension Implementation Act and will formally move second reading of the legislation at the end of my remarks.

But first I'd like to take a couple minutes just to outline the background of this legislation and give a bit of detail as to what it does.

Mr. Speaker, in the late 1970s all defined benefit pension plans in the public sector were closed to new members. Those closed plans were under the umbrella of the superannuation Act. The Workers' Compensation Board Superannuation Plan is one of the defined benefit plans that was closed to new members in 1977.

Since 1991 the Workers' Compensation Board Superannuation Plan has accumulated surpluses to the extent that the employer stopped making contributions to the plan, and this practice continues today.

Under The Pension Benefits Act, 1992, any registered plan must have provisions for an orderly windup of the plan. Three factors — growing surpluses, fewer contributing members, and no provision for an orderly windup — have made this an issue for the 50 or so member employees of the Workers' Compensation Board Superannuation Plan.

As of December 31, 2003 the accumulated surplus in this WCB (Workers' Compensation Board) plan is in excess of \$5 million. The purpose of this legislation is to authorize the transfer of assets and liabilities of the Workers' Compensation Board Superannuation Plan to a new closed pension plan registered under The Pension Benefits Act.

This legislation, Bill 15, also provides for a consequential amendment to The Workers' Compensation Act. The amendment gives the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board authority to establish and operate a pension plan. This legislation provides for a process to manage the existing surplus and future surpluses based on the principle of sharing the surplus on a 50/50 basis. This will be accomplished by limiting

benefit enhancements to no more than 50 per cent of the available surplus.

Bill 15 also provides for negotiations to determine the distribution of remaining assets upon windup of the plan with the final determination made by the board. Any remaining assets in the fund following windup will be returned to the Workers' Compensation Board.

The WCB and the union have negotiated and agreed upon the provisions set out in Bill 15. Both union and management have considered a range of benefit enhancements that may result from the fund's surplus. These benefit enhancements range from a guaranteed cost-of-living adjustment to lump sum payments to all pensioners and survivors. Of course, the extent of the enhancements will depend upon the available surplus at the time of registration.

The WCB has consulted with the deputy superintendent of pensions. The negotiated terms meet all requirements for registration under the pensions benefit Act. As well, the Public Employees Benefits Agency has confirmed that no new industry standards are being set by the negotiated terms.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, Bill 15 is both meritorious and straightforward. It will have a positive impact on the labour-management relations at the WCB and is consistent with the pensions benefit Act and its provisions for the windup of a closed pension plan. It's my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to move second reading of Bill No. 15, The Workers' Compensation Board Pension Implementation Act. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Labour has moved that Bill No. 15, The Workers' Compensation Board Pension Implementation Act, be now read a second time.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly . . . I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure today to stand in the House and speak to Bill No. 15, the workmen's compensation benefits . . . workmen compensation board's pension implementation Act. I thank the minister for her explanation of the . . . why the changes are occurring in the Act and concur with the minister that a plan should be open to new membership, and that seems a worthwhile reason to be going forth so that all people regardless of when they start employment are eligible for their pensions and their benefits.

It does raise a question however, Mr. Deputy Speaker — why now? — when I think the minister stated it was back in the 1970s. Is this the typical maturation that this sort of Act would need to be amended so that new members can come in? Was it an oversight in initiation when the Act was initially drafted? Has it been an issue that has been raised by and large by members or the board, or which parties in essence were affected? Have the new demmers been raising this on a regular basis so that it needs to be addressed?

I understand that this Act will put a new plan in place and we do have some questions around any new plans. Will there be any increased cost incurred and how will those within the pension be affected, how will employers be affected? I believe

the minister stated that there is a shared contribution and obviously we think that the details to those questions really need to be examined more thoroughly so that everyone has a full understanding of the implications of the Act so that it's a fair deal for all those.

In general, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this is a housekeeping Act and there's small regularities that need to be kept up to date, we don't see any reason that the opposition has real problems with this as long as the stakeholders involved have been contacted, have been consulted with and that meaning all parties — labour, individual employees, the members of the WCB, as well as employers — and that all persons putting in monies towards the plan are contacted and consulted for their point of view.

There have been questions in the past around the superannuation plan and the ability of managing that pension fund. I don't think that this particular Act will be directly affecting those particular questions.

So as long as, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a situation where the parties that are affected by the Act are consulted with, where we know what the costs are going to be, where we know if there's going to be any administrative costs that result from these housekeeping details, it should look like the opposition, once those are answered, will be able to probably work co-operatively with the government on this issue.

And to that end, Mr. Deputy Speaker, having enthralled the House with my oratory ability, I am going to move that we now adjourn debate of Bill No. 15.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Kindersley has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 16 — The Geographic Names Board Amendment Act, 2004

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Hon. Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Geographic Names Board Amendment Act, 2004.

The Geographic Names Board Act was passed in 1974 and establishes a board appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The board makes recommendations respecting the naming of geographic features in Saskatchewan. The Geographic Names Board is similar to boards in other provinces and works collaboratively with the Geographical Names Board of Canada.

One of the board's most notable initiatives is its geo-memorial project. This was a project completed just last year to honour and commemorate those who gave their lives in the service of their country in the Second World War. The honour is given by naming

a geographical feature such as a lake, bay, or island after each individual. Over 3,800 geographic features in Saskatchewan's northland have been named through this project.

And while I'm on that subject, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge the efforts of Mr. Doug Chisholm, who resides in La Ronge, Saskatchewan. And he is an aviation mechanic — I believe in the employ of the Saskatchewan government — but he also is a pilot. And one of the things that he has been doing is flying around northern Saskatchewan taking photographs of geographic features that have been named after people that died in the Second World War.

And in fact, Mr. Chisholm published a book about that with the names of many people after whom geographic features have been named, and also photographs of some of those features, and also several dozen stories about some of the individuals — almost always young individuals — who died in the service of Canada in the Second World War, and some personal background about them.

And I purchased that book, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and of course I read it and I want to say it was really a fascinating book. I believe it was published by the University of Regina. I wish I had brought it with me today but I didn't. And the stories about the people after whom the lakes and other features were named were really very moving, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it reminded us that for every person who is killed in a war there is a family, there are people who survive into succeeding generations even, who lose that person. And it's a wonderful thing that Mr. Chisholm through his efforts has been preserving the memory of those individuals.

In fact one of the individuals who had been killed in the Second World War was a relative of mine by the same name and so I knew that a lake had been named after my cousin. And so I ordered from Mr. Chisholm a photograph of the lake and also kind of a memorial tribute that he will produce at a very reasonable fee. And I decided that it would be appropriate to send this memorial to the Zelma United Church because that's where my family is from, just as a memorial to that individual who had died in the Second World War.

And so I think that the work that this board does, although it sounds fairly esoteric in the sense that we don't often think of the work the Geographic Names Board does, but the work that they do in remembering the people that gave their lives serving their country in the Second World War to me is very significant and I know all members of the House would feel the same way. Because I think these young people who died in wartime should be remembered for all time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not just for what they did for their country but also as a reminder to us all that we want to avoid warfare as much as we can now and into the future.

(15:15)

So this board is continuing its work. The activities of the Geographic Names Board are presently administered through Information Services Corporation, for which I am the minister responsible.

The amendments are really quite minor and technical. They will

facilitate the operation of the board by continuing to authorize the appointment of the secretary to the board and providing greater flexibility for the appointment of the secretary by the minister responsible. The amendments will remove references to the administration of the board exclusively through a government department because now it is over at Information Services Corporation, they will update the name of the Geographical Names Board of Canada where it is referred to in the Act, and incorporate the use of gender-neutral language.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of An Act to amend The Geographic Names Board Act.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Industry and Resources has moved Bill No. 16, The Geographic Names Board Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's with pleasure that I rise to speak to the Act to amend The Geographic Names Board Act, as presented by the minister. Mr. Speaker, I would like to very much concur and expand on some of the comments the minister made, particularly in regard to the geo-memorial project.

A couple of years ago I had the opportunity to be in attendance in Melfort where the Royal Canadian Legion, the Melfort branch, dedicated a wall of honour at the Melfort Hospital to fallen members of that branch who had the honour bestowed on them that they would be honoured in the way that this project outlines, in having a northern geographic or geological feature named in their honour and tribute.

And to be in attendance at that dedication, which had Doug Chisholm there as well, and to see the beautiful work that Doug had taken on, both as initially almost a happenstance kind of a thing where he got curious about these geographic points and he loves to fly and he was looking for a reason to go to various locations, and so he started compiling these pictures over the years and he found that then people were asking him to undertake the special mission to do that. And he does it very reasonably and he does it with a great deal of class, and it ends up with a testimony to these fallen members of the Canadian Forces over the years in a very moving and inspiring way. And I was very much touched.

And in two parts really was the symbolism of the event important. One was . . . is that I think as the minister outlined, it's extremely important for us to acknowledge and remember those largely young men and women — mostly men — who gave their lives in conflicts on behalf of the country of Canada that we know and love. And it was important to acknowledge those individuals, but it also was important I think for Legion members that survived those horrifying events to be there in attendance and to pay tribute.

And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what was a striking contrast is to look at those pictures of these very young men, by and large, that were on those tributes and then watch the pride and the determination of the Legion members, who are of course very much older, who survived and lived their lives. But they very much reconnected with their comrades of those many long years ago and rebounded, if you like, in many of the

horrific battles and skirmishes that were outlined.

Mr. Speaker, Doug Chisholm, from the early beginnings of codifying and taking some of these pictures, has really made it a passion of his to try to do as many of these locations as possible. And so that they'd be compiled in a recognized way, he published a book that's called I believe *Their Names Live On*. And it's a very moving book as you go through and read the individual stories of who I think are real Canadian heroes.

And it all began, I think quite appropriately, by the Geographic Names Board undertaking this geo-memorial project that actually outlined the geological features of the North to . . . in memory of many of our fallen soldiers of the past. I think that that is an important effort.

And many times you think of what seems to be a routine, pretty nondescript entity or agency within government and say well how in the world is this going to make much difference or how does it matter. Well here I think is an example of where something was done that was very thoughtful, was very creative, and was very appropriate. And an individual citizen seized on that opportunity and has provided I think a real opportunity for fitting tributes to many of our fallen soldiers that are so important.

And I would certainly like to join with the minister in not only congratulating the board for this project of naming these geological features, but also in highlighting and recognizing and thanking Doug Chisholm for his dedication and passion to actually make these a very moving and fitting and personal tribute to our fallen soldiers.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister outlined as well that this Bill is very much housekeeping in nature and it talks about some routine kind of amendments that certainly did not create any difficulty for me at all except one.

And when I saw . . . And I quote from the minister's remarks: "The activities of the Geographic Names Board are presently administered through Information Services Corporation." And I sort of got really nervous about what that might imply and the inherent dangers that might be there because of the track record of this group in terms of taking something that is relatively simple and straightforward and forthright and turning it into something that's a computerized, bureaucratized nightmare. So I hope that they are so busy with other activities that they won't do that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we think that this is a worthwhile organization. The geo-memorial project was extremely important and has been commented on. And, Mr. Speaker, we do not think that there are any difficulties in the routine measures, but we have people that have indicated they wish to provide us with some information. And in order for them to do that I would like to adjourn debate at this time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Melfort has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 17 — The Department of Energy and Mines
Amendment Act, 2004**

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to present to the House for second reading legislative amendments to The Department of Energy and Mines Act. The amendments will update changes as a result of government reorganization that took place in March 2002.

At that time the departments of Energy and Mines and Economic and Co-operative Development merged to become the Department of Industry and Resources for which I am responsible. The changes will now reflect the current structure of the Saskatchewan government.

As we make these changes I am reminded that the oil, gas, and mining industry contribute a great deal to the Saskatchewan economy. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the oil and gas industry has become the largest industry in Saskatchewan. And we have seen record drilling in the province which is continuing. Mining also is a very large industry in Saskatchewan, being the second or third largest part of our economy and the third largest mining sector in Canada, if you exclude coal. These industries create jobs, build capital investment, and create opportunities for business and communities across our province. Since March 2002, the new Department of Industry and Resources has provided enhanced services to these sectors. These sectors will continue to bring more investment to our province, and more jobs and more opportunities to our people.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments under this legislation are minor and will remove references to the former Department of Energy and Mines and the provisions under which that department was established. Other minor housekeeping changes are being made to repeal sections of the Act that are duplicated in The Government Organization Act. These are provisions that refer to the department's seal, describe the staff that make up the department, allow the minister to engage services, and refer to the filing of the annual report. The legislation to be renamed the energy and mines Act will continue as the legislative framework for the Government of Saskatchewan's energy and mines duties which are currently assigned to myself as Minister of Industry and Resources.

Mr. Speaker, I now present the legislative amendments to The Department of Energy and Mines Act for second reading.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 17, The Department of Energy and Mines Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to make comments on this and in response to the minister. We recognize that the purpose of this particular Bill is to make official the changes in the department name to Industry and Resources from Energy

and Mines, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We realize as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that these changes being made are very technical and simply take into account the change in department names and organization that were made last year.

However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whenever we have a Bill dealing with the energy sector in Saskatchewan, we feel it is beneficial and worthwhile for all members to reflect on how important the energy sector is in this province. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to just report some of those numbers, this year's numbers. The natural gas estimate in dollars was \$138 million in previous year. And in 2003-2004, that will go up to some \$205 million. Oil, \$400 million, which will go up to \$734 million in 2003-2004. And potash, between . . . staying consistent between 125 and \$115 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan is also blessed with large uranium deposits which will be of growing importance in an energy-starved world. In 2002 we saw the government bring in reduced royalties for the oil and gas sector. This was something that the Saskatchewan Party supported, and we did see a corresponding rise in investment in that sector.

We think that's something that the members opposite should take careful notice, that you can actually lower a tax and see a corresponding rise. So that's something that I would urge them to take a particular note of and maybe put it at the top of their pad and refer to it on an ongoing basis.

It makes you wonder why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the NDP is so proud of its initiative in this one sector, why they seem so ideologically opposed to attracting investment in other sectors through similar tax initiatives.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, even though Saskatchewan corporate capital tax rates are wildly out of line with those of our neighbours, the NDP opposes reducing this tax rate to make us even more competitive. How much more development could there be in this province if this tax raise was brought into line? Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is one of the most counterproductive and offensive taxes. It is a tax of point six of 1 per cent when it is zero in other . . . (inaudible) . . . It is a tax on an asset that is not necessarily producing any revenue. It is a tax on reserves that are in the ground, money in the bank. It is just a straight tax on ownership, and it is one of the most offensive to industry . . . or potential for investment. It is in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a tax on growth. If a potash mine wants to expand its production, it will have to pay more in capital tax, hardly an incentive or an encouragement for growth.

We have seen nothing from the new Department of Industry and Resources which would indicate the NDP plans to change its approach to economic development. We hear frequent comments and frequent remarks about looking forward to a green plan. The only thing I've seen green is the colour on the highway signs, and perhaps that's noted when people are leaving the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I've seen nothing of a green plan coming forward from the government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$200 million has been set aside in the budget for further incursion by the government into the private sector operations. Once again this pushes aside potential private sector investments in Saskatchewan. Why does the NDP

government continue to compete? Why does the government not try and attract businesses rather than continue to push business out of this province?

(15:30)

We did see Industry and Resources pay for the Future is Wide Open campaign — a multi-million dollar fiasco designed to prop the NDP more than actually bring about a green and . . . a growing and vibrant economy. The Wide Open Future campaign is really the thinnest veneer on NDP advertising. It would more aptly be named the wide open wallet campaign because it's taxpayers' dollars that continue to leak out of that program.

The view of Saskatchewan's investment climate and its attitude toward the private sector in general probably has not been this bad since the NDP nationalized potash mines in the 1970s — something which continues to haunt Saskatchewan in our attempt to attract outside investment to this province. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that irrational act in the 1970s will continue to dog this province . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. The item before the Assembly is Bill No. 17, The Department of Energy and Mines Amendment Act, 2004. So I would ask the member to ensure that his comments are linked to that Bill in some way, shape, or form.

I recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, this Bill, the Department of Energy and Mines Act, deals with the operation of the department and deals with the expenditures made by the department and deals in particular with the resources that we have. And with all the natural advantages that we have, this should be a rich province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But we are not. We are a have-not province, and that's where this government seemingly wants us to stay in spite of changes to this Bill, in spite of changes to this legislation. The NDP has developed a strategy of reducing any public and . . . profitable expectation for this province.

If we are to have the resources pay for important services such as health care and education, we need a growing economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We need an expanding tax base, not a shrinking one. We need a province whose population is growing and where young people are staying. These are the taxpayers of the future, and they are leaving, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The NDP's only plan seems to be taxing fewer people more. It's unsustainable, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I would move adjournment of this.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That's carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 19 — The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2004

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the minister responsible for Information Services Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise to move second reading of The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2004.

The Land Titles Act, 2000 was passed to modernize and update the law and rules respecting land registration, conveyancing, and title to land, and to facilitate the implementation of the new land system in 2001.

The land titles registry and related programs and services are administered and delivered through Information Services Corporation. And I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a member of the Saskatchewan bar myself, I happen to know that the Information Services Corporation has reduced the time to register a transaction for a transfer through the land titles system from approximately three weeks to three days, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and there have been many other improvements as well.

And I want the House to know — because I'm anticipating that the members opposite will get up and say that this is some kind of disaster — that I have been in contact with members of the Saskatchewan bar who have been selected by the lawyers to work with the Information Services Corporation. And those members have told me that the system works very well, that a lot of progress has been made. They're happy with the way the Information Services Corporation is working, and they're very pleased with the responsiveness of the corporation and the service they're providing.

So I want anybody watching this to know that, when the members of the opposition get up and say the system does not work, what they are saying is not true, and everyone should understand that.

Now both the new legislation and the land system, Mr. Deputy Speaker, were implemented in phases through the former land titles offices serving ten former geographic registration districts across the province. The Land Titles Act, 2000 was proclaimed in the first district implemented in June 2001 and has been in operation province-wide since August 2002. Since the initial proclamation, the Act has been amended twice.

The early post-implementation period has provided both Information Services Corporation and its customers with new and further experience and an opportunity to identify ways to optimize the new land system and its governing legislation.

I want to pause here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to pay tribute to the many people, including a lot of young people, that work at the Information Services Corporation, and they have truly built a system in Saskatchewan which doesn't exist anywhere else. It doesn't exist in the province of Alberta. It doesn't exist elsewhere. It is a computerized system whereby I can be at my office or indeed at my home on the Internet if I wish, and I can access the land registry system — but not just the land registry system, also the personal property security registration system and the geographic information system that is part of the

system.

And in other places, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that opportunity doesn't exist. You actually have to go physically to an office to access the system. And in fact the province of Alberta, where the opposition has sometimes said we should have bought our system, has decided they are going to revamp their system to be more like ours, and they're going to spend quite a bit of money to do that.

And the work that the people at Information Services Corporation have done to create a state of the art computer system should be acknowledged and respected, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And people in our province that have worked on that system should be respected. They should be treated with respect. They should not be constantly criticized for perceived inadequacies while at the same time their good work is not acknowledged, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They should be treated by respect, and the members of the opposition should show some respect to those individuals, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's become apparent that some sections of the Act require minor clarification or fine tuning. Several of the proposed amendments are the result of ongoing consultations with and feedback from customers and stakeholders and directly address issues raised by those groups and individuals.

And I want people listening to this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to know as well that the opposition will get up, and they'll say that this system was supposed to cost \$20 million. They will then say it cost over \$100 million. What people need to know — and I want to put it on the record as I have before — that the \$20 million figure was for the land titles part of the system. But what we have done was to build a system that not only deals with land titles, but also the personal property security registry which is for people that take a security interest in personal property as distinct from land, and also the geographic information system, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So it does many more things than the \$20 million was supposed to cover. And it was budgeted to come in at about \$58 million, and indeed it did.

And the costs of building the system, Mr. Deputy Speaker, were audited by the Provincial Auditor at fifty-eight point some million dollars in June 2002. Notwithstanding that audit by the Provincial Auditor, the members opposite continue to get up and say that the system cost \$107 million. It did not, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And when the members opposite say that, they're simply saying something that is not true, and that's unfortunate.

The amendments proposed in this Bill will facilitate the appropriate and efficient handling of land registrations by both ISC (Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan) and its customers and will provide clarifications to ensure that the intent of the Act is carried out. They are a demonstration of the responsiveness of the land system to customer needs. This responsiveness is one of the reasons why the public has confidence in this new system which works effectively and continually improves.

I want to point out to the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that as a member of the Saskatchewan bar myself, when I began practicing law in 1979, it took one month to register a transfer

in the land titles system. Today most transfers are done within three days. Many are done the same day through direct access through the Internet in law offices.

I'm not sure that the members opposite have a good understanding of how the land titles system works, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they're highly critical, but I want the House and anyone listening to this to know that people using the system are very happy with the system and feel that we have built a good system for the 21st century which was well worth an investment of public funds.

The proposed amendments in this Act will confirm the Torrens principles of reliance on the title and that there is no need to look behind the title following conversion of interests on titles to electronic form. They will clarify the priority of converted instruments and interests based on transactions currently known as revolving lines of credit. They will confirm that a transfer to oneself is not a change of ownership for certain purposes, including The Crown Minerals Act. And they will further detail the powers and authority of the court in matters involving land and the land titles registry.

As well they will address minor housekeeping issues and provide minor clarifications on further details respecting issues of law or technical processes and facilitate business efficiency including: further describing the conversion of former certificates of title that were silent respecting minerals; clarifying the conflict of interest provisions applicable to statutory officials and ISC officers and employees in relation to the land titles registry; acknowledging the registrar's responsibility to provide notices; permitting other provinces, territories, and governments to be named as title owners; validating current customer practices for registration of certain interests; confirming the authorization and information required and acceptable for certain registrations or other requests of the registrar; providing circumstances where an affidavit of value need not be provided; and finally, permitting customers to request withdrawal of an application prior to registration.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I'm very pleased to move second reading of An Act to amend The Land Titles Act, 2000.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has moved that Bill No. 19, The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time.

I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting to get up to make some comments on this new piece of legislation which we've just received. We were sending it out . . . it's a very controversial . . . ISC has been very controversial for the last year so it's interesting to make some comments.

I'd like to address one or two comments the minister made on coming in on budget. I know that when I was in Crowns there I know we talked about . . . there's a few things we talked about there. One of them was ISC had paid back a \$34 million into the General Revenue Fund when that year they had made no money. So obviously you would tack that on to the 60 million that they had already did and you're up to that \$100 million that they've spent on this land titles operation.

It's been very interesting, land titles. I can remember when Crowns first came in they were going to sell this all over the world. It was going to be the newest innovation. They were going to reinvent the wheel. Well reinventing that wheel so far, Mr. Speaker, has cost us \$100 million, and over here on this side of the House we have talked to people and they said there had to be some changes. They weren't quite sure of the \$100 million — that much of a change at it.

He talks about doing a little fine tuning to ISC. Well that fine tuning so far has cost us \$100 million and possibly the costs will go up. I've talked to people that have used the land titles and the first year or two there was horror stories. They finally have gotten some of them corrected — which they should — but it's taken them two years.

They basically brought in a system that wasn't quite right for this province. They didn't do their homework on it, their background on it, and it's cost the province. They should have did a lot more background research on this. Maybe they did need to do, to invent some things here but they probably could have reused some systems from some of the other provinces. But this government seems to get very stubborn at times when it comes to bringing something in and I've yet to hear them mention that maybe they have made a mistake or they were a little rammy at first trying to prove . . . to put it through that fast with some of the troubles on it.

And there still is some glitches on it. In my constituency, in the town of Dundurn, there was an issue that was raised. I'm just trying to bring it to mind again. That was about four months ago and then . . . to do with titles.

(15:45)

They had 50-foot lots, I believe that time, and they have a bylaw that says they have to build on a 100-foot lot — 50 was too small. So they had put a bylaw in effect putting their lots together into 100-foot lots. That was a provision, that you had to build on there.

Now when land titles redid the titles for that town, they reissued them all in 50-foot lots, which basically overproceeds their bylaw. So they had phoned my office and trying to get some information — does that mean that if a person wanted to build a house on that 50-foot lot, no matter what the town bylaw said, was he allowed to do that? Could he override the town?

And that was four months ago. And I didn't know the answer to it myself. So we phoned the minister's office, tried to get information and to this day yet we haven't, us and the town haven't got a satisfactory answer to that yet. So the town of Dundurn, it hasn't come in yet where there is a person that has wanted to build on a 50-foot lot there, but some day they're worried that they're going to challenge that bylaw. And they don't know yet where their legal standing is. So that was one of the problems that come up that our office handled.

There was several others that was . . . last year was the length of time on titles. There was also another problem we had in my constituency I think, where there was a person with the same last name and the computer couldn't . . . (inaudible) . . . between the two names. One, there was a lien on that particular

piece of property that wasn't being affected and the person was selling it. It got jammed up and they had a very long time, and I think an extra cost of \$1,000, trying to convince that computer that his particular piece of property did not have a lien on it.

Now I think they have corrected that problem from what I understand, a bit. I haven't heard of any cases this year coming in my office but I had about two, with people running into the same last name, where they had that trouble.

So when they talk about fine tuning this, I think they should have spent enough money on it that it shouldn't have to be fine tuned. So it worries me very much when they talk about fine tuning this particular Crown. That's like a car slamming into a brick wall 100 miles an hour and a mechanic telling you, well I think with a little fine tuning I think I can get it back on the road.

That's been a very big concern with the people out there. I mean, this province is against the wall with money issues. We're looking at hospital long-term bed closures in there because they don't have the money. And then they do a cost overrun of 30 to \$35 million in ISC that could be used to keep beds open in my constituency. So there is some concern and some issues over ISC.

Another thing we're talking about looking at here was fine tuning the Crown's mineral Act. And that always makes me nervous when this particular government wants to touch anything with Crown mineral Acts. I believe it was the Tommy Douglas government that first brought in the \$5 fee for mineral rights. I think that was when they . . . in their first term in office. I can't remember even if a letter was sent out. I think they did an ad in the paper at that . . . A lot of people, you know, older gentlemen back in the '40s — farmers that had been farming since 1920s — probably didn't read, didn't follow a lot. A lot of them gave up their mineral rights, didn't . . . realizing that they had . . . that the government had brought in this fee.

And also in the '70s — I don't have much information on it, but I vaguely remember — there was what they called . . . I call it a mineral land bank. And I forget the person that started it, but it was under the NDP government. And basically you could put your minerals into this and you were supposed to get part of the proceeds. It was kind of like a mineral co-operative land . . . and I call that a mineral land bank because we all know what the land bank was back . . . that this NDP government brought in, taking over.

And I remember particularly hearing a story about it. A lot of people ended up losing their mineral rights when that either dissolved in the '70s or not getting any dividends on it. But the idea was you put all your — I believe if I got that right — you put all your minerals into a pool and an agency of the government was supposed to, like, look after them and sell them and you were supposed to get your dividends. I have yet to hear of anybody that ever got any dividends on it, but I knew there was a couple of stories that people actually lost their mineral rights.

So when I see them doing anything with mineral rights in this province, it makes me very nervous because this government

has a reputation of wanting to run things, of taking it over. Let's be honest here, that's what they do. You can word . . . you use socialism if you want. That's their philosophy, whether you believe in it or not. But that seems to be their issue with it.

And I know at one time, they wanted to own all the mineral rights. There was talk of — when they were in power in the '50s and the '70s — of taking over all the mineral rights in this province. And the province, you know, basically taking them away from private ownership, people that had them on the title.

So when they talk about fine tuning this, Mr. Speaker, on the mineral rights, I'm a little worried that, is this going to affect the mineral rights of the people that own them. And I know several people in my area that still own mineral rights. Unfortunately because of this government not developing anything, they're not really worth something yet. But some day maybe their great-grandchildren, they may be able to get some money from it, and they want to hang on to them.

And I don't know if this particular . . . how much it deals with, but we're going to be sending this out to lawyers and to geologists and different interest parties that they can check this particular on the Crown mineral rights because looking at, well looking at, say, further describe the conversion of former certificates and titles that were silent respecting minerals. Now I'm not sure what that exactly means but I know I want to check on that because myself, I own some mineral rights and some land. And I, I would like to hang on to them in the future of that.

But getting back to some of the other things of the Bill, one of the things is the costs, that it has a cost overrun. The last time we were in Crowns I think they pretty well had given up the idea of selling this around the world, so that tells me that it wasn't like absolutely the best system that these people designed over there. I'm hoping it gets better. We're hoping that it's not going to cost any money.

But one of the things that I have gotten calls on lately is the costs, is the fee structure on it. I don't have it right in front of me but I believe in the last budget the fees went up for just about everything. And I have a local lawyer that does a lot of land titles and . . . that does a lot of land title work. And he says yes, the fees have gone up considerably, and he's worried that they're going to keep going up year after year after year, where it becomes very expensive for people to turn over properties.

If you're dealing with \$100,000 piece of property, maybe \$1,000 doesn't seem like a lot. But when you start dealing in small towns where maybe a neighbour wants to buy the local lot just to store a car or two on . . . And lots back home in a small town, if they're empty, unserviced, sell for \$100. If you have to pay \$1,000 to transfer that title, you're going to like, no, I'm not going to touch that.

And I think that can be very detrimental out in . . . for a lot of land sales on small transactions, and I know that them costs have gone up. I won't say that they're \$1,000 on \$100 transaction, but the lawyer I've talked to has said that if the rates keep going up the way they are, they will be at that. And he says right now it is getting costly for people, that he said these people come in, they've looked at transferring a title, a

small title that's, you know that's worth . . . maybe they're buying for a couple of hundred bucks, 100 to 1,000. And then they've gotten the price of what it costs to get it transferred — basically you almost have to go through a lawyer — the transfer fees, the cost to ISC, and all of a sudden they'll say, maybe it's just too expensive. You know, they're thinking, you know \$50, \$75 — an easy transaction. You go in once . . . they've run into a very difficult . . . especially a title in a lot of the towns have to be searched, you know, records. Some towns when they were developed in the early 1900s some of the records aren't the best, and it can get very costly in research yet. It's something that I hope that this Bill will address, but I don't see it addressing any of the cost factor of it.

And to me when this land titles was to come in, the idea was supposed to make things simpler, easier, and more cost efficient to the people of Saskatchewan. When you bring in something, the idea of it, it's supposed to . . . with computer age technology, it should be easier. That means it should be less cost. It should be . . . it shouldn't be more difficult and more expensive at that end, you know. And that is detrimental for the sale of small, very small properties. I have concern with ISC; I have concern with this Bill at that end of it.

I think we have to do a lot more research. I know I have a lot more members out on this side of the House that want to speak to this Bill because in their area I don't think there's a constituent out there — or I shouldn't say constituent, I mean a member out there that hasn't had a constituent somewhere in his constituency phone him with an ISC trouble. Either it was the fee structure, either it was a title search, or it was just the length of time of getting that job done.

So there is a lot of stories out there, and they are still out there. And when you go to a system that should have been in place, that system should have been up and running within six months. Now it's over two years and it's still a lot of glitches in that particular system, Mr. Speaker.

One of the . . . I'm trying to think of what case I had which wasn't that long ago, was a house transfer that took, was supposed to take in the old . . . under the old paper system would have taken a week to 10 days, it took them two months to go through. And basically that person was at the end of an apartment lease and he thought if you know a lawyer told him, well we should be able to wrap this up within two, three weeks, he'd given up notice — you have to give notice in your apartment — he'd given it up, Mr. Speaker, and all of sudden got jammed up with a search title on it.

And land titles . . . and all of sudden it started dragging out. All of sudden, the end of the month he doesn't have title to the house. Well the owner says, no you're not moving in until we can . . . until you have the title, or we transfer the title. He was stuck basically having to find another place to live for another month which was, he said, costly; he had to move twice. He wasn't that impressed with ISC when he phoned me last year over that, Mr. Speaker.

Looking at a few other . . . I'm just trying to . . . I appreciate the minister sending his speech over in advance so I can look through it, and I had a few things marked in here so I'm just kind of going through some of the things I had marked down.

He talked about the public has confidence in this new system.

Well I tell you what, I haven't had one person tell me they had confidence in this new system. I haven't had one person say, man, that's a good system; I'm glad that we went to it, not that . . . knowing on this side of the House there has to be some changes.

But the idea is if this government, this government — I'm trying to think of the word because if I use the other word you're going to sit me down — basically said that \$20 million, and that's what they had floated out to begin with, that's all it would cost, you know, so that's what was floated out to the public. And back then a lot of people said, okay \$20 million, yeah we have to do a change to our system. There has to be some updates.

I think if this government had gone around and said no, the initial cost is going to be \$60 million and then we're going to throw it up to 100 million, I think that there would have been a lot more outrage and it wouldn't have . . . there'd have been a lot more challenge to this particular Crown coming through. But this way . . . (inaudible) . . . this government operates is they started real low and basically lowball the price and sell it as a greatest idea — it's done, we've did the homework on it, \$20 million, within two months it's going to up and running. The idea sounded very well at that time.

And all we've got to do . . . is what's happened since and all you've got to do is look what happened. And that's why people out there don't have confidence in this government, you know, don't have confidence in ISC. And it's going to take a long time down the road and a lot of changes before they do have confidence in this particular Crown of what happened in the past with that. If this government would be more upfront when it was actually bringing in things like that there might be a little more confidence in this government.

But I say, Mr. Speaker, there is many members on this side of the House that I believe would like to speak to this Bill. And I know that we have to . . . This Bill has to go out to various interest groups which have a big interest with ISC, Mr. Speaker, so with that I will adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Arm River-Watrous that debate on Bill No. 19 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Debate adjourned.

(16:00)

Bill No. 20 — The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to

move second reading of The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act, 2004. This Act provides a framework for the self-governance of this group of professionals through the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association.

There are currently approximately 72 land surveyors and professional surveyors who are licensed members of the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association. Fifty-six of these members are resident in Saskatchewan. The other 16 members are resident in other parts of Canada, mostly in Alberta. Residency is not a requirement to be authorized to carry on the surveying profession in Saskatchewan or to be a member of the association.

The practice and approach in the survey industry is to facilitate mobility of surveyors throughout Canada. The Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association has requested that its members who are not residents of Saskatchewan be eligible for election to the council of the SLSA (Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association), the land surveyors association.

The council is the governing body of the association. It consists of eight individuals, seven of them are elected by the membership and must all be licensed members resident in Saskatchewan. There is one additional member appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The appointed member is not required to be a surveyor but must be a resident of Saskatchewan.

The proposed amendments will allow surveyors who are licensed members of the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association, but who are not residents of Saskatchewan, to be eligible for election to the council of the association. They will broaden the pool of potential candidates to be elected to serve on council, and restrict the number of non-resident elected members of council to a maximum of three.

As well they will make these provisions regarding residency of council members more consistent with similar legislation governing surveying professionals across Canada and with some other professional legislation in Saskatchewan, which also allows in many cases, non-residents to be members of governing councils.

Mr. Speaker, I am therefore pleased to move second reading of an Act to amend The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Act.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Industry and Resources that Bill No. 20, The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act, 2004, be now read a second time.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise today to speak about this Bill.

I guess one of the first things that you look at this Bill, and one may call it a bit of housekeeping Bill, but it has to bring into question as to why we would open up the association to

out-of-province members? And the first thing that strikes my mind is it's probably Saskatchewan residents that have moved out of province that the government now wants to come back in to be part of the association. And we have to sit and again wonder what caused these people to leave Saskatchewan.

Now it would be interesting to see whether it's actual Saskatchewan residents that are members of the association that are now living in other provinces, but it sure strikes me as that's what the case is. Those are the people that know the province the best and they have actually moved out. Now we have a government that is kind of pleased with having people move out of the province so I would suspect that's probably the case here, that people have moved out of the province and now are asking to come back and to be part of the association for land surveying.

But I go back to the premise of, why would they leave the province? If we had land surveyors in this province, why would they be leaving? And it's the policies and direction that this NDP government has proposed and enacted on over the last number of years that has caused businesses, industry, people to move out the province. And it's kind of a shame to see that the only way we're going to get people to come back in as part of the association is to open up an amendment to the legislation that will allow people from outside of the province to be members of the association.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to talk about ISC because this legislation is coming from ISC, the Information Services Corporation. And this corporation has been much concern to an awful lot of people in this province. And it's very interesting to sit here and listen to the minister talk very slowly and very deliberately about how good ISC is doing for the people of this province. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would have exception . . . I would take exception to that.

Mr. Speaker, the minister earlier got up and said it works well, it works well, and it only cost — and I forget his exact figure — 58, \$68 million, but it's working well for the people of this province. And he said as I remember, and I'll have to look at *Hansard* tomorrow, but he said, and if members opposite say it cost over \$100 million they're not telling the truth. That's what the minister said.

So I would say to the public also, if the minister is saying it only cost \$58 million, is the minister telling the truth? And I would let the people of the province determine if he is the one that's telling the truth or not because information we have, the ISC bill is over \$107 million currently. And, Mr. Speaker, that is taxpayers' money. That is taxpayers' money.

Now it's very, very clear that when ISC started this venture off-the-shelf systems could have been purchased anywhere from 5 to \$12 million. But even then the government budgeted \$20 million. Well that's a little bit out of hand. Twenty million dollars is a little bit out of hand.

But we know how this government operates. They budget low. They lowball it and then it comes in higher. Well there's a couple of extra expenses that come in, unforeseen expenses and so it escalates. So even at the \$20 million budget, and even by the minister's own words . . . Now think back to the \$20 million

that was originally forecast by this government, who is telling the truth. Was 20 million the budget . . .

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Saskatoon Massey Place on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Cline: — I rise on a point of order. My point of order is that . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — What the member is saying, Mr. Speaker, has nothing to do with the legislation before this House.

The Speaker: — On the point of order I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the member was making references to the topic at hand and this whole issue is closely monitored by you in these speeches. And since you have seen fit to allow the debate to continue appropriately, I certainly think that the House should support that decision by the Speaker.

The Speaker: — I thank you, members, for raising the point of order. The general rules that we have used in this House on second reading is to allow quite far-ranging debate, but I do expect the member to relate his remarks to the Bill at hand. And I would ask the member to continue.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And in my opinion, I do relate to the Bill at hand because it is proposed . . . this proposed legislation is coming from ISC, Information Services Corporation. So I believe if this Bill is coming from the Information Services Corporation, we have to look into the corporation to have a look at a bit of their track record as to how they've operated over the last few years.

So this is just one piece of legislation from ISC and it's from ISC. So I think it deserves comment in the House as to how ISC is performing before we can determine whether this legislation should be supported or opposed.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue and talk about ISC and have a look at their track record. And when we look at their track record, when I talk about the expenses and the over \$100 million being spent, to me it directly relates to this proposed legislation. It's again because of the track record that they have, and I think it's fair for the people of this province to hear and to understand some of the issues and concerns within ISC before they sit back and comment on this particular piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the costs of ISC, again is there going to be costs related with this Bill? And we look at the debate that we have about whether it's 58, 68, 107, or how many million dollars. I think it's very pertinent to the people of this province as to this piece of legislation that's being introduced because they want to know what's this piece of legislation going to cost if it's run and governed by ISC.

And, Mr. Speaker, I also would like to comment about some of the minister's words from earlier about ISC. He said it's really

working well for the people. And again, I would like to include my comments on whether it's working well, directly related to this Bill, because how will this Bill, how will it work? Will it work like other aspects of ISC? And let's just look at a couple of incidents with ISC before, how it works.

We remember debating in the House here the individual that had a lien put on his assets because he was behind, he got notice that he was behind in his child support payments. Well, Mr. Speaker, ISC had the wrong individual. Our 100-and-some million dollar system couldn't identify two separate people in this province. Can you imagine the embarrassment of an individual receiving a notice of lien on assets because he was behind in child support payments, imagine what his wife felt like — because they had the wrong individual. And that very much relates to this Bill.

It very much relates to this Bill because how do we know, how do we know that this will work, one of these amendments in the Bill will work, when other aspects of ISC are having an awful lot of trouble?

Mr. Speaker, also it doesn't say anything in this Bill about costs, and that is a concern. And that is a concern for us on this side of the House, and it's a concern for people of the province.

We've already discussed the matter of it costing in excess of \$107 million, that some of it could be hid with smoke and mirrors, and we know that this government, current government, is very good at doing that, using smoke and mirrors to hide costs.

And now I am very much concerned about a small housekeeping amendment like this . . . is how much it's going to cost, and where's the money going to come from. Again it'll come from the taxpayers. The taxpayers by this NDP government have a bottomless pocket because they're in it all of the time for money no matter where, no matter what, whether it's increases in any fees.

And I'm worried about the costs associated with even a housekeeping Bill because they can say, well it's not going to cost anything, Mr. Speaker. This amendment can cost absolutely nothing. But now next year we'll say, well it's a few million dollars, but well it's okay because they're doing a good job. Well we already know how good of a job they're doing.

Mr. Speaker, the minister talked about how happy people are with the system. Well if they're happy with it, why would we be putting amendments in such as this if they're so happy with the system? And I think that's a fair question that we should have answered.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the costs, costs associated with what this amendment may cost, costs associated with what ISC has cost the people of this province, I think the people of this province should be concerned. They should be extremely concerned.

Mr. Speaker, with some of the costs of ISC, and we've heard numerous stories. We've heard absolutely numerous stories from ISC problems from our constituents. The paperless society it was going to be, and we had one individual I think that had

150 pieces of paper for a land titles transaction in a paperless society. So again this system does not work.

Now again that's why I'm worried about this piece of amendment to this legislation. Is it going to work, and how will it work? I do have a concern there. So, Mr. Speaker, I know members opposite will talk . . . well there's been some glitches in the system. There's glitches in the system. Well I know this one's off topic, but we hear that in health care too, how the glitches are in the system. But there's glitch after glitch after glitch with ISC and with health, and that makes it very much a concern for a Bill like this.

(16:15)

Now how many glitches are we going to accept in this particular land surveys association amendment? I mean, there's probably not much to this Bill. But if it can be fouled up, we have the government that can foul it up. And that is a concern.

Mr. Speaker, the system, the system — contrary to what the minister talked about that is doing so good and everybody likes it — there are problems within the system, Mr. Speaker. And again with this amendment, I have a number of concerns and basically wondering why this amendment would have to be implemented.

I'm really wondering why that the Land Surveyors Association would have to be changed to allow three out-of-province residents to be on the association. I think that should be a flag of concern for an awful lot of people. As I mentioned earlier, are they former Saskatchewan residents that have been forced out of the province by this government because of rules, lack of rules, or being overruled? Or definitely we know is a lack of growth, and lack of growth definitely chases people out. So I'm wondering if these members that are going to be proposed association members from out of province in accordance with this legislation, whether they are going to be required to be former Saskatchewan residents or not.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues that are of concern to us . . . why this needs to be implemented, and we're wondering what the impact of these proposed amendments are going to be. And I believe that they need further study.

So at this time, I would like to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Wood River that debate on Bill 20 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 21 — The Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I

am pleased to rise today to speak about this new piece of legislation for one of the major professional organizations in Saskatchewan's school system. The Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials, or SASBO as it's commonly known, is the professional association for the individuals employed as treasurers, secretary treasurers, and school board secretaries in school divisions across the province.

These officials play a critical role in the proper and effective operation of our school divisions. Their work includes such matters as budgeting, accounting, record keeping, human resource management, facilities management, school board elections, and student transportation. By law the individuals appointed to these positions must possess prescribed qualifications and become and remain members in good standing in SASBO as a condition of employment.

Although SASBO has operated under its own statute for many years, the legislation has not been amended since 1993. The amendments made at that time were largely of a technical nature. As a result, the statute has become out of date in the context of modern professions legislation in this province. This new Act that we are now considering represents a thorough overhaul and updating of the legislation to reflect contemporary standards and requirements of statutes of this type.

I want to briefly outline the main changes incorporated in the new SASBO Act. The first deals with the eligibility for membership in the association. In the past, individuals who wished to be employed as school business officials needed to have a certificate of qualification issued by the Board of Examiners. Different classes of certificate were issued depending on a person's qualifications and experience. Boards of education were required to appoint school business officials who possessed a valid certificate. The SASBO Act defined eligibility for membership in the association by reference to possession of a valid certificate.

Last year with the concurrence of SASBO and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, this process of issuing certificates of qualification was eliminated as it was administratively cumbersome and unnecessary. Boards of education are now simply required to appoint school business officials whose qualifications meet the requirements set out in the regulations. As a consequence of these changes, it is necessary to amend the SASBO legislation to remove references to certificates of qualification as a criterion for membership and substitute references to compliance with the regulations.

The second category of changes incorporated in the new Act is a series of standard provisions for professions legislation. There is now a requirement for the appointment of a public representative to serve as a member of the SASBO executive board and of the association's discipline committee. The appointment of such public representative is now a feature of virtually all professional legislation. It helps to bring a public perspective to the deliberations of professional bodies and to their handling of cases of professional misconduct by members.

SASBO is now also being given the more broadly defined authority to make bylaws so that it has the flexibility to evolve in response to changing needs and circumstances. The bylaws

generally fall under two categories. Administrative bylaws deal with the association's internal affairs and can be approved by the members themselves. Regulatory bylaws deal with policy matters that can affect the public interest, and these bylaws require the approval of the Minister of Learning. This categorization of bylaws enables the association to serve the needs and interests of its members effectively while ensuring there are appropriate controls over those matters with implications beyond the association itself.

One of the most important roles of any professional association is to maintain high standards of professional competence and conduct among its members. This ensures that the public interest is protected, and public confidence is maintained.

Disciplinary processes must be legally sound and transparent in order for the public to see these as being fair to members. The provision of the SASBO Act dealing with the discipline of association members are being greatly expanded and strengthened to reflect contemporary requirements for due process.

Mr. Speaker, I have highlighted a few of the key elements of the new Act. Elsewhere throughout the statute language and other details have been revised where appropriate. In the start of my remarks I described SASBO as one of the major professional organizations in our province's school system. SASBO is what we refer to as one of our educational partners. They are representative of a wide range of policy and advisory committees that support the development of our school system.

For SASBO to serve the public and its members effectively, it is important that the association's legislation provide a comprehensive, sound, and strong basis for all the association's activities. I am pleased to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that this new legislation has been developed in close consultation with the SASBO executive, and it has their full support.

I am therefore pleased to move that Bill No. 19 . . . An Act respecting Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Learning that Bill 21, The Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a real pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill No. 21, the Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials.

Mr. Speaker, there isn't too many times in the House we actually bring forward a Bill talking about education. And normally when we do, we're hoping it's got something to do with the actual classroom business. But often we forget that behind the classroom there's many faces of people that are working diligently to make sure our education system is working for everyone in the province.

And when most people think about the education system, we think about the teachers and the school boards and the students and what our pioneers tried to do back 100 years ago, and that

is start a system for education for our students to do something that they couldn't do for themselves.

There basically was only three things they felt they couldn't do in their own homes, and that is provide health care, infrastructure, and the education system. So over the years, we've gone from the days when we had these country schoolhouses right across Saskatchewan, one every 6 or 10 miles and people went uphill both ways to schools. And now we have these wonderful buildings where our students are placed, and we have all the amenities for them and hopefully the money to provide the services that they need.

We don't expect our teachers to take care of the financial planning in the school any more, and we don't expect them to deal with the daily, ongoing work within the school system itself. We're expecting them to work within the education system and provide those services to our children.

But today our system has boards and associations and federations that are working behind the scenes to ensure that the education system works. We have the SSTA (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association) — and I guess now it's called the SSBA (Saskatchewan School Boards Association) — the STF (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation), LEADS (League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendent), and SASBO (Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials). SASBO is the organization of professionals working in our education systems that encompasses people like the secretaries, the secretary treasurers, and the school board secretaries.

We know that budget day at the legislature is a green light for many of these people to really go to work for the year and ensure that they can provide the education system with the dollars that they've been allocated to ensure that our students have the very best possible chance to reach their potential.

We know that salaries are a huge part of the work that these officials are dealing with, but they also deal with the maintenance and the daily operating costs and work within the school system. They deal with the utilities and the cost of supplies. They deal with the technology, both hardware and the software that's required in our school system, and our support staff. Besides that, they are dealing with the idea that we're going to need new buildings. They're dealing with the cost of transportation and actually the cost of the school boards elections themselves.

All of these things are taking place without most of . . . individuals realize what's happening. We expect it, and we take it for granted.

We know that the individuals that are appointed in SASBO must have qualifications and are members in good standing within SASBO. They haven't had their statutes changed since 1993, and of course with these changes we know that there has to be updates in the legislation today.

Mr. Speaker, in the past people who wanted to work as school business officials had to have a certificate of qualification that was issued by the Board of Examiners. We know that there had to be different classes of certificates, and boards of education

were required to appoint school business officials who had their valid certificates. You could only be a member of SASBO if you actually had a valid certificate.

Last year we know that there was an agreement between SASBO and the SSBA to . . . this actually was going to eliminate issuing the certificates of qualifications because they thought it was cumbersome and it really wasn't necessary any more.

Mr. Speaker, there is . . . the standards . . . the changes that are incorporated into the new Act is a standard, a standard provision for professions. There is now a requirement for a public representative to serve on the SASBO board. The appointment of this representative happens in virtually all our professions now. I understand that there will now be a standard provision in the Act like your requirement for appointing a public representative.

SASBO is now given more broadly defined authority to make bylaws and they're going to be allowed to be more flexible. The bylaws, as the minister stated, are going to be in two categories — the administrative part and the regulatory bylaws. And these bylaws are going to be requiring the approval of the Minister of Learning.

Now I understand that the changes within this Act have been asked for by the involved individuals, but I think it's important to understand that the minister is going to have some powers now that are probably within the last Act, but it's going to give him some authority over our children. And I'm sure that we on this side of the House want to ensure that the minister is using his authority, working well within the context of the SASBO requirements.

Any organization that's dealing with our children's education holds the greatest implication for the future of our children. The First Nations peoples used to say that the buffalo was their mainstay, but now they say that education is the buffalo of tomorrow.

All of our professionals are important cogs in the wheel of education. We put our faith and our trust in the people who work with our teachers and our school boards to make our education system effective. Many of them work behind the scenes to ensure our system works well and we'd like to thank those individuals for their dedication to our system.

Mr. Speaker, this Act has been brought forward by the people that are involved within SASBO and so I understand that most of the changes are ones that they require. But we always want to make sure that there isn't anything that's overlooked, so we're going to be sending the Bill out for further inquiries and information. So at this time we would . . . I'd like to adjourn debate on this Bill.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Kelvington-Wadena that debate on Bill 21 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 22 — The Saskatchewan Farm Security
Amendment Act, 2004**

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

(16:30)

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I will move second reading of amendments to The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's credit unions have done an admirable job in our rural areas helping to ensure local access to financial services to thousands of rural residents. As the chartered banks have moved to consolidate branches in larger centres, credit unions have held fast, maintaining their presence in small town Saskatchewan.

This shift has brought to light a concern on the part of farmers and credit unions, whereby the rules governing the loan process for credit unions differ from those of chartered banks. Insofar as the credit unions are providing a vital service to rural residents, the Government of Saskatchewan supports their activities and seeks to provide them with a more equal footing. The Act needs updating in order to do just that.

The amendments are the result of consultations with numerous stakeholders. Among others, the following organizations provided input: the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Credit Union Central, Farm Credit Canada, and Agricultural Credit Corporation. As always, Mr. Speaker, we were open to what they had to say, and that dialogue yielded the following.

A current requirement for credit union customers to acquire legal advice when using farm property as security on certain kinds of new loans has been removed. Because no such requirement exists in the Bank Act which governs the chartered banks, it was perceived by customers as an unnecessary level of red tape on the part of the credit union. By requiring that legal advice be sought in cases where existing debt is involved, any outstanding security considerations can be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, the benefits of this change are threefold. First, it enhances farmers' access to vitally needed operating capital without removing the fundamental protections provided by the Act. Second, in periods of lower interest rates it assists farmers who need to restructure their loans. Third, it enables credit unions across the province to compete on a more level playing field with chartered banks.

Another amendment to section 99 will correct an instance where The Cities Act is referenced twice in the same list.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to express my appreciation for all of the input we received from stakeholder groups throughout this process. We believe that these amendments are the fruit of their participation, and that producers and credit unions alike will be beneficiaries of this consensus.

Therefore I move that the amendments to The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act be read a second time. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Agriculture has moved Bill No. 22, The Saskatchewan Farm Security Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time.

I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's with pleasure that I rise to speak briefly on The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act. My colleagues mention that there's a hockey game starts at 5 o'clock and they're encouraging me to be brief — or there's another one starting at 8:30 and they're encouraging me to take whatever time that I need. And I'm sure I can guess what the consensus of this Assembly might be.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to first of all in my comments recognize what the minister said in terms of this clarifies the Act in terms of farm security, particularly with machinery and other such type of properties, that the credit unions are at a disadvantage compared to registered banks in terms of the security they can take and the way they'd exercise these relationships.

And as many of us remember, certainly we've had the opportunity a week or two ago to meet with credit unions who came to Regina to discuss this issue with us and to make us aware of the concerns that they have that we're out of step with our provincial legislation in terms of a similar set of circumstances with the chartered banks.

And, Mr. Speaker, I recall a few years ago when the credit unions asked to have their basic legislation opened and amended so that they could be more in step with the powers and authorities that were granted to banking institutions so that they could operate in that same competitive environment.

And I had the pleasure to be the Finance critic for the official opposition in those days. And I recall in the consultation in meetings of saying to them that the official opposition was going to very much support and encourage the government to bring this legislation forward because we really believe that the credit unions serve a very integral and important part of the mosaic of Saskatchewan and really in particular not only of urban Saskatchewan, but in particular of rural Saskatchewan.

In many instances credit unions and their branches are the primary lending institution in rural Saskatchewan, and in many cases the only lending institution in many communities across the province. And we said to them, in support for this we want to challenge you to rise to the opportunity and the potential of the changes of this legislation.

And you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I think that they have risen to that challenge in an amazing way and have provided incredible service to the people of Saskatchewan, the rural and urban people, to provide a greater breadth of financial services and have done so in a very professional and thoughtful and imaginative way.

And so I certainly would like to acknowledge the work that the credit unions have done in response to the first fundamental change to their legislation. And I know, and I'm very confident in looking at this amendment and the fact that the credit unions have requested it is to . . . it was an oversight I suspect, and to allow them to be more in step with chartered banks in providing the proper services and security to their clients that chartered banks can, that we'll be very supportive of that.

Mr. Speaker, irrespective of the fact that there have been a number of the credit unions meet with us and talk to us when they were here visiting with the members of this Assembly, we still have had an indication that some specific credit unions wish to make comment. And we would like very much to give them the opportunity to do that. And so in order for that to happen, I would move that we adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Melfort has moved debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — That is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 23 — The Regional Parks Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, after my brief remarks, I'll be moving second reading of The Regional Parks Amendment Act, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, I have a great appreciation for the importance of the regional parks system. Growing up in rural Saskatchewan I've had the opportunity to visit several regional parks and I've many fond memories of those visits. For many years regional parks have been providing us places to relax and enjoy the local environment, as well as contributing to the economic development and the quality of life in rural Saskatchewan.

The amendments before us will provide regional park authorities with the legal authority to borrow funds from lending institutions. While some regional park authorities have borrowed money from lending institutions, this power is not specifically provided for in existing legislation. This amendment will empower regional park authorities to borrow money while making the lending institution responsible to determine the limitations on borrowing. The province will not be held responsible for any debts incurred by a regional park authority. Through this amendment, regional park authorities will also have the ability to invest any part of their capital or operating money.

Another amendment, Mr. Speaker, will give Saskatchewan Environment authority . . . the ability to request an information report related to borrowing from a regional park authority to ensure accountability by the park board. These amendments will improve the existing legislation and make it work even better for the regional parks system.

Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of The Regional Parks Amendment Act, 2004. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has moved Bill No. 23, The Regional Parks Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time.

I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure that I have to rise to speak on the Bill No. 23, An Act to amend The Regional Parks Act.

Mr. Speaker, the minister I think has quite correctly identified that the regional parks are an extremely important part of the mosaic of Saskatchewan, and they have provided essential recreational services and have developed in many communities and many areas of the province across our great natural environment fantastic parks that are a real tribute to the province and to the communities that they largely serve.

I could find it just a little bit strange that the minister talks about that this is a minute kind of housekeeping change that really allows for greater authority and autonomy by the regional parks to either invest money or borrow money. And it made me wonder is that . . . what would precipitate this? Is it the fact that the minister is expecting to give investment powers to the regional parks at . . . that he's expecting that there's going to be a windfall profit coming from the wiener roast tax on firewood, that there's going to be so much more money coming into the park system that we'll need the capacity, we'll need the ability to be able to invest this money so that they have the way of sort of collecting this huge windfall that the minister's created for them.

But then on the other hand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he also mentions that the authority extends to being able to borrow money. And I'm wondering if that might be by way of the fact that the season and summer is shortened so that they won't have enough opportunity to indeed make their expenses.

So it really makes you wonder if this government of course knows what they're doing in terms of the whole parks organization, provincial parks and regional parks. And I would hope that for the sake of the regional parks that this minister stays out of their affairs as much as possible because it was pretty obvious from the provincial parks discussion during the budget that he was pretty much out of sync with the province of Saskatchewan on that issue.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that it's important that regional parks be given the necessary latitude and tools that they need in order to conduct their business insofar as this legislation provides them with those additional tools. I understand that the limits of borrowing are still pretty much determined in agreement between the regional park and a particular financial institution and based on securities, etc., that are available, so that will make sense.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I believe that there are other concerns and issues that the regional parks board would like us to have

considered while this legislation is in process of being opened. And we want to give them the opportunity to provide that information to us to see what further opportunities there are in order to make this legislation potentially even better than what's proposed and to take it beyond just a housekeeping nature to something that really is going to be more beneficial to the regional parks and make them a real attractive centrepiece for the attraction of the tourist industry and a wonderful camping season this summer.

So in order for them to have the opportunity to do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this time I would move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Melfort has moved debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Debate adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member for Saskatoon Greystone on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, I move this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — Pardon me, members. The member for Greystone has moved that this House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

The Assembly adjourned at 16:43.

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