



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

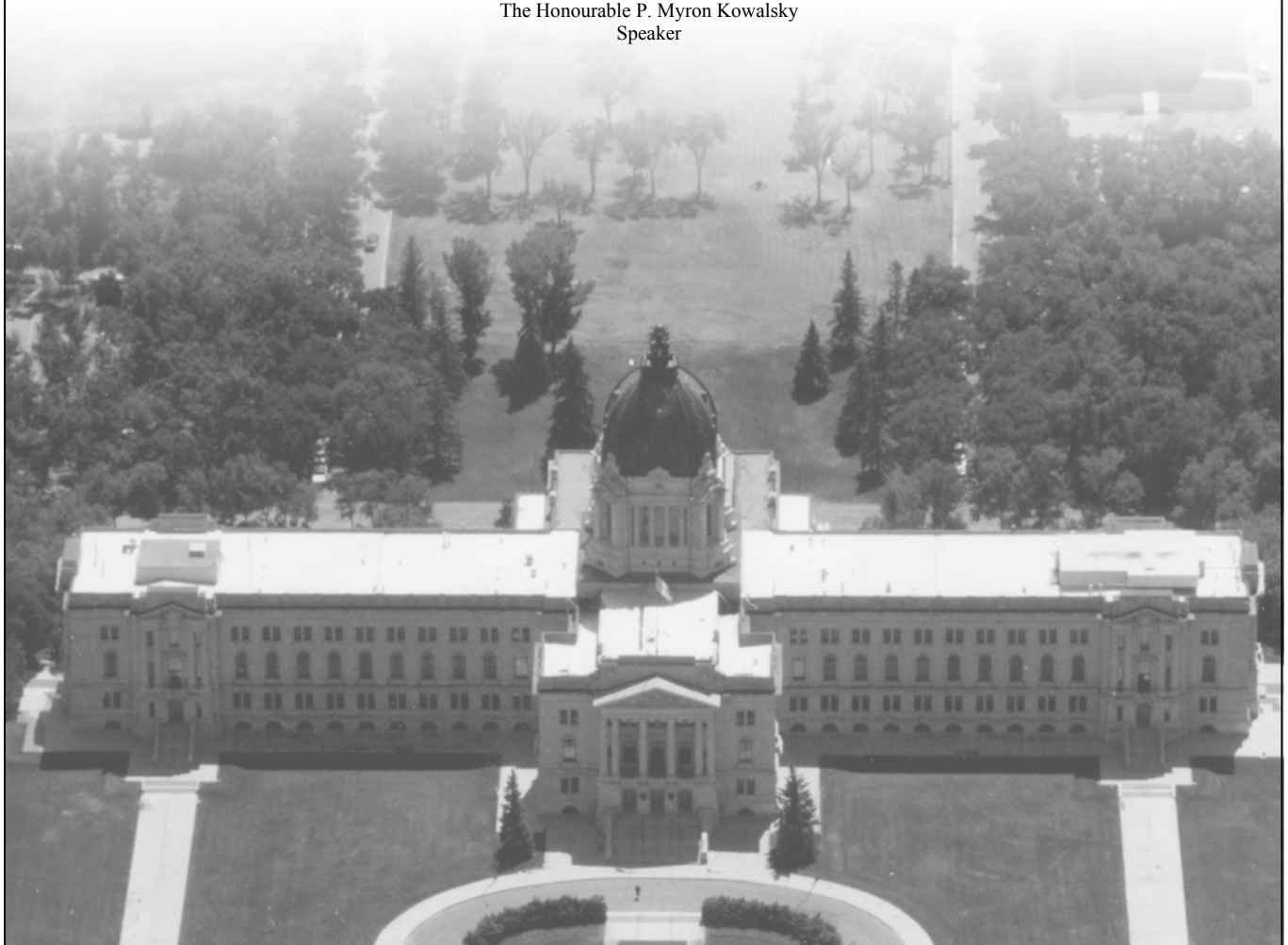
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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. Mr. Speaker, most of last year and a good part of this year earlier in the session, I presented petitions on behalf of Crown grazing leaseholders. And even though the government has addressed some of their concerns, I still have many more petitions to present on that particular subject. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure that current Crown land lessees maintain their first option to renew those leases.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these two particular petitions are signed by constituents from the communities of Fox Valley and Maple Creek.

I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present a petition today signed by people 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. Mr. Speaker, the prayer 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 are from the communities of Beechy, Lucky Lake, and Birsay. And I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are concerned about the deplorable condition of Highway 35. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to

make the necessary repairs to Highway 35 north from the United States border in order to prevent injury or loss of life and to prevent the loss of economic opportunity in the area.

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

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

I so present.

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 area that are very concerned of the condition of Highway 43, and I might add that it's deteriorating now as the spring breakup is underway, and it's actually getting worse. And the petition reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens from Swift Current, Morse, Lafleche, Gravelbourg, Hodgeville, Mossbank, and Mankota.

I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens that want to keep our provincial extension agrologists.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly immediately rescind their plan to eliminate the extension agrologist program and enter into meaningful discussions with agriculture stakeholders to address any further restructuring in the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture.

Signed by good citizens from Davidson.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition from constituents opposed to the possible reduction of health care services in Biggar. 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 Biggar Hospital, long-term care home, and ambulance services 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 Biggar and district.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in the House to present a petition on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan from Unity concerned with their district seniors lodge project. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

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

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 63, 65, 69, 72, 96, and 97.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on day no. 27 I shall ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Telecommunications: does SaskTel's *Max* TV service have the technical capability to provide high-definition service to its subscribers, and how much did it cost SaskTel to acquire and develop this technology? And two, if SaskTel's *Max* TV service does not have the capability to provide high-definition service to its subscribers, when does it intend to purchase or develop the required technology and at what cost?

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 27 ask the government the following question:

To the Saskatchewan Property Management minister: can the minister please provide all of SPMC's (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) lease agreements with its public and private sector partners? If not, why?

And also while I'm on my feet I have a similar question:

To the minister: can the minister please provide all of SPMC sublease agreements with all of the Crown agencies as well as the terms of these deals? If not, why?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 27 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Information Services Corporation: during fiscal year 2002-2003, what was the name of the report that resulted from the Gartner Group study recommending an appropriate governance model for Geomatrix services within the provincial government? And further to that, what were the costs associated with the study? What were the results of the study, and will the minister table this report in the Assembly?

Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you and to you to the rest of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce Father Dan Rafael up in your gallery, seated in your gallery. I just had an opportunity to meet with him just before we came into the House just for a few minutes. He was saying that he moved to Canada about two years ago as of Friday. He's the Reverend at St. Joseph's church in Balgonie.

I also had a little note here that he's been very interested in politics. He wasn't sure whether he should go into priesthood or into politics, so I'm interested to ask him after question period today if he feels he made the right decision, Mr. Speaker.

Also before I sit down, it's also his birthday today. He didn't tell me which year, but I do know that April 21 is his birthday, so happy birthday and welcome to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, seated in the west gallery is a group of 19 really good-looking young people. They're here from St. Augustine Community School, grade 6 and 7 students. I might add that St. Augustine School comes to visit me at the legislature, it seems like, every year. I always look forward to their visits and to their excellent questions which we had today. They're accompanied here by their teacher, Karen Goodon, and also by Marion Desjarlais. And I would ask all of the members of the Assembly to join with me in extending a very warm welcome to this great group of students.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the House, 11 grade 12 students from the community of Eastend.

Mr. Speaker, every year since I've been here, their teachers, Shelley Morvik and Marie Hanson, have made it a practice of bringing the grade 12s to the Assembly, and I want to recognize that contribution to the well-being and the education of their students, and their dedication to that particular task. With them, of course, is a bus driver, Curt Humphrey. I've referred to him in the past as one of the best backhoe operators in the province, and I promised I wouldn't do that today.

I also want to acknowledge that the Finance minister in his introduction of the students from his constituency said they were a fine looking group, I believe. And he's . . . well he's set a standard; I have to raise the bar. This is an exceptionally good-looking group from Eastend, and I'd like everybody to welcome our students to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly, Cindy Paquette, employee of the University of Saskatchewan, the manager of government relations. I had a chance to meet with Cindy briefly today and look forward to meeting with her again tomorrow. And since I assumed my role as post-secondary education critic I've enjoyed our meetings and her professional manner. So all members join with me, please.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Adley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's not only my privilege to introduce Cindy Paquette in the Speaker's gallery; it is also my privilege to give her a raise from manager of government relations to director of government relations, so . . . The University of Saskatchewan falls within my constituencies, and I am very privileged to represent them. So I join the member in inviting Cindy to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Dewdney.

Administrative Professionals Day

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is Administrative Professionals Day and I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the valuable contributions that our administrative professionals provide on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, the role of administrative professionals covers a broad range of tasks. Apart from answering phones, writing letters, filing, sorting, and faxing, our administrative professionals play a vital role in public relations as well as maintaining solid working relationships with our colleagues, our constituents, and various other agencies or institutions as well, Mr. Speaker.

These professionals are our links to information. They are our messengers. They are our ambassadors. Quite simply put, Mr. Speaker, our offices could not function without our constituency assistants and administrative assistants.

Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of all administrative professionals across the province today. And on behalf of my colleagues on both sides of the House, I thank all of our constituency assistants as well as our administrative professionals in our caucus offices, and those in our government caucus office — Jannet, Gail, Margaret, and Kjersten. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member from Regina Dewdney in recognizing Administrative Professionals Day, part of Administrative Professionals Week that's being held in Canada and right across the world.

Mr. Speaker, this year's theme is Ambassadors of Excellence. And there's no denying the extremely important role our directors of first impression play in meeting members of the public. These men and women are the first point of contact in our offices and it's with a warm smile and a helping hand that they make our guests feel welcome and appreciated.

While all members of the House have their own administrative assistants to thank, members on this side would like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere appreciation and thank you to all those who work in our constituency offices. And a special thank you to my assistants, Linda and Natalie.

There's also a special mention going out to Leanne and Joanne — two hard-working and dedicated professionals in our caucus office who are always there to help out whenever and wherever needed.

By way of history, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say that this year's Administrative Professional Week is the 52nd one since its recognition in 1952. As we all know, it was originally known as Secretaries Week, but a name change four years ago was done to recognize changing job titles and expanding responsibilities in today's administrative workforce. It's one of the largest workplace occupations in the world. There are nearly half a million administrative professionals in Canada and they all deserve our respect and support for their important roles they play in making our jobs that much easier.

I ask all members to recognize Administrative Professionals Day.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

SaskTel Awards

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, SaskTel is dedicated to supporting the community and to helping young people pursue careers in telecommunications and information technology.

Each year, SaskTel awards scholarships valued at \$3,000 each to Saskatchewan students attending post-secondary institutions and enrolled in a field directly related to telecommunications.

(13:45)

Mr. Speaker, this year's recipients have demonstrated excellence in their academic pursuits. And this year's winners are Andrew Quibell from La Ronge, Jacqueline Gobeil of Prince Albert, Amy Stradeski from Regina, Kaylin Sidloski of Weyburn, Devan Legare of Saskatoon, Jocelyn Lanoie from St. Victor, Brittany Galambos of Leask, Darren Lewis of Regina, Michael Boychuk of Regina, and Christopher Simáir from Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, I thank SaskTel for its dedication to young people. I'm sure my colleagues will join me in congratulating this year's recipients and wishing them good luck in their future endeavours. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Montmartre Cadet Corps Places First in Marksmanship Finals

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the third straight year No. 2988 Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps based in Montmartre placed first in the Provincial Unit Marksmanship Finals held in the Regina Armouries on Saturday, April 3.

The competition was attended by the 12 top-placing teams plus 6 top-placing individuals from the provincial semifinals that took place in January. Mr. Speaker, the Montmartre team consists this year of Janis and Sandra Procyk of Fillmore, Craig Pister of Kipling, Travis Kish of Windthorst, and Ryan Little of Montmartre. They are coached by David Klein of Broadview.

Of particular note, Mr. Speaker, is that Janis, Travis, and Ryan are first-year competitors. This is Sandra's second year and Craig's fourth year of competition. Following the provincial competitions, a composite team consisting of the five highest-placing individuals of the provincial finals joined the Montmartre team to form Team Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the two teams will complete both independently and together as Team Saskatchewan at the National Cadet Marksmanship Finals to be held in St. John's, Newfoundland, from May 8 through 15. Mr. Speaker, the team wishes to thank the Kipling Legion for their generous donation of the use of

their building for their practice times.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate this fine group of young people on their achievement and wish them well at national competitions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

International Special Librarians Day

Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is International Special Librarians Day and this year's theme is Creating Information Currency to reflect the global contributions of special librarians and the value attached to their critical skills.

I don't need to remind this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that special librarians are those who work in libraries providing services to specific professions: medical libraries, science libraries, and in our case, the Legislative Library.

Mr. Speaker, Marian Powell and her staff in the building here, Tim, Pat, Jane, Leslie, Maria, and Kim make our lives easier, our work more productive, our time more efficient, and our information more accurate. And, Mr. Speaker, they are always pleasantly cheerful and friendly. Mr. Speaker, not only does the Legislative Library crew help us find whatever we're looking for in books, magazines, and documents, they are also experts of the Internet in this changing world of information.

Tomorrow to celebrate this special day for a group of special people, the Legislative Library will host an open house from 10:30 till 3:30 p.m., featuring demonstrations of their electronic products and tours of the library. Also, everyone is invited to enjoy refreshments. I am sure all my colleagues will join me in thanking our special librarians for the work they do, and in wishing them the best on their day and throughout the year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Health Facilities in Imperial

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk about serious concerns raised in the town of Imperial regarding the possibility of their hospital being closed. The Long Lake health centre at Imperial provides a vital service to the residents of this community as well as others such as Holdfast, Liberty, Stalwart, Simpson, and surrounding areas.

Current information shows that this facility contains 15 long-term care beds that are full 100 per cent year-round, with a 10-person waiting list. They have three swing beds, full all the time; one dedicated full-time respite bed, full with a waiting list. There is also a full-time emergency bed that must cover the many emergency cases that come in each day. The lab and X-ray staff are there five days a week including rotating on-call with Davidson and Craik on evenings and weekends. The building contains Dr. Schwartz's main office as well as a baby

wellness clinic, foot care clinic, activity and church program events for the benefit of long-term residents.

Clearly these citizens cannot be without this important medical centre. And yet this government may close it and throw the long-term residents out on the street and send their highly qualified doctor and nursing staff down the road. The NDP keep calling themselves the champions of medicare — some champions.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Writer-in-Residence Program

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Writers Guild has one of the largest writers' programs in Canada. And I would say that it is because of the Writers Guild that we have such a strong literary tradition and community in Saskatchewan.

One program sponsored by the guild is the Saskatchewan writer-in-residence program. This program has a reputation as one of the best in the country. Not only does it offer professional, artistic leadership in Saskatchewan, but it also stimulates participation in the literary arts.

Mr. Speaker, this year's writer-in-residence is award-winning author Yann Martel, who has joined the Saskatoon community in October. Mr. Martel is the recipient of the prestigious 2002 Booker Prize for his widely acclaimed novel, *Life of Pi*. And last month, Mr. Martel was awarded the 2004 German Book Prize.

Mr. Speaker, since coming to Saskatoon Mr. Martel and his partner, Alice Kuipers — who is also a fiction writer — have come to love living and working in Saskatchewan and in Saskatoon and are looking to buy a home in the bridge city so that they can make Saskatchewan their home.

In a recent *StarPhoenix* article, Mr. Martel said — and I quote:

There's a real sense of community here . . . It's laid back but intelligent and people are easy to make friends with.

Mr. Speaker, I want to, on behalf of all of the citizens of this province, wish Mr. Martel and Ms. Kuipers all the best. And I extend a very warm welcome to them both on their arrival in our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SaskPower Profit

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

SaskPower released its 2003 annual report today, and the good news is that SaskPower made a healthy profit last year. The bad news, however, is that the NDP (New Democratic Party) government took every dime of that profit and more.

Mr. Speaker, according to SaskPower's 2003 annual report, our power utility made a net profit of \$74 million last year, but the NDP is forcing SaskPower to pay the government a dividend of \$169 million.

Mr. Speaker, that means that the NDP has forced SaskPower to pay every dime of its profit to the government and then to borrow \$95 million more from the bank to pay that cash-starved government.

Why is the minister forcing SaskPower to borrow money to pay a dividend to the cash-starved NDP?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the member from Cypress Hills. Yes, SaskPower's had a good year; net income was \$187 million.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — My friend across the way, the member from Cypress Hills, points out that some of that, some substantial part of that was a non-cash income foreign exchange debt, beneficiary of a racing Canadian dollar.

However, however, Mr. Speaker, what the member, I think, heard this morning in the briefing but has forgotten — or forgotten to mention — is that of course there's a depreciation, which is a non-cash expense well in excess of \$187 million and that the cash available to SaskPower was over \$200 million. And no money has been borrowed to pay this dividend, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, there are both winners and losers in the SaskPower . . .

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

Mr. Elhard: — \$189 million profit and 113 million of it was strictly paper, Mr. Speaker. That doesn't leave much for the cash-starved government.

Mr. Speaker, there are winners and losers in the SaskPower annual report and the big winner is this NDP government because the Premier is taking every dime of SaskPower's \$74 million profit and then forcing SaskPower to find another \$95 million elsewhere. They're paying a whopping \$169 million cash dividend to this cash-starved NDP government.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan families and businesses are the losers because, despite near record profits last year at SaskPower, the NDP is getting ready to increase power rates.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP preparing to charge families and businesses more for power this year after stripping SaskPower of every single dime of its profit last year?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand how the people of Saskatchewan are losers here. We have a power company that made \$189 million net income — more if we're just looking at cash. In this case, the power company's paying a 90 per cent dividend; that's not unusual for power companies on the continent to pay that type of dividend, 90 per cent.

But in this case it's a Crown utility, Mr. Speaker. And that 90 per cent goes to health, education in this province, and making payments for services for the people in the province which otherwise would have to be raised by taxes — or in some other way if the members opposite across the way had their way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, while the NDP is racking up money by taking every dime of SaskPower's profit in 2003 and then forcing the utility to borrow or come up with another \$95 million somehow to pay an even larger dividend, the NDP is now planning to charge families and businesses even more for power. And to SaskPower employees, the very people who are responsible for making that 2003 profit, they're being offered a zero per cent salary increase.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain to Saskatchewan families why the NDP is sucking up every dime of profit in this year's performance while at the same time planning to increase power rates to Saskatchewan families and, on top of it, offering SaskPower employees a zero percent increase?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that I'm new here, but I thought I answered the question the first time. SaskPower is not borrowing money to pay this dividend, and the cash flow is more than sufficient for the dividend, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Well, Mr. Speaker, if they're not borrowing money to pay the dividend, maybe the minister would be happy

to explain why SaskPower is borrowing \$200 million more in Canadian funds?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, SaskPower borrows money to make capital investments. The first responsibility and duty of SaskPower is to provide reliable power to the people of Saskatchewan. Investments are being made in the coal fleet and elsewhere to provide reliable power, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that if SaskPower hadn't been obligated to pay such an inflated dividend, they wouldn't have to borrow that money in the first place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, if SaskPower made near record profits in 2003, why are both the minister and senior officials at SaskPower saying that a SaskPower rate increase is virtually certain in this calendar year?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, the balance sheet of SaskPower is healthy, and it is the healthiest of any Crown utility in the country. The debt to capital ratio is under 60 per cent; in 2002 it was 56.8 per cent; 2003 56.5 per cent. What SaskPower is doing in respect to the dividend is more than sustainable, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in SaskPower we have a company that is going to be obligated by this government's promise to provide a greener economy, and green power is expensive power, Mr. Speaker. And we also have SaskPower purchasing additional power supplies from other sources, also a very expensive way to provide power to the people of this province.

And now we've got \$95 million that has to come from somewhere, borrowed or internally, that will be paid in a dividend over and above all of the profit SaskPower made in 2003. Those costs all add up. Somebody's going to have to pay the bill. Will the NDP jeopardize the long-term viability of SaskPower or will it be raising rates soon?

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister for SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, SaskPower is proud of the contribution it's making towards a green and prosperous economy. SaskPower is proud of the initiatives that are taking place in the member's constituency in Cypress Hills, where the wind blows even if the member isn't there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — The hon. member for Moosomin, the hon. member for Moosomin in a speech last week called on SaskPower to explore biogas. So I sent the hon. member the press release and the announcement from a month previous, March 14, about the partnership SaskPower has gone into in Cudworth, generating electricity from, generating electricity from pig manure. It was such a good idea that the hon. member from Moosomin had, that we had implemented it a month earlier.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Medical Notification Sent to Family of Deceased Patient

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, over the past two . . . few weeks the Saskatchewan Party has raised two cases where family members have either been phoned or notified by mail of a diagnostic appointment for a loved one after that person passed away.

Donna Carswell of Regina got a phone call six months after her father died. John McBain of Meadow Lake received a letter one year after his wife passed away. In today's *Leader-Post* the minister is quoted as saying, and I quote:

I would say it's a rarity, but when it happens, it's very tough for the family and it's unfortunate.

Well, Mr. Speaker, these situations should never happen. Are we to believe that this is the best that the NDP can do?

To the minister: what kind of health care record keeping system cannot keep track of people, even when they pass away, to take them off the waiting lists?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, our health system in Saskatchewan — and especially those people who work with those patients who are dying — are I think the best in Canada, if not in the world, in caring and working with their patients. They continue to do this very tough job on a day-to-day basis and provide care for those people who are dying.

Sometimes there are some errors around getting that record into the broader system because we have quite a number of different diagnostic parts or other parts of the system, and when that happens that is really unfortunate for the family. And we don't want it to happen, but it does.

But I want to emphasize that the people who are providing the care are providing the best care possible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Saskatchewan Health Information Network

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, this government continues to spend more money on health care year after year, but outcomes

aren't improving. For example, since 1996 the Saskatchewan Health Information Network has received over \$65 million in grants from Saskatchewan Health — \$65 million, Mr. Speaker, to develop electronic health records. For \$65 million, if not more, we now have a system that can't even keep track of people when they have passed away in order to take them off of waiting lists for diagnostic services.

Mr. Speaker, after more than \$65 million and almost a decade of work, SHIN (Saskatchewan Health Information Network) should be able to track basic health information. To the minister: when will the electronic patient records be fully operational?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we are working on this challenging problem not only as the province of Saskatchewan but as part of the national program. The federal government has put in money for the Canada Health Infoway. We have been using some of that money. We've been putting our own money into a system which will ultimately result in an electronic health record which will hopefully prevent some more of these kinds of challenges.

This is a very complex process. We have been working at it for . . . very carefully and diligently. I guess what I would say is here in Saskatchewan we have done this very carefully to make sure that whatever we spend, we can keep using. I know our neighbours both to the west and to the east of us have had some substantial difficulties with their electronic health record projects. We in Saskatchewan are proud of the careful work that we've done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, almost 10 years ago we were told SHIN was needed to address a number of gaps in the health care system as far as patient records were concerned. Some of the problems identified were information about previous treatment plans were not available; diagnostic test data was not available, resulting in tests being repeated; and essential data was not available in emergencies.

And guess what, Mr. Speaker? Ten years later and \$65 million later, this information is still not available. We cannot even keep track of when people have passed away in this system. What kind of value are we getting for the money that's being so carefully spent, as the minister said?

Can the minister say how long is it going to take and how many more decades, and how many more millions of dollars are we going to have to spend before SHIN can do even the most basic data entry?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, some of our staff have been providing the leadership for the country with the federal government in Health Canada to work on this particular area.

One of the concerns that we as all, as part of all of the Canadian Health ministers in Canada have said, is that we want to have a common platform for information so that we can make sure that whatever we do in Saskatchewan will allow for our information here to be applicable in Alberta, Ontario, British Columbia. We are working very diligently on that part.

We are working on all of the pieces here in Saskatchewan. We have many complex systems that work in our major centres, Saskatoon and Regina, and the surrounding health authorities. We have slightly less complex ones at the regional centres, and we have another sort of level out in the rural areas. All of these systems are working together.

We're continuing to work on electronic health record, but we're going to do it right.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, when I hear the minister say that Saskatchewan is a leader in the country, not only is this province in trouble — the whole country is in trouble.

Mr. Speaker, this province has spent a decade and \$65 million trying to get the most basic information together. The minister now says we're now going to take this level of incompetence to a national level so that it will take another decade or two to finally get basic information. Today, Mr. Speaker, we have essentially a \$65 million e-mail system and it could have been done over the Internet or hotmail.com.

Mr. Speaker, when is the government going to provide a system that will actually keep track of patients who have passed away so they're not sitting in the waiting list for diagnostic tests?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we on this side of this House sit down with people who are working in a particular area and work with them to develop systems that are practical and that work. I think our Sask surgery registry is being identified right across the country as a very practical system that's going to provide the information that we need to manage surgeries in the long term. We're going to continue to work in that style as it relates to diagnostic imaging issues and others.

All of these things do relate to an ultimate electronic health record. We're doing that in the context of our Health Information Protection Act, which will make sure that the privacy of individuals is protected. But it will also make sure they get the best care possible. That's how we do things here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Closure of Long-Term Care Beds

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are over 200 long-term care beds in my constituency. Of them 200 care beds, they are full with waiting lists. One of the towns that has a waiting list is the town of Imperial. That facility has 15 long-term care beds with 10 on the waiting . . . (inaudible) . . . Yet that facility is rumoured to be closed by this NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Health: can he assure the residents of Imperial and district that their facility will not be closed? Can he assure that there will be no long-term care beds closed? Can he assure the seniors of that town that they will not be forced out of their community?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, on budget day this government put forward a budget which increases the health care portion by \$160 million. It comprises 44 per cent of the dollars that we're spending in this province.

But on the same day, Mr. Speaker, I also identified to the people of Saskatchewan that we are going to have to change some things to work with the resources that we have. And that includes some changes in long-term care, it includes changes in administration, it includes changes in other services that are provided.

The regional health authorities got their budget numbers on March 31. They are now working very hard to figure out how to do all the things that we've asked them to do. We're going to continue to work with them to make sure that people get the care right across the province, and that's how we do things.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the Minister of Health cannot assure the people of Imperial that their facility will not be closed, I will ask about a facility in Craik that has the same facility — a very new facility with 15 long-term care beds, a waiting list, one respite bed only, full constantly. And they are on the waiting list.

Can the minister assure the people of Craik that their facility will not be closed? Can he assure the people of Craik that there will be no loss of long-term care beds? Can he assure the seniors of Craik that they will not be forced out of their community?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I have the same answer to that question as the previous one. But I did a little bit of research, Mr. Speaker, and I . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. One at a time please, members. The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I did a little bit of research over the last couple of days, and I found a Web site with the name of the member from Swift Current. And in there, he includes a copy of the official opposition brief to the Fyke Commission on Medicare. And there's a couple of different things that they talk about in here that are kind of interesting. This is three years ago now. One was, they talked about designing a new model for health care. We haven't heard about that yet; we'd really like to hear about that.

They also talked about not micromanaging health districts' operations — they shouldn't do that. And on long-term care, they say, amongst other things, we should conduct an inventory, project the long-term care demands, assess public and private sector funding capacity, and look at all of the things to address this.

We're doing those kinds of things, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. People in my constituency are also expressing concern about the possibility of facility closures and bed cuts. There are a currently 105 long-term care beds in Biggar constituency — 59 in Biggar, 29 in Wilkie, and 17 in Langham. Today these beds are 100 per cent full, yet there is talk from this NDP government that they may be closing some of these beds.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide the assurance that long-term care beds in Wilkie, Langham, and Biggar will not be closed?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I think the members opposite have some work to do when they go home to their home communities to explain why they voted against a budget which increased the health care portion by \$160 million because the dollars that we have increased in that health care budget are to go and deal with exactly the issues that they're raising.

Now what we have to do, Mr. Speaker, is to make sure that we use the dollars that we do have, the resources that we have, to provide the care that's possible across the province.

We know that we have a challenge on all of the budgets and we're going to continue to work at that. We're also working at a national level with the federal government and all of our other provinces to see if we can't get further resources to provide a long-term care . . . a long-term plan but we have to work and do that together.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm asking the

minister a very straightforward question and the people of Biggar constituency deserve a straightforward answer. Will long-term care beds in Biggar, Langham, and Wilkie be closed? Yes or no?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to work with the regional health authorities around all of these challenges and make the most appropriate decisions using and making sure that . . . using the dollars that we have to make sure that people have the care that they need.

That's how we have to do things in this province. Our long tradition in the government from this side of the House is we make sure we do what we can within the dollars that we have. We don't get ourselves into the kind of mess that we had 20 years ago. Nobody in Saskatchewan wants that again.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, people in Wood River constituency are hearing very similar and expressing very similar concerns.

Mr. Speaker, seniors and their families are getting very worried. There's 192 long-term care beds in Wood River constituency. The beds are full. There are seniors on a waiting list to get into these facilities and the NDP is talking about closing beds and closing long-term care homes.

(14:15)

What assurances can the minister provide that long-term care beds will not be cut, and the facilities at Rockglen and Glentworth in the Wood River constituency will not be closed?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the government has put forward a budget which includes more money for health care — more in that area than any other area. One of the ways that it's going to be funded is by increasing the sales tax. There'll be a Bill introduced to do that. Will the members opposite support that? It's going to provide resources that will help us fund some of these health care challenges that we have.

I think it's entirely appropriate that all members of this House look seriously at where we get the resources, how we spend the money, and make sure that we do it in the most appropriate way.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well it's ironic the minister talks about the budget, but also in there talks about closing long-term care beds.

Mr. Speaker, StatsCanada today announced that there was

148,000 seniors in the province of Saskatchewan — 15 per cent of the province is seniors. And what does the NDP come up for a solution for housing these seniors? Die quicker. That's what they say, die quicker — and close beds.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when we've got a population that is aging . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. The member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at a time when this province . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Once again, the member for Wood River has the floor.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — I think I hit a nerve, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at a time when this province needs more long-term care beds — more, not less — what are the NDP doing? They're closing, they're closing facilities.

Will the minister assure the people of Saskatchewan that no long-term care beds will be closed, and specifically in my constituency where there's a waiting list and other areas? Will he assure the people of this province that long-term care beds will not be closed?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I was a bit surprised by the introduction to this question given that my clear understanding after many years in this House is that the opposition's research department is the *Leader-Post* and *The StarPhoenix*. And both of those papers today had a very strong comment about some of the comments made by members opposite around the end-of-life care and things that happen in that basis.

I think, Mr. Speaker, those members opposite need to work together with us in passing this budget and getting the resources that we need to make sure that this health care system works. That includes long-term care; that includes many of the other issues that are raised here. Here in Saskatchewan we work together to solve our problems. That's what we're going to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Computerized Tomography Scanners

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to share with you an important announcement about health care for the people of Saskatchewan. I'm pleased to inform you and

members of this Legislative Assembly about the expansion of CT, or computerized tomography scanner services in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we have now purchased three new CT scanners which will be located in Swift Current, Moose Jaw, and Yorkton.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — With this significant investment, Mr. Speaker, this government is fulfilling yet another commitment made in our Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care to provide quality, accessible health care services for all Saskatchewan people.

More specifically, Mr. Speaker, our goal has been, where financial resources allow, to expand diagnostic imaging services in our regional health centres. It is clear to us, as it is to health care professionals, regional health authorities, and the public, that diagnostic services such as CT scanners are a priority. That is why, despite the financial challenges facing our province, we are making this investment in the health care system for residents in the Swift Current, Moose Jaw, and Yorkton areas. We are investing approximately \$2 million in these new scanners, with a further 600,000 to come from our 2004-05 budget, for the necessary renovations to health care facilities to accommodate the new scanners and for training of the medical diagnostic specialists and technicians.

The new CT scanners will expand the technical capacity of CT services in these regional hospitals. Each of these CT scanners will do approximately 2,500 scans in each year. Mr. Speaker, this will nearly double their current capacity and it will bring the provincial total to approximately 72,000 scans per year.

Mr. Speaker, these scanners will not only alleviate the pressure on our current CT units, such as those at Regina General Hospital, but they will allow more convenient and accessible services to residents who do not live in or near our largest health centres.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank those involved with this project, particularly officials of Saskatchewan Health and representatives of Five Hills, Sunrise, and Cypress Health regions, who worked extensively on the tendering and selection process. That regional information and advice was extremely valuable during this process, and I believe it supports our efforts to develop a truly provincial strategy for diagnostic services in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it is this government's ongoing goal to improve our ability to provide more timely and accessible CT services in Saskatchewan. We are committed to that goal, and I am pleased today to demonstrate our commitment with this significant investment in the expansion of our CT services.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is a wise investment in our regional health care facilities and in the health of our province's residents. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Swift Current, the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a representative of one of the affected communities, it's a pleasure to be able to comment today on the minister's statement, and we welcome it on this side of the House.

Where the minister was thanking individuals though, I think it would have been fair for him to thank those diagnostic professionals — especially in Swift Current and the community of Swift Current — that signed literally hundreds of petitions.

Originally what the government proposed in the last budget, Mr. Speaker, was to provide for two new CT scans in the province and that Swift Current would be able to utilize the used, the used CT scan that had previously been shared in a mobile unit between Moose Jaw and Swift Current. Professionals came forward and said that didn't make a lot of sense, Mr. Speaker, because Swift Current had developed some expertise as a result of that mobile unit. And were there to be a new unit allocation, it might make sense to put a new one there and make this used one available where there had not yet been any diagnostic experience, so they could develop that and get a new one.

Now the government has improved on that proposal, mind you, by announcing three, three new CT scans which we on this side of the House welcome. But I think it behooves the minister to acknowledge the fact that the original proposal by this government was improved, not necessarily exclusively by Sask Health officials or even administrators at any of the districts, but by health care professionals, Mr. Speaker, and by those who rallied and signed petitions that were presented in this House.

And the good measure announced today should have been perhaps shared with the Whip on the government side. Just this weekend in the paper, in our local paper, the Whip took an opportunity to indicate that the members on this side of the House in the Southwest somehow opposed this initiative, when we actually helped present petitions that resulted in it, Mr. Speaker, that we opposed it as a result of our budget vote.

Mr. Speaker, I've got a lot of feedback in Swift Current that the people saw through that, that they saw through that in Swift Current. So we say to the government, congratulations on this initiative. And we wish in the future that, along with acknowledging the officials that have helped make it a reality, that they'd also acknowledge health care professionals who are stepping forward with innovative solutions, and also those who work towards to get those solutions implemented — the people who sign petitions and interact with their government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and convert for debates returnable, questions no. 177 and 178.

The Speaker: — Questions 177 and 178 have been converted to orders for return (debatable).

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

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 rise today and move second reading of The Powers of Attorney Amendment Act, 2004. Mr. Speaker, this amendment Act will allow grantors of enduring powers of attorney to give attorneys decision-making power with respect to personal matters as well as financial matters.

An enduring power of attorney, Mr. Speaker, is a power of attorney that continues after the incapacity of the grantor. The use of an enduring power of attorney allows an individual to appoint a trusted person to make decisions on his or her behalf when he or she is no longer able to do so.

Mr. Speaker, The Powers of Attorney Act, 2002 codified the law respecting enduring powers of attorney, provided more flexibility for grantors of enduring powers of attorney, and provided protection against financial abuse of persons granted . . . or granting enduring powers of attorneys.

While in proclamation of that Act, Mr. Speaker, the government received requests to amend the Act to allow grantors of enduring powers of attorney to give attorneys personal decision-making as well as financial decision-making authority. The amendments will allow the appointment of personal attorneys as well property attorneys.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments provide autonomy and flexibility to seniors . . . (inaudible) . . . concerned about a future loss of decision-making capacity. Current alternatives to the appointment of personal attorneys including ad hoc arrangements and court appointment of personal decision makers . . . Ad hoc arrangements often work well, but they also provide opportunities for abuse by the unscrupulous.

Court appointment of personal decision makers provides protection against abuse, but it's more complex, costly, time consuming, and intrusive process for the adult. And the appointed decision maker may not be the person the adult would have chosen.

The appointment of a personal attorney is seen as an appropriate middle ground by many adults planning for their futures. Mr. Speaker, under these amendments, grantors of enduring powers of attorney will have the option of appointing a personal attorney, a property attorney, or both a personal and a property attorney. The same person may serve both roles, or different people may be appointed as personal attorney and as property attorney.

In situations in which it is unclear whether the decision is under

the authority of the personal or the property attorney and expenditure of money is required in order to implement the decision, the decision of the property attorney will prevail. However either party or the Public Guardian and Trustee may ask the court which decision is to be followed. Mr. Speaker, provisions in The Powers of Attorney Act, 2002 respecting accountings will be extended to apply to personal as well as property attorneys. The personal attorney will be able to ask the property attorney for any accounting decisions made and vice versa.

Provisions limiting when attorneys may act will also be extended to the personal attorneys. The Act will also clarify, Mr. Speaker, that a property attorney may not make or change a will in the name of the grantor. It will provide that, unless the enduring power of attorney states otherwise, a property attorney may not make an election benefiting himself or herself or designate himself or herself as a beneficiary of the grantor's property. Similarly unless an enduring power of attorney states otherwise, a property attorney may not change an election or a designation made by the grantor.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments are the result of considerable consultation. In response to some of the recommendations of the Steering Committee on the Abuse of Adults in Vulnerable Circumstances, a legislation working group was formed in 1998 with the mandate to recommend legislation in areas of adult guardianship and financial abuse of vulnerable adults. This group includes representatives of community agencies as well as the departments of Justice, Health, and Community Resources and Employment.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read to you the list of hardworking community agencies represented on this committee: the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living; the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan; the Autism and Resource Centre of Regina; the Schizophrenia Society of Saskatchewan; the Canadian Mental Health Association, Saskatchewan Branch; a consumer of Mental Health Services; the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres; the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism; Senior Power of Regina; Seniors' Education Centre in Regina; Saskatchewan Voice of People with Disabilities; office of Disability Issues; capacity assessment, department of psychology, University of Saskatchewan; Native Counselling Services, Regina General Hospital; Regina and District Personal Care Home Association; Elmwood Residences, Saskatoon; Family and Friends of Cosmo and Elmwood, Saskatoon; Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations; Systemwide Admissions and Discharge, Regina-Qu'Appelle Health Region; long-term care, Regina-Qu'Appelle Health Region; Regina Pioneer Village; Wascana Rehabilitation Centre; wills and estates section, the Canadian Bar Association, Saskatchewan branch; the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan; the Royal Bank; Conexus Credit Union; and Credit Union Central.

(14:30)

Mr. Speaker, in developing the amendments to The Powers of Attorney Act, 2002, this committee carried out further consultations with persons with legal and financial expertise and with organizations working with or representing seniors and persons with disabilities. The proposal to allow the

appointment of personal attorneys generated a very positive response. Mr. Speaker, I thank the legislation working committee and congratulate them for a job well done.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of An Act to amend The Powers of Attorney Act, 2002.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 32, The Powers of Attorney Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we enter into second reading on some of the Bills that are being presented and also as we spend some time at adjournment debates, Mr. Speaker, it's important I think that members from both sides have the opportunity to get up and speak to the Bills that are, you know, being introduced.

Obviously some of them will have some sections and some things in them that are going to be very important to the people of Saskatchewan. On the other hand of course, Mr. Speaker, there are going to be and there have been introduced Bills that really don't have very much to them. Some are merely housekeeping Bills, and some are I think perhaps a way for the government to put in some time in this Assembly.

I want to stand up and say a few words on behalf of the official opposition about Bill 32. The minister just made his address on this Bill, and I wanted to address just a few of the ideas and the thoughts that I had as he made his speech and as I looked through the Bill prior to the Assembly sitting today.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that certainly at first blush what the Bill contains is important to every resident in Saskatchewan. Certainly it is from my perspective. We all have . . . most of us, I should say, Mr. Speaker, have people in our families who are living longer and living healthier rather than living longer and dying sooner as the member from Eastview would have them have.

And if they live longer and healthier, what happens more often of course is that people will require other people — other family members, other appointed people — to look after their business affairs. That's a simple fact.

I look at my own family, Mr. Speaker. I have an uncle who was recently admitted to a long-term care facility in Davidson. Mr. Speaker, my uncle is 86 years old and has very poor vision, so he does require somebody to do his personal . . . look after his personal business. He did appoint an attorney to do just that, Mr. Speaker. So the idea or the theory of having powers of attorney and having them available to these kinds of situations are very critical. I know that in his case, my uncle was never married. He has no children, and his closest family perhaps would be nieces and nephews and some brothers that he does have left living in the area. And I know that he feels much better by being able to have somebody who is part of his family look after and continue to do his personal business affairs.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, you know we could really relate this

Bill to so many of the other Bills that we've seen or so many of the other issues that we've talked about in this Assembly this session. If you look at long-term care beds, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that they're full, that tells me that there's going to be more and more need for people to appoint other people to act as their attorneys on issues of personal and property. If our population continues to age — and it does in Saskatchewan — then we know again that we are going to have far greater need for people to perform this very valuable duty.

I guess the concern I have with this Bill — and it's just like many of the other things that we've seen, that I've seen from the government side so far in this session — is the matter of credibility.

I guess, Mr. Speaker, two things that most people tell me they have the least amount of trust in are politicians and lawyers, and not necessarily in that order, Mr. Speaker. That's unfortunate, but that's often the case, that people tell me and they tell us, and people make a joke of it. But it's not a joke. They don't have that trust that they should have in order for these things to be successful.

So the concern I have with this Bill is that it could, it could be left open to abuse by some people, by unscrupulous people, by unscrupulous lawyers, by unscrupulous accountants, by even perhaps people who are less than scrupulous who might belong to the person's family, who does require somebody to act on their behalf. That's the real concern I have, Mr. Speaker.

It seems as though whenever you have something new that is really meant to be a good, solid, strong position to act upon, they often get abused. And people will look for — and in many cases find — ways to abuse any particular piece of legislation or law that happens to come into effect. That's the concern that I have with this Bill as well as I do many of the others.

I'd like to just quote from the minister's speech and I think it does build in some mechanisms to safeguard against that, and I think that's really important. But I really want to emphasize this, Mr. Speaker, and I do want to . . . and I quote from the minister's speech. It says:

The Act will also clarify, Mr. Speaker, that a property attorney may not make or change a will in the name of the grantor. It will provide that, unless the enduring power of attorney states otherwise, a property attorney may not make an election benefiting himself or herself or designate himself or herself as a beneficiary of the grantor's property. Similarly unless an enduring power of attorney states otherwise, a property attorney may not change an election or . . . designation made by the grantor.

Close quote, Mr. Speaker.

I think that that does build into the Bill, as I said, the safeguard against the possibility that we could see unscrupulous people try to work their way around this type of legislation and really benefit themselves by becoming an attorney for someone who no longer has the capacity or the power to stop that or to act on their own behalf.

Those are the kinds of things that I as an MLA (Member of the

Legislative Assembly) would like to see and have seen in this piece of legislation with regards to this Bill.

I'd have to . . . We'd want to of course debate this further, Mr. Speaker, and look at, down the road, the ramifications of all the aspects of the Bill. As I said at the outset, on first blush I would say to you that the Bill looks very credible. And I hope that the government, in the rest of the proceedings as we carry this Bill right through to the final vote, that they keep in mind that we must safeguard the people of the province. That has to be our ultimate, our first and ultimate goal without question.

Mr. Speaker, the minister also made note of a good number of groups in his speech that were community agencies that were represented on the committee. And as I look through that list of organizations certainly there are a great many of them that are very high profile organizations in Saskatchewan. One that I see that he did mention was the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan. Of course as we know, Mr. Speaker, that that group, those people who are afflicted with that disease would certainly, certainly all be people who would require the services of someone to act as their attorney and to look after their business. Because as we, some of us know more than others of course — we've had people in our families and our friends afflicted again with this . . . with disease and we know how debilitating it is both physically and mentally and we also know that it's certainly a very solid, strong requirement that these people have access to attorneys.

We look at . . . and the minister also mentioned a good number of seniors' organizations, the Seniors' Mechanism, the seniors' education centre in Regina, so on and so forth; Elmwood Residences, Family and Friends of Cosmo and Elmwood, Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, I go on, and on the list is long and strong and they are good, credible organizations.

Certainly all seniors will be concerned about having someone act on their behalf as they become older, as they go to a long-term care home. And as I said before, the minister . . . or the member from Eastview said that they ought to live longer and die sooner. And I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, that they ought to live longer and die later. But as they do they're of course going to need the services of attorneys, certainly more often as time goes on.

And I think that the list is solid, and I do want to congratulate the minister. I think he did a pretty good job on this — the minister and his department — of being able to put together a really good, strong group of people to act on the committee.

I guess when I look at it I'm a little bit disappointed, just a touch disappointed in the fact that most of the organizations would have originated either in Saskatoon or Regina. Of course that's where our two biggest population areas are, Mr. Speaker, and certainly more people live there than perhaps in smaller towns or smaller cities or even rural Saskatchewan.

Having said that though, Mr. Speaker, there are a good many organizations in rural and small town and small city Saskatchewan who are very concerned and very interested in legislation such as this because they will all be affected perhaps at some point in time with having to undergo and having to have somebody to become their attorney and to act on their

behalf.

So I would have said, had I been able to do this before the Bill was produced, I would have said to the minister to — or asked him and his department — to include, to include, Mr. Speaker, other groups from across the province who obviously are interested.

Mr. Speaker, there's another group that could have been, as well, part of this discussion prior to the Bill being produced and that is people who aren't seniors, people who are not yet ready, perhaps for many, many years, to have to think about somebody appointed as their attorney. And that would be all of us, Mr. Speaker. Every one of us wants to put forward, and to make sure, and to ensure that all people of this province are protected. They need to be protected certainly at any stage in life, but my concern here is that perhaps we've left out a pretty important chunk of the population, and that being the young people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just finish what I have to say in my remarks on this Bill by again talking about credibility. And I think whether you talk about Bill 32 or any of the Bills prior to that, everything that the government has done to this point in this session — we want to talk about the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, we want to talk about the budget, we want to talk about any of the Bills that we've talked about and had presented to us before — Mr. Speaker, I'm concerned about the lack of credibility in any of those Bills.

Governments . . . This government campaigned on one thing and is doing the opposite on everything that they've done. That's the concern I have. That's what worries me when I see a Bill that has some very, that's very important. When I see a Bill like that, I get really concerned that the government is going to do a flip-flop on this Bill just like they've done on everything else that they've done to this point in time. That's my concern. And I have . . . There's no evidence, I've seen no evidence to this point in this session that they're going to change.

So do I support in theory the idea of granting powers of attorneys to people? Certainly I do. Do any of my colleagues on this side of the House? I'm sure they do. That's not the issue. The issue is whether we can trust this socialist government who have flip-flopped on every other issue. The flip-flops on the health care issue, on the taxation; the flip-flop on the education tax on property — all the things that this government campaigned about.

(14:45)

You know, and during the last election campaign the NDP socialist government across the way talked about the . . . how they were going to handle the Crowns. And yet we're seeing them doing a flip-flop. We talked about that, heard about that in question period.

And I want to bring this back to the Bill, Mr. Speaker. And I know that you want me to as well, and I'm happy to do that. But that's my point. My whole point is — and I said this, Mr. Speaker — is the Bill is good. The Bill, the theory is solid. It's the credibility issue that I'm concerned about.

And if and when they can convince me and my colleagues that

their heart is in the right place on this Bill, Mr. Speaker, that will take us on this side of the House a long ways towards supporting this type of legislation and any of the other ones that happen to come down the pike, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, at this point in time I would like to move adjournment on this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Carrot River Valley that debate on second reading on Bill No. 32 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.

Bill No. 33 — The Archives Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased today to make a few remarks at second reading stage of Bill No. 33, The Archives Act, 2004. With this legislation we are taking an important step in updating The Archives Act to make the Act more effective. The changes we are proposing will bring the provisions of the Act into line with current best practices in the archives field.

Saskatchewan's archival legislation has not been updated for years. We're still operating under a legislative framework that was designed in 1945. The amendments we are proposing to the Act will reflect the evolution of government over the years.

We are making changes to the Act to take into account the many technological advances and other changes that have taken place in the field of information and records management, especially in the recent past. Our government is committed to improving its record keeping and to improving our ability to respond to freedom of information requests.

This legislation will improve the public's access to information under the freedom of information Act by improving the government's ability to locate appropriate records and to make those records available, providing they are not exempt. In addition, provisions of this Bill will clearly state the responsibilities, core activities, and powers of the Saskatchewan Archives.

The changes we are proposing today will place greater responsibility and authority on the Saskatchewan Archives and government institutions, which will facilitate better management of the records under their custody.

This new Act was developed in consultation with the National Archives of Canada, other provincial archives, the consulting team of Michael Swift and Associates, and other stakeholders.

Mr. Minister, we need to put in place legislation that meets the

archival and records management needs of the government and the public in today's environment. Therefore I am pleased to move second reading of Bill No. 33, The Archives Act, 2004.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Provincial Secretary that Bill No. 33, The Archives Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Kerpan: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I must say it's a rare occasion that I would get up, have the opportunity to get up and speechify twice in a row, Mr. Speaker, on the very same day, in fact back to back. So I am very pleased to be able to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I had a bit of a toothache this morning when I woke up and one of my colleagues over here just finished telling me that it was kind of an old wives' tale that if you don't allow the air to get at that sore tooth that it will . . . it won't hurt any longer. So that, Mr. Speaker, what I've decided to do today is I've been able . . . I've decided I'm going to blow out all day in this Legislative Assembly rather than suck in, and try to alleviate the pain in my tooth and perhaps the pain from the, that I am feeling from the government since we started this session.

But I wanted to talk about, and I do want to talk about Bill 33, the archives Bill, Mr. Speaker, because again, it's truly, truly an important Bill. I understand why this socialist government is all of a sudden so interested in bringing down an archives Bill because, as we on this side of the House well know, many of them, including the government, are going to soon be a part of Saskatchewan history. And perhaps, Mr. Speaker, maybe sooner rather than later.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Moose Jaw North, who is very eloquent, who is very eloquent on his feet, and is having the opportunity to throw a few words back my way, knows very well what it's like to be on this side of the House and I'm sure that soon he'll be back there.

But I wanted to talk about The Archives Act, Mr. Speaker. And I think, given the time that we are at in this province, it's even more important that we start looking at things like this Bill. We know that next year we are going to be into Saskatchewan's centennial year. It's a tremendous milestone in the history of this province, Mr. Speaker. And there's not a better time that I can think of that we as a government or we as a province would try to and want to and be very desirous of putting the archives and the history and the tradition and the culture of this province not only in its rightful place within the province, but within its rightful place within our great country of Canada. So the timing of this effort is good.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of concerns with this Bill, just like I had with the Bill that I talked to prior to this, and really the first one is credibility. And again, Mr. Speaker, in order for me to relate my concern I have to talk about things like the ISC (Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan) fiasco over the last few years that was supposed to be an electronic switch of our land titles system — which

was in theory a wonderful good idea, Mr. Speaker; no one would argue — just like we would want to talk about this Bill and to electronically organize and make very accessible our archives of this province. They're both great ideas in theory.

Unfortunately, the other one that I just talked about cost us over \$100 million and is still in a state of complete disrepair. And that's my concern that we may see with this Bill, Bill No. 33, Mr. Speaker. That's the concern I have. It's not the idea of the Bill; it's how it's going to be implemented and what the mechanics of that Bill are going to be.

The Speaker . . . or the minister in her opening comments talked about working in conjunction with the national archives Act. Again Mr. Speaker, a very . . . that's a very good thing to have happen. It's good that we should work in co-operation with the national government on issues such as archives.

But that brings me to another area of concern, and that is section 8 of the Bill. And I'd like to quote from the Bill and then talk about it, Mr. Speaker. And I quote:

The Archives Board may acquire by gift, devise or in any other manner printed documents, manuscripts, private papers and any other record or material, to whomsoever belonging, having a bearing on the history of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the way I read this is that that would leave people of Saskatchewan, people who have records or material or artifacts that would be or could have been in Saskatchewan at any one point in time would leave them open again to, to some people really confiscating those types of things. That's the concern I have, because it doesn't safeguard . . .

If I look at section 8, Mr. Speaker, it tells me that, for instance, if I have an important artifact that's been handed down through my family that has some interest in Saskatchewan, this government or any government — this government or any government — could take it without, without any real reason, without any kind of compensation. Because they say again, and I want to quote from the Bill, Mr. Speaker:

The Archives Board may acquire by gift, devise or in any other manner printed documents . . .

And so on and so forth.

The word devise, Mr. Speaker, is the word that I do not trust this socialist government with because history has shown, history has shown, Mr. Speaker, that this socialist government right over there, if they can devise a way to take nuts from a squirrel they're going to do it and they have done it and they're going to do it because their record is . . . Mr. Speaker, that's one thing I must say about this government, their record is impeccable. They are the best devisers that I have seen in many, many years. They can devise ways to change their minds after the election on all kinds of issues. That's the concern I have with this Bill, the archives Bill.

Members opposite, members opposite laugh, Mr. Speaker, but I can hardly wait . . . I shouldn't say I can hardly wait. I know, I know that we are going to see people in this province come to

us as the official opposition and say you know what, this NDP socialist government took, they devised a way to acquire something that was important to my family. And you know it's going to happen, Mr. Speaker, because the record is there.

And that's the concern. It's not, again, Mr. Speaker, it's not the theory, it's not the idea of the Bill; the idea of the Bill's fine. It's solid. It's the mechanics and the way this Bill is going to be implemented that is of great concern to me and my colleagues on this side.

Mr. Speaker, again we're going to . . . I and my colleagues will look and watch as this Bill goes through its stages and through its votes in this House, and as it goes through committee and we . . . I am prepared to support the good things in any Bill this government comes forward. The problem is, the issue is, is credibility, as I said, Mr. Speaker. And if at some point in time, whether that be sooner or later, Mr. Speaker, that they can convince myself that their heart is in the right place on this issue, that'll go a long ways towards co-operation in this House from myself. Unfortunately we have seen very little of that.

Mr. Speaker, as I said before, I am very hopeful and as I said at the outset, it's my goal — it's my goal and the goal of the official opposition and my party — to make historical artifacts out of this NDP government as soon as possible. And at that point in time I would be very happy, as part of the government of Saskatchewan, to include them in our archives. Because even though they are a big part of our archives, Mr. Speaker, it is now time that they were no longer the government of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move adjournment on this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Carrot River Valley that debate on second reading of Bill No. 33 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion's carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 34 — The Psychologists Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Psychologists Amendment Act, 2004. Mr. Speaker, the main reason for amending this Act is to allow the Saskatchewan College of Psychologists to use provisional licensing for psychologists.

In developing this legislation the government has consulted extensively with many groups and organizations, including the College of Psychologists, Saskatchewan educational psychological association, and the Psychological Society of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Mr. Gary Halbert, who is the president-elect of the Saskatchewan College of Psychologists, and he's with us today here in the Speaker's gallery. Mr. Halbert, we would like to thank you and the colleagues for your dedicated work in helping update the Act with this new Bill.

I would also like to acknowledge the important role psychologists play in our health care system and in serving the health needs of the people of Saskatchewan. As health care professionals experienced in diagnosing and treating people with emotional and mental health disorders, psychologists have a variety of skills essential to building the kind of health system we want for this province. Psychologists can play an important role in our primary health care teams.

Mr. Speaker, currently the Act requires that all psychologists must successfully complete their prescribed examinations before being licensed. Therefore it prevents licensing those psychologists who have completed their education program but who have not yet passed their examinations. The amendment I put before the House today, Mr. Speaker, will remove this restriction and will allow psychologists who have not yet passed their examinations to work in Saskatchewan under a provisional licence. Once they pass their examinations, they will be provided with a full practising licence.

(15:00)

Mr. Speaker, we believe benefits will arise from this change. We expect this amendment will encourage newly graduated psychologists to practise in Saskatchewan. This is especially important as we continue to show our commitment made in the Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health Care to retain and recruit health care providers to Saskatchewan. This also shows the commitment made in our Throne Speech of making Saskatchewan ready for the next generation.

This amendment, Mr. Speaker, along with others concerning administrative details, will make the Act consistent with other health profession legislation.

The College of Psychologists has asked that we amend the Act to require that the total membership approve the bylaws of the college. Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to respond to their request and have included that change in this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, as part of our government's commitment to quality, accessible, and responsible health services for the people of Saskatchewan, we believe it is important to bring these amendments to the House today. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of The Psychologists Amendment Act. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 34, The Psychologists Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with pleasure that I rise this afternoon to speak briefly on this Bill, An Act to

amend The Psychologists Act, 1997.

Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak to this Bill, I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank the very important contribution to the health care system and the health of Saskatchewan citizens that is provided by psychologists across this province.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes people do not recognize and realize the importance of psychologists in our health care system. And many of the diseases and the conditions that they deal with deal with mental illness and people with other such disorders. And very often they go undiagnosed and untreated because they're sort of a silent and hidden type of a condition that quite often doesn't manifest itself in a very obvious way. And so there requires a great deal of insight and intuitiveness by psychologists in order to provide this care.

Mr. Speaker, it's also true I think and fair to say that not only in Saskatchewan but across Canada that there are more and more people who have either by design or accident placed themselves into increasing situations of stress. And those conditions can be manifest and amplified into such a condition that they require the services of psychologists and I think that that is certainly true in Saskatchewan as well.

Mr. Speaker, there's a great many of our people, in these economic times, that are under a great deal of stress and those stresses then manifest themselves in relationship problems and other mental dysfunctions. And I think that while we count on psychologists to provide medical and professional support for these individuals we sometimes under appreciate them. And so in speaking to this Bill, I think on behalf of the opposition and the government as well, acknowledge, and support, and voice our appreciation for psychologists and the roles that they play in the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to acknowledge that the minister is responding to a request that has come from the college for improvements to their legislation so that they can better meet the challenges of their profession, and also make sure that their legislation is consistent in keeping with similar pieces of legislation governing other health care professionals in the province and across the country.

Mr. Speaker, one of the challenges that I think everybody understands that we have in the health care system — not only for psychologists — is the issue of making sure that we provide an environment to not only try to attract psychologists, in this case, to this province but that we also create an environment whereby people who are being trained as psychologists within our province find the opportunities in Saskatchewan to establish themselves and practise if it is on a provisional basis and then establish a permanent kind of a practice in the province. Because as I think everyone knows in the health care system, there is a great deal of competition for trained health care professionals and psychologists are no exception to this rule.

And insofar as this request from the College of Psychologists to allow for the changes in their licence from restricted to provisional — so that a person that has completed the required amount of training to make the qualifications for a provisional licence can begin practising in the province — I think that that

is a pretty helpful kind of opportunity and a tool to use to potentially attract these young graduates from their profession to establish a practice in Saskatchewan on a provisional basis. And with the great expectation and hope that these young people will then move . . . decide to stay rather than to move and have a permanent practice here when they complete their licensing requirements for a permanent licence.

Mr. Speaker, I think that that is a very useful and helpful kind of provision in the psychologist legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that it may be well worthwhile for this legislature and the government to consider, are there merits in this type of approach in other medical professions as well? Is there the possibility of these type of provisional licences, and are they in place in other disciplines? And if they're not, then maybe we should consider that because it seems to me to be a very practical, pragmatic, and useful suggestion that may indeed assist us in the challenges of making sure that we have adequate medical professionals in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I think as well that the request by the college that the changes to the bylaws I believe requires the approval of their own membership further sort of enforces the concept that this is a professional association and they are indeed self-regulating and that they, if given the opportunities, will set the appropriate and very world-class, high-class standards for the practice of their profession in our province. And I think that has benefits as well.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to acknowledge that we have initiated communication with the college, and they have told us that they are supportive of this legislation, and they encourage us to be supportive of it. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, as I've outlined I think that the provisions in this legislation have merit and should be properly considered. In fact I think they may be considered to be rather innovative and will allow for some real good solutions to track and keep health care professionals in this province and may be precedent setting for other disciplines as well.

Mr. Speaker, we've also had some inquiries from individuals who are interested in the ramifications of this legislation and is our practice . . . we certainly feel that it is important that these individuals be given some reasonable time to comment on this legislation. And as this is the second reading, we think that is important to allow sufficient time for these individuals to make their positions known. We're very optimistic that they will be supportive of this legislation.

And so, Mr. Speaker, in order to have these individuals have the appropriate time to make their comments known to us so that we may be able to understand if there are issues or concerns that have been overlooked, I would like to move at this time to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melfort that debate on second reading of Bill 34 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.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 12

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Higgins that **Bill No. 12 — The Purchasing Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to rise today to enlighten the member for Moose Jaw North as to what we see in this particular Bill, a Bill respecting the government purchases, Mr. Speaker.

And Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues have presented some reservations as to the procedures and indeed motives of the government opposite in their bringing forward of Acts and the enactment of Acts in this province, we also have, Mr. Speaker, some concerns that perhaps the member from Moose Jaw North might be interested in listening to on this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, because the purchasing of government supplies and services are critically important to the people of Saskatchewan.

All you have to do is take a look at any news item in today's news in relationship to Ottawa where it comes to the provision of supplies and services, and there's a huge scandal there. So people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, need to be aware of the failings that can happen within government purchase programs, to be watchful of them, and to ensure that Acts and operations in relationship to these kinds of services and purchases of services, Mr. Speaker, are done in a safe and appropriate manner that serves the people of Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, does not serve interests unrelated to the taxpayers and the citizens of Saskatchewan in the provision of those services.

And, Mr. Speaker, in this particular Act there are some of those kinds of concerns in relationship to the proposal to centralize the purchasing, Mr. Speaker, of purchases and services for the Government of Saskatchewan. Just like in the federal government, they were centralizing their sponsorship under one particular program, Mr. Speaker, which was allowed to go awry, and the Committee of Public Accounts in Ottawa is reviewing that process, Mr. Speaker. The Auditor General has reviewed this process and found that it has indeed not been done properly.

So it's important that we scrutinize this particular Act, which is a new Act dealing with the centralization of purchasing services within government operations. And it's not just within what one has normally considered to be government departments, but it also includes, Mr. Speaker, all government-type entities and third parties as well that receive the majority of their funding from the province — from the tax base — such as the health districts, education, etc., Mr. Speaker. So this is a fairly broad and encompassing Act that deals with . . . When you look at the budget of Saskatchewan's six point some billion dollars, there

is a large amount of supplies and purchases that are done, Mr. Speaker. You take a look at this, and it describes who would be participants in this kind of activity, Mr. Speaker. It deals with participating jurisdiction.

The Speaker: — Order. Why is the member from Cumberland on her feet?

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, I'm asking for leave to introduce some guests.

The Speaker: — The member for Cumberland has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Thank you. And I would like to thank the member from Cannington for allowing me to introduce a couple of guests. They are members of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Ted Merasty and Brian Ballantyne, and they are here for a visit. They are members of . . . They are from Pelican Narrows, and I would like to welcome them to Regina and to the House. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 12 — The Purchasing Act, 2004 (continued)

The Speaker: — The member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Absolutely a person needs a chance to collect their thoughts and catch their breath, so it's always welcome, especially when a member of the government side of the House wishes to give an opposition member a break and allow them to have a sip of water, etc., Mr. Speaker, so that kind of neighbourliness is appreciated at times.

Mr. Speaker, in this particular Bill respecting government purchases, it talks about participating jurisdictions, and that can be the Government of Canada and/or its agencies, the government of any other province or territory of Canada, First Nations organization or Métis organization, Mr. Speaker, so it's fairly broad and encompassing.

It deals with public agencies such as any department, agency, board, or commission of the Government of Saskatchewan including any Crown corporation or other agent of the Crown designated by the minister — fairly wide latitude there — as a public agency for the purposes of this Act.

It also deals, Mr. Speaker, with The Regional Health Services Act.

It deals with universities, colleges, boards of educations, conseil scolaires, and other educational institutions; municipalities and local governing bodies; any institution or body that derives its funds in whole or in part from the Government of Saskatchewan and any other institution or body designated by the Lieutenant Governor in Council as a public institution for the purpose of this Act.

(15:15)

So it covers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the people of Saskatchewan normally think of as 45 per cent of the entire economy of Saskatchewan, in the first place. In the second place, it deals with our third level of government — municipalities, education, health boards. And it deals with the federal government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It deals with services, meaning any service required by a public agency or public institution. So it can be anything from supplying consultants. It could deal with ad agencies. It can deal with telephone service, any possible service, supplies, meaning any goods, wares, or merchandise that is required. So this is very, very broad, Mr. Speaker.

This Act allows the minister to appoint an officer or employee of any department or Crown corporation as the official to be called the director of purchasing. This is the person at . . . where the pinnacle of all the purchasing within that organization shall culminate, and they will be the authority, and the person with the designated authority to make decisions that this Act will implement, Mr. Speaker.

And it's interesting that in . . . what some of the rules that will be set up in dealing with the purchasing of supplies and services. It says that the director shall do the following: obtain competitor prices for supplies. Now that's a very good. That is what needs to happen.

In fact as . . . we saw that today in question period, where Sask Housing has gone out into open market and found a more acceptable price for natural gas for heating their units. And they've entered into a contract to supply, have this company supply natural gas to Sask Housing rather than going through the government's own agency of SaskEnergy because the marketplace competitive system is working. That's how it should be.

I guess the real question needs to be asked, why is the government agency charging more than the private sector? Because the private sector is not doing this as a charity. They're not doing this to lose money. They're doing this with a profit motive in mind. And yet the Crown agency who doesn't have to do this with a profit motive in mind is charging more money than what the private sector is charging to supply natural gas to Sask Housing.

I would only hope that each and every one of these directors of purchasing within each agency, Crown, board, commission, department — whatever the case may be — would also go out and seek a competitive market for the purchase of their natural gas for heating, for their electrical services, for their supplies of whatever kind they may need, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they just don't simply call up and say, some government agency

we'll take whatever it is your supplying regardless of the cost.

They need to follow their very first rule in this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, clause 4(2)(a): "obtain competitive prices for supplies."

Now when you obtain competitive prices for supplies, I don't see in here anyplace though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where it says they have to accept a contract that provides them the most competitive price. They've obtained a quote on that price, but I'm not sure that the word obtain competitive prices for supplies means they have to accept that quote. So while they may have obtained the most competitive price, they may not have accepted that price as their final supplier, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I think that's a requirement, should be a requirement that they receive their supplies at the most competitive price not simply that they obtain those prices, Mr. Speaker. They need to . . . This deals with the combining of more than one agency in putting forward a request for supplies and services, Mr. Speaker.

It also talks about obtaining the best value for supplies. It says that the director shall do the following: "obtain the best value for supplies, considering price, quality, delivery, service, warranty . . ."

And those are all very good. If they simply stopped there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that would mean that in obtaining that lowest competitive price they would be taking it. But then it goes on to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker: ". . . or any other factor that the director considers important for . . . supplies being acquired."

So does that mean that the director — while having gone out and obtained the quotes for the lowest competitive price to supply, in this case of my example, natural gas — could take some other factor into account that the director considers important for the supplies being acquired? Does that mean the fact that you could obtain lower natural gas prices from a private sector provider or a higher price from a Crown sector provider? The fact that this is one Crown corporation purchasing that they would go to a sister Crown corporation to make their purchase based solely on the fact that it was another Crown corporation rather than going to the competitive marketplace — this allows that to happen, Mr. Speaker, where it says:

. . . any other factor that the director considers important for supplies being acquired.

I think that's way too broad, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the director should have to supply reasons why they would accept something other than the best value for supplies considering price, quality, delivery, service, and warranty.

I think there should be a requirement in here that if the director does not acquire supplies or services based on those values that the director should have to publish the reasons why, that the Crown Corporations Committee . . . that it should be published in the *Saskatchewan Gazette* perhaps. But it should be made public as to what the reason is, why they chose not to follow their own guidelines, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think that would go a long way to ensuring that indeed the public was

receiving value for their purchases and that everyone could be assured and would feel comfortable that that was happening.

Further on it goes:

acquire supplies at rates and on terms and conditions conducive to the economic and environmental well-being of Saskatchewan.

I guess this allows an avenue for the acquisition of electrical supplies from the wind generation that SaskPower has put up in southwest Saskatchewan that my colleague today mentioned that the windmills aren't turning; they're sitting there silent and quiet today because the wind isn't blowing.

And so SaskPower I know has gone to the public and said that it was going to cost more to purchase this power. And I know that a number of the Crown boards and agencies, the universities have taken up this challenge to purchase this power at an additional cost and this very Act would allow that to continue, Mr. Speaker. I think there needs to be an explanation given when the director of purchasing makes the decisions to do that — to pay a premium to subsidize or to supplement that production from costs that someone else has to pay.

You know we hear about the complaints from the universities that they're not receiving enough money from the provincial government to support their programming. We're hearing complaints from students that the tuition fees are too high. And yet I know that the universities are purchasing power from SaskPower for their windmills in Swift Current. So how do you square the circle, Mr. Speaker, in obtaining the best value for your supplies considering price, quality, delivery, service, and warranty and also provide for the environmental well-being of Saskatchewan?

Someplace there has to be an explanation as to why that is occurring; why some groups, like the students at the university, have to pay additional costs to provide for this. Perhaps it should be on their tuition fees that the students could check off a box that would say, I agree to pay an additional \$25 in tuition fees to supplement this additional purchase of power.

Since the director of purchasing seems to have the right to make those kind of decisions, and certainly we saw that Sask Housing has taken the option and taken their right seriously to provide for their clients at the lowest possible cost, why shouldn't other areas, Mr. Deputy Speaker, also have that provision as well — such as students at the universities and at SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) to make that decision when it comes to the costs on their tuition fees. Because obviously any additional costs based on this are being transferred at the end of the day either to the provincial government in the amount of their grant that is given, or in the case of . . . according to the universities not being given, which in turn means that the students have to pay a larger tuition fee, Mr. Speaker.

It also says that:

For acquisitions of less than the dollar amount prescribed in the . . . (legislation), the director may give a preference in favour of supplies produced, manufactured or sold in

Saskatchewan.

I think that is important, Mr. Speaker. I think we do need to encourage manufacturing and production in this province.

And if that means that we have to temporarily — I think there needs to be a sunset clause on this — temporarily support an industry to get it off the ground, then we should do so. But at some point in time that industry needs to be able to stand on its own two feet. Either the product is of value and people desire it or it's not of value. And my colleagues shout, like potatoes.

Well obviously at the start people thought there was a value in producing it so the government jumped in whole hog and put in \$28 million. And at the end of the day there was no value there and that was a complete loss. And so at the end of the day you have to be prepared to cut your losses on these things and bail out. The government did this eventually after six years of hiding the truth on the matter. And yet then they say it was a huge success, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unless you take the narrow view of the money loss.

So we did grow potatoes. We were a success in growing potatoes, Mr. Speaker. The problem was they were inedible. They couldn't even turn them into vodka, Mr. Speaker, so they dumped them in a dugout that filled up with water and the seagulls ate them. And, Mr. Speaker, much to the surprise and possibly the chagrin of the minister responsible for Liquor and Gaming of the day, they did ferment and we did have a bunch of drunk seagulls.

Now I'm not sure what kind of an impact that had on the environment, but I'm sure that there was some people out there who would've been disturbed that this was a danger to the wildlife, Mr. Speaker, in particular to the seagulls that were consuming this alcohol to their detriment, Mr. Speaker.

Another section deals with, Mr. Speaker, that:

. . . all suppliers who are bidding or otherwise competing on a contract to provide services to a public agency are to be governed by the same set of competition rules and procedures established by the director . . .

Well I guess, Mr. Speaker, that's good, until you flip back and say that the director may direct any . . . compensate for any other factor the director considers important. Or whether the conditions are conducive . . . excuse me . . . conducive to the economic and environmental well-being of Saskatchewan.

So everybody has to compete with the same rules and procedures unless the director decides otherwise. That almost sounds like a Liberal program, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That almost sounds like the program that Chuck Guité was running in Ottawa — that, well sometimes you know we have to fudge with the rules a little bit.

Well, Mr. Speaker, why would you even allow for that in legislation? You've seen the problems that this can develop from this kind of a procedure, and yet this government in a new Act is putting those kind of conditions into that Act that allow for these kind of inconsistencies to occur.

You know the sponsorship program has become a huge scandal across Canada. We're talking a minimum \$100 million and possibly as much as \$250 million, Mr. Speaker, and yet this government is moving ahead with a piece of legislation that could allow those very kind of things to occur here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

(15:30)

Clause no. 5 here I think is equally disturbing. It talks about surplus materials that the agencies . . . government has and how those services can be disposed of. They could be sold. They could be reissued to the agency in question or to another agency. Or, Mr. Speaker, here is the one that concerns me: selling, trading is acceptable, or donating them, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now depending on who you're donating them to, it may be of value.

I know when my son was in Wascana, Wascana would love to have had a donation from some government agency of one or two computers to allow the people who were quadriplegics or paraplegics to learn how to operate a computer. But they didn't have them. They would have dearly loved to have had someone to contribute that, to donate that.

But the question is, is how broad is this donation process? Who can you make this donation to? Is it to another department? So a department is a little short of money this year. You know, you look at Environment last year, or even this year. They didn't have enough money to open the parks up before mid-June. They were short \$100,000. But let's say the department needs to purchase \$100,000 worth of grass-cutting equipment for the parks. Would it be possible for the Department of Highways to donate \$100,000 worth of grass-cutting equipment to the Department of Parks, so the Department of Parks could free up their \$100,000 and keep the parks open? Is it going to be used simply as a means of transferring money back and forth, Mr. Speaker, between the departments so that it doesn't appear in the budget, Mr. Speaker?

Those are the kind of problems that could arise. Or is it going to be used to donate money to non-governmental agencies, say to non-profit charities? You know we had the story a few years ago of a company called PDN that was a non-profit charity. You know I'm sure the member from North Battleford remembers that particular company. I believe he was renting his office space off of them.

This company built up a huge amount of money in their charity, in their accounts, their assets, which they were supposed to be donating for charity but never were, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So would it be possible to donate some of the supplies of departments or Crowns to a charity like this, like PDN, Mr. Speaker? That isn't . . . I think would be totally inappropriate for that to have happened. PDN also happened to be a major contributor, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the campaigns of the member from North Battleford as a federal NDP MP (Member of Parliament), and to the previous member from North Battleford, Doug Anguish.

Would it be appropriate for the government to be making donations to this non-profit charity of that type? I would argue that it would not be. So I think the rules need to be tightened up

here significantly, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to these kind of operations, Mr. Speaker.

There are a number of other issues in this particular Bill that need to be looked over very, very carefully, Mr. Speaker. And that's the making of regulations. It says the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations. Well the Lieutenant Governor in Council has nothing to do with the Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Lieutenant Governor in Council is the cabinet — are the members of the NDP Party that are in the cabinet.

And one of the things . . . Now they've laid out a number of rules in the Act, Mr. Speaker, as to purchasing. That you have to get the most competitive price; that you have to get best value for supplies, considering price, quality, delivery of service, and warranty. And then it says that the cabinet can:

. . . (define), enlarging or restricting the meaning of any word or expression . . . in this Act but not defined in this Act;

b) designating the supplies or classes of supplies excluded from the provisions of this Act . . .

Now I'm sure Paul Martin right now down in Ottawa would have loved to have had this clause in excluding classes of supplies that is supplying advertising, from the rules. Would have been very nice for him right now. He could say, huh, didn't break any rules; there were no rules.

Mr. Speaker, that's what this Act allows in regulations. Designating the supplies or classes of supplies excluded from the provisions of this Act. Mr. Speaker, it also goes on to say:

. . . on the basis that those supplies are included in contracts for construction or contracts for other services or for any other reason the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers appropriate;

Any other reason the cabinet considers to be appropriate. They can exclude any purchasing of supplies or services from this Act.

So I guess really the question comes down to at the end of the day, what's the purpose of this Act if the cabinet can exclude anything they want from this particular Act. And it even goes beyond the Lieutenant Governor in Council and the making of decisions by cabinet. It goes on to say:

The minister may make orders:

governing the manner in which the business of the director shall be conducted;

governing the manner in which a public agency shall request the director to purchase . . . (and) dispose of supplies;

designating the officials or employees of a public agency who may make (additions) acquisitions of supplies other than through the director;

(and) specifying the conditions under which acquisitions of supplies may be made by persons designated pursuant to clause (c).

They put an Act in place, Mr. Speaker, and then they put in enough exclusions to completely nullify this very Act. You have to wonder, what's the purpose of it? What are they trying to build? What are they trying to hide? What is the real reason for doing this, Mr. Speaker, when you have so many, so many exceptions, so many exclusions? The cabinet can make decisions that totally disregard the Act. The minister can make orders to completely disregard the Act. You have to ask yourself at the end of the day, is this just a make-work exercise for the drafting branch of Justice? What is the real purpose of this Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that the minister needs to take a very serious look at this Act as to what he's trying to do, to make the necessary adjustments to this Act to make sure that it accomplishes what it sets out to do in the first part of the Act minus all the exclusions and exemptions and exceptions that they may have in this particular Act.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, at this time I would move adjournment of debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 13

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 13 — The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations 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. It is a pleasure for me to rise and speak to Bill 13, labour-sponsored venture capital amendment Act, 2004. Mr. Speaker, in summarizing the notes regarding this Bill — and we thank the Hon. Minister of Industry and Resources for providing them — this Bill is intended to do or to facilitate a few proposed changes regarding LSVC corporations, labour-sponsored venture capital corporations.

The first amendment is a result of changes to the federal Income Tax Act, and the second is to ensure that growth in labour-sponsored funds continues in this province. On the basis of these reasons, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to further examining this Bill to ensure that these reasons and the proposed legislation enacted will in fact bring about the results that will be beneficial to the investment community and business expansion, but not to be detrimental to the province as

a whole.

There are, Mr. Speaker, in effect four players involved in the provision of raising capital in this manner. There are the labour unions; there are the businesses that access the funds; there are the individuals who choose to invest their money in these funds; and there is the governments, both federal and in our case Saskatchewan, who provide the tax credits to make this type of investment more attractive to investors.

Venture capital corporations are not restricted to labour-sponsored venture capital corporations. But in effect, because the income tax credits are only made available to duly registered labour-sponsored venture capital corporations, they are effectively the only tax-incentived venture capital choice.

I and we, Mr. Speaker, have some questions about this. If, for example, a group of agricultural producers wanted to set up a venture capital corporation with the intent of obtaining capital from other agricultural producers and we the . . . and use the capital to fund agriculture-related projects within a certain area, because, Mr. Speaker, they are not a labour-sponsored group, they would not be able to offer to their investors the tax credits that are available to those investing in an approved labour-sponsored venture capital corporation.

If indeed, Mr. Speaker, venture capital is a commodity that this province needs to attract to grow this economy — which, Mr. Speaker, certainly this side of the House is in full agreement — then should the tax incentives that are provided by our government, our people, Mr. Speaker, be restricted to labour-sponsored venture capital corporations only? What about free enterprise sponsored venture capital corporations that would, as an incentive, provide tax credits to individual investors?

Mr. Speaker, I truly believe that investments such as exist under labour-sponsored venture capital corporations will continue to be influential in the raising of capital within and without the province.

Mr. Speaker, the tax incentives that are presently provided are attractive enough to warrant the serious consideration of investors. Let me just provide a quick example of just how the present rules can work. I will make some assumptions — an individual resident of Saskatchewan is 30 years old, self-employed, does not have a company pension plan, and his income is sufficient that his allowable RRSP (Registered Retirement Savings Plan) contribution is in excess of \$5,000 a year.

If this individual invests \$5,000 per year into his Registered Retirement Savings Plan via qualifying labour-sponsored venture capital corporation and if . . . over an eight-year term. And if over this eight-year term he even realizes zero per cent rate of growth on his investment, we have a situation whereby at the end of eight years the individual has \$40,000 in his RRSP. His tax credits of \$1,750 per year are \$14,000. So in effect, Mr. Speaker, you can see that at the end of ten . . . of eight years, this individual has a \$40,000 investment in his RRSP and an after-tax cost of only \$26,000.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is when the . . . It gets interesting when

this individual stops contributing to this program but rolls over his investment each year over the next eight years. And this is not generally understood in the financing community, I don't think, on . . . perhaps on either side of the House, but I would just like to continue to show you the effect of this. That's good?

An Hon. Member: — That's good, yes. Another ten minutes . . .

Mr. Chisholm: — Okay. So what allows the rollover over the next eight-year period is that there is a provision that if you hold the investment for eight years, you do not have to pay back the tax credits.

(15:45)

So as my example here, when my guy reaches the age of 38, he doesn't buy another \$5,000; he rolls over the one that's now eight years old. Now assuming zero growth again, this individual would now have 40 . . . still \$40,000 but with an after-tax cost of \$12,000 because he would have received \$14,000 in tax credits the first eight years; he now receives another \$14,000 in tax credits in the subsequent eight years.

Now let's just continue. This gentleman's only 46 years old. Let's carry this on for the next eight years. At that point our investor will still have \$40,000 in his RRSP. What is his cost base now? Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a negative \$2,000. He has received \$42,000 in tax credits over this 24 years. His original cost was \$40,000; he's received \$42,000.

Now my guy's still only 53 years old, Mr. Speaker. If we continue this process, which is allowed, at the end of . . . by the time he's 61 years old, in the next eight-year period, he has, still has \$40,000 in his RRSP but the cost base now is a negative \$16,000. So he has paid a negative \$16,000 for an investment that is worth \$40,000.

Now I'll continue this just one more time. We'll just take him to 69 and just to leave it there; he will probably start to draw on the money at that time. But if we go all the way to 69, he has an investment of . . . that's still worth \$40,000. He has a negative cost of \$30,000 — that's what his cost was.

Now this illustration is based on a zero return of the initial investment. In effect a mere 5 per cent return over the period would result in him having \$100,000 with a cost of a negative \$30,000.

So, Mr. Speaker, the example, which I hope didn't bore you or the members opposite, or indeed the members on this side of the House, I think you can appreciate that there will continue to be an increasing number of residents of our province who will be attracted to investing in labour-sponsored venture capital funds once they understand the concept, particularly through their retirement savings program.

So that is why this legislation is important and must be examined closely to determine that the desired goal to attract venture capital funding is balanced by the cost, the cost to the General Revenue Fund in the tax credits that are being generated by the individual investors . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That was just an example.

The various industries that have accessed labour-sponsored venture capital funds over the past number of years, both the Saskatchewan funds and also the out-of-province funds that have also provided tax credits for residents of Saskatchewan, include agricultural-related industries, oil and gas development, high-tech development, etc.

And specifically, for example, the Willows golf course in Saskatoon and perhaps ironically a company called DC DiagnostiCare, an Edmonton company that provides private MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) services . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . A Saskatchewan tax credit, a Saskatchewan tax credit available for a fund that provides private MRI services in neighbouring Alberta. Interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, interesting.

I know this to be true, Mr. Speaker, because I have benefited from the Saskatchewan tax credits generated from this very fund. You can do that in Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Not with an MRI, sorry.

We look forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to examining this Bill in light of the provisions to allow more flexibility for funds to partner or merge with other funds. We see this as a positive move, in that the nature of venture capital funds is that their toughest seven to eight years is traditionally the first seven to eight years. And this is because in the start-up period, you normally have some winners and some losers. The losers normally get weeded out early so you are left with a larger per cent of winners after the initial period.

So if existing funds with their proven track records can combine the expertise and capital with smaller start-up venture capital corporations, there should be positive affects.

We do therefore want to have an opportunity to debate this Bill further, Mr. Speaker, so I request to move adjournment on this Bill. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 15

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Higgins that **Bill No. 15 — The Workers' Compensation Board Pension Implementation Act** be now read a second time.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to have the opportunity to speak on the short title, the

workmen's compensation board pension implementation Act. I'm sincerely glad that's the short title, Mr. Speaker.

One question that certainly came to mind upon reviewing this plan was that it's been around, Mr. Deputy Speaker, since the 1970s and here we are nearly 35 years later looking at this as a urgent matter that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, according to the minister there are around 50 or so members of this plan. The question is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is 50 the magic number that the government has made to decide to review some of these issues in the pension plan system? And although, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 50 may seem like a small number, I'm not sure how they would be affected or do they agree to these changes and have they been consulted, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

I've not been able to review any material regarding the opinions of the 50 affected. In my opinion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, their opinion should be regarded and looked at prior to making any changes to this agreement. Their desires . . . They're the ones that have been putting into this plan, and they certainly should have a discussion and a chance to be heard at all levels.

Is this a priority of the affected or a priority of the government to have these changes put through at this time? Mr. Deputy Speaker, have all the stakeholders been informed to any additional costs associated with the workmen's compensation board pension plan? And are the costs, if any, associated with this Bill offset by the perceived advantages to the changes as presented? Who will bear the total cost associated with these changes, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Have those costs been documented and have they been presented to the 50 stakeholders prior to the amendments and changes requested? Is there a cost benefit to this change? Who will receive the benefit of this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

When we're changing pension plans that have been in existence so long . . . for such a long period of time, we need to be assured that there are no losers in the transaction. People have entrusted to us the ability to protect these plans to the betterment of all.

Thirty-five years have passed and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the stroke of a pen we can be affecting somebody's life for the next 35 years. We must be sure that all 50 representative are protected to the best of our ability.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister stated that the employer stopped making contributions to the workmen's compensation board pension plan because it had a surplus in it. Is it not the employer's obligation to contribute their portion of the plan? Is this not a bone of contention with some of the other government's pension plans that the employer — the government — has not contributed its share to the fund? What are the rules surrounding this? And how can the government just arbitrarily stop contributing on behalf of their employees?

Accumulation surplus is \$5 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This Bill will transfer the assets and the liabilities of this plan. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this gives the workmen's compensation board the ability to start a new pension plan. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to be absolutely clear as to what is happening

with this \$5 million surplus. The minister said it would be shared on a 50/50 basis, but she never really said who we'd be sharing with. Mr. Speaker, I think this is a critical issue that needs to be answered prior to this Bill going further.

Is the government's GRF (General Revenue Fund) entitled to a cut of this surplus? And is that the government's intention? Of course if that were the case, that would be of a major concern to me and the members on this side. Or will the surplus be used for better benefits for the members? This is a considerable sum of money and we . . . (inaudible) . . . to know precisely how it's going to be used.

Is workmen's compensation board free to use a portion of this surplus for any purpose it intends? Could they be paying down their losses or could they be doing some more decorating, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

This type of an issue is a concern because of the many complaints all of us as legislators have heard through the years from other retired public employees who are not happy at all with how they were treated under their pension plan. They complain often and bitterly about the fact that government has not put any money into these plans that it is so obligated to do. And some complain about the benefits they received under their plans compared to some of the plans from other public employees.

We must also clarify, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how this Act will affect the workmen's compensation board's bottom line — if it does or if it doesn't. We all know that the WCB (Workers' Compensation Board) has racked up huge deficits over the past couple of years. These huge losses have resulted in double-digit premium increases for the employers of this province.

There have been many questions about the management decisions at workmen's compensation board so we will have to take time to scrutinize this Bill very carefully.

Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 15. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 16

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 16 — The Geographic Names Board Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to speak to the . . . An Act to amend The Geographic Names Board Act. As the minister outlined in his second reading speech, one of the board's notable initiatives is the geo-memorial project.

This is a project, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to commemorate those who gave their lives in the service of their country during the Second World War and it is . . . it has proven very, very worthwhile. As of today there is something in the neighbourhood of 3,800 geographic features in Saskatchewan's northland have been named for this project.

Mr. Speaker . . . Deputy Speaker, I think all of us, I think all of us, most of us in this House, have had some knowledge of individuals that were unfortunately killed during the war — relatives, friends — for more the senior people but . . . and it's nice to see these individuals recognized.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've had the opportunity on numerous occasions to speak at functions, Remembrance Day functions throughout the province and it is very, very touching to an awful lot of individuals that discuss the fact that a relative of theirs have been honoured by being . . . having a geographical feature named after them. I had the opportunity two years ago to speak to an individual who had a twin brother, and his twin brother was actually killed in World War II. And I think the brother — I think they are about 20 years of age at the time; it's very, very young and tragic age to die — but died serving his country.

(16:00)

And when I spoke at the Legion function, the individual had talked to me and told me the story of his brother in the war, and how he had died, and the fact that a lake in northern Saskatchewan was named after his brother. It's a very, very moving and touching honour to have a geographical lake or geographical object, place named in your honour.

But, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I also would like to see possibly a little bit different in this Bill is, we talk extensively throughout, in the minister's comments and in the powers and duties of the board . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. The Deputy Speaker requests leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Deputy Speaker: — Thank you. Thank you members. As members know, the broadcast services is often called the mother channel because most of the people watching it are mothers. I noticed in the Speaker's gallery that my mother and my father have joined the proceedings. Just incidentally my father just recently celebrated his 10th anniversary of his 60th birthday. So I would ask all hon. members to welcome my parents to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

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

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And welcome to your parents into the Assembly and I promise I will not be too rough on your son as he sits in the honoured Chair.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I was saying, there's parts of this Bill that I think need to be looked at and possibly expanded on. And the reason I say that, we see that several times in the minister's comments we make reference to the young people who died in wartime and that they should be remembered for all time. And I wholeheartedly agree with that.

But let's take it one step further, Mr. Deputy Speaker. How about the young men and women that have given their lives for the country subsequent to World War II? And I look at people currently on peacekeeping duties, for an example, that have given their lives for their country, which is our country. They have gone to places — hot spots of the world if you wish — and I would hope, I would hope that they would be recognized also under the terms of this Bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also look at, from my background, people that have died in tragic accidents while even in training missions, performing training missions that were preparing young men and women to go to war or to service the war machine if you wish.

And I use an example of a Hercules aircraft that crashed in the High Arctic a few years ago. And it was on a humanitarian mission. We may sit back and suggest that these people were not killed in a war, but I would submit to everybody that they were killed in the course of their duties. They were unfortunately and tragically killed performing a very tricky landing in a situation in the Arctic where they were trying to save other people. Were they killed in a wartime? No. Were they killed in the service of their country? Yes.

And I think it's people such as this that should also be recognized when it comes to a Bill such as The Geographic Names Board Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a young fighter pilot back a number of years ago, I had a very unfortunate incident happen which . . . on a night training mission flying a Star Fighter aircraft, one of my very, very close friends crashed ahead of me on a night mission. Was he killed in war? No. But he was sure killed in training for a war that we all hoped would never happen. But he was killed in his line of duty, and his line of duty was training so that the rest of Canada and hopefully the rest of the world could be free.

It is people like my friend that I would hope would be included

in the geographic name board Act. And the reference that I see so far, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't see any reference to that and I would like to talk a little bit more about that. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I look at this Bill, the Bill itself I fully support. I support the concept. And my few words that I've given you I think there needs to be some changes to this Bill, and how do we effect these changes?

And when I look at the actual Bill, one of the things — and my colleague from Cannington pointed out in his eloquent remarks previously — about the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and Lieutenant Governor in Council is in fact cabinet. In this Bill it states that the board that governs The Geographic Names Board Act are appointed by Lieutenant Governor in Council, which is cabinet.

Now I would suggest and submit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that in effect politicizes the board, and one of the very least things that should happen when we're referring to individuals that died for their country. Why would we want to politicize that? And because it's an appointment by cabinet, it's very, very easy to see, and it's very easy for one to suggest that it could definitely be politicized.

Also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at the board and the amendments that come into this Bill, that it actually comes under ISC. Now I do have a bit of a problem with why this board would report to ISC. I could go on at great lengths about our feelings about ISC, but here we have an organization that has . . . We've talked about in this Assembly on numerous occasions about the mismanagement and how they've gone totally out of control with spending. And yet we put something so significant as The Geographic Names Board Act underneath the umbrella of ISC.

Now again one may sit on the other side of this Assembly and say, well that's an arm's length from government, and that's why we've done it that way. Well let's be fair and let's be truthful — it's a Crown corporation. And who do the Crown corporations report directly to is the government. So I think to depoliticize such an issue and such a good initiative as this, it should be totally out of the arm of the government or out of the Crown corporation.

And also within the context of the Bill, there's a clause in the Bill that says the minister may — may — approve a name recommended by the board for a geographical feature — may. And that is quite troublesome. When we look at a board that is established to decide, and even given the context that it's not politicized, although it's appointed by cabinet . . . We have a board with their mandate to gather and record information regarding the names of places and geographical features in the province. That's one of the mandates of the board, and there's a whole list, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I don't think I have to go through the whole list of duties of the board, but one is to recommend to the minister for approval, the names of geographical features. So we have a board — if we may even go so far as to say it's non-politicized — that are seeking names of individuals that geographical features should and could be named after. Then it goes to the minister for approval.

I would suggest that this is politicizing this very, very important and very sensitive function into an organization that it need not be. If in fact the minister is required to approve it just for the sake of putting a rubber stamp on it to legalize it through the legislature is one thing, and maybe it should state that within the Bill. It should state that the minister will and shall approve the recommendations of the board. But I think the board should be offset from government.

We have numerous people in this province that have served, some of them are getting more senior now, but have served in World War II. They would be ideal representatives on this board, and not somebody that has the right political stripes to be appointed to the board. And that would totally depoliticize the function of this board.

And these individuals, if depoliticized, could go out and research the names of people that have been killed in the war. And as per my suggestion is, we could go on and look at people that have died for their country subsequent to the war. And in fact even in the context of the geo-memorial project we don't make reference even to the Korean War. And I think this is maybe an oversight, but I think this needs to be included within this Bill.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I look through this, the actual amendment to the Bill, there's not an awful lot of significance or substance to it. Changing words to make them gender neutral, that's just a housekeeping issue.

It removes the secretary to the board from being appointed by the Crown and make the appointment subject to The Public Service Act, mainly for benefits. And now the secretary is going to be — if I got my notes here correctly — is going to be appointed by the minister. So another politicized position appointed directly by the minister.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that the . . . this Bill needs to be looked at further in terms of how it can be made more responsive to the people of the province and not responsive directly to the government of the day. The concept to me is great. We need to honour our men and women who have given their lives for their country and for their province, and I've given you a couple of examples. But I think the Bill itself needs to be re-looked at. Maybe we'll have an opportunity at a later date to look at the Bill.

But as far as the amendments, again as I related, there's a couple of issues in the amendments that I think that we want to question, specifically why ISC is in charge, if you wish, of the board or the board comes under the umbrella of ISC. Again the management, the whole concept of ISC has been in a terrible state for the last few years, and so for this to come under there kind of puts it in a lesser light, if you wish.

That being said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's some issues that I think that we want to look at in this Bill, and I'm confident there's other members on this side of the House that would like to speak to this amendment. So with that being said, I'd like to adjourn debate on this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Wood River has moved debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the

Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 17

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 17 — The Department of Energy and Mines Amendment Act, 2004** — be now read a second time.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Lloydminster.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There are several things that I would like to put forward with regard to the amendment in this particular Bill. On the surface it looks like a very housekeeping type of Bill.

(16:15)

In fact, the major part of the Bill is just trying to change the name so that it will apply to the new restructured and the new renamed government. In fact, the Bill becomes something like this — it was called The Department of Energy and Mines Act, and the amendment is going to be changed to dropping the word “department.” It’s just called now the energy and mines Act. And on the surface it’s as insignificant as that.

But when you get into the actual thought process behind the Department of Energy and Mines there’s lots of comments that could be made and lots of questions that remain unanswered.

The importance of the mines and energy sector of our economy is very important and the importance of this sector, as far as the budget for this year is concerned, is significantly important. It’s a pretty major part of the budget. There is a significant amount of money allocated in the budget for the mineral revenue section, for the petroleum-natural gas section, for the exploration-geographical services section, and the resource and economic policy . . .

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

Mr. Borgerson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I request permission to introduce guests.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Saskatchewan Rivers has requested leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried. I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thank you to the member from Lloydminster for giving me a moment

or two to introduce some guests who have come quite a long distance here to visit this Assembly.

We have 25 students, grade 7 and 8 students from Ray School, from Ray, North Dakota here to visit us today. And they are accompanied by their teacher, Lynn McCoy and chaperones Monica Hartsoch and Jan and Vern Herfindahl. I hope I pronounced that correctly.

Ray, North Dakota, I think, is quite close to Williston, if I am not mistaken. On behalf of all members of the Assembly, I would like to welcome our guests from North Dakota to Canada, to Saskatchewan, and to this Assembly. So welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Eagles: — Leave to introduce guests.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Estevan has requested leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That’s carried. I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And on behalf of the official opposition, I would like to join the government member in welcoming the students from North Dakota.

Ray is situated between Williston and Minot. And as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my constituency borders the United States and I’m very proud of my American friends. And members of this Assembly . . . We all know that you will be recipients of Canadian and Saskatchewan hospitality. So welcome. I hope you enjoy your stay and I hope your travels are safe.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I now recognize the member for Lloydminster.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 17 — The Department of Energy and Mines Amendment Act, 2004 (continued)

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I too, during my comments here, would welcome our guests from North Dakota. It’s a rare occasion when we have people like yourselves come to try to understand a little bit better the similarities and the differences between our systems. And I think you’ll find that there is both similarities and differences, but we’re all trying to achieve the same kind of thing. We’re all pretty interested in trying to make our own regions and jurisdictions a little bit better, both for the present and for the future because it’s really the future that we’re trying to plan for

here, and that's really important.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to continue with my, with my thoughts about this Bill, the amendment of . . . The Department of Energy and Mines Amendment Act. I was saying that that sector of our economy is very important to us and it's a very important part of the budget as well.

When I look through the numbers in this particular budget, I have noticed that even though they're significant, and the government is depending heavily on those kind of numbers for carrying the budget as far as they can go, there is actually a decrease in the amount that's being budgeted for these particular departments or areas of the department. And it's quite astounding to me that if this is an area that is so important, why there would be about a 4 per cent decrease in the amount budgeted to try to keep the level of revenue at the level needed for this particular budget.

It is a major player in this, in this province — the resource sector. It's quite amazing to me when you think about that Saskatchewan is in fact a world player when it comes to potash and the supply and mining and the sale of potash. We are in fact a world player when it comes to mining the uranium in this province.

The question I guess I would have is, why are we not focusing more on the value-added of this uranium production instead of trying to export it across out of the province to have the value added somewhere else in this world? The same thing applies to all of our other natural resources that we are so blessed within this province. We need to keep focusing on putting value-added back here in this province.

So we have the potash. We have uranium, world class. We have a very considerable amount, almost two-thirds of the arable land in Canada, that is here in Saskatchewan for the agricultural purposes. We are a major player of course with natural gas and a major player with oil production. We are a major player in mining of other minerals, as well as forestry products.

When you think about the advantages and how we are so blessed in this province with those kinds of resources, it staggers the imagination to think that we in fact are a have-not province. It's a question of why are we still a have-not province with all those blessings that we have. Why are we not attracting more of these industries into our province with the kinds of examples we've had in trying to stimulate the gas and oil and the mining industry in this province?

The government pats itself on the back on a regular basis about how the resource base is starting to move ahead because they have become more competitive in the regulations and in the royalties charged. And we have in fact an increased amount of revenue generated. In fact the budget shows that we are probably at one of the higher levels of revenue being generated in this province. In other words, the budget is that significant. So why are we still in fact then showing a deficit in this budget? Why is our debt increasing when we have the opportunities to change this around?

None of these things are being addressed in the budget, and none of those things are being addressed in this particular Bill.

The Bill is an opportunity lost to try to put some more of those kind of things into this Bill.

How much would it have cost? I think that would be a good study. How much has it cost this particular government to change from the department of mines and energy and combine it with the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development into the Industry and Resources branch? And then how much has it cost to try to make up these kind of amendments so that the legislature is correspondent to the . . . what the government has done in terms of reorganization and restructuring? It's a very large amount.

So why . . . If it's such an important aspect of our economy, why are we continuing then to penalize these large corporations with things like the highest corporate tax and the capital tax especially on these corporations? We can't continue to claim on one side that we are attracting these industries with the royalties and the incentives, and on the other side continue to penalize them with these capital tax, which is probably the worst tax, that would reduce the confidence of any investor in this particular province.

The question would be, why in fact are more of the head offices in the petroleum and the gas industry located outside of our province than in the province? The oil industry is such an important economic driver in my part of the country, and yet there is very few — I'm not sure I could name any more than two or three — that have their head office on the Saskatchewan side of the border, even though there's a lot of activity in the border.

We are developing lots of drilling activity, and lots of revenues are being generated, both from land sale and royalty. But the large significant amount of revenue that's being generated is by the province of Alberta, where the head offices are and where the workers mainly are . . . that come into Saskatchewan, do their job and then leave the province to sleep and pay their taxes. And that is a situation that has to be turned around if we want to continue to build the industry based on what we need to realize out of the resource industry.

We can't keep patting ourselves on the back, saying that we are doing such a great job in this province, particularly when the government says that they're the generators of the oil and gas initiatives in this province. We have to look at the fact that \$37 a barrel is the driver of the oil industry, particularly. And it is the companies that use that as their business plan and, in spite of what's going on in Saskatchewan, will invest here because of the \$37 a barrel average price that has been achieved over the last little while.

There's lots of things that should be done in the oil and gas sector that would add to the confidence of investors. And I've talked to many business people in the resource sector in the province of Alberta that tell me that this is an opportunity awaiting here in this province. All we have to do to is put the fundamentals right. The fundamentals in their view are not right because they will not invest fully and wholeheartedly.

If we could remove some of the uncertainties, some of the barriers, and put the incentives in place that will attract both the workers and the head offices, I think this industry — the oil and

gas particularly — but the resource sector would be the economic driver that will make Saskatchewan move ahead faster than any other sector, including the value-added part of the agriculture sector which I also think has a huge, huge potential.

Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of . . . there's a lot of people that would like to continue the discussion on what is needed and offering some of their thoughts about what is needed in the amendments to the Department of Energy and Mines, the Energy and Mines amendment Act. I've covered a few, and I think those are reasonable questions.

Others will have other comments and questions too, but at this time I move adjournment of debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Lloydminster that debate on second reading of Bill No. 17, The Department of Energy and Mines Amendment Act, 2004 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. 19

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 19 — The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

(16:30)

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to stand in this Assembly to speak to Bill No. 19, The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2004 or Act, 2000.

Mr. Speaker, in the minister's second reading speech, the minister talked about the need for this piece of legislation. He indicated that it was needed to be passed to modernize and update the laws and rules respecting land registrations, conveyance and title to land, and to facilitate the implementation of the new land titles system of 2001.

And, Mr. Speaker, the minister also indicated, and he said at that time and I quote from *Hansard*, April 19:

. . . I am anticipating that the members opposite will get up and say that this is some kind of a disaster . . .

And he did indicate in the . . . later on in the paragraph that progress has been made.

Well I can assure the minister that from what we have heard — and I refer to my colleagues and I and our members on this side of the Assembly — that certainly the changes in the land titles system in this province have had a significant impact on individuals across this province who have endeavoured to buy

and sell property over the past number of years. And what we have seen is significant delays in title transfer, in fact delays to the point that has impacted individuals quite significantly.

So we would hope, Mr. Speaker, that indeed we have begun to see some progress in regards, regarding the computerization of our land titles system and how the system is operating at this point in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the minister talked about the fact that the new legislation and the land titles system that these . . . back in 2001, the first piece of legislation and the legislation to date were to phase in over a number of years, the changes which would hopefully facilitate a fairly smooth flow in the . . . regards to the changes in and the updating and computerization of our land titles system.

And as we have seen and prior to this year, we have already had two amendments that have been brought forward regarding that initial Land Titles Act and the recognition that there were problems at that time which the government had been warned about and which, as an opposition caucus, had been brought to our attention. And we continue to receive complaints from people across this province as to how this program is working and how — its implementation — and how it has yet to prove that it is providing a more smooth and orderly flow of land titles transactions in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, what we have seen as we have moved to computerize the program, it has been a program that has been brought forward not just to address the land titles registry system, but also personal property security registration system and the geographical information system that is part of the whole program.

Mr. Speaker, one would have to ask why this government decided it had to move in a form of bringing forward a totally new system into our land titles registry system rather than looking at systems that we have seen in other provinces that have brought forward . . . and actually in many cases a lot of work and effort that has been moved forward in other provinces in computerizing and updating their land titles registry program.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we have seen from other jurisdictions, many jurisdictions have taken a lot of time. They've been through a lot of hard work and effort in simplifying their computerization of their programs. And, Mr. Speaker, no doubt they have learned from their mistakes. And I would think that as taxpayers in the province of Saskatchewan . . . And that this government could have certainly taken a look at what had happened in other areas and would have been able to implement a program much . . . that would have run much smoother, would have been able to have been implemented much smoother, and would work more efficiently . . . and updated, have achieved the goals that the government originally came forward with, when it decided to computerize the current land titles system, had they just looked at another jurisdiction, looked at what they had to offer, and implemented the programs that had been brought forward, for example the province of Alberta.

And I've chatted with realtors who some . . . In fact a gentleman who used to be in the realty business in the city of Saskatoon, now actually has moved to Lloydminster, the

Alberta side, and has commented on the fact that what . . . He has worked within Saskatchewan before, in Saskatoon before he moved to Alberta. And what he has seen in how the system in Alberta at that time and currently operating today, and suggested that that system that — once he left Saskatoon, working under the current, revised system and as it's been progressing in the province of Saskatchewan and then moving to Alberta and telling me that it, from what he has seen, from what he has found as a realtor dealing with land titles on an ongoing basis — that it's his opinion we could have taken that Alberta model and implemented it in the province of Saskatchewan for a lot fewer dollars than we have spent to date to try and get a new system up and running in the province of Saskatchewan. A totally new system, a totally redesigned system rather than implementing one that had already been worked through and where all the glitches and the problems that other jurisdictions had found had already been able . . . they'd been able to work through.

And had we taken that system and worked together — and maybe it wouldn't have worked totally in our province without some changes — but the suggestion is that those . . . we could . . . we'd have been able to work out the minor changes quite effectively and actually done it very efficiently and upgraded our land titles system in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we see a system that has actually been a major cost for the province of Saskatchewan, and it's been referred to as a black hole, and just in the amount of money and the cost to implement and redesign a totally new computerized system to allow for a smooth flow of land titles in the province as properties are bought and sold in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, one of the problems we have seen and has been referred to by some of my colleagues is the fact that with the changes we've seen significant costs to landowners. We've seen significant cost to individuals as they have attempted to transfer title of land from one owner to a new owner, Mr. Speaker.

And in some cases, Mr. Speaker, this new system which was supposed to just smooth the process out, which was supposed to identify individuals fairly quickly and efficiently, in fact, Mr. Speaker, we have found it's become a cost to individuals.

And I refer to a comment made by the member from Arm River at — I believe it's Arm River-Watrous now, the new constituency the member represents — when he was commenting about this piece of legislation and talking about a transaction where an individual was . . . actually found he had a lien against his property. And he couldn't figure out why, when he went to sell the property, all of a sudden realized that he had the same name as another person. But the unfortunate part was this new computerized system did not differentiate between this individual and another individual. And as a result this person found themselves with a lien against the property and they had to then go through a whole process of clarifying and clearing their name on the title so that they could move ahead with the transaction.

And at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, it ended up costing this family just to clarify the title, even though the mistake had been made through the land title system.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen in the past under the old system which the government said was antiquated and didn't run very smoothly, I can attest and I would suggest to you that even though it took a lot of manual time and effort, it actually operated quite smoothly.

Now we're not saying that it wasn't appropriate to start moving into the new age and computerizing and updating our system, but maybe we could have found a much smoother way of implementing the program. But under the old system which took man-hours — it had to be physically managed — Mr. Speaker, the land titles system actually on an annual basis paid about \$12 million in dividends to the provincial treasury, the General Revenue Fund, on an annual basis.

And we would say, well that's somewhat odd that a system that was supposedly costing us more and supposedly didn't achieve the same goals and we're supposed to be providing a more efficient system, that that system would at that time be able to achieve — and this is going back four or five years — at that time that system which was supposed to have been the antiquated system was actually putting about \$11.7 million into the provincial treasury on an annual basis, Mr. Speaker. A far cry from the \$107 million that it has cost us to date to change from that old system, where you needed a lot of man-hours to operate, to this new computerized system.

The NDP government would have been far better off to buy some land titles software off the shelf for \$2 or \$4 million rather than reinventing the wheel, and I'm quoting, by developing a newfangled system with all the bells and whistles for five or ten times the price, is what has been said regarding the ISC program as we have it today and the amendments that the minister is coming forward again.

In fact a quote from the *Leader-Post*, Mr. Speaker, says, perhaps the LAND project is a great achievement — as indicated by the writer — that we need to celebrate. And the writer is commenting on the fact that the minister was indicating that it's maybe time we forgot about all the negatives and the problems we've had and begin to celebrate the fact that we're just about reaching the end, and we're just about achieving the original goals.

However we need to downplay the additional costs that have been associated with the changes and recognize that we're just about reaching the end where we'd be . . . hopefully we'll begin to pay back the debt and arrive at a point of actually paying dividends to the province, and recognize that we finally have achieved a goal. And this is where this comment is coming from. Where the writer is saying yes, maybe we need to celebrate, however we still haven't quite reached that point and so maybe for most of Saskatchewan taxpayers they will be forgiven if they decide to keep the champagne on ice for a while yet.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, that is the problem. The problem is that this system that this NDP government sold us as being something that could be achieved in a matter of time — and it wouldn't take all that long to reformulate the old land titles system and put it on computers, and computerize it at a very cheap cost to the taxpayers — in fact has cost us to this point expenditures in the neighbourhood of \$107 million.

And it begs us to ask the question, why did this government choose to go this route when they could have looked at other alternatives? And why did this government put the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan in a position of having to fund to the tune of \$107 million, a change which possibly could have been achieved for a far lesser cost to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan had they looked at other alternatives that were already up and operating and functioning in other provinces, other jurisdictions?

And no doubt as I indicated earlier, other jurisdictions as they made the changes, there's no doubt in my mind that if we talked to them they would have indicated that when they originally began to change and computerize their land titles program, while they thought it would move ahead fairly simply, they realized as they began to move into the process that there were a number of glitches that showed up. And they had to address them. And as I've indicated, we wonder why we would not have looked at some of the programs that were already out there.

And not to say, Mr. Speaker, that they would have met the total need in the province of Saskatchewan, but quite possibly had we adopted some of those programs we could have then tweaked the programs so that they would address the specific needs that we had in regards to land title registry in the province of Saskatchewan, and done it at a fairly reasonable cost so that the people of Saskatchewan would not be left with that additional burden.

And as we have seen from this current Finance minister and from what the government is saying, this government continues to bemoan the fact that they do not have the fiscal ability to meet a number of the ongoing needs that they would like to address, or the promises that they made in the last provincial election. A promise like addressing the high cost of property tax or education on the property tax owner in the province of Saskatchewan.

(16:45)

And, Mr. Speaker, as a result of that, I believe we . . . I believe that the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, beginning tomorrow, has called an emergency meeting of their association to deal with the fact that this government, in this most recent budget, didn't address and even come up with suggestions of a plan as to how they were going to address the cost of education that continues to be borne by the property owner of Saskatchewan.

And I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, had this government looked at other alternatives and implemented a more . . . a cheaper and a reasonable system that would have cost less money, they would have had more money available to work and to deal with situations like property taxes and the cost of education that is borne by the property tax owner in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen as well — not only with the cost overruns — that there have been serious flaws and glitches and delays which have seriously impacted the delivery and timelines for customers. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that no doubt the colleagues — the NDP colleagues across the way —

have had the same calls that my colleagues and I have had to our offices in regards to the timelines that people have been trying to reach as they have moved forward with the sale of property and they . . . the titles . . . the sale and the transfer of title so that they can achieve their goals and indeed reach the timelines that they have agreed to with regards to the sale of property and the purchase of property in the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for an example, even myself as I attempted to purchase a property here in the city of Regina a couple of years ago so that our children would have a place to stay as they were coming to university, and they were beginning to expand their learning with the hopes that as they attain degrees at the university, that through the attainment of those degrees they would enhance their ability to find quality job opportunities not only in the province of Saskatchewan outside . . . but outside of the province or wherever they might go to seek employment opportunities — however, Mr. Speaker, I might add their preference at this time would certainly be to find a quality job within the province of Saskatchewan — but we have found, Mr. Speaker, even as we were going through the process of purchasing a property, the realtor we were dealing with indicated that contrary to what we used to, we used to face a number of years ago, where they had indicated it would take just a matter of a day or two for the land titles to . . . and the titles to move forward and transfer, that indeed we found that there were significant delays as we began to look at that land title transfer, Mr. Speaker.

And Mr. Speaker, I note that there are many others, others who would like to speak on this piece of legislation. Certainly there's a lot of debate. In view of the clock and the time that we're facing — it's arriving at basically the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, and I know I've got a lot of other questions I'd like to raise — Mr. Speaker, I would think that it would be appropriate to either move adjournment at this time and I will finish my comments at a later date. So at this time I will move to adjourn. Thank you.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Moosomin that debate on Bill . . . second reading of Bill No. 19, The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2004 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. 20

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 20 — The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors 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, it's interesting when we look at the land surveyors professional amendment Act, Bill. No. 20, in many cases, Mr. Speaker, this

piece of legislation has some of the same effects that we were just talking about earlier in regards to The Land Titles Amendment Act. And as I indicated earlier, I'm looking forward to speaking at length and addressing some of the other concerns that, as the Government House or Deputy House Leader was indicating, that we were basically at a point of wrapping up that it was time to move on, but I have a number of grey issues that I want to continue to raise in regards to Bill No. 19.

However at this time I will move on to Bill No. 20, the land surveyors professional amendment Act. And I would like to speak for a few moments in regards to this piece of legislation as well, and the problems that we have seen and that have been brought to our attention in regards to this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as I understand, this piece of legislation will allow up to three of the seven licensed members of the council of Saskatchewan land surveyors to be members who reside outside the province of Saskatchewan. And Mr. Speaker, as we look at building our province, as we look at attempting to grow our province there's . . . it's no doubt imperative and important that we as well look at our legislation on certain Acts and ask ourselves whether or not there are ways we can accommodate people from outside the province in getting . . . involving themselves in some of the areas of debate that we have in the province of Saskatchewan.

And one of the areas that the land surveyors has come forward with, I believe, they have suggested that it might not hurt if we would allow for people residing outside of the province to become part of the council of the Saskatchewan land surveyors, become members of that profession. We have had requests coming from the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association, by legislation coming forward through Information Services, this Crown corporation, that we extend this membership to include members from outside the province.

And as I understand, that's what the government is doing as they come forward with this piece of legislation. They are moving to allow three of the seven members of the land surveyors' association to come from outside the province of Saskatchewan. And one is . . . first of all, one wonders why we would need to change the legislation to allow this to happen, in view of the fact that it would seem to me that we would probably have enough land surveyors in the province of Saskatchewan to fill that seven-membership panel.

However it seems that the land surveyors, the provincial body, certainly appears to suggest that it's . . . would be appropriate that we expand . . . or I shouldn't say, not expand, but we allow three of the seven members to be residents . . . individuals who would reside outside of the province.

We would ask, are we moving in this direction because we do not have enough people in the province of Saskatchewan to fill that seven-member council? Or is it the fact that we're beginning to recognize that we need to look beyond just our borders if we want to grow the province of Saskatchewan. We need to allow people from outside the province just to have a membership to bring forward some of their ideas and suggestions and being on panels, these types of panels, that would allow opportunity for the province to grow and for this

province to move forward as we begin to address the needs of growing the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we understand from the letter that we've received from the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association that even this proposal that the government is coming forward, it will still be one of the most restrictive in this country in regards to land surveyors. And we are not surprised by that fact — that the land surveyors' association of this province would have brought that to our attention — in view of the fact that we have seen this government for years has continued to be famous for their red tape and bureaucratic process.

In fact when I talk about bureaucracies, the province of Saskatchewan . . . I heard a commentary this morning, and the commentary, Mr. Speaker, was based on the fact of equalization payments in this country and the importance of the equalization payments. But not just the importance of the equalization payments but the sad realities of equalization payments in the province of Saskatchewan. And the commentator was suggesting that maybe equalization payments are not good for this country and good for the provinces that receive them.

And let me explain it this way. The commentator suggested that there are two provinces in this country that make substantial payments into a fund on which we base equalization payments. And those two provinces are Ontario and Alberta. All the other provinces that have relied on these equalization payments and draw on those equalization payments, it seems because they were drawing on the equalization payments it's an indication they're really not moving forward and being contributors to confederation if you will.

And I remember a former of minister of Finance suggesting when the equalization payments were actually reduced because we had reached a point — I believe it was about five or six years ago — where actually we were almost a contributor to the . . . rather than a drawer on equalization payments. And it would seem, Mr. Speaker, that that would be something that as a province we should be working to achieve in this province in view of the fact that the resources of this province are . . . as a province, we have access to resources such . . . in fact, natural resources that as a province we should be a have province and a have-not province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation, I would hope . . . and we have a number of questions we would like to ask. And I note some members suggesting that maybe it's time to wrap it up. Well the last time I gave them the opportunity they brought forward another Bill so I guess we'll have to speak the clock out on this one.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we would . . . it's important that when we have the opportunity to debate that if the members are suggesting that we've reached the time of day for adjournment, that we should have moved there when we gave them that opportunity. Since we haven't received that we are . . . another piece of legislation has come forward, possibly that we recognize the fact that we will speak until the Speaker of the Assembly calls the clock. And so I'd like to address a few more comments regarding The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, since its inception as a Crown corporation in January 2002, we have seen . . . as I indicated earlier, ISC has proven to be a black hole or a money pit for the NDP. And while it originally budgeted \$20 million, its costs have now arisen to \$107 million. And we see that this piece of legislation has some ties to that Land Titles Amendment Act. And we would like to ensure that this piece of legislation doesn't run into the same pitfalls that we have seen in the ISC debate that we were talking about a few moments ago.

Mr. Speaker, we have . . . this piece of legislation provides framework for self-governance of a group through the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association. And in the province of Saskatchewan, as I understand it, there are 72 land surveyors and professional surveyors who are licensed members of the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association, with 86 of them being residents of the province and the remaining 16 residing outside of the province and mostly in Alberta.

And as I indicated earlier, what the Bill currently suggests is that membership on this council would be comprised . . . members or people who reside in the province of Saskatchewan. This piece of legislation, as I understand it, is going to allow members outside of Saskatchewan to be part of the council. And I believe what they're talking of here is talking of the membership, the 16 members who happen to reside out of the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, what this piece of legislation is . . . what this government is indicating, they're trying to help facilitate mobility and allowing Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association's request to have members who are not residents of the province to be eligible for election to the council, which is the governing body of the association.

Mr. Speaker, this council is made up of eight individuals — as I indicated and as we have heard — seven of whom are elected and one who is appointed by the province of Saskatchewan. And it is our understanding that request has been made to broaden the pool of potential candidates to be elected to serve on council and restrict the number of non-resident elected members to a maximum of three.

And, Mr. Speaker, if bringing on non-resident members on council is a means of allowing this council to work more efficiently and more effectively, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, that . . . my colleagues and I certainly can agree with that, with the changes that are being brought forward.

The Bill will make reference . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. It now being past the hour of 5 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.

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