



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

---

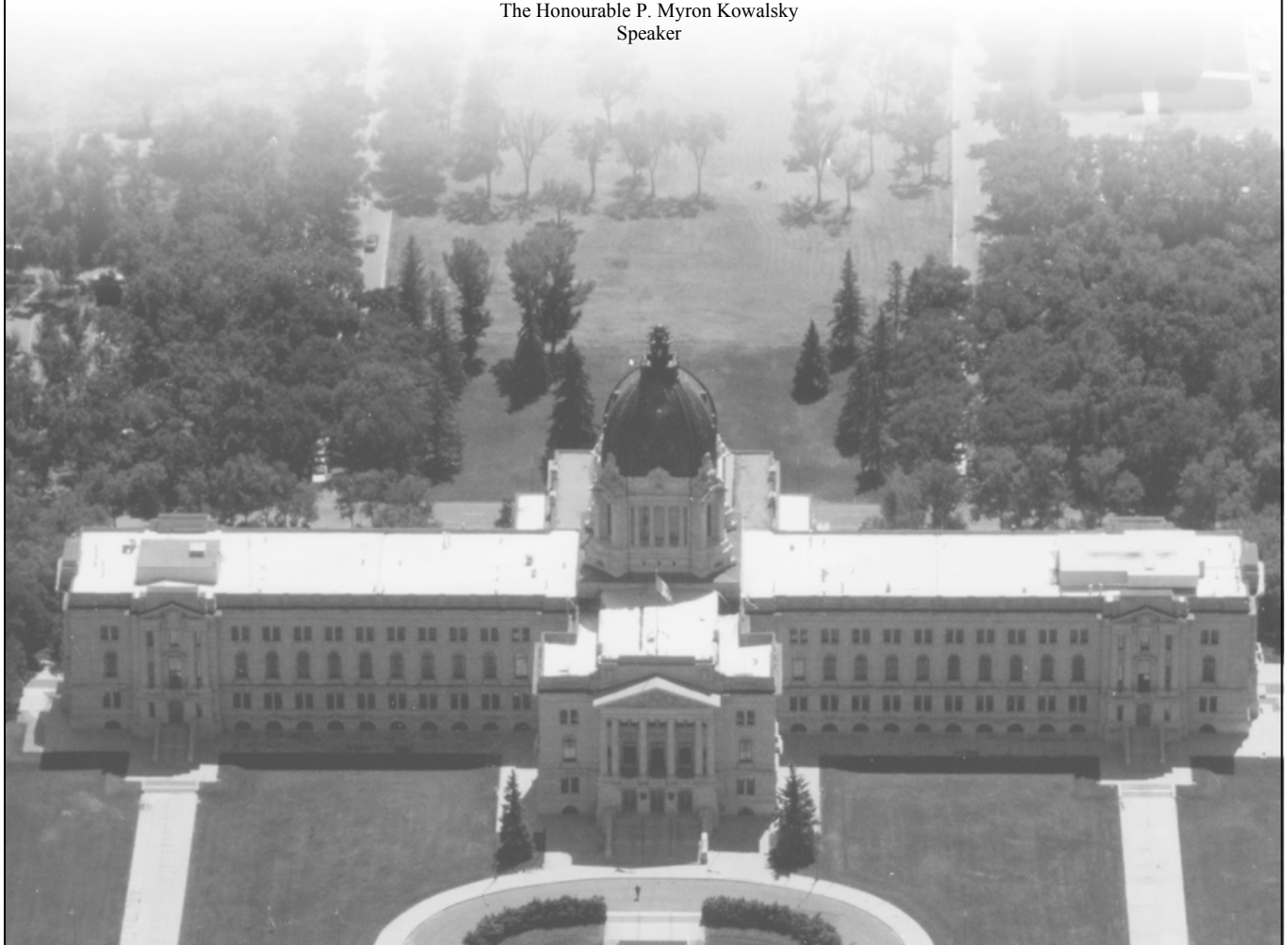
**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

---

(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. Once again today I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents from Cypress Hills. This one has to do with the increase in crop insurance premiums this year and the reduction in coverage that attends that.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all necessary steps 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 position . . . petition is signed by constituents from the community of Fox Valley.

I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by residents of the Rosetown-Elrose constituency regarding recent changes to the crop insurance program which resulted in large premium increases for insured farmers while overall coverage is reduced. And the prayer of this petition reads:

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.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from the communities of Lucky Lake, Beechy, Birsay, and Swift Current.

I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

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

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise with a petition from citizens in my constituency who are extremely concerned about the condition of Highway 43. And the prayer 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 folks of Gravelbourg, Woodrow, Palmer, and Hodgeville.

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 constituency concerned about closure of health care facilities in our constituency. And the prayer 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 facilities providing health care services in the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy are not closed or further downsized.

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

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

I so present.

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

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here where citizens that are opposed to closures or possible reductions of services at 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 the Davidson, Imperial health centres be maintained at their current level of service at a minimum 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 Davidson and Imperial areas and beyond.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Davidson, Saskatoon, and Hawarden.

I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also 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 just . . .

I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — 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 being able to bridge from independent living between long-term care. 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 the 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 petition is signed by folks from Unity, Macklin, and Battleford.

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 the level of service at the Wilkie health centre and special care home;

A petition concerning the level of service at the health care facilities in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency;

And addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 50, 63, 65, 69, and 72.

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 26 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: will Saskatchewan chicken producers currently on the waiting list to be granted quota in our province to supply chickens be granted those quotas in an expedited manner in order to supply the increased need for chickens due to the cull of 19 million birds? If so, what is the time frame for the granting of these new quotas?

I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 26 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: how many extension agrologists were employed by the Government of Saskatchewan on April 1, 2004, and how many will be employed by the Government of Saskatchewan as of May 1, 2004?

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Ms. Bakken:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to stand and welcome to the legislature Donna Carswell of Regina who is here today to observe the proceedings. And I would like all members of the Assembly to welcome her to her legislature.

And while I'm on . . .

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

**Ms. Bakken:** — And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to welcome the grade 8 class from St. Michael School in Weyburn. There's 47 students attending today.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that you had the pleasure of meeting with them, I believe it was in February. I was unable to accompany you that day. My constituency assistant, Marcie Swedburg, did accompany you and she informed me that it was a great day, and that the students had put a lot of work and preparation into the day that you spent with them, and that they had great questions. And she felt that considerable time had been spent by both the teachers and the students in helping them prepare for this day.

With the students today is Tracey Kiliwnik and Tessa Kerawotski who are their teachers. And also, I'd really like to welcome Angie Giroux who is the chaperone and she's seated on the floor of the House with one of the students from St. Michael's. So I'd like all members of the Assembly to help me welcome them.

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

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

#### Am I an Ag Minister?

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, spring seeding is rapidly approaching, and farmers are very worried. And knowing the poetic nature of our current minister, I received a poem on behalf of farmers, dedicated to the minister, called "Am I an Ag Minister?"

Am I an Ag Minister?

I have no briefing book.  
I have no clue.

But, do I know rural Saskatchewan?  
 No, that's untrue.  
 I have scratched my head and wondered aloud.  
 Why was I given this portfolio?  
 With swagger, bravado and arrogance  
 I have fed the House lines  
 and left for the day.

So am I an Ag Minister?

I've touched the mud and I've slung the mud.  
 I've heed and hawed . . . (I've) flipped and flopped.  
 I've been in meetings and (I've) talked a lot.  
 I've gone back on my word on negative margins.  
 I've closed service centres, raised taxes, eliminated the  
 farm rebate  
 and fed government coffers.  
 And yes, I've slaughtered and butchered the foundation of  
 this province.

I've battled farmers and prairie people.  
 I've ached and cried to the feds  
 over programs that are good for the province.  
 I've written letters and called for help.  
 With precision and accuracy, I've buried farmers:  
 men, women and children whom I have not known, whom  
 I  
 have not cared for.

Am I an Ag Minister? No.  
 But, I still don't understand.  
 For I have not learned, and . . . have . . . (not) compassion.

Am I an Ag Minister?  
 Well sadly, I try.  
 But as every farmer knows  
 Even a steer can try!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

#### 2004 First Nations Saskatchewan Winter Games

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. For more than 20 years, the First Nations Winter Games have been a big part of the First Nations sporting tradition here in Saskatchewan. In keeping with that tradition, last week more than 2,000 First Nations youth from all across the province gathered to compete in hockey, badminton, volleyball, and broomball. Mr. Speaker, the games are a showcase for First Nations culture and athletics. They help to promote community spirit, and they also foster self-esteem and personal development for First Nations youth.

Mr. Speaker, the theme of the 2004 games, "Communities in Partnership," was fitting. The Prince Albert Grand Council and the First Nations communities of Cumberland House, Shoal Lake Cree Nation, and Red Earth Cree Nation joined forces with the surrounding communities of Nipawin, White Fox, and Carrot River to host the games. Games manager Mel Mercredi commented:

This was one of the most successful winter games ever. I particularly want to thank the 550 volunteers who worked

so tirelessly to ensure these games were a great experience for athletes and spectators alike. Without them, this wouldn't have been possible.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate all the winners of the various events, and I thank all the organizers, the volunteers, the sponsors, and all the communities involved for making the 2004 First Nations Winter Games a resounding success.

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

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

#### Eston-Holman Student Exchange

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In late March, the grade 10 arts class from the Eston High School hosted 19 students from Holman, Northwest Territories, a small, remote community north of the Arctic Circle on Victoria Island.

Leadership for this project was provided by Marea Olafson who happens to be in Regina today as a member of the organizing committee for the Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy. Marea describes the visit in these words:

The past five days have been hectic with many awesome experiences. The students saw many animals: Moose, Antelope, Deer, Cows, Horses, Ants, Coyotes, gophers, Wild Boars, Turkey and Chicken Chicks, "Pink" Pigs, a newborn calf that just dropped, Elk, Buffalo, and beetles. They skied, snowboarded, and tubed at Table Mountain, climbed trees, Swam in a pool, Shopped at the Midtown Plaza, Saw the Great Wall of Saskatchewan at Smiley, Toured Nexen oil and gas plant, toured the Glidden Hutterite Colony, Toured the Western Development Museum, Eston Museum, Went glow bowling, the girls got their hair cut and coloured at a professional salon, which was a first. Experienced the driving distance on a school bus! The students from Holman soaked up all the new experiences and used "awesome" over and over.

But the story doesn't end here. In May the Eston grade 10s are flying up to Holman to experience life in the Arctic Circle, above the Arctic Circle at a time when the sun never sets.

Thanks and congratulations go to Marea Olafson of Eston, Helen Kitekudlak of Holman, the YMCA, Canadian Heritage, and everyone who is making this exchange a successful reality. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

#### Saskatoon Volunteer Recognition and Awards Celebration

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night I had the honour of attending Saskatoon's second annual volunteer recognition and awards celebration. The event is hosted by Volunteer Saskatoon, and the awards are presented by SaskEnergy.

Mr. Speaker, the goal of Volunteer Saskatoon is to support and enhance volunteerism in the community. One of the ways they

do that is through this event that celebrates volunteers, honouring them for their gifts of time, talent and energy, and thanking them for their commitment to the community.

Mr. Speaker, the winners of the 2004 Saskatoon Volunteer Recognition Awards are, in the arts, Tamara Bond; for community development, Shirley Isbister; for cultural diversity, Dr. Anne Leis. In the family category, the winner was Lorraine and Kara Sauve. For human services, the winner was Julie Gibb. The Spirit of Volunteerism Award went to Om Kochar. The winner in sports and recreation was Bob Westad. The award for workplace volunteer program went to Saskatoon and District Labour Council, summer snack program. And the Youth Volunteer Award went to Martin Van Rijn. And the first ever winner of the President's Award of Distinction was George Ann Murray.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating all the nominees and award winners at the Saskatoon volunteer recognition and awards celebration. Thank you.

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

(13:45)

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Batoche.

#### **Community Growth Initiative in St. Brieux**

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the community of St. Brieux is once again on the leading edge and has launched a new initiative. This exciting initiative is called Fifty-in-Five community growth initiative. The object is to attract 50 new families in five years to the vibrant community of St. Brieux.

St. Brieux was founded in 1904 and has become a thriving industrial community. This industrial activity is part of the St. Brieux heritage and is the result of the vision and creativity of the people who settled this community. This vision has resulted in the community of St. Brieux having the highest average family and single parent income in the entire province.

St. Brieux has a modern school, modern hockey rink, ball park, golf course, regional park. There's excellent hunting, fishing, hiking, cross-country skiing and ice fishing, camping and golfing. The Fifty-in-Five community growth initiative is designed to grow the population of the community, and the people of St. Brieux are very optimistic this will happen. The community has good paying jobs and is an exceptional place to raise a family.

They are striving to combine all their assets to make relocating to this community the best choice for those people who seek a rewarding career as well enjoy the quiet life in a rural setting. Congratulations to the people of St. Brieux on their initiative to grow their community.

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

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

#### **4-H Provincial Public Speaking Competition**

**Mr. Borgerson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Saturday I was pleased to attend the 2004 Saskatchewan 4-H provincial public speaking competition at the Prince Albert Exhibition Centre.

Mr. Speaker, 4-H, with its motto, "learning to do by doing," is all about providing the youth of today with the tools that will allow them to become the leaders of tomorrow. And with 231 clubs across the province in both rural and urban settings, Saskatchewan 4-H stimulates the hearts and minds of more than 4,000 young people.

This government is the proud sponsor of 4-H in Saskatchewan. We provide financial support, office space, and staff travel that will total nearly \$460,000 this year. As someone who has judged 4-H public speaking, I know how difficult it was to choose winners from the 24 contestants on Saturday. The speeches were on a variety of topics, and they were all excellent.

The winner in the senior category was Roxy Mutton from Alameda in the southeast region. Roxy's a member of the Black Gold 4-H Club. The intermediate winner was Sarah Anderson, also of the southeast region. Sarah is a member of the Abbey-Lancer 4-H club. Chylla Nault of the Pierceland 4-H club in the northwest region was the winner in the junior category.

Mr. Speaker, I ask members of this Assembly to show their appreciation to the District 32 4-H Club for hosting this event, and our congratulations to all of the contestants and their families who participated in 4-H public speaking this year at the club, district, regional, and provincial level.

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

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

#### **Humboldt Resident Appears on Letterman**

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well Jennie Ford may have had only five minutes on Letterman, but the Humboldt native is finding out that can translate into a lot more than just 15 minutes of fame.

Last Thursday, Jennie, a Broadway performer who has lived in New York city for the past four years, walked past the Hello Deli and was pulled in for an impromptu interview with David Letterman of the *Late Show with David Letterman*. Playing a game called Trump or Monkey, Ms. Ford correctly identified millionaire Donald Trump's hair out of a line-up of monkey heads.

And as we'd expect no less of a Saskatchewan girl, she even managed to leave the famous host stumped for a few minutes in what media reports have called comical confusion. It took some help from fellow Canadian and bandleader, Paul Shaffer, to help Letterman understand that Jennie was speaking Canadian.

Mr. Speaker, apparently Mr. Letterman didn't expect a correct answer, so he threw in a trip to Acapulco as the winning prize

which prompted the producer to complain that Mr. Letterman should not be giving unauthorized prizes. The standard prize, Mr. Speaker, is only a platter of meat.

But Jennie's 15 minutes of fame didn't end there, Mr. Speaker. The producers enjoyed having Jennie on the show so much that they convinced her to stick around and have some more fun. To top it all off, Jennie did get her free trip to Acapulco. And to show what a good sport she is, she plans on sending Mr. Letterman a postcard.

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

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

#### Health Care Issues

**Ms. Bakken:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the last few days the Minister of Health has tried to downplay serious concerns, serious concerns citizens have brought forward about gaps in our health care system. Donna Carswell is here today to tell the minister what is wrong with the health care system, and I sincerely hope that he will hear her concerns.

Ms. Carswell's father, Donald Geddes, passed away on March 18, 2003 at 69 years of age. The final two years of Mr. Geddes's life included misdiagnosis, not once but twice. He was finally diagnosed with brain cancer, and though he was severely ill, there was no hospital bed for him so he was sent home.

Mr. Speaker, is this the NDP's idea of health care — to send seniors away to die in their homes?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I express my condolences to the Carswell . . . Mrs. Carswell and her family. And what I do say though, Mr. Speaker, is that we will continue to work with people in the province to find the most appropriate places for their care and also for the palliative care that we have. And I think we all can be very proud of the kind of services that we have in this province to deal with people who are dying.

It's a very difficult job but we have very many caring people who do that kind of work. And I think what we need to do is affirm the good things that they are doing. If there are problems that arise within that process, those things should be identified with the people who run the programs so that the changes can be made. And I think that's a very appropriate place for those things to be dealt with.

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

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

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Health said that the NDP (New Democratic Party), and I quote: "provide good care for people at the end of life." Well after

repeated attempts to get Mr. Geddes admitted to the hospital, his doctor finally had a hospital bed delivered to his home. His end-of-life care fell upon his daughter and a daily visit from home care.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Geddes deserved to die with dignity. Instead, he was sent home with minimal care because of a shortage of beds. And finally, the day before Mr. Geddes passed away, he was admitted to palliative care at the Pasqua Hospital.

Is this the NDP's idea of quality health care — to have people die quicker so they can reduce the need for hospital beds?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I encourage that member . . . And I know that she does on many occasions raise these issues with my office so that we can refer them to the appropriate people that run in this case the palliative care system that we have in the province.

I think that there are many difficult choices that individuals and families make at the end of their life. And many individuals prefer to be at home and not in the hospital at the end of their life. And that's the kind of decision that has to be worked out with the doctor, with the family, with the various services where . . . that are provided. And the goal clearly by all of those caring people is to provide the kind of care that the person needs at the end of their life.

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

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, the first step to fixing a problem is to admit that one exists. Mr. Speaker, this government continues to ignore the pleas of health care workers and their patients. This government continues to say Saskatchewan is a leader in medicare when in fact we have the longest wait lists in all of Canada. Will the minister today tell Donna Carswell that he will address the shortage of hospital beds so other families do not have to endure what her and her father had to endure?

Mr. Speaker, when will the minister admit that there is a problem and when will he take steps to address the shortage of hospital beds in Saskatchewan?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to work with all of the regional health authorities and with all of the professions in this province to make sure we provide the most appropriate care. And sometimes that means we need to provide more hospital beds, more long-term care beds. Other times it means that we need to provide less of those.

This is an ongoing process that we have to work at and we will continue to work at. But the goal of all of the very many caring people in the health care system is to provide the best care for our Saskatchewan people.

And I think that it's appropriate for the members opposite to continue to work with us as we identify those situations where there may be some problems, but also that they should work

with us and support a budget that supports health care in this province.

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

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

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Health said, and I quote:

... we pride ourselves on the kind of care ... we have provided for ... people from birth to death ...

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Carswell does feel that her father received good care once he was finally admitted to hospital. However almost six months after her father's death, Ms. Carswell got a call from Pasqua Hospital to inform her that his bone scan was scheduled for the following week. This is the same facility that Mr. Geddes passed away in six months earlier.

Mr. Speaker, this begs the question: what kind of record keeping is taking place in our health care system? Family members should not receive notices for diagnostic appointments after their loved ones have passed away.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister take steps to address record-keeping problems within the health care system?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, those kinds of challenges exist from time to time and they are being dealt with.

One of the things that we're doing on a broad basis — and we are actually leaders in the country as we work in this — is to work with the Canada Health Infoway money and help design an electronic health record. It has to be done step by step to be careful that we don't end up with some major challenges in the costs of it. But we are getting a system which will eliminate some of the kinds of things that the member opposite has raised.

I think that, you know, we should remember that when the head of the Canadian nursing association comes to Saskatchewan, she tells us in Saskatchewan, you're leading the way in so many areas of nursing. It's often outside of our province that we get the recognition.

Unfortunately there are many members inside the province, especially sitting opposite, who all they can see is negativity in everything that's in front of them.

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

**Ms. Bakken:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today we are talking again about real people, real families, people that have lost their lives in our health care system.

Mr. Speaker, a deceased person was on a waiting list for six months for diagnostic procedure. And, Mr. Speaker, sadly this is not the first time this has happened. Last month, John McBain reported to this Assembly that he received notice for an

MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) appointment for his wife, one year after she had passed away. I'm sure there are many more cases out there that people have not come forward with.

Mr. Speaker, is this an acceptable wait list management system? Mr. Speaker, when will the Minister of Health fix how health care records are managed in the province?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, we are careful with the dollars that we have and we're careful to work at those things that we can manage within the resources that we have. We have tackled the surgical waiting lists and we now have a surgical care registry.

Our next goal is to look at the diagnostic list which is the items that have been raised by the member opposite. We'll use the same care and diligence in that area as we have with the surgical care registry.

I think it would be interesting for this Assembly to know that the work that we have done around our waiting lists for surgery in Saskatchewan is being heralded across the country as some of the best, if not the best, anywhere.

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

#### Natural Gas Rates for Commercial Customers

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy.

SaskEnergy currently charges all of its commercial natural gas customers \$6.97 per gigajoule. However, commercial customers can buy their natural gas from private sector natural gas suppliers for much less than the NDP government is charging them through SaskEnergy.

So will the minister explain, Mr. Speaker, why commercial customers should continue to buy natural gas from SaskEnergy instead of moving to a private sector natural gas supplier?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government House Leader.

(14:00)

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question and to focus attention on the excellent work that SaskEnergy does do for not only residential customers but also business customers in Saskatchewan.

We have had, Mr. Speaker, for many years now, competition in the provision of natural gas in Saskatchewan. This is being provided by a company called CEG Energy Options and they will, from time to time, make gas supply offers to various customer groups, especially business and commercial customers. We know that they will make offers to provide gas at a certain price but there is always an if to that: if they can deliver, if they can buy the gas at that price.

Sometimes they're able to deliver on that, sometimes they're not. In fact, many times they're not and then those customers



revert back to natural gas. So at the end of the day, they are able to obtain a small measure of business in Saskatchewan.

But SaskEnergy does a very good job of providing very good rates to its customers and therefore we're able to retain our customer base.

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

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation: will the minister stand today and confirm that the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, a Saskatchewan government-owned Crown corporation, has dropped SaskEnergy because their natural gas price is too high and has signed a contract to buy its natural gas from a private sector gas supplier?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm a bit confused now. The members opposite have, over the years, always championed the concept of an open marketplace and a competitive marketplace. And now that someone, I guess, is taking advantage of that — and I take the member at his word that this has happened — now they complain about this.

All I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that there are instances where this competitor to SaskEnergy is able to offer some natural gas at a very competitive rate, but they're not always able to do that. And what happens, in many cases, is that some of the customers that they signed up, sign up end up reverting back to SaskEnergy because SaskEnergy, at the end of the day, is overall able to deliver very good product at a very good price.

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

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister shouldn't confuse questions with complaints.

The Saskatchewan Party has acquired a letter from the manager of territory housing operations from the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, a provincial Crown corporation. And the letter says the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation is dropping SaskEnergy as its supplier of natural gas and has signed a contract to buy its natural gas from a private sector company called CEG Energy Options.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation explain to the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy why she dropped SaskEnergy as a supplier to sign a contract with a private sector company?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, again we've operated or SaskEnergy has operated in a deregulated

marketplace since 1987. Customers in Saskatchewan are free to make their own decisions about what they perceive to be the best option for them at the end of the day.

In this competitive marketplace SaskEnergy continues to do very, very well. It offers a very good product at very reasonable rates, which is why many customers are sticking with SaskEnergy. On any given day the competition may be able to provide a lower cost, but overall we're very confident about the supply that SaskEnergy is able to provide for its customers and at the prices. And that's why SaskEnergy continues to do very well in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It's had a very good year in Saskatchewan, provides excellent service to all residential customers in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to the letter written by a senior manager at Sask Housing on April 2, the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation has dropped SaskEnergy in favour of a private sector gas supplier and hired CEG Energy Options simply because SaskEnergy was charging too much for natural gas.

The Sask Housing Corporation says SaskEnergy's rate of \$6.97 per gigajoule is 22 cents higher than CEG's rate for this year. But, Mr. Speaker, next year it'll be 37 cents a gigajoule higher.

Will the minister confirm that Sask Housing is dropping SaskEnergy as its natural gas supplier and signing a contract with this private sector supplier because the NDP government is overcharging for natural gas?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, again, we have had competition in the marketplace here for natural gas now for many years in Saskatchewan. And we take that seriously, that ability to do that — to provide that marketplace. And as such we will have not only local housing authorities but we will also have hospitals, we could have universities, schools, other institutions, other businesses that from time to time will look at the option that is provided by CEG. And from time to time we will find that some institutions or businesses will take the CEG offer.

But you know what, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day the amount of business that's provided by CEG relative to SaskEnergy is very minimal. Why? Because SaskEnergy, on balance, over time, does an excellent job of providing natural gas to its customers at very competitive rates. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, given the savings that the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation have calculated by going to CEG, I think there'll be many more

customers making that move.

Mr. Speaker, I want to quote from a letter we received regarding Sask Housing Corporation's decision, and I quote from the letter. Sask Housing Authority

... could benefit from significant savings in natural gas purchases per annum by contracting with the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, in a test over the previous two years, the Housing Corporation has already saved \$15,000 on just three units in a pilot project. Sask Housing Corporation has approved an initiative to bulk purchase natural gas from a private sector supplier.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP government allowing the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation to drop SaskEnergy because its natural gas rates are too high while keeping natural gas rates high for Saskatchewan families?

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

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again the thing that we have to remember is that CEG provides an anticipated price, but they have to confirm that at the end of the day and if they're not able to provide the gas at that price then those customers have the option of reverting back to SaskEnergy. And that is something that does happen, and one of the reasons that SaskEnergy has been able to maintain its customer base over the years, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that on a day that SaskEnergy puts out its annual report — it's had an excellent year doing very well, its international investments are making money — that the opposition chooses to focus on, I don't know what, something that's been going on for many, many years and nothing unusual.

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

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

#### Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization Program

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday we heard an incredible admission from the Minister of Agriculture. He said that the NDP worked very hard to ensure negative margins were covered under the new CAIS (Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization) program, and that the program funding cap was increased. But then when the federal government finally agreed to these changes, this Minister of Agriculture says Saskatchewan can't afford it. Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. They hold out and hold out and hold out for negative margins and when they finally get it, they decide they don't want it.

Mr. Speaker, how on earth does this minister expect to have any credibility whatsoever when it comes to negotiating support programs on behalf of Saskatchewan farmers?

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question because I... in fact we did work very hard as a government to make sure that we would have negative margins covered and that would we would have an increased cap. We wanted to have the very best program for all producers in this country, and so we held out to make sure that for ourselves in this province and for others in the other provinces that there would be a program that would work.

Mr. Speaker, we are also holding out because 60/40 programs that the federal government has imposed upon us have just sucked the treasury dry. We have gone beyond those 60/40 programs. And, Mr. Speaker, the federal government in this country should be responsible for trade injury which they have just basically ignored over many years or funded partially. Every other major nation has the federal government covering those trade injury issues, Mr. Speaker. We are looking for more support from the federal government for our producers, as it should be.

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

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to negotiating agricultural policy, this government is a joke. This minister is a joke. They go to Ottawa, they ask and ask and ask for negative margins, and then when the federal government finally gives in to them, they say we don't want it.

Mr. Speaker, how much credibility is this minister going to have next time he goes to Ottawa to ask for farm support? Absolutely none. Mr. Speaker, how on earth can this minister justify asking for negative margins and an increased cap and then refusing to sign on when he finally gets them?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Mr. Speaker, we have committed \$100 million towards the CAIS program this year. And within that program there is opportunity to pro-rate if need be. But, Mr. Speaker, we want our producers to be covered more fully and therefore we are continuing to press the federal government.

I would also add, Mr. Speaker, that we have shown on our... it is on our record that we have been there for producers. We have been there in significant ways and in fact on issues of trade like BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) and the closed borders, Mr. Speaker, we were there for \$55 million last year. Mr. Speaker, that was without the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, we have been there for producers in this province. We are there for producers, and we will continue to be as we seek to negotiate the best deals that we can for producers here and producers throughout the country.

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

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, just imagine if a farmer went to his local implement dealer to buy a new tractor. They agreed on a price, they got all the paper work done up, they made some special modifications and added some accessories to the tractor, and then when it came time to sign they said . . . the farmer said, sorry I don't want it; I can't afford it. Mr. Speaker, pretty soon nobody would want to deal with that farmer. And pretty soon nobody will want to deal with that minister.

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — His word means nothing. You can't trust him. The federal government knows it, farmers know it, everyone knows it. Mr. Speaker, how can anyone trust this Minister of Agriculture when he says one thing and does another?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to know that for the CFIP (Canadian Farm Income Program) program we said we would be there for up to \$70 million. We are. Mr. Speaker, we say that we will be there for up to \$99 million plus for the CAIS program and, Mr. Speaker, we will be there to those limits. What we say, we stand by.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but we go beyond what we have said. We have proven that. We will prove it again if need be. We have been there, we will continue to be there, and we put the dollars on the table that make the difference, that give the support to our producers that is necessary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, I guess we shouldn't be too surprised at the Minister of Agriculture saying one thing and doing another. After all, his leader promised to cut taxes and then raised taxes. His leader promised to protect government workers and then fired government workers. His leader promised to look after seniors and now he's booting them out of their beds. You can't believe a single word this Premier says and you can't believe a single word this Minister of Agriculture says.

Mr. Speaker, why should any Saskatchewan producer believe this Minister of Agriculture when he says one thing and does another?

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that this government has shown and will continue to show that when we say something, we will stand by that. Mr. Speaker, we have shown that in agriculture. We have been very clear.

We said that we would provide up to \$70 million for CFIP. We have done that. Mr. Speaker, we have said we will provide the . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please, members. Order. Order, please. The Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that it is not only that we keep our word but we go beyond that and last year I think was probably one of the best examples, where we went \$130 million over our budget in Agriculture. Why? Because there was need, Mr. Speaker — because there was need.

We intend to keep our word this year and if there is greater need, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has said we will be there. I have said we will be there, Mr. Speaker. We will be there if there is increased need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture acts like the fact that this government is in financial trouble is a great surprise to him. That minister will know, or ought to know, that this government has run deficit budgets for the last three years. Mr. Speaker, it would seem to make sense to ordinary people that this NDP government would cost out the programs that it bargains for with the federal government before they fight so hard that they get those programs.

(14:15)

To the Minister of Agriculture: what drove this? Was this farcical deal really made with the federal government out of ignorance of the cost of the program or was it made out of a blatant disregard for honesty with our agricultural producers?

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Mr. Speaker, obviously the member opposite does have trouble understanding budgets. We have not had deficit budgets over these last three years. We've used the Fiscal Stabilization Fund to balance the budget and we are doing that again this year, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are putting the funding into agriculture that we committed to put into agriculture. There will be \$100 million there for CAIS. There will be the money that is there necessary for crop insurance.

Mr. Speaker, in this past year \$130 million over budget — why? Because there was crisis, there was need. And, Mr. Speaker, we were there for producers and we will be there again. We are there for the people of Saskatchewan and we will keep our commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### **Bill No. 32 — The Powers of Attorney Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi de 2002 sur les procurations**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 32, The Powers of Attorney 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. 32, The Powers of Attorney 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. 33 — The Archives Act, 2004**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for Culture, Youth and Recreation.

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 33, The Archives Act, 2004 be now introduced and read the first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation that Bill No. 33, The Archives 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? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — 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. 34 — The Psychologists Amendment Act, 2004**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 34, The Psychologists Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 34, The Psychologists 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:** — And when shall the Bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Next sitting, 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.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely pleased today on behalf of the government to stand and convert for debates returnable questions no. 172 through 176.

**The Speaker:** — Questions 172, 73, 74, 75, and 76 have been converted to orders for return (debatable).

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

#### **Bill No. 24 — The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2004**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2004. Mr. Speaker, the proposed Bill makes three changes to The Provincial Court Act, 1998.

First, Mr. Speaker, the Bill implements a recommendation . . . (inaudible) . . . the Provincial Court Commission. It provides that the pensions of judges retiring before April 1, 2003 and their survivors will be adjusted for the cost of living at the same time and rate as superannuation allowances are adjusted for retired civil servants.

Currently, Mr. Speaker, when retired civil servants' pensions

are adjusted for cost of living, retired judges and survivors' pensions are also adjusted. However this has been done ad hoc . . . This has been an ad hoc practice, Mr. Speaker, rather than one enshrined in legislation.

Second, Mr. Speaker, this Bill makes changes requested by the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. These changes will ensure the Provincial Court judges' pension plan complies with the Income Tax Act of Canada. Mr. Speaker, these are technical amendments aimed at clarification rather than change.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Bill responds to a request by the Special Committee on Regulations of the Legislative Assembly. It amends the regulation making power in the Act to more clearly delineate the types of benefits available for Provincial Court judges. Specifically the amendment refers to a deferred salary and pressing necessity leave as types of benefits available to judges, separate from sick and special leave.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of An Act to amend The Provincial Court Act, 1998.

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

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 24, The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2004 be read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Martensville.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to be able to respond to Bill No. 24, and it was a very low-key response from the minister. And I'm not sure if he didn't want us to check it through carefully or what, but there's a fair number of things in this Bill that I think we need to look at. And he listed three of them, which are probably the basic overriding issues in Bill No. 24, An Act to amend The Provincial Court Act.

The first of all . . . The first one, Mr. Speaker, deals with the COLA (cost-of-living adjustment) clause. And it's rather interesting that this government, this NDP government that considers itself so much a friend of their public employees, so much a friend of the working person that till now, the year 2004, has been dealing with the COLA clause on an ad hoc basis. So they've had people working for them and they'd say well one year, we'll give you the COLA clause this year; and next year, I don't think we will.

What a way to treat an employee, Mr. Speaker. It's very much a shoddy approach to dealing with your labour relations. If they would have dealt with this issue probably 20 or 30 years ago when labour was starting to get its act together and government was being more concerned for its employees, it might have made more sense.

And here we are, Mr. Speaker, in this particular century finding out that they've been dealing with a COLA clause for a group of employees in an ad hoc manner. Mr. Speaker, that is totally abhorrent. This basically, Mr. Speaker, is a process that's been set in place under past premier, Allan Blakeney. So for 30 years . . . and the member from Regina chirps, that was 30 years ago. And it's not just going back in 30 years.

That process that the CCF-NDP (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation-New Democratic Party) set up 30 years ago is still in effect today — today, Mr. Speaker. Those same employees today are in that same situation that they found themselves in then and it's a shame that they've been in charge of this province for most of those years and haven't corrected that, Mr. Speaker.

How is it possible that a government that considers itself a friend of the working person can in all the time that they've been in charge come to this point in history, the year 2004, and still not have dealt with that?

Mr. Speaker, the NDP over there should be ashamed of themselves and from the silence that I hear from the benches, I believe they are — I believe they are. The member from Saskatoon said, what are we talking about? Okay, it was explained very clearly, very clearly by the Justice minister just a few minutes ago, that for this particular class of government employees, the COLA clause, the cost-of-living clause, has only been applied on an ad hoc basis, which meant when a socialist decided to hand it out, they handed it out, and if they decided to give it to somebody else, they did. That's the way they've been dealing with these people. It's a shame, Mr. Speaker, a total shame. Finally they've brought this misuse of their power to light and they're dealing with it in Bill No. 24.

Bill No. 24, in the explanatory notes, Mr. Speaker, it says:

The amendment requires that if . . . (the) cost of living . . . (increases) . . . provided in relation to the pensions of retired civil servants, it will also be provided with respect to the pensions of judges who retire prior to April 1, 2003 and their survivors.

Finally they're going to go ahead and set it up so that all the public employees, all the civil servants, when one of them gets a cost-of-living allowance increase in their pensions, they will all get it.

But, Mr. Speaker, let me underline again how shameful it is that we would have had a government that would have picked and chosen which one of their civil servants would get the COLA clause on their allowance and which ones wouldn't. It speaks, it speaks very much to the integrity of the NDP government. It speaks very much to the integrity — and as someone just said, the lack of integrity — of the whole socialist philosophy when they're in charge of that sort of a thing and they would allow that to continue to happen, as the member from Regina said, for over 30 years.

**An Hon. Member:** — Regina Albert South.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Regina Albert South, he was correct. For over 30 years the NDP-CCF (New Democratic Party-Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) have perpetrated that injustice on the civil servants of this province, Mr. Speaker. That's the first key issue that this particular Bill deals with.

The second one is . . . And this one is just about as amazing because pensions have been around for a long time, civil servant pensions. As I've just been told, they've been around

since 1934 with the teachers' pension. And we have the past deputy Health minister commenting on that one too, but we'll leave that one alone for now. We'll deal with that one at another time.

But ever since that particular time, Mr. Speaker, our pension plan in this province has not agreed with the federal pension plan, has not agreed with the federal pension plan. So now finally after all those decades they're going to say well, the federal government has some regulations on this and these should dovetail. And yes, Mr. Speaker, they should.

How's it possible again for this government to mistreat its civil servants in such a way to have our civil servants totally out of step with federal regulations on what should be happening with the pension plans for our civil servants? Mr. Speaker, again a total shoddy way to run government. A shoddy way to treat the civil servants.

**An Hon. Member:** — Typical socialists.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Typical socialists is correct, is very correct.

Mr. Speaker, the third thing that was mentioned that this Bill deals with is that it's also going to amend the regulations. Now regulations by themselves are a fearful thing in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Regulations, for those people that are listening . . . and I find out a lot of people are because every once in a while when we take a particularly cutting shot at some political misadventure we get some missives in the mail and we realize that people do pay attention. Now regulations is that aspect of government where they pass a piece of legislation that is generally written in a fairly vague term.

And I have a copy of Bill 24 here, Mr. Speaker, and you . . . there's a lot of legalese in that document and so most people can't really understand what it's saying because of the legalese in it. And then you say, well where are the specifics? What exactly is this going to do? And there's nothing in here. Why not, Mr. Speaker? Because that's been relegated to regulations.

Regulations. That's where government that doesn't sit here, sits down in the dead of night somewhere and writes out, now what is really going to happen with this piece of legislation is this — these are the exact numbers that are going to be given; this is how it's going to work; these are the dollars we're going to assess; this is the formula we're going to use.

That's what regulations are all about. That's what the people out on the street end up . . . finding out what it's all about. That's where they have to go ahead and write out the cheques. That's where they have the deductions made off of their paycheques, Mr. Speaker.

That comes from regulations. It's not in here. And as I said earlier on, Mr. Speaker, it's the regulations that are a fearful thing because that's the part that doesn't get debated in this House.

**An Hon. Member:** — Devil's in the details.

**Mr. Heppner:** — That's the part that you don't find on the front page of *The StarPhoenix* or the *Leader-Post*.

The member behind me just said the devil's in the details, and it is very much that when it comes to regulations, Mr. Speaker. The government sits down quietly in the dark recesses of this building and draws up exactly how this is going to affect the people of this particular province, Mr. Speaker.

So three issues that are being dealt with, the COLA clause; complying with the federal laws; and amending some of the regulations. And we need to look into some of those things specifically.

(14:30)

It says:

The amendment ensures that the supplementary allowance provided to judges shall not exceed the amount of the Consumer Price Index.

Well that should be fair enough. I don't think any other employees get more than that. The problem has been that this government in the past has decided from time to time not to grant that COLA clause — for no reason whatsoever. It wasn't that the work that these people had done wasn't valid. It wasn't that there wasn't a cost-of-living increase. It was just they decided, this year we're not paying it.

It says:

Subject to this section, every judge shall, by reservation from his or her salary, contribute to the fund an amount equal to 5% of the judge's annual salary.

So that sets out, Mr. Speaker — this is 28(1) — that sets out specifically what the deductions are going to be. Now it does not apply to any judges who elected to receive the annuity benefits to which a judge was entitled pursuant to The Magistrates' Courts Act. So there are some options that people in this particular area can take.

It also says that you cannot make contributions for more than twenty-three and a third years. That's a rather interesting little tidbit there, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to want to check with the minister later on when we get a chance to ask him some specific questions on this — what the purpose of that would be because having been involved as an employee that had a pension plan, we were allowed to contribute a certain amount every year. We were in fact required to contribute that every year up to 35 years.

Now why in the world has this group been picked and the number twenty-three and a third years? I wish we knew. We weren't told by the minister when he introduced this piece of legislation today. It will be one of the questions that we're going to have to have an answer for a little later on.

It also deals with judges that have been granted leaves of absence and what takes place during that particular time; also disability allowances. And those are always important situations that any item that deals with labour and labour settlements,

labour negotiations, and labour contracts, it's an important part of all of that.

It also says that:

Where a judge has, in a year, made contributions to this fund that exceed . . . (in total — the word in aggregate is used) the maximum contributions prescribed by the *Income Tax Act* (Canada) with respect to the judge for the year, the amount . . . (in) excess contributions shall be refunded to the judge.

Now as I believe you well know, Mr. Speaker, and every public employee knows is that we can't very well sit down as public employees and make a decision and say, this year I'm going to contribute this amount to my pension plan. There are certain minimums and certain maximums that are set up.

But what seems to have happened with this group of public employees is that the contributions that the NDP have demanded from them on a yearly basis have been out of sync with what the *Income Tax Act* — that's the Canadian overriding consideration — is. And so in fact this government has filled its general coffers by withdrawing from the paycheques of this group of individuals an excess amount. They've been caught with their hand in the cookie jar, Mr. Speaker, as it were, and they're going to now have to refund that to these particular people.

It also states that contributions that exceeded the maximum level, as I just said, will be refunded and why, Mr. Speaker? In order to avoid revocation of the registration of the pension plan. It's come to the extent that if this NDP government wouldn't act on what they've been doing here — doing incorrectly — the registration of this particular pension plan could actually be revoked. It's come to that, Mr. Speaker. I think that's shameful.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier on, benefits for which this group of employees is entitled includes leave of absence, sick leave and special leave, travelling, sustenance, moving expenses, life insurance, disability, dental and health benefits.

The amendment delineates the types of benefits available to judges and reference to deferred salary and pressing necessity leave are added as types of leave separate from sick leave and special leave as, Mr. Speaker, they should be.

So, Mr. Speaker, we'll be wanting to look at Bill No. 24 in much greater detail, but it's very much as I stated. It's unfortunate that we have to deal with a government that would have chosen — would have chosen — Mr. Speaker, to hand out the COLA aspects of the pension plan in the past as crumbs. You get it today; it's gone tomorrow.

It's shameful that any group of people elected to government would deal with their civic employees in such an underhanded way. And as I stand here speaking, I look at the back row of this NDP government and I see one, two, three, four people that were extremely active — five in fact — extremely active in the union labour movement. And they've allowed this to go on for decades, for decades until finally they were caught, and the federal government comes along and says you need to dovetail the provincial pension plan with the federal pension plan.

So it's obvious; you can elect all the people from the union ranks you want, it has absolutely . . . oh, and I missed one in one row down. There's another one over there. And the fact is there's lots of them. I think they probably carry the majority. And now they're complaining that they haven't been here nearly as long.

Well I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, those people will not be there nearly as long as I and my colleagues on this side are going to be. We will be in this House a whole lot longer than they're going to be in this House. We're going to have to bring this kind of legislation to the public's attention, to the public's attention.

Mr. Speaker, and while we're dealing with that, it was during the election campaign . . . And I've been through a few of those, Mr. Speaker; I've been through a few election campaigns. It probably shows, Mr. Speaker. But I recall in every one of the last three election campaigns I've knocked on the door of some retired civil servants, and they have invariably asked me why in the world their . . . And they consider this to be their government because it's the CCF-NDP.

CCF used to be an agricultural kind of a situation, Mr. Speaker, where Tommy Douglas was going to put electricity into every . . . on every farmyard in the country as if, if he didn't do it, it wouldn't happen, which is utterly strange when the other nine provinces all got electrified in their rural areas without Tommy Douglas — without Tommy Douglas, Mr. Speaker. Where was Tommy Douglas? He wasn't in Alberta. He wasn't in Manitoba. He wasn't in PEI (Prince Edward Island). And their rural areas were totally electrified.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said, when I knocked on the doors of some of these civil servants, they would bring up this aspect of the pension plan exactly, the COLA aspect. And they asked me why in the world they, on their pensions, didn't have a COLA aspect. Why in the world their NDP government . . . And they became NDPs instead of CCF, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, when they decided they didn't have a hope left in rural Saskatchewan.

And we've seen with their attitude recently in rural Saskatchewan that that probably wasn't a bad move on their part because they've realized out there in rural Saskatchewan this is not a friend of the farmer.

So they became the NDP and they thought, well we'll get into . . . in with labour, and we've got the labour people over there. And now we're just finding out that the retired labour people in this province, Mr. Speaker, still don't have their COLA clauses adjusted as they ought to have.

It's only power, it's only power that the NDP is after. And when the people drop off their ranks as employees from the union lists and they become just a statistic on a pension plan, then they become a liability for this government. They become a liability for this government, and they drop them, Mr. Speaker.

I was going to say drop them like a hot potato, but potatoes is a particular topic that I don't think this government wants to hear about. They know about it well. They know about it well.

Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 24 requires a lot of discussion. I raise numerous questions that we have to ask this government about what they intend to do. We'll have to keep a very close eye on what they do with regulations, which has always been a disaster when you put a socialist in charge of regulations. That's where you end up with things like wiener taxes and what was it, a year or two ago we had coyote taxes and all these sorts of things. Those sorts of things, Mr. Speaker, come out of regulations. And you can't trust a socialism in regulations any more than you can trust a fox in a henhouse. We'll be keeping our eyes wide open on that, Mr. Speaker.

At this point, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 24, The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2004. Thank you.

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

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Martensville that the debate on second reading of Bill No. 24 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. 25 — The Adoption Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'adoption**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Community Resources and Employment.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Mr. Speaker, sometime one gets so moved by the speeches that it's hard to remember that you're next. So I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Adoption Amendment Act, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments are designed to ensure the best interests of the child in adoption planning and voluntary committal processes by addressing the rights of birth parents in a more equitable way. The amendments reflect a more inclusive approach to birth parents' involvement in planning for their child.

The definition has been broadened to include all biological fathers, regardless of their circumstances and relation to the birth mother. In fact, the birth mother and birth father definition are aligned together to reflect equity in being assessed as a birth parent. In other words, Mr. Speaker, the amendment represents a recognition of the rights of birth fathers in planning for their biological child.

Over the past few years many adult adoptees who have received post-adoption services have expressed significant frustration or hopelessness at their inability to access information about their paternal ancestry. Adult adoptees have been quite critical of any legal provisions that do not ensure both birth parents have equal opportunities to be involved in adoption planning.

Mr. Speaker, we will amend section 2 by amending the definition of birth father. This amendment will ensure the

protection of birth parents' rights and safeguard the interests of children.

Mr. Speaker, while this amendment will enable an adoptee to request a reunion with his or her birth father, it remains up to the birth father whether he wishes to proceed with the reunion because, as you know, in these situations there has to be consent by both parties who are interested. If the birth father does not wish to proceed, the adoptee will be advised, but no identifying information about the birth father will be given to the adoptee unless there's consent on both parties.

Mr. Speaker, another identified concern in adoption planning is the use of a form called the affidavit of birth mother. This involves the birth mother completing an affidavit sworn under oath declaring that there is no legal birth father as per the definition of birth father in The Adoption Act, 1998.

When it was introduced, it was thought that the affidavit of birth mother would be used rarely and only in exceptional situations. However, that has not been the case. The affidavit has been used far more often than anticipated and the department has concerns that it is being used by birth mothers to unacknowledge a birth father.

We will repeal section 4(3) of the Act to eliminate the use of the affidavit of birth mother. While the affidavit will no longer be used, birth parents will have options that provide for consent or dispensation and I will just briefly explain those options.

Consent is a process where birth parents freely provide written agreement to an adoption plan. They would do this after receiving the required counselling as set out in The Adoption Act, 1998 and its accompanying regulations. The counselling ensures both parents understand that they have 14 days to consider their decision and provide notice to the director if they wish to reverse their decision, known as revoking.

Dispensation is a process whereby the birth mother identifies the birth father but then presents reasons to not have him involved in the adoption process or planning for the child. Reasons would usually include such things as safety concerns, sexual assault, or stalling tactics related to the planning. The situation is then presented to a judge who weighs the information presented and ultimately makes a decision which takes into account the best interests of the child and the rights of the birth father to be involved. In some cases, the judge may allow the dispensation application to proceed without notice to the birth father based on the circumstances of the situation.

Mr. Speaker, the need for these amendments to The Adoption Act, 1998 became more apparent following the recent Supreme Court decision in the case of Trociuk versus British Columbia. In that case the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that to give a birth mother the absolute discretion to unacknowledge the birth father is a violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

(14:45)

Further, Mr. Speaker, we've added section 12 to ensure that adoptions finalized previous to this Act would not be legally challenged on the amendments to the definition of birth father.



This ensures certainty in adoption. It's important to ensure the balance of the rights of birth parents as well as the need for certainty in the adoption process.

In addition to the amendments noted above, Mr. Speaker, we'll make several housekeeping amendments including upgrading the provision addressing confidentiality to ensure the highest standard possible. This ensures clarity regarding preservation of records and information as well as authority to administer and provide services. Altering the definition of birth mother to reflect that definitions of both parents should be the same. The term three days was amended to read 72 hours to clarify that a full 72 hours must pass after a child is born before birth parents sign a consent, voluntary committal, or transfer of guardianship for adoption.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that adoptees have the right, to the extent possible, to know their ancestry both maternal and paternal. We also believe that birth fathers have the right to be involved in planning for their children irrespective of their relationship with the birth mother at the time of the child's birth.

These amendments represent a significant step forward in addressing these rights. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Adoption Amendment Act, 2004.

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

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Community Resources and Employment that Bill No. 25, The Adoption Amendment Act, 2004, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it is — it's an honour to be able to stand up and speak to this Bill. The minister just explained a number of significant changes that will be made in the Act to amend The Adoption Act, 1998, Bill No. 25.

And things that she had listed were altering affidavit requirements, amendments to the dispensation, and a number of other issues which allow sort of a shift or a protection of the rights of the birth parents, which I think is very important. There are a number of aspects that we will have to contact various stakeholders to have them take a look at it, see if these are changes that they want to see made, or if they can see some concerns in them because there is quite a list of changes.

But ultimately the first and foremost priority with any amendments being done to this Act has to be that we have to ensure the safety and the well-being of the children that are involved. It is important to protect the birth parents to allow them to have rights, as well as the adopting parents. But ultimately the people that don't have a lot of say in all this is the children and I'm sure the Minister would agree that the children are the number one priority.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is a number . . . You know we're going to need some time to talk to stakeholders and to get some feedback on what they think about this Bill.

The Minister mentioned that there is some frustration and hopelessness with the children related to their ability or inability in order to find their birth parents. And I would suggest to her that yes, probably there are a number of times — and I actually know personally — of cases where that has been a concern of children who have been adopted and the frustration in trying to find their birth parents later when they're older.

But what we do need to, as a government — both opposition and government — need to be concerned about the children, about their education, their safety, and their quality of life. And that perhaps is an area that the opposition feels that the government has failed in a number of areas of ensuring that there isn't frustration of those children and a hopelessness when it comes to their future ability to be able to reach their goals and dreams.

And that comes hand in hand quite honestly with the economy and the opportunities that are available to these children. We need to worry about the growth of the province and opportunities for these children and it is a great concern that we have such a high rate of children living in poverty, especially amongst the First Nations children.

There was an article that I read, it was in the Regina *Leader-Post* dated Monday, April 19, "Life is hard for the poor." And it is. And I'll quote, Mr. Speaker:

Thousands of Reginans enthusiastically embrace the slogan "I Love Regina", but for too many in this city it's a tough kind of love.

They're most likely aboriginal, or single-parent families or new immigrants living on low "incomes" — defined by Statistics Canada as less than 32,700 . . . for a household of two adults and two children. Many live on far less than that.

Citing data from the 2000 census, Statistics Canada says that while aboriginal people were only eight per cent of Regina's population at that time, they accounted for more than a quarter of the low-income families.

Hard as poverty is for adults, it is even tougher for the children whose future health and employment prospects can be permanently blighted by a poor start in life.

The subject generates scads of reports and research and lots of sympathetic nodding and lofty goals from (the) governments, but in the tough neighbourhoods of Regina and other cities across this province and country, little seems to change.

And we agree, Mr. Speaker, little does seem to change. We've seen little in the budget that's going to expand the economy; that's going to expand the education opportunities; that's going to expand the job opportunities for the young people in our province. And that, Mr. Speaker, needs to be addressed and needs to be addressed very, very quickly considering that we're losing our young people at an alarming rate.

So Mr. Speaker, as I'd mentioned earlier we need to examine this Bill a little more closely. We need to talk to stakeholders

involved that will be affected by this Bill. And so with that I adjourn debate.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Humboldt that debate on second reading of Bill No. 25 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. 26 — The Adoption Consequential Amendment Act, 2004**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for Community Resources and Employment.

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 26 arose out of changes to Bill 25, The Adoption Amendment Act, 2004. My speech to Bill No. 25 in effect details all of the changes. Therefore I move that Bill No. 26, The Adoption Consequential Amendment Act, 2004 be now read for a second time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister for Community Resources and Employment that Bill No. 26, The Adoption Consequential Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister mentioned, the changes in Bill No. 26 is as a result of Bill No. 25. So again, you know, we'll be looking at . . . or speaking with the same stakeholders with the two Bills together.

I just wanted to add to what I had said to Bill No. 25, Mr. Speaker. A comment that was made by the member from Batoche when he made his member's statement, and it occurred to me that he said that St. Brieux had the highest family and single person income per capita in Saskatchewan.

And I think that says volumes to what I had been saying earlier when I was speaking to Bill No. 25, of how the economy, a growing economy, is what we need to help our children. We cannot continue to have so many children living in poverty, Mr. Speaker. We need a province that's growing. We need an economy that's growing and that is of ultimate importance.

But, Mr. Speaker, we will need more time to take a look at Bill No. 26 along with 25 so, with that, I adjourn debate.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Humboldt that debate on Bill No. 26 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. 27 — The Political Contributions Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2004**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Deputy Government House Leader.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you. I rise today to move second reading of The Political Contributions Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2004.

Members of this Assembly will recall that effective January 1, 2001, our province introduced a political tax credit system similar to those already operating for a number of years in other provinces.

This legislation was introduced as a product of collaborative efforts of all of the parties represented in the Assembly at the time to ensure that there was a modern and equitable method for raising of necessary funds for the political process in our province. At the time, the contribution levels were chosen in part to reflect the levels that were in place nationally for the federal tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill before the Assembly today is intended to directly parallel recent changes which have been made to the federal tax credit system effective January 1, 2004. Accordingly, the Act is amended to provide that for contributions made after January 1, 2004, the provincial political contribution tax credit will be 75 per cent of the first \$400 contributed by any person and 50 per cent of the next \$350 contributed and thirty-three and a third per cent for the next \$525 contributed.

The maximum for this credit will be \$650 and it will be available when valid contributions have been made to a level of \$1,275. This change applies equally to individuals and to corporations.

Mr. Speaker, we invite all members of the Legislative Assembly to support this amendment to The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act so that the Saskatchewan system will remain parallel to the federal tax credit process.

I'm pleased to move second reading of An Act to Amend the Political Contributions Tax Credit Act.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Deputy Government House Leader that Bill No. 27, The Political Contributions Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

I recognize the member for Cannington.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today on this particular issue as it is an important issue for democracy and the practice of democracy in our province, that political parties no matter whom they are or their size or grandeur have the ability, Mr. Speaker, to raise the funds necessary to represent the people of Saskatchewan. It's necessary that these funds be raised in a manner that is fair and equitable to all parties, Mr. Speaker, no matter which side of the House they sit on, whether they sit in the House or do not sit in the House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to perhaps to go back and take a little look at the history of this particular issue. Up until 1998-99, there were two provinces in Canada that did not have any provincial legislation regarding political fundraising, those two provinces being Newfoundland and Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

In 1998-99, I just don't remember which year it was, the two . . . the three parties that were sitting in the House at the time, Mr. Speaker, the New Democrats, the Liberals, and the Saskatchewan Party, did work collaboratively in bringing forward proposals to this Assembly to provide for political contributions for the tax credits for funding for support from the government.

Okay, if you go back even further though, Mr. Speaker, this has been a long-standing means of fundraising at the federal level and in the other provinces. And the reason that the . . . that this developed, Mr. Speaker, was that some individuals, some political parties, had a very large ability to fundraise; others did not.

And there was a feeling at the time that there was a need to equalize this somewhat and that it simply shouldn't be a manner in which people could buy elections by being able to fundraise more than their opponent and to be able to advertise, to be able to travel around, and all of those things that are necessary to do, Mr. Speaker, during an election campaign.

What the politicians gained, Mr. Speaker, was some financial security. What they gave up though was that caps — limits — were placed on the amount of money that they could use during an election campaign. Further to that, there was limits put on what that funding could be used for. So there was a win and a loss, you might say. There were benefits accrued and opportunities given up, Mr. Speaker. And that was the rationale for the development of the political tax credit, Mr. Speaker, which we're talking about today.

(15:00)

Well in 1998-99 in the province of Saskatchewan, the parties came together, developed the political tax credit structures that were necessary to legislate and to implement that in this province. However this is not just a one-step process. The legislature had to go through the process of developing the Bills, it had to present them to the House to pass them and to proclaim them, Mr. Speaker.

But even there that wasn't the end of it. Because now you need to go and make adjustments to the Income Tax Act to allow those political tax credits to flow through from the contributor, through the tax system, and back to the contributor. And that happened, Mr. Speaker, in the year 2000 and then with proclamation came in . . . took place in the year 2001. The unfortunate part though, Mr. Speaker, was that while this particular Bill — or the Act, The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act — came in in either 1998 or early 1999, it wasn't proclaimed.

So the net result of which, Mr. Speaker, was that for the 1999 election, two of the three main political parties had an opportunity to access federal funds, because the monies were

funnelled from the provincial parties through their federal counterparts where they receive the tax credits, and then back to the campaigns of the various candidates, Mr. Speaker.

So two of the three parties, the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party, were able to access government money, federal government money, to support their election campaigns, whereas one party was handicapped in that particular election, Mr. Speaker, — the 1999 election — and that being the Saskatchewan Party, which had no federal counterpart through which they could funnel money.

So the net result of which was that the Saskatchewan Party during the 1999 election was handicapped in competing on the democratic stage, Mr. Speaker, because no taxpayer support was provided. The taxpayer support was provided to the New Democratic Party, it was provided to the Liberal Party, it was provided to the Green Party. It was provided, Mr. Speaker, to any political party that had a federal tie.

The Act that came in in 1998-99 allowed for provincial contributions to be tax credited, but because the Act was not proclaimed it had no weight. Because no adjustments had been made to the Income Tax Act it had no application, and therefore any contributor to any political party that had no federal representation or no federal counterpart was handicapped and excluded from any of the provincial tax dollars or federal tax dollars that might have been available.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you recall after that election there was serious concerns raised about this particular issue by the media in how that was an unfair process — how one political party had an advantage of using taxpayer dollars whereas another political party did not have that opportunity. And pressure through the media and the public was applied to the premier of the day, Mr. Romanow, and the changes were made that allowed this political tax credit to actually become a reality rather than simply a theory, Mr. Speaker.

So the net result of which was the Act was proclaimed. Changes were made by the member, I believe at the time of Saskatoon Massey Place as the Finance minister, and introduction of changes to the Income Tax Act occurred which allowed that provincial tax credit then to flow through for all political parties regardless of whether they had a federal representative or a federal branch.

In actual fact, Mr. Speaker, it actually becomes more representative in the fact that the contributions are made provincially, they stay here provincially, and they're used provincially. It's my understanding that most of the federal branches of the other political parties extracted some portion of the donation for their own purposes, for their administration fees, or for whatever reasons they took a portion of them off and returned to the provincial, their provincial wing, some portion of that contribution.

I know that there had been questions raised in Ottawa whether this was an appropriate means or appropriate measures that provincial bodies should be utilizing the federal tax credit system to benefit provincial politics and provincial parties not representative, not working on the federal stage, Mr. Speaker.

And I know that people were reluctant to enter into that area of debate in case it was decided that there was no right to access those federal funds in that manner. And I know that there was discussion that was taking place on the national stage that the Auditor General or that the chief electoral office for Canada was looking at those things and was considering making a ruling in the determination as to the viability or the legalities of even carrying that out.

So it became of interest, shall we say, to all of the political parties that there be a provincial tax credit structure in place.

And the political tax credit structure, Mr. Speaker, allows for individuals to participate more openly and to have their impact and their participation recognized in the political system. You know, most people think a \$100 donation is a large donation. And so if you simply take \$100 out of your pocket and contribute to a political party's campaign, it may be an impediment, it may be a hardship to your family.

But in recognizing that if you make that \$100 donation — either one lump sum or over a period of time within that year — and at the end of the day because of the tax credit structure the net result is that you've paid \$25, Mr. Speaker, and the political party of your choice has benefited by \$100 encourages democracy. It encourages the participation and the awareness of all of our citizens. And when our citizens are aware politically of what is happening and what's going on, we all benefit as citizens, Mr. Speaker. And we benefit actually as elected members or as members seeking to be elected because we have information and support from a larger community base than what we might otherwise have had, Mr. Speaker.

So the political tax credit system allows people to be more involved. It means that those of limited means have the ability to be involved as well, rather than just someone who can make a political contribution with really no impact to their own personal well-being. So it gives the individual who is on a fixed salary, or a person who is a farmer or any other individual in society, the ability to participate and to be a valued member, Mr. Speaker, of any political campaign. And I think that serves us well, Mr. Speaker.

This Act goes on, Mr. Speaker, now to bring us into line with the federal rules that apply to the provincial . . . to political tax credits. I'm not sure whether it brings us into line or what's happening in the other provinces, whether they are adjusting as well to align themselves with the rules that are set out by the federal government, but it would probably be worthwhile if everyone across the country was operating on the same rules, although certain provinces may argue that they have unusual or unique circumstances within their jurisdictions that they need some variance from that. But I think in general the public understands it better if everyone operates from basically the same set of rules.

As it is now, if you make political contributions at the federal level then your tax credit will be applied to your federal income tax. If you make a political contribution at the provincial level, then your tax credit will be applied at the provincial level. And so it allows you to participate even with different parties, Mr. Speaker. You may support one party federally and a different party provincially, Mr. Speaker, and there is absolutely nothing

wrong with that.

I know that some members of the government from Meadow Lake are concerned about that process. But that being the case, if that concern was real and true, there might have been a number of members from the CCF-NDP who would not have been elected in the P.A. area when George Diefenbaker was running for MP (Member of Parliament) there because people were voting obviously for the Progressive Conservative Party at the federal stage. And, Mr. Speaker, some of them were obviously voting for the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) or New Democratic Party because they were electing members there at the provincial stage.

So if you confined people to being supporters of only one political party, I would suggest under my analogy, Mr. Speaker, that the CCF-NDP might have been the loser in that particular case.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is a very important piece of legislation that contributes to the long-term benefits of democracy, Mr. Speaker. And we need to keep that in mind as we see apathy rise within the citizenry of Saskatchewan and across Canada and across North America, Mr. Speaker. We are down now to, I think, it was what in the last election, 63 or 64 per cent of the people actually came out; 63 or 64 per cent of the people who were enumerated, Mr. Speaker — I should correct that — who were enumerated actually came out and voted. And there was a good many people who, for whatever reason, Mr. Speaker, were either missed in the enumeration or chose not to be enumerated.

We need to have more participation in the political process, Mr. Speaker, rather than less participation. And if this kind of a Bill, Mr. Speaker, encourages people, provides people with the opportunity to participate, then I think we need to be encouraging that, Mr. Speaker. And I look forward to supporting this Bill as it passes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the one moved by the Deputy Government House Leader, the minister of Public Service Commission, that Bill No. 27, The Political Contributions Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The motion is carried.

**Clerk Assistant:** — Second reading of this Bill.

**The Speaker:** — To which committee should this Bill be referred? I recognize the Deputy Government House Leader.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you. I move that Bill No. 27, The Political Contributions Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Deputy Government House Leader that Bill No. 27, The Political Contributions Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The motion is carried. The Bill stands referred then to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**Bill No. 28 — The Public Employees Pension Plan  
Amendment Act, 2004**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Deputy House Leader.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2004.

The Public Employees Pension Plan was established in October of 1977. It is the defined contribution pension plan. Both employees and employers contribute to the plan and the members earn investment returns on those contributions. At retirement the member chooses an option for receiving the pension income. For example, the member could purchase a prescribed registered retirement investment fund or an annuity.

There are about 30,000 members making regular contributions to the Public Employees Pension Plan or PEPP. Another 15 . . . or 11,500 inactive members no longer contribute but have money invested in the plan. The total value of the pension fund at December 31, 2003 exceeded \$2.9 billion. It is the largest defined contribution pension plan in Canada based on asset size.

Mr. Speaker, in 2003 a review was conducted of the structure of the Public Employees Pension Board. The review was in no way a reflection on the board but was in keeping with the government's commitment to review the structure of pension boards. A review of this kind had not been initiated since the pension plan was established in 1977.

As a result of the review, the board was increased from seven members including the chairperson to eight members plus a chairperson. Board members will choose the chairperson. Board members will be chosen by employee and employer organizations and will be appointed for a term of four years. The new board structure will be effective on September 1, 2004.

The proposed amendments to The Public Employees Pension Plan Act will not only revise the structure of the Public Employees Pension Board, but they will also offer members the opportunity to purchase a Prescribed Registered Retirement Income Fund from the plan, provide members with the option of a lump sum payment should they become terminally ill, and this legislation will change the language of the Act where necessary to better reflect the investment income earned by

members.

(15:15)

As I said this Bill offers members the opportunity to purchase a PRRIF (Prescribed Registered Retirement Investment Fund) from the plan, and this enables members to keep their money in the plan after retirement. And, Mr. Speaker, offering members the option of a lump sum payment if they become terminally ill would be an essential and practical benefit at a critical time.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the return on investments members earn include capital gains and losses, dividends and interest, not simply interest. The language in The Public Employees Pension Plan Act should reflect that clearly, which is why we're proposing an amendment to do just that.

Mr. Speaker, we're looking out for the needs of the plan members. The amendments to The Public Employees Pension Plan Act will help the pension board meet the ever changing needs of its members and make the plan a bit more flexible.

Mr. Speaker, I hereby move second reading of The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2004.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Deputy Government House Leader, the Minister of the Public Service Commission, that Bill No. 28, The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Lloydminster.

**Mr. Wakefield:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's a pleasure to be able to respond to the second reading of this particular Bill. There's a . . . excuse me, there's a lot of information that is contained in the Bill . . . excuse me. And there's a lot of things that we should be exploring and trying to get a better understanding. And so that's why I welcome the opportunity to both make some comments and, I think as this Bill moves along, to be able to ask some of those kind of questions and try to get clarification on several of the issues that was brought up by the minister.

The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act as it's called has . . . it follows from several other pension plan legislation that we've talked about in the last several years in fact. The minister talked about this one, the board part of this, not being reviewed for a number of years, I think since 1977. And I guess that brings up a point that I think is quite important. When you're dealing with these kinds of plans, when you're dealing with the future of people and the plans that people are making for the future, it's very important to make sure that the situation is flexible enough to be able to give you the changes needed as things change in our lives and as conditions change. So the flexibility is very important, and I want to talk about that in a moment.

But when I thought about this particular amendment, I was trying to put myself into the position of a public employee which . . . As a matter of fact, in my earlier life I spent some of my time as a federal public employee. And one of the things that became very apparent is . . . when I was trying to think my

way through what would be appropriate and beneficial, I tried to compare it to what we would see in the private enterprise.

The people in the private enterprise, they have their own particular way of planning for their future when it comes to retirement. And I'm talking about self-employed. You have . . . they have to be able to plan. They have to be able to have the tools to do that. And they have to be able to have control of those plans so that they have a confidence and they have a comfort level that, into the future, they will be able to retire without being a burden and the plans that they're putting in place can be fulfilled.

When private enterprise tries to attract employees, they again use a pension plan as a benefit for employment. And that kind of a pension plan can be worked out through several different ways. And it's probably worked out to the benefit of both the employee and the employer so that in fact it becomes a real benefit, but also the employee can depend upon that in the future so that it becomes a very positive benefit. But again it's in the control of both the employer and the employee, and I think that's a very important aspect of any kind of a pension plan.

So when we're talking about public employees, again this is a benefit that is supplied to the employees in the public sector, and it really is a benefit. And it's something that we need to take particular care of because we in the legislature have in fact the responsibility to make sure that the plan is working, and it's working to the benefit of the employee so that they in turn can have the confidence that, in the future, their needs will be taken care of and their retirement is in place.

So that is an important aspect of what I see in this Bill — the ability to be able to do the things as the minister had described in making sure that there was proper controls. And it's flexible enough that, as times have changed, so that we can allocate the different kinds of interest or the different kinds of investment income in ways that will be a benefit.

The benefit as I see it is it allows the board and, therefore through them, the manager of the pension plan to be able to take this what is now called allocated interest, which is the flexibility part or the changing of the wording, from just straight interest. And they are able to then take the allocated interest and be able to respond to the changing needs of the employee. And that is an important aspect because it is now under the control, and continues to be under the control, of the board and the board's recommendations.

The change of the number of board members has increased, and I would like to explore the reasons for that at a future time. But I notice that the employers now have a three-member on the board — a combination of the Crown utility SaskPower, SaskTel, and SaskEnergy; another board member appointed by the SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, by SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), and by SLGA (Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority); another person appointed by Sask Crop Insurance, and a combination of Sask Crop Insurance, WBC, and the Cancer Foundation.

The other four members of the board now are going to be

appointed — one person from the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union), one from CEP (Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada), one from IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers), and one from CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees).

Now the change as I see there, the chairman is going to now be chosen by the board itself, and I think that's probably a very positive aspect because now the board are the ones that are taking more control of the pension fund and more control of how the funds are going to be allocated. And I think, as I mentioned earlier, that's a very positive thing.

In allocating the investment funds, that's the part that I was referring to earlier about making these plans change as the times change and making them more applicable as time moves along. And I think we need to do that as we look at all our plans and all of the parts of the institutions that we're in control so that we can make sure they're relevant and they are being delivered . . . the services are being delivered in appropriate way as the times change.

Having said that, it's very important I think for the people that are contributing to the pension plan to be able to have the confidence in what is happening to their investments on their behalf for the future. As you know, the whole idea of a pension plan is for in fact planning. You have to plan for your future, and here is one way which I talked about earlier as a benefit. Here's a benefit that can very much be part of what the planning is for an employee's future.

Now that planning for the future of course is going to be realized at retirement. So when we're looking at these plans, we have to make sure that . . . because we are the ones that approve the legislation, we have to make sure that we're comfortable in these plans having the predictability that people are counting on into their future. We have to make sure that these plans have the transparency so that each of the members have the understanding of the plan, and they then can make the choices necessary. And we have to make sure that the rules don't change as these plans unfold and more and more investments come into it. That's all part of the predictability that goes into long-term planning.

So we have to, when we do alter these plans through the amendments, we have to make sure that we're not trying to create a playing field that the public employees are not comfortable with or take away from the long-term planning aspect. But again they have to be flexible enough, so we can make the changes needed.

All of this of course, Mr. Speaker, gives the employees the confidence that their future is well in hand in terms of their pension. The confidence is a very important part, whether we're talking about investing in our province or in fact planning for our long-term future. You have to have the confidence that it's going to unfold as you think it will without any particular surprises. And as far as we can go to eliminate those surprises and make sure that the future unfolds as we've planned, that's the reason that we're trying to do the best job we can in a Bill such as this one.

That confidence is a very . . . it's a very elusive thing at times because you have to put yourself into the mind of a person who is about ready to retire and wants to count on those pension plans. If this person is thinking to himself that . . . is this pension plan going to do the job for me that I'm hoping it will in a situation like we have in this province where the population is shrinking? It is on a shrinking trend right now. Is this going to give me enough of a lever in the future to be able to compensate for the shrinking population because, as we've all noticed in this budget and in the last three, there's an increasing debt load in this province that is being placed on our citizens even . . . and at a higher rate because of a shrinking population.

So we have to make sure that that increase that we will expect or the increase of demand for higher taxes to make sure that the services are still being rendered . . . is that being compensated for in these plans? It's important to think your way through that in order to still have the confidence that the plan is doing what it is supposed to be doing.

So we have to think about . . . We also have to think about how this is going to relate not only to us but our immediate families as well because, as our family increase . . . as our family retires, both spouses and sometimes parents of these families all become pretty dependent on how these pension plans work and the source of funds from them. So that, I think, is an important part.

From what I see in my part of the country — and maybe it's a symptom right across the province, I suspect it is — that a lot of people are choosing, as they go into retirement, to move out of the province. And in fact, we lose a great asset as people are choosing to move either closer to their families because their families have chosen to pursue opportunities that aren't here — those opportunities are outside of our province — or the retirees themselves on this pension plan, the retirees are going to have to move outside the province for things like maybe a lesser tax rate or better services in those particular areas.

(15:30)

And I can assure the minister that the number of retirees in my community are moving to the other side of the border in the city of Lloydminster for those particular reasons, not because that they want to leave, they have to because of the difference in the cost of living.

And I think it's a really good opportunity to do an economic study of elders in our communities because as we are growing older, and I'm certainly included in that group, as we grow older we have to make those assessments as to what . . . where we can get the best return for the money that we have because our pensions are limited. So when we're talking about these pension plans we have to keep thinking about how we will all here want to be able to retire in a way that we are planning now and hopefully we can sustain that kind of a lifestyle that we're planning.

This retirement is a pretty critical time, and for those people that have retired and those people that are contemplating retirement are going to have to think very carefully about the consequences of that retirement. It's a terrific adjustment from an ongoing day-to-day workaday world into a lifestyle that for

the first time doesn't have the same restrictions on them.

And I have talked to several people that have moved into the retirement phase and in fact have quite a struggle adjusting to that new life, that new lifestyle. There's a lot of uncertainties that come along with retirement and that's why I think the employee pension plan amendments that we're talking about become very critical. Because those kinds of uncertainties are going to happen and that's why the pension plan is a very stabling or a concrete part of, I hope, what their plans will be for the future.

These uncertainties, you know, they're compounded daily by things like increasing utility rates that seem to be coming. Certainly the 1 per cent PST (provincial sales tax) is a . . . for people on a pension becomes a very major part of the problem that pensioners are going to be having in maintaining that same lifestyle. All of those uncertainties. Are they going to be able to afford the house or the housing that they're in? And if not, where will they find adequate housing without having to downgrade into something that they don't really want to move into but maybe be forced into?

Is the health care going to be available? We've all seen situations, we've heard about them in this legislature, where people are coming forward and saying there is some inadequacy here. And those kinds of things have to be addressed, and they have to be addressed pretty soon because the aging population is going to put a greater burden than ever on the health care system as we know it. So that's a major problem.

And also the extended care and moving into facilities that retired people will need in their future — extended care, assisted living, those kind of things. And those increasing costs are going to add a larger burden.

So let me go back to where I started, Mr. Speaker, and just again refresh the reasons why I think we have to pay close attention to an amendment — these particular amendments under The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act. We need to put the control in a board that the pension . . . the public employees have faith in. I think that's being done; it's being expanded. I'm not sure what the reason is there. I think it's being put . . . there's changes being made so that they should be able to adapt then to other than just interest being generated. There's other kinds of investment opportunities that the board I'm sure will direct.

All of those things are very important. And there's a lot of positives in this Bill, but there's a lot of things that I would like to explore, a lot of things that my colleagues would like to explore too because, like I said, we're all getting there and we want to make sure it's done right. So with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn the debate.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Lloydminster that debate on second reading of Bill No. 28 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. 29 — The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2004**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Deputy Government House Leader.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2004.

The Snowmobile Act administered by Saskatchewan Government Insurance is a document that outlines the laws regarding the operation of snowmobiles in Saskatchewan.

The first two proposed amendments I'd like to outline are designed to increase safety for snowmobile users by requiring them to take a snowmobile safety course. Snowmobiling is one of the province's most popular winter activities but it can result in serious injury if operators aren't riding safely.

A snowmobile safety course teaches riders how to prevent snowmobile collisions and gives them the know-how necessary for survival on Saskatchewan trails. The first amendment of this group requires all drivers born after January 1, 1989 to have completed a snowmobile safety course before operating a snowmobile off private property.

This allows the province to grandfather in training for all snowmobile users over a significant period of time and is a preferable alternative to imposing mandatory training for all operators regardless of age or experience.

The Saskatchewan Safety Council provides the snowmobile safety training for the province and is able to handle any increase in demand.

The second amendment that deals with safety courses permits individuals over the age of 16 who have taken the safety course but who do not hold a driver's licence to operate a snowmobile unsupervised. Currently individuals between the ages of 12 and 15 can operate a snowmobile only after taking a safety course and with the supervision of an experienced driver.

However the Act is silent with respect to individuals over age 16 without a driver's licence. This amendment will ensure these individuals can continue to enjoy snowmobiling in the province if they've taken a safety course.

The next proposed amendment I'd like to outline also enhances safety. The amendment requires that individuals holding a class 7 driver's licence, better known as a learner's licence, must be accompanied or supervised by an experienced driver when operating a snowmobile on public roads.

Again the emphasis is on safety while ensuring that individuals who need guidance while learning to drive have the same kind of guidance while operating a snowmobile on public roads.

The next amendment deals with changes to the snowmobiles trail system. Currently all changes to the trail system are supposed to be gazetted. This amendment changes the process to allow the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association to simply

issue a trail map once a year highlighting changes to the trail system.

This change is at the request of the Snowmobile Association and will greatly simplify the process for identifying changes to snowmobile trails. In addition the easing the workload of the Snowmobile Association, this change will also help law enforcement to be better able to enforce trail permits.

The next two amendments I'd like to discuss deal with clarifying requirements for snowmobile registrations in specific situations. Under The Snowmobile Act a snowmobile must be registered with SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) before it can be driven on roads, ditches, other highway rights-of-way, provincial parks, Crown lands, designated snowmobile trails, or on rivers and lakes. Registration is not required if the snowmobile is driven on privately owned land with the permission of the owner or tenant.

The first of these amendments simply clarifies that a snowmobile is not required to be registered if it's merely crossing the highway by the most direct route. This is housekeeping in nature and is consistent with the rules of the road set out in The Highway Traffic Act.

The second amendment that deals with snowmobile registration outlines an exemption for licensed trappers and commercial fishermen when the obligation to register a snowmobile within the northern administrative district. This exemption already exists in the November 10, 1994, Highway Traffic Board order but by including it in The Snowmobile Act it is more readily accessible to the general public. This ensures individuals in the northern administrative district are aware of this exemption.

This concludes the outline of proposed amendments found in The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2004. These amendments will enhance the safety of snowmobiling in Saskatchewan and help to clarify certain registration requirements.

So, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to Amend The Snowmobile Act.

**The Speaker:** — It has moved by the Deputy Government House Leader that the Bill No. 29 — The Snowmobile Amendment 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, it's a pleasure to stand in this Assembly to comment on the most recent piece of legislation that this government has come forward with, The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, every time we turn around it seems that this government wants to get into the hair of the people of Saskatchewan, and I don't say that lightly, Mr. Speaker. We all realize the problems that we see in regards to snowmobiling and how the number of tragic incidents it seems every year through careless use of snowmobiles. But it seems what this legislation is basically doing is penalizing everyone for the odd person who does not operate their snowmobile carefully and responsibly.



I think, Mr. Speaker, on many occasions if we'd look very carefully we'll find that there are numerous situations where there are accidents with snowmobiles that alcohol happens to have been a factor and a safety course certainly wouldn't address that.

Mr. Speaker, there's nothing wrong with safety courses, but I think there's a lot of importance in parents and even snowmobile associations just reinforcing responsible use of skidoos, when you go out skidooing with your family, how to operate a skidoo without the government having to come in and implement another rule and interfere in peoples' lives.

And I think, at the end of the day, what we find is, through licensing and required licensing, it's another cost that the taxpayers of Saskatchewan who enjoy snowmobiling are going to have to experience and put up at the end of the day to enjoy a pleasure that a lot of people continue to enjoy — thoroughly enjoy — in the province of Saskatchewan in view of the types of winters we have. And, Mr. Speaker, we have certainly seen in the Southeast . . . We've seen it in the central part of the province of Saskatchewan and we'll see it right through the Northwest . . . northern parts of the province as well.

However these past few years, Mr. Speaker, I think we found many, many people who have been thorough in . . . snowmobile enthusiasts have been somewhat discouraged with the costs of the sleds they have bought only to find that mother nature hasn't been all that supportive in providing the snow cover that is needed to thoroughly enjoy their snowmobiles.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I look at this piece of legislation and as I listen to the minister, what bothers me is the fact that we continue to see a government deciding that it knows what's best for everyone and suggesting that they have better ideas, without basically relying on the fact that parents and guardians have, through the years — and I know many parents who've taken their children, this basically has become a family affair — have been very careful in educating their children and themselves as to how to manage, how to handle a skidoo. And as they're travelling down the trails, how to use a skidoo for the pleasure and the enjoyment that it provides, as well as thinking of the other person who may be on the trail or may be out skidooing as a group of people and respecting the fact that we have a responsibility to watch out for the other person.

Mr. Speaker, across this province and in many cases now over the last few years, where you used to have trails locally that would maybe at the . . . a 32-mile run for example or a 20-mile run, whatever you wanted to go on for a day, we now have runs that actually go from one end of the province to the other. You can travel north, you can travel from the American border right up to Hudson Bay and up to the forest fringe on trails that have been groomed and continue to be groomed by snowmobile associations, and in each area of the province.

(15:45)

And each and every one of these associations takes the time, raises the required finances to groom those trails and to ensure those trails are well groomed — and not only well groomed, Mr. Speaker, but indeed well marked so that a person travelling on that trail would know exactly what's coming up.

They'll know that there's a municipal road or they'll know that there's a major highway coming up, and they have to pay attention to that. And they have to take the appropriate means of crossing those intersections safely and indeed being sure that they're observant, whether or not there's any traffic on the highway.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we . . . As we look at this piece of legislation, and while some would say well, it really doesn't mean a lot, I think at the end of the day what this piece of legislation will do, as we have seen in the past, it's just the start of how government gets involved in people's lives to a point that down the road there's more involvement. And what you begin to see is a crackdown in the use of recreational equipment such as, such as snowmobiles.

Now I'm not, Mr. Speaker, I'm not basically downgrading the fact that there shouldn't be some training, but does government have to regulate everything. Does it actually have to, have to basically set down rules and implement programs until the . . . to the extent that every time the general public goes out to do something or gets involved in some kind of recreational or leisurely activity, they have to check first of all to see whether or not they . . . there are new rules and guidelines, whether or not there are new regulations in place that they have to meet, they have to follow through on, before they can go out and enjoy the pleasure of skidooing across an open plain or an open lake or an open field or just down trails through our provincial parks or even just in many areas.

In our area there are some very, very . . . some excellent wilderness type of areas where our local skidoo clubs have placed trails. And I know that many people really enjoy getting out. And this is a . . . this for some people is a weekend activity. For some it's an afternoon activity. It may be a Sunday afternoon. They just get the family together and they go out skidooing on the trails.

And, Mr. Speaker, we all agree with the fact that we need to really reinforce safety procedures. But does the government have to implement legislation to enforce these types of safety . . . or are there ways that our snowmobile associations already are indeed meeting many of the requirements that this piece of legislation is actually bringing into law, rather than just common sense and recognition of the responsibilities that people have when they get out on a snowmobile.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all realize that over the past number of years, and in fact I think even going back some 30 years ago when we really saw snowmobiles starting to come on the market, the skidoos that were on the market at that time certainly didn't have the capabilities they have today. And I remember riding a few. I'm not a real strong skidoo enthusiast. I've enjoyed riding a skidoo, but I remember some of the earlier ones. And I'll tell you, you couldn't really open them up very well because their suspensions were fairly firm, and there was a pretty rough ride when you were cruising across a field or whatever and it jarred your body pretty good.

But you get to the machines on the . . . that are available today, they're very, very well-built machines. In fact as you're driving down along the highway and you see somebody in a field beside you or even in a ditch beside you, it's amazing, it's

amazing, Mr. Speaker, the speeds that can be attained and how these riders can ride these skidoos and enjoy the ride and not be jarred off of the skidoo — simply because of the types of suspensions.

So there's no doubt that we need to reinforce the importance even more so today of safety requirements. And in fact, the fact that the responsibility of individuals to ensure that whether it's an adult or a teenager or a child is on a skidoo that they recognize that when they get on that skidoo to drive that skidoo, that that machine has the capability of doing a lot of things. And in some cases if it's not handled wisely and with respect can certainly create some very difficult situations for a person as well, and especially a young person who may not be able to handle that type of machine. But I know that many parents have worked hard to train their young people and teach them how to respect skidoos as they enjoy the winter sport of skidooning.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing too as I look at this piece of legislation and one of the concerns I have . . . We talk about how we use them on private property. And in rural Saskatchewan as we see acreages get larger and as individuals, while they may have the ability of skidooning on private property without having to license a skidoo, the facts are very few people now can enjoy all of the private property they own without having to cross some public property to just get onto other areas of their own land.

And the problem I have, Mr. Deputy . . . Mr. Speaker, is the fact that as we see . . . And I had a couple of situations arise last year where young farmers in the area just picked a small motorbike that they could carry on their equipment, that was handy to carry on the equipment, so that as they move from one spot to the next they could go back to pick up their truck, and yet because they were just driving — and it was only about a half a mile up the road — the only access was the highway; you get pulled over because you don't have a licence on your bike and all you're using it for is just that little bit to get from point A to point B.

But because of the new guidelines and regulations — and that's one of the concerns I have in the way government implement regulations — it penalizes everyone, even the person who's just trying to get from one point to the other without having to have someone always available to give them a call on the phone and come and pick them up as they go to pick up another piece of equipment, which means it disrupts that other family member's life if they're into some work in the yard or whatever, that they have to put that aside to go and help out the person who happens to be operating the equipment.

And the same thing with skidoos. Why do we have to license just to go across the road? Like I mean, there's no common sense whatsoever. It seems to me that you should be able to move if you're on your private property. And we heard the members earlier talking about private initiative, well let's allow a little bit of common sense to work within the province of Saskatchewan in regards to how we implement regulations, in regards to legislation and how we get into the faces of men and women and boys and girls across the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there are certainly a number of issues that we need to look at very carefully as to what this Bill entails. As I

indicated earlier, and I believe the minister mentioned the fact about proper, proper signage, I'm not exactly sure where this is going regarding the signage issue because of what I observe locally in what local skidoo clubs have done on all of their trails, is their signage is very . . . is excellent. They've got signage that indicates that there's a curve up ahead; they have signage that indicates that there's a T in the trail and you better be prepared for it; there's excellent stop signs at every, every crossroad. Our local organizations have done an excellent job in ensuring the trails are well marked and well groomed for those who enjoy the winter sport of skidooning.

The enthusiasm of getting out as a family and just enjoying . . . opening up, if you will, out in the open, fresh air — I might add, very fresh air on some occasions — but just the enjoyment of sailing along a country . . . through a field or whatever, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe we would like to take a closer look at exactly where the government is going in regards to regulations that they have for . . . in this piece of legislation, and therefore I move to adjourn debate.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Moosomin that debate on second reading of Bill No. 29 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The motion is carried.

Debate adjourned.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 3

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen that **Bill No. 3 — The Certified Management Consultants Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad I'm here to speak on this Bill No. 3 today . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm glad that the Government Whip is glad we're here after we had some confusion about what was . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And I am glad that the member from Moose Jaw North is happy to hear the oratory about to come forth on the certified management accountants Act. And I have a brief summary here, but I can promise all member of the House that I will not skimp on the details so that all can be enlightened to the true nature of the Bill and the attention that it merits.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, authorizes the institute of certified management accountants to grant certificates to members that have met the educational and professional requirements of the institute. And this is a very good move because in essence what this is doing, Mr. Speaker, is allowing the people in the industry

to understand their own standards and to set those standards free from indiscriminate government standards.

It makes sense that, because of the technical nature of some of the work that they are involved in, that they be responsible for the testing, that they be responsible for the level of professionalism that they think that their profession should contain.

And the best way to do that is to have them, the individual members from this specific group, write their own regulations and follow their own regulations so that they can find if members should or should not be members relative to the test that they have put forth.

One of the things that this piece of legislation does, Mr. Speaker, it removes the criteria for admissions to bylaws rather than legislation. And future changes in requirements will not require legislative approval, only ministerial approval.

On the larger philosophical issue of this, it sometimes raises issues and concerns for the opposition to think more and more things are going to be moved into a regulatory system where only the minister has a say — after all, the Legislative Assembly speaks for the people of the province of Saskatchewan and there are a number of Acts governing a whole plethora of issues. And when the regulations around those Acts — so that they can perform the function of government or the function of the laws which they're set out to be the regulations of — no longer come before the House there are worries about that, Mr. Speaker.

And the worries specifically could be that, first of all, the elected representatives aren't having their full say, aren't being able to represent their constituents if they have a certain issue, that it could be a situation where only the minister has that say. And that could prove problematic in a situation where . . . very difficult for certain parties to make their case to the minister where they may have a different philosophical out view . . . outlook on life. They may disagree with the general direction that the minister and the government are moving in and that may affect the regulations per se. So it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we have the right as elected representatives to speak on Acts, to speak on regulations, and it does cause some concern when regulations are moved into regulations from being only legislation.

On this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, we have spoken with the certified management consultants, and by and large they are pleased with this Bill, and they have in fact put a great deal of work into it. And certified management consultants, obviously what they deal with is business, they deal with tax planning, accounting, this sort of thing. And as a generalization they tend to be detailed people that are very quick to note irregularities and whatnot. And I'm sure that that helps them in their ability to conduct audits and whatnot, so it's not surprising that the persons working in this type of field would have those attributes.

And with that being said, we know that they have very thoroughly looked over the changes to the legislation that have been brought forth. And they have told our party, Mr. Speaker, that by and large they're happy with this particular legislation.

(16:00)

As I've said before, Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns that we have around it is with regards to the regulations being moved out from legislation and just only being in the future determined by ministerial approval. And as I said, Mr. Speaker, there's problems, there could be problems in the future where approaching . . . interested parties approaching or members of the public at large may have problems getting into a situation to be able to have the minister see their point of view — even to see the minister to be able to lobby. It limits the ability if you have multiple, multiple directions that individuals would like to see or organizations would like to see go on a regulatory matter if there's only one point for that.

And I can see that I've got your attention again, Mr. Speaker, that when I've said we have in general no objections being brought forward regarding The Certified Management Consultants Act here because they have been part of this consultative process. And we would hope that in the future this would also be the case and that the move of regulations away from legislation will allow the same type of access as was put forth in the drafting of this Bill.

This Bill actually complements a Bill first passed by the legislature in 1998. And that Bill however, Mr. Speaker, has . . . that Bill has remained unproclaimed while the bylaws for the professional association have been developed. And that in itself has been a good process because there was no point in having legislation go forth if it was incomplete about how it would actually affect this industry and the institute of certified management accountants in particular.

So it's been a good thing that the Bill has not been proclaimed so that this further work could get done. However what is somewhat alarming, Mr. Speaker, is that the Bill first being passed back in 1998, and it currently being 2004, that's six years. And most of the certified management consultants and/or accountants that I've worked with don't seem to have that kind of time lag where six years is a normal process for completing a set of bylaws.

So that does raise a number of concerns. Why hasn't . . . Why has it taken six years for these bylaws to come into effect, and then in turn to allow the institute of certified management accountants' Act to come into effect? Why couldn't this have been done in a more timely matter and the legislation of 1998 been proclaimed?

It is worrisome that there are a number of unproclaimed Bills which exist sitting on the statutes. And it calls into question fundamental principles of democracy if individuals are taking forth in participating in the democratic process and electing representatives to speak on their behalf on legislation and/or on regulations.

But on legislation and collectively, as members of this House, we debate legislation. We put forth amendments and, at the end, we proclaim this legislation and then it sits on the books and does nothing.

I would go as far to say, Mr. Speaker, it raises real concerns about the process of us governing laws and having represented

... elected representatives rather, Mr. Speaker, come forth, put laws forth and then having them never be proclaimed into active law. That is worrisome. And I believe, at the end of the day, it can cause a situation where you have erosion in the confidence of government. And I mean government in the bipartisan sense, in the process of our government and its ability to pragmatically solve problems.

And as we have been seeing in Saskatchewan over the last number of general elections and in by-elections, we've had lower participation rates. It continues to be a trend throughout our whole country and we have to ask whether or not having situations where you have legislation that people think is going to make a difference remains unproclaimed accounts for some of the lack of participatory democracy.

I believe in the democratic process, Mr. Speaker. And also that, by and large, the larger participation level that you have, the better pragmatic outcome that you get because you have a larger number of individuals concerned with the laws that govern their country and their province and their participation in that. Usually, two heads is better than one and multiple is usually better than a single direction.

Which brings us back to a situation regarding the real concerns we have around the certified management accountants Act, really has to do with the movement of regulations ... movement of legislation into regulation governing this body. And I've elaborated for some time, much to the vast attention of my colleagues, about the need for legislation to be able to stay for ... so that it can be discussed.

And I know that ... I can see in the Chamber, Mr. Speaker, it can be discussed in a meaningful way that members can participate in the debate as we can see is happening at this moment, Mr. Speaker, where people are paying attention to the arguments being made about legislation with regards to the certified management accountants Act. And we see the healthy work of democracy right before us, Mr. Speaker.

It's an awfully long time with regards to the Bill which was passed in 1998 to be waiting — six years. And again it is a concern when a Bill does have to wait this long.

As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, in this case there seems to be a good reason that the ... and this is that the bylaws were under development. But developing bylaws for six years should definitely not have taken anyone having to draft the legislation that long. It really raises some concerns about the nature of this important work and why it would take that long to have it go forth. Six years ... I can see I've got the member for Saskatoon Sutherland absolutely enthralled with the details of the case before us and the certified management accountants Act.

The Bill here is necessary to get the bylaws in place and get the self-governing body up. And if there's one thing that this side of the House believes in, it is on having industry and industry-related parties specific to their industry bringing forth their own rules and guidelines for how they want their industry to function.

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, I believe that gets right down into a question of who knows best. Does the government

know best, or do the professionals working in a particular industry know best, Mr. Speaker? And our side of the House would undoubtedly believe time after time that it is the members in a particular industry that are best left to chart their own destiny.

And as a government, as their government, it's our duty to aid them in this. And we see in this particular Bill that ... (inaudible interjection) ... I hear the Government House Leader calling me on, so I'll have to repeat some of the stuff that I've said further, Mr. Speaker. And I sadly have to go back to the top.

We've spoken with the certified management consultants, and they're in general pleased with this Bill. And in fact they've put a great deal of work into it, Mr. Speaker. I would apologize to the Government House Leader that he missed this point prior, and going through it I hope I'll be able to render it palatable to his ears, if that's possible.

We have no objections, as I've said, brought forward regarding this legislation. What we do have a problem with is the fact that there was a previous Bill that passed in this legislature in 1998 that dealt with a lot of the same concerns here and while the legislators debated this fact, the Bill became ... after passing has remained unproclaimed.

I stated before, Mr. Speaker, that there was good reason for the proclamation of this particular Bill being delayed while there was the development process for the bylaws by the professional association. However the concern definitely exists that six years to develop bylaws is somewhat taxing, even for accountants.

Mr. Speaker, I would, at this point, having enthralled the House on a number of occasions, getting a great rise from the Government House Leader, I would move that we now let this Bill go to committee.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 3, The Certified Management Consultants Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — Second reading of this Bill.

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 3, The Certified Management Consultants Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance

that Bill No. 4 . . . Bill No. 3, The Certified Management Consultants Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to 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. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I would ask for leave to just deal with a procedural motion regarding the referral of a Bill to the appropriate committee.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Finance requests leave to make a certain procedural motion. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

## MOTIONS

### Referral of Bill No. 27 to Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That Bill No. 27, The Political Contributions Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2004 be withdrawn from the Standing Committee on Human Services and referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

I move, seconded by the member from Melfort.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Regina Douglas Park, seconded by the member from Melfort by leave:

That Bill No. 27, The Political Contributions Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2004 be withdrawn from the Standing Committee on Human Services and referred to 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.

Motion agreed to and the Bill referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

### Bill No. 4

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen that **Bill No. 4 — The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few comments regarding the Bill No. 4 before us this afternoon, the municipal employees' pension plan Act, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, as many of my colleagues have already indicated, when it comes to people all across this province and certainly as people get to the age of looking forward to retirement, one of the most important features is that through the period of time that a person's been working that they've had ample opportunity to contribute to a pension plan. That they can look forward to having actually done very well and know that when they retire there will be finances available in that plan so that they can enjoy a quality of retirement that gives them an opportunity to . . . in many cases as we're seeing younger people reaching that time of retirement, of being able to enjoy a lot of more leisure time, as well as still having the opportunity of involving themselves in many activities.

And what I find, Mr. Speaker, many people who donate their time to community endeavours, to charitable endeavours as they reach out to help, and in many cases those least fortunate amongst them.

And so it's important, Mr. Speaker, that the pension plans that people are, are paying into are certainly meeting the needs and are building or allowing those individuals to build for their futures while at the same time not impacting the associations that may have to implement the plans or else contribute . . . make equal contributions to.

And especially associations like our local municipalities and school boards who find after contractual agreements have been settled that . . . and they begin to honour those new contracts with their employees, that the cost sharing of a lot of the programs coming from provincial governments doesn't happen to be available. And municipal governments and boards of education find themselves having to look to the property owner to meet the needs of those contracts.

(16:15)

And part of the contract is recognizing the ability and the . . . recognizing the pension plans and ensuring that these employees are able to make their contributions, and that these contributions are indeed working to meet the needs of those employees in the future as they retire from their place of employment.

Mr. Speaker, what we've seen over the past number of years, we have seen local governments and local school boards indeed suffering as a result of decisions made by this government. And, Mr. Speaker, when I talk about decisions made by this government, we have heard for the last 12 years this

government has lamented the fact that the federal government has shirked its responsibility in many cases — whether it's through equalization, whether it's through funding of health care, or whether it's through funding for education.

This government has continued to point the finger at the federal government and its off-load as the federal government, under the new Prime Minister — the then Finance minister — bragged about how well he had worked at balancing the budget by . . . while at the same time, all he had done in many cases, was off-loaded his responsibilities onto provincial governments who in turn turned around and off-loaded those responsibilities onto local governments who had no other alternative but to look to their property owners and to their ratepayers.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we look at the Municipal Employees' Pension Plan, it's important for us to realize that the employees who have been contributing to this plan have been contributing on . . . in goodwill, appreciating the fact that their employer will indeed meet their commitments to honour their portion of their contributions to the pension plan.

And unfortunately in many cases these employers have been forced to work harder and harder to ensure that they honour their portion of all the contractual agreements with their employees, to ensure that their employees are treated fairly and equitably. And that's one of the things that this piece of legislation talks about. This piece of legislation talks about ensuring that part-time and full-time employees are treated equitably with respect to credit for time worked.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that's laudable. I believe it's certainly important that each employee be treated fairly, that their time of employment be recognized equitably, and that equal opportunity be made, and the equal payments be placed into the pension plan on their behalf.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will all know that if you're working part-time, it means that you won't have these same abilities as you would as a full-time employee to contribute to the same extent into a pension plan. However the recognition that even as a part-time employee you can contribute to a pension plan is certainly important. And it's important that we recognize that as part-time employees that you are able, through the process of time, to build up and add to a pension plan for yourself, looking forward to retirement opportunity as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Finance just asked about Air Canada. And I think right now the Minister of Finance is really glad that he isn't responsible for that company and its potential problems with its pension plan.

However this Minister of Finance has the responsibility for another pension plan, and it's called the defined pension plan in the province of Saskatchewan. And this Minister of Finance will know that since 1991 the defined pension plan in the province of Saskatchewan under this government's tutorship, has actually grown by another, I believe it's 1.2 or almost \$1.4 billion over the last 12 years, which means the plan has fallen behind.

And I note as I look at the comments by the minister. The minister made his comments in his opening speech regarding

this piece of legislation, that the spousal beneficiary, or the opportunity of a spouse to purchase annuities from the Municipal Employees' Pension Plan with their spouse's plan, has now been removed. And the Minister of Finance said that the reason it's been removed is because of the fact that the government wants to ensure that at least the integrity of the defined pension plan is certainly intact. And we all agree with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

While we have two pension plans in the province of Saskatchewan, an unfunded pension liability which is growing in the province of Saskatchewan, and as a result of that unfunded pension liability, the government a number of years ago came up with a defined pension plan which ensures that that pension plan continues to grow and that the funds are available in that plan for the employees who have contributed towards that plan.

And the minister is right in suggesting that maybe it's appropriate that if an employee passes away, that their spouse has access to the benefits that are still accumulated in the plan on that person's behalf, but that the spouse have the opportunity then of accessing — while it's a limited amount depending on the amount that continues to be in the pension plan under the Canada Income Tax Act — the spouse has the ability as well to access the rest of the pension plan funds and put them into a RIF or a retirement income fund or some other type of registered retirement fund rather than purchasing an annuity through the Municipal Employees' Pension Plan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Municipal Employees' Pension Plan has been something that employees in my area have talked about. They've been asking about whether or not this plan is going to continue to meet their needs and this . . . Earlier today or this afternoon we actually had another pension plan that is talking about honouring the COLA agreements and recognizing the fact that a number of retired pension earners have fallen behind because they didn't have COLA agreements in their pension plans when they were . . . it was indicated that those would actually be moved ahead in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, as we . . . Deputy Speaker, as we look at this piece of legislation, as we look at municipal employees and their pension plan there's no doubt that each and every one of us recognize the need to ensure that we honour and that we respect and these pension plans grow, have the ability to grow, and employees have the knowledge that as they reach that time of retirement that there will actually be plans . . . funds in the pension plan to honour the commitment to that employee.

Mr. Speaker, while we talk about the undefined pension plan that is . . . continues to grow in the province of Saskatchewan — and I know the teachers across this province happen to be the hardest hit by that undefined pension liability — it's important for us to note, I think the comment has been made, that down the road governments are going to have to honour that. And we will, we will honour it. I believe that's been a comment that has been made, that governments will honour those, those unfunded liabilities.

However the facts are for the government of the day, whoever happens to be in sitting as government, whichever party, political party happens to be sitting as government as more and

more of these pensioners retire and have to begin to withdraw under this unfunded pension liability, it's going to be another tax burden on the people of Saskatchewan as governments have to then look at where they go to find the dollars to put them into that unfunded pension liability so that indeed employees are not shortchanged.

And I trust that what this piece of legislation is doing is ensuring that the employees that are paying into this pension plan today are willing . . . are assured of the fact that this pension plan will be there, that the funds are available to meet the needs of those employees, and that the taxpayers are not left on the hook because this pension plan has not been managed well.

And those are some of the areas, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we certainly have to take note of. We have to be very careful that these pension plans are managed well. We need to be . . . ensure employees that these pension plans are and the funds that they are putting in these pension plans are indeed working on their behalf. And as we've seen over the past couple of years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've noticed that pension plans have not — especially pension plans that have . . . are now investment opportunities, the investment opportunities over the last couple of years haven't worked all that well. And so we've been watching very carefully with some of these defined pension plans at how well they've been working.

And I think we can certainly credit the work of the public pension plan opportunities and the individuals responsible, for how well they have managed in some very difficult economic times. Whereas a number of people have seen significant losses in their investment opportunities and what they've been setting aside for retirement, I note that the people managing our public pension funds have been doing a fairly decent job of ensuring that those investments have not been losing ground. While they may not have gained a lot of ground, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they certainly have been holding their own. And as the economy begins to improve and investment opportunities improve, those defined pension plans will continue to grow and that's exactly what municipal employees are looking for.

They're looking for, number one, the fact that as they . . . for every day they're working, whether full-time or part-time, that the contributions they're making and those matched by their employer are going to be invested wisely and that when they come to that point of retirement that they will know that those funds are available for them. And not only are they available to the employee, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but should something happen that their spouse and family will also have the ability of having access to those pension funds which they have put aside — which they worked so diligently for, worked so hard and deliberately — put those pension funds aside to take care of not only of themselves to provide for themselves, but to provide for their families should something unfortunate happen and they find that their lives have been cut short, knowing that those pension funds will indeed go to their spouse and beneficiaries.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot of the information in this piece of legislation is fairly technical in nature and we certainly do not have any problems with it. We're more than prepared to move ahead as we debate this piece of legislation. I believe as the critic responsible indicated as well, there are a few things that

we feel that as we begin to debate this piece of legislation that we could certainly get more concrete answers and clarification on a number of the clauses in this Bill as we would move to committee. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, we're more than prepared to allow this Bill, Bill No. 4, the municipal employees' pension plan Act, 2004 to move forward into committee. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the minister that Bill No. 4, The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That is carried.

**Clerk Assistant (Committees):** — Second reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 4, The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 4, The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2004 be now referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That is carried. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

### Bill No. 5

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen that **Bill No. 5 — The Saskatchewan Pension Annuity Fund Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to stand today and speak on behalf of, on behalf of constituents of Saskatchewan.

But on Bill 5, the Saskatchewan pension plan annuity fund amendment Act, in brief, Mr. Speaker, this establishes a separate board to administer the annuity fund from . . . separate from the Public Employees Pension Plan. And the changes being made here are very technical in nature. It does establish a new board to administer this annuity fund, and we really . . . To understand the technical nature would require expert witness and whatnot so that we'll have a number of questions we'll be

posing to this.

Any time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you're dealing with pension legislation, you have to be extremely careful because of the individuals that it affects. And that being said, this is specifically the seniors, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Seniors often rely on pensions; they often have fixed incomes. And any change to those pensions can be critical to the lifestyle that they're leading and their abilities to remain independent, free, and enjoy the retirements that are due them due to the years of service that they've given their country and communities.

Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, seniors have not always fared very well under this government. For example, we saw the senior care home fees hiked two years ago. And as I recall it was the right thing to do, which is what the member from Regina Qu'Appelle was apt to tell us. It wasn't the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker, and we're glad that the government heeded the opposition's advice and reversed their decision on this.

(16:30)

It would have been a travesty to have senior citizens, to have senior citizens with fixed incomes have their fees go up for the homes in which they have to live in. And with many seniors being on multiple medications and many of these medications being quite expensive, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not surprising that it inflicted a great deal of concern and fear into a large sector of our senior citizens who were very glad that they contacted us and that we were able to persuade the government to reverse its decision on the care home fee hikes of two years ago.

It would be a good thing in the spirit of co-operation in the future, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the government were to take the opposition's advice more readily and to heart, and perhaps we wouldn't be in the budget troubles that we're in today. And perhaps we would have a plan for the future — a plan rather than just the complete stagnation of the province of Saskatchewan, where we really don't see any light at the end of the tunnel, where we really can't see the changes.

And these changes actually directly reflect to the pension plan annuity amendment Act because the pension plan . . . All pensions obviously are derived from investments put forth — savings for retirement, in essence. But the economy in general is responsible for the growth of those savings. And if we have an economy which is not going in the right direction, if we have an economy which is not growing, if we have an economy which doesn't offer light at the end of the tunnel and isn't increasing our population, it leaves fewer and fewer people to be paying into the pension funds in the future.

And because of the demographics in our particular province, we have more and more seniors which would be drawing on these, and it raises the question, would these pensions be adequate? And the necessity of having adequate pensions I've already outlined briefly, Mr. Deputy Speaker; it is absolutely crucial that persons that have worked for their entire lives, or their spouses, deserve the dignity to be able to retire and live a lifestyle which is comfortable and afford the medications which they can afford and not have their hike . . . not have the staples removed from them.

We see also . . . You know it's very tragic. Just recently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the current budget, the PST was raised by 1 per cent, and this is one of the things that it does hit — seniors on fixed incomes and those incomes coming from pensions. It hits them hard because there's no recovery for that for them.

They're only in a situation where . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I hear the member from Moose Jaw agrees with me on the relative nature of the PST fee increase from 7 to 8 per cent on . . . its effect on seniors and how pensions have . . . being related to seniors of fixed income coming from pensions that there's no recovery for them. There's no bottom line. It's just the 1 per cent higher that they have to pay . . . and the importance of pensions in general, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be able to meet inflationary targets, to be able to meet the needs in the future, the demographic spreads which may increase.

And we have heard from a number of seniors upset with the current government's position in the current budget on increasing the PST because it is seniors that are disproportionately hurt and targeted by this and seniors on fixed incomes which are on pensions.

We also see now the current government is considering bed closures. Again this is an issue that hits on senior citizens, seniors that are linked to pension plans that are on fixed incomes. And there's not enough beds in the province now. There are shortages. There are waiting lists, as has been brought up by the member from Arm River-Watrous. There's possibly plans to close facilities where there's waiting lists, and all the current beds are full.

And this is what unfortunately people have come to expect from this NDP government. And sadly, moves like this, they do hurt the most vulnerable in society. They hurt persons without voices, and it is greatly disturbing that this could be the priority of the current government when only a few months ago it said completely the opposite.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a situation with regards to the technical side of the pension plan annuity amendment Act coming forth. I can see from the legislation that's been put forth in the Bill, section 2.1:

**4 The following section is added after section 2:**

**“Saskatchewan Pension Annuity Fund Board established**

**2.1(1)** The Saskatchewan Pension Annuity Fund Board is established.

. . . The board consists of three members appointed by the minister. (And)

. . . The minister shall designate one of the members of the board as chairperson.

I can hear that once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that members of the House are enthralled by the discussion around Bill No. 5, and I share their enthusiasm on it as it is necessary that these changes come forth. Any time we're dealing with pensions, it is extremely important that we listen, that we're careful and



scrutinize the particular legislation so that the persons whom it affects — pension drawers, senior citizens — are not affected adversely.

And had we been able to . . . It's a great thing today to be able to participate in this debate because we have seen in the last number of months, with the closure of hospital beds to come, that the senior citizens are not a priority of this NDP government. And that's even more reason to be watching on the technical questions with regards to amending the pension plan annuity Act. Without having pensions in firm fold, without being able to rely on their incomes, without being able to rely on those incomes, seniors who have worked their entire lives in some case . . .

I think that the member from Moose Jaw is once more enthralled in the debate. We've seen . . . We have to admire the member from Moose Jaw and his interest in the pensions annuity Act.

And for the member's well-being, I don't have any problem continuing on in looking at the Act and specifically, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on page 2 of the:

#### Transitional

5(1) In this section:

- (a) “**former board**” means the Public Employees Pension Board continued by section 3 of *The Public Employees Pension Plan Act*;
- (b) “**fund**” means the Saskatchewan Pension Annuity Fund; (and)
- (c) “**new board**” means the Saskatchewan Pension Annuity Fund Board established by section 2.1 of *The Saskatchewan Pension Annuity Fund Act*.

(2) On the transfer of the administration of the fund to the new board:

. . . the new board is the trustee of the fund . . .

And that seems to make good sense, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If there's one piece in this particular document it has to be that, point (b) .

- (c) all of the powers and responsibilities of the board set out in *The Saskatchewan Pension Annuity Fund Act* are vested in the new board . . .

That also seems to follow as does:

(d) every contract or agreement entered into by . . .

. . . decision of the former board pursuant to section 4 of *The Saskatchewan Pension Annuity Fund Act* is deemed for all purpose to be a determination or decision of the new board.

Well we're glad that new decisions will be made by the new board and that former decisions will be made by the former

board. And it's really good that we've got a situation where, Mr. Speaker, our timelines are at least consistent with those that exist in the natural universe.

Mr. Speaker, on that note, having brought the attention of members opposite, I believe that we've not heard any major objections to this piece of legislation. And therefore, it can probably be best dealt with in committee where the minister and his officials can answer our technical questions.

Thank you for your attention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and for my colleagues in this House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the minister that Bill No. 5, The Saskatchewan Pension Annuity Fund Amendment Act, 2004, be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That is carried.

**Clerk Assistant (Committees):** — Second reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 5, The Saskatchewan Pension Annuity Fund Amendment Act, 2004, be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 5, The Saskatchewan Pension Annuity Fund Amendment Act, 2004, be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

#### Bill No. 6

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen that **Bill No. 6 — The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

**Mr. Chisholm:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wish to speak to Bill No. 6, An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act.

My understanding of this Bill is that it contains provisions to tidy up, if you will, The Superannuation Act. These changes affect pension plans of the Liquor Board, the Power

Corporation, Workers' Compensation pension plan, Public Service pension plan, and the Saskatchewan Transportation plan.

The minister stated in his statement that these changes will not have any impact on the General Revenue Fund. And we will be asking the minister to make that clear again in committees.

We will also be requesting additional information on the impact of these changes, not only on the General Revenue Fund, but as well on the government organizations and Crown corporations that these changes have a direct impact on.

It is essential that we honour the plans that have been agreed to over the years with our public service. For many of those who are receiving, or about to begin receiving their pensions, this is a difficult time. The so-called golden years are looking a little more tarnished than they have been or than we would have hoped they may have been. That is why it is important that we honour the things that we have promised our seniors, including, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the pensions and superannuation plans.

The tarnishing of the golden years has been as a result of a failing program by this government. When the incomes of our seniors are largely fixed but the cost of living continues to rise, our seniors have less and less disposable income. The indexation of provincial income tax deductions and credits was of particular assistance to seniors. What did this government announce in the budget? Yes, that the indexation of deductions will terminate.

Our seniors have seen their property taxes increase over the past number of years. The NDP promised to address this issue of removing the burden of education tax from property owners, but nothing has been done.

Our seniors are faced, as are we all, with an increase in the provincial sales tax of some 18 per cent, from 6 per cent to 7 per cent. Our seniors are faced with ever-increasing costs for pharmaceuticals and diagnostics, and many have been forced to go to other jurisdictions for their treatments at their own expense. There is a shortage of available housing for seniors in many communities, and that is if you are fortunate to have the good health to be able maintain your own home. We have waiting lists for those who are not able to maintain their own homes and reason to believe this government intends to actually reduce long-term beds.

The changes proposed in this Bill, as I had pointed out, are of a housekeeping nature in order to properly administer the provisions of the superannuation Act, in light of a number of the provisions having become redundant and other revisions that required changes as a result of changes to the federal Income Tax Act and as a result of a number of the provisions that are no longer made through legislation but rather by order in council.

We look forward to exploring these changes in more detail so as to assure firstly, the financial impact on the General Revenue Fund, the government organizations, and Crown operations are as indicated by the minister's statement. And secondly, to ensure any changes made to these plans benefit currently working public employees as well as those depending on this

plan for their current pensions.

To this end, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we look forward to further studying this Bill in committee.

(16:45)

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the minister that Bill No. 6, The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That is carried.

**Clerk Assistant (Committees):** — Second reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — To what committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 6, The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 6, The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2004 be now referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That is carried. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

### Bill No. 10

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 10 — The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi sur l'administration des successions** be now read a second time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour to enter debate on Bill No. 10. Basically, having looked through the Bill, the opposition approved it in principle. It allows for an orderly windup of the small estates and it bypasses the court from having to grant administration to the Public Guardian and Trustee, giving the Public Guardian and Trustee the same authority to administer the estate.

The member from Saskatoon Southeast went through the Bill and found a few areas where he felt it was weak, so he has already sort of laid an outline of the amendments that we'll be

putting forward to this Bill.

The Assembly adjourned at 16:49.

The other concern that we have on this side of the House is that only too often the government passes Bills — you know, it isn't that they're controversial, both sides could agree on the Bill — but then they don't proclaim them or parts of them. And that has been a common practice of this government. And there's a number of Bills that we can use for examples such as . . . The Labour Standards Act has many sections that haven't been proclaimed and The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act hasn't . . . has sections that haven't been proclaimed.

So there's no point pushing it through with mistakes in it, so we will be suggesting some amendments to this Bill. And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would be more than happy to have it go to committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before . . . Order. Order. The question before the Assembly is the motion by the minister that Bill No. 10, The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That is carried.

**Clerk Assistant (Committees):** — Second reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred?

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — I move that Bill No. 10, The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It is moved by the minister that Bill No. 10, The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2004 be now referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That is carried. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I move the House do now adjourn.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved 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.

**CORRIGENDUM**

On page 566 of *Hansard* No. 19A Friday, April 16, 2004, the sentence in the left column, last paragraph, reading:

. . . I would like to give them a attitude towards life leads to a healthy life.

should read:

. . . I would like to give them a health tip: Mr. Speaker, a smile, a smile and a positive attitude towards life leads to a healthy life.

We apologize for this error.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>	
<b>PRESENTING PETITIONS</b>	
Elhard .....	615
Hermanson .....	615
Huyghebaert .....	615
Bakken .....	615
Brkich .....	615
Weekes .....	615
Dearborn .....	616
<b>READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS</b>	
Deputy Clerk .....	616
<b>NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS</b>	
Dearborn .....	616
Harpauer .....	616
<b>INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS</b>	
Bakken .....	616
<b>STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS</b>	
<b>Am I an Ag Minister?</b>	
Dearborn .....	616
<b>2004 First Nations Saskatchewan Winter Games</b>	
Belanger .....	617
<b>Eston-Holman Student Exchange</b>	
Hermanson .....	617
<b>Saskatoon Volunteer Recognition and Awards Celebration</b>	
Forbes .....	617
<b>Community Growth Initiative in St. Brieux</b>	
Kirsch .....	618
<b>4-H Provincial Public Speaking Competition</b>	
Borgerson .....	618
<b>Humboldt Resident Appears on Letterman</b>	
Harpauer .....	618
<b>ORAL QUESTIONS</b>	
<b>Health Care Issues</b>	
Bakken .....	619
Nilson .....	619
<b>Natural Gas Rates for Commercial Customers</b>	
Elhard .....	620
Van Mulligen .....	620
<b>Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization Program</b>	
Stewart .....	622
Wartman .....	622
<b>INTRODUCTION OF BILLS</b>	
<b>Bill No. 32 — The Powers of Attorney Amendment Act, 2004/     Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi de 2002 sur les procurations</b>	
Quennell .....	624
<b>Bill No. 33 — The Archives Act, 2004</b>	
Beatty .....	624
<b>Bill No. 34 — The Psychologists Amendment Act, 2004</b>	
Nilson .....	624
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>	
<b>WRITTEN QUESTIONS</b>	
Yates .....	624
The Speaker .....	624
<b>GOVERNMENT ORDERS</b>	
<b>SECOND READINGS</b>	
<b>Bill No. 24 — The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2004</b>	
Quennell .....	624
Heppner .....	625
<b>Bill No. 25 — The Adoption Amendment Act, 2004/     Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'adoption</b>	
Crofford .....	628
Harpauer .....	629

<b>Bill No. 26 — The Adoption Consequential Amendment Act, 2004</b>	
Crofford .....	630
Harpauer .....	630
<b>Bill No. 27 — The Political Contributions Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2004</b>	
Atkinson .....	630
D'Autremont .....	630
Atkinson (referral to committee) .....	632
<b>Bill No. 28 — The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2004</b>	
Atkinson .....	633
Wakefield .....	633
<b>Bill No. 29 — The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2004</b>	
Atkinson .....	636
Toth .....	636
<b>ADJOURNED DEBATES</b>	
<b>SECOND READINGS</b>	
<b>Bill No. 3 — The Certified Management Consultants Amendment Act, 2004</b>	
Dearborn .....	638
Van Mulligen (referral to committee) .....	640
<b>Bill No. 4 — The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2004</b>	
Toth .....	641
Van Mulligen (referral to committee) .....	643
<b>Bill No. 5 — The Saskatchewan Pension Annuity Fund Amendment Act, 2004</b>	
Dearborn .....	643
Van Mulligen (referral to committee) .....	645
<b>Bill No. 6 — The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2004</b>	
Chisholm .....	645
Van Mulligen (referral to committee) .....	646
<b>Bill No. 10 — The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2004/ Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi sur l'administration des successions</b>	
Harpauer .....	646
Quennell (referral to committee) .....	647
<b>MOTIONS</b>	
<b>Referral of Bill No. 27 to Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies</b>	
Van Mulligen .....	641
<b>CORRIGENDUM</b> .....	648

## **CABINET MINISTERS**

Hon. L. Calvert  
Premier

Hon. P. Atkinson  
Minister of Crown Management Board  
Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission

Hon. J. Beatty  
Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation  
Provincial Secretary

Hon. B. Belanger  
Minister of Northern Affairs

Hon. E. Cline  
Minister of Industry and Resources

Hon. J. Crofford  
Minister of Community Resources and Employment  
Minister Responsible for Disability Issues  
Minister Responsible for Gaming

Hon. D. Forbes  
Minister of Environment  
Minister Responsible for the Office of Energy Conservation

Hon. D. Higgins  
Minister of Labour  
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. J. Nilson  
Minister of Health  
Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. P. Prebble  
Minister of Corrections and Public Safety

Hon. F. Quennell  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Hon. C. Serby  
Deputy Premier

Hon. M. Sonntag  
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs  
Minister of Highways and Transportation

Hon. L. Taylor  
Minister of Government Relations

Hon. A. Thomson  
Minister of Learning  
Minister Responsible for Information Technology

Hon. H. Van Mulligen  
Minister of Finance

Hon. M. Wartman  
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization