



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

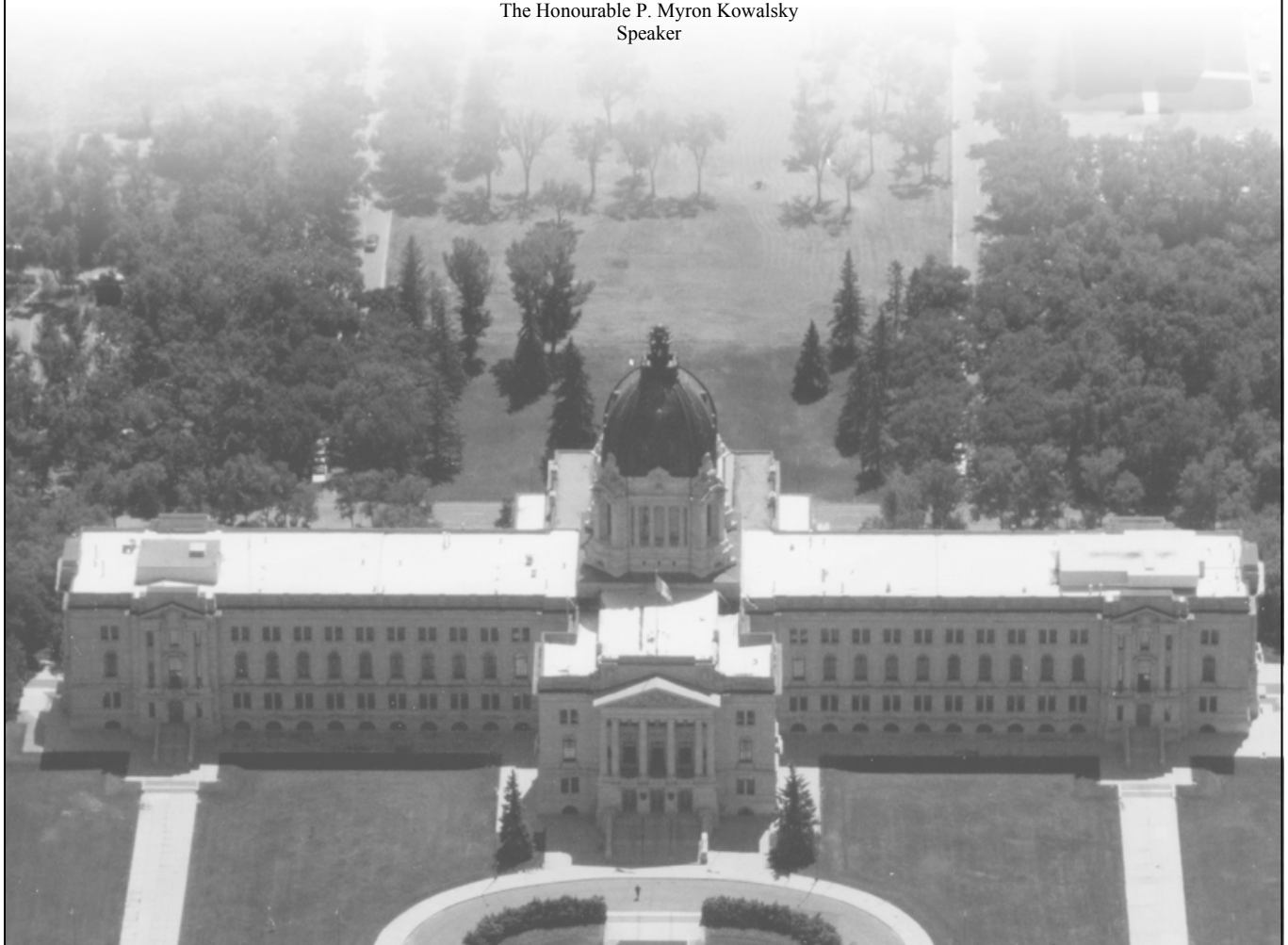
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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. I rise today to present the first of several dozen petitions, including several hundred names from people in the communities of Climax and Frontier, with concerns about the possible closure of the health centre there. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to ensure that the Border Health Centre in Climax remains a 24-hour facility.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of residents of Saskatchewan and outside our province concerned about the Herbert Nursing Home. Mr. Speaker. The prayer of their petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure the Herbert Nursing Home is not closed or further downsized.

And, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from Herbert, Waldeck, Regina, Hodgeville, Neidpath, Morse, Ernfold, Gouldtown, Rush Lake, Consul, Vanguard, Chaplin, Warman, Wymark, Main Centre, and Swift Current; as well as Bassano, Alberta; and Maple Ridge, BC (British Columbia).

And on their behalf I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on behalf of people from my constituency who are concerned about the health care closures and downsizing.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to take the necessary action to ensure that Foam Lake Jubilee Home is not closed or further downsized.

The people that have signed this petition are from Rose Valley, Foam Lake, Wadena, and Margo.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to do with the proposed closures of health facilities in the province. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure the Herbert-Morse union hospital is not closed or further downsized.

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Morse, Herbert, Hodgeville, and Ernfold.

I so present.

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a number of petitions signed by citizens concerned with the possible closure or downsizing of the Herbert-Morse union hospital. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the Herbert-Morse union hospital is not closed or further downsized.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Herbert, Neidpath, Morse, Hodgeville, Vanguard, Gouldtown, Main Centre, Swift Current and many other locations throughout the province.

I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present regarding the Claybank Brick Plant. And the petition . . . or the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reconsider the decision to reduce funding to the Claybank Brick Plant.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from Avonlea, Milestone, Moose Jaw, and Regina.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I stand to present a petition on behalf of people from my constituency very concerned about the future of health care in

our province. 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 action to ensure that Radville Marian Health Centre is not closed or further downsized.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens of Colgate, Radville, Minton, and Trossachs.

I so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition today with citizens concerned about the availability of their health care. 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 action to ensure that the Herbert-Morse union hospital is not closed or further downsized.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Herbert, Morse, Waldeck, Hodgeville, and Regina.

I so present.

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are very concerned about the future of health care in our constituency. And the prayer reads:

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

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

And the petition is signed by citizens of Assiniboia, Ogema, Weyburn, Bengough, Pangman.

I so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition today on behalf of citizens concerned about the downsizing of long-term care facilities in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency. And the prayer reads:

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

further downsized.

This petition is signed by residents of Weyburn and Lake Alma.

I so present.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise with petitions today from people in my constituency that are extremely concerned about the closures and reduction of long-term care facilities. And, Mr. Speaker, the petition . . . 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 action to ensure that the Lafleche & District and the Grasslands Health Centre in Rockglen are not closed or further downsized.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, today I would like to table all of these petitions, and there's literally hundreds and hundreds of signatures from people not only from within the area of Lafleche and Rockglen but throughout the province and even some from outside of the province.

I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens opposed to reduction of long-term care beds in Davidson and Imperial health centres.

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of 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 possible reductions 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 service is maintained 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 south central Saskatchewan concerned with the loss of the Herbert-Morse union hospital. 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 action to ensure that the Herbert-Morse union hospital is not closed or further downsized.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good people from Herbert and Gouldtown.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order a petition concerning the Foam Lake Health Centre presented on May 17 has been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) is found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

Other petitions that have been presented are addendums to sessional papers nos. 63, 96, 97, 145, 157, 165, 167, and 169 and they are hereby read and received.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two questions to present today. The first question, I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the minister for SaskTel: what is the value of incremental revenues earned from *Max* TV to date?

And the second question, Mr. Speaker, that I give notice on day no. 46 I shall ask the government, is:

Also to the minister of SaskTel: what is the return on investment in *Max* TV to date, both in terms of capital expenditures and in terms of operating costs?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: what is the total cost savings of closing one wing of the long-term care facility in Davidson?

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: what process is used to ensure that methadone is only provided to people who qualify for the methadone program? And secondly, are those qualifying for the methadone program required to take their dosage in the presence of a physician?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to introduce to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, a delegation from the communities of Frontier and Climax. They're seated in your gallery.

And today we have with us Mayor Nancy Kirk from the village of Climax; Alderman Dennis Kline from Climax; Mayor Connie Korsburg from the village of Frontier; Barb Webber, the administrator for the village of Frontier; and Ron Bakken, who is a concerned citizen who happens to be in town on medical treatment and is very concerned about issues facing the Border Health Centre in Climax. I'd like to ask you and the members of this august body to welcome this delegation.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly, two guests in the Speaker's gallery, one of whom will be well known to members.

Evan Carlson is a former member of this Assembly of course and represented the constituents of Melville on the New Democratic Party side of the House. And I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that Evan now lives in my riding. He's been a huge help to me in the last two provincial election campaigns. Among many other endeavours in Saskatoon, he's made an enormous contribution to the work of the Saskatoon Community Clinic. So I hope members will join me in welcoming Evan.

And secondly, Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to members of the House, Mr. Graham Rhodes, who is visiting from New Zealand, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Rhodes has made many trips to Canada during the summer. He was originally born in Hong Kong. He's grown up for a large part of his life in New Zealand, and he'll be studying in California this fall. So as you can see, Mr. Rhodes is truly a global citizen, and we are very, very pleased to welcome him to this legislature.

So please join me in welcoming these two special guests. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Hon. Assembly, a group of concerned citizens from the communities of Herbert, Vanguard, Hodgeville and Morse, and areas surrounding them.

The delegation includes Dr. Suresh Kasset, doctor for Herbert, Morse, Hodgeville, Vanguard and surrounding areas for 20 years; Mr. Gordon Milton, administrator, Herbert Nursing Home; Mr. Albert Kildaw, mayor of Herbert; Mr. Bruno Miller, reeve of the RM (rural municipality) of Excelsior; Mr. Peter Unger, reeve of the RM of Morse; Mr. Louis Fafard, deputy reeve, RM of Morse; Mr. Jim Bulbeck, councillor, Morse; Mr. Glen Solberg councillor, RM of Morse; Mr. Harv Schulz, councillor, RM of Excelsior; Ms. Marie Burton, administrator, village of Vanguard; Mr. Ben Hofer, representing the Main Centre Colony, and other interested citizens from the Vanguard and Main Centre areas.

As well, Mr. Speaker, this delegation is here in defence of their hospital and nursing home today. And I hope that all members will give them a warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview, the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and to all members of the legislature, a number of people who are here today because we're doing a second reading of the tobacco Act amendment.

And so I would like to introduce Alex Taylor, who is the president of SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations); Donna Pasiechnik from the Canadian Cancer Society; Dr. David Butler Jones, medical health officer for Sun Country; Susan Antosh, who's the president and CEO (chief executive officer) of SAHO; Paul van Loon from the Saskatchewan Lung Association; June Blau from the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association; Lynn Greaves from the Saskatchewan Coalition for Tobacco Reduction and Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority; Rhae Ann Bromley from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Saskatchewan, accompanied by Eva Davis and Tanya Mengel from Saskatchewan Health. I ask all members to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the Minister of Health in welcoming the individuals and guests that he pointed out in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. These individuals have worked tirelessly in defence of the concerns of people that have exposure to second-hand and first-hand smoke, and they certainly are very concerned about the legislation that's being brought forward. And I know as this

legislation passes through the various stages of the Assembly including committee work this summer, that they'll be very much interested in following and presenting to the standing committee on health and human services.

And, Mr. Speaker, we welcome and appreciate their involvement. Thank you very much for inviting them here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today, Tuesday, May 18, 2004, is a very wonderful and special day as I welcome some very special guests to the Assembly today, on behalf of the province of Saskatchewan.

In our gallery, Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery, we want to welcome Vicky Neiser and her darling daughter, Zoe. And as you know, Vicky was one of my staff members, and Vicky is always an important person certainly to work on our staff and to the people of Saskatchewan.

But Vicky wanted to point out that all the wonderful traits that her daughter has — the brains, the good looks, and the vision and the compassion for life — comes from her father, Colin. But her greatest gift is her humility which she gets from her mother. So I want all the members of the Assembly to please welcome this very special visitor, Zoe Neiser. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Swift Current.

Mr. Wall: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with members in welcoming the delegations concerned about facilities, health care facilities in Climax and Herbert. But I would particularly want to welcome His Worship, the Mayor of Herbert, Al Kildaw, Mr. Speaker.

We haven't always agreed on politics, the mayor and I, but we agree on much more important things — namely his daughter and my wife, Tami; and his grandchildren, Megan, Colter, and Faith, our kids. So I want to offer that special welcome today to Al to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member from Saskatoon Greystone in welcoming Graham Rhodes to the Assembly and to say that his father was one of my professors at the University of Saskatchewan law school in the 1970s. And we certainly have fond memories of Professor Rhodes who went on to become dean of the law school at the University of Hong Kong.

And I also want to introduce to you, and through you to other members of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, a young man and a young woman seated in your gallery — Noah Evanchuk and Anna-Marie Kowalsky. I believe Anna-Marie Kowalsky is

known to you, Mr. Speaker, because I believe she is your niece, if I have that correct. And Noah Evanchuk is a young man who moved from Calgary, Alberta to study law at the University of Saskatchewan. And now he has chosen to pursue his law career here in the city of Regina, and he's going to be beginning that next week.

So I'd like all members of the Assembly to welcome Noah Evanchuk and Anna-Marie Kowalsky here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce a number of people in the east gallery. I've met with this delegation prior to the House sitting, and they're a group of people called PUSH, and PUSH stands for People United to Save Healthcare. And these people drove to Regina today from my area to express their concerns over the potential loss of health care in this province and reduction in facilities in this province.

The group is . . . The spokesperson for the group is Mrs. Terry Carefoot. And I'm not going to introduce the whole contingent, Mr. Speaker, but I would ask the contingent to rise because I think they perform a very important function to help promote health care and save health care in the rural areas of this province. So if they would all rise, I'd like all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce 46 grade 5 students from the Delisle Elementary School, seated in the east gallery. I had the pleasure of visiting them in their class a few months ago and now they returned the visit, and we had a nice meeting just before the sitting today.

And, Mr. Speaker, with the grade 5 students, teachers Mrs. Dreher and Mrs. Dyck; and also chaperones, Mrs. Westby, Mrs. Schneider, Mrs. Schnitzler, and Mrs. Grisdale, as well as Mrs. Fayant. And, Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming the grade 5 students from Delisle.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of the House, a young woman up in your gallery, Cara McDavid, who will be joining my office as a summer student. We're looking forward to having Cara with us for the summer, and I hope she enjoys her time here.

And Cara's also accompanied by another young woman that

works in my office, Dana Shumate. And, Mr. Speaker, I would wish all members would give them a warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Whitewood Special Care Aide Program Graduation

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a moment this afternoon to just extend a special congratulations to a wonderful program that is hosted in the community of Whitewood.

Mr. Speaker, over the past number of years, the Southeast Regional College, through their facility in Whitewood and with support from SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) Kelsey Campus have been offering a special care . . . home care/special care aide grad or program. And this past week my wife and I were able to join with 16 graduates and the staff for their graduation.

Mr. Speaker, this program is an excellent program. And it's very interesting to see who comes forward to take this special care aide grad program and the services they provide. We have individuals who have just completed their grade 12 matric, right up to grandmothers. And what I have found, Mr. Speaker, over the past number of years is that I haven't found anyone who has felt that it wasn't a worthwhile program or that they regretted that they even got into the program.

I would think one of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, is because the instructor is Minerva Scammell, a vivacious, a very vibrant, and a lady with a lot of character. In fact as the . . . when you talk to the graduates or the students, they say that one thing makes their classes so exciting is that it doesn't matter what they're talking about, Minerva can make it challenging, interesting, and add a lot of character and funniness to the program.

Mr. Speaker, it's a worthwhile program. Every graduate that's graduated so far has left with a job on the line. And, Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the special care aide program.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Contracts Landed by SED Systems of Saskatoon

Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, not too long ago while talking about the overall strength of the provincial economy, a University of Saskatchewan professor pointed out that, and I quote, "the perception of what an economy is about, often lags behind the reality."

Here's one example of Saskatchewan's new, diversified economy here at the beginning of our second century. Mr. Speaker, SED Systems at Innovation Place in my constituency of Saskatoon Sutherland recently landed three high-profile contracts. These agreements have a total value of over \$12

million and will strengthen the position of SED in Canadian, American, and European markets.

SED will be providing Inmarsat, based out of London, with a new satellite spectrum monitoring system. The \$4 million contract is the latest between the two companies. SED has been providing Inmarsat with ground-based systems to help manage its satellite networks for 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, SED has also extended its contract with the Canadian Space Agency's satellite operations directorate for operations and maintenance services, and with Systems & Electronics Inc. out of the United States for the manufacture of equipment for surveillance and security applications.

Mr. Speaker, according to an SED spokesperson, in the quarter just ended, revenue sources like these have meant an increase of almost 100 per cent over the revenue recorded in the same quarter last year.

I'm sure all my colleagues will join me in congratulating everyone at SED on their ongoing success. They're one of the reasons why Saskatchewan has and will continue to have one of the strongest economies in the country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Remembering a Canadian Hero

Mr. Kerpan: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I attended the funeral of a Canadian hero. You wouldn't have read about him in the newspaper or have seen him on TV on the national or even the local news. You wouldn't have read about him in the sports section. Yet he was in my mind a bona fide Canadian hero.

His life story is similar to that of thousands of men and women in Saskatchewan and right across the country. He was one of the Canadian heroes to put his life on the line, fighting to preserve our way of life.

Don Walz of Moose Jaw left his home south of Moose Jaw in the early 1940s to take training as a fighter pilot. He was shot down twice over France. The first time he escaped capture with the help of the French underground. Shortly thereafter he was shot down again. This time he was captured and spent the rest of the war in prison camp.

I remember him telling me, Mr. Speaker, how much he loved flying a Spitfire. He also told me how he would much rather have Canadian pilots on his wing rather than Americans. He made the point that in a tough situation the Canadian boys always stuck together.

Don Walz returned home after the war to marry his sweetheart, raise a fine family of boys and a lot of wheat in the Quincy district south of Moose Jaw. He was one of the thousands of unsung heroes of this province. Yesterday he was laid to rest in his military uniform as training jets from CFB Moose Jaw flew overhead.

Mr. Speaker, the point I'm making here is that a whole generation of veterans are aging and we are saying goodbye to many of them. As we approach the 60th anniversary of D-day we should again pay special tribute to those who gave us so much. Yes, Don Walz was a great Canadian hero. He was my uncle and one of my personal heroes as well. Lest we forget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Small-Business Loans Program

Mr. Trew: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the small-business loans program is an initiative that is successfully spurring small-business growth and creating literally thousands of jobs throughout Saskatchewan communities. Since the program was set up in 1989, small-business loans have helped maintain and even create over 19,000 — that's 19,000 — jobs. There are currently 239 active small-business loan associations throughout Saskatchewan. Each has access to a revolving line of credit of \$100,000 available from Industry and Resources.

The associations make loans of up to \$10,000 to new and existing small businesses that are not eligible for financing through other traditional means. The program is government administered and community delivered through the small-business loan associations, and it contributed to the creation of more than 1,100 new jobs last year.

The small-business owners have jobs and they create jobs that strengthen the community. The small-business loan association program supports small businesses by providing loans. This government is proud of the literally thousands of small businesses our accessible loans programs has helped. We're proud of the small-business owners' can-do attitude. We say well done Small Business Loans Association, well done small businesses, well done all of the workers that make it happen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Health Care Facility Closures

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is a sad day for the many people in Saskatchewan who are being forced to deal with even more NDP health care facility closures. Mr. Speaker, the town of Foam Lake is one of these on the losing end. In a move that makes absolutely no sense, Foam Lake is losing acute care beds in a town that has a doctor and a hospital.

The NDP's (New Democratic Party) excuse? Their justification is a nursing shortage, yet today this NDP government fired 40 nurses.

(14:00)

Foam Lake is also losing 11 long-term care beds, yet waiting lists for these people is long for people within a 100-mile radius who would like to call this place home.

How can the NDP justify these closures? It is literally putting people's lives, as well as the future of the town, in danger. A town of 1,200 people needs a health care facility. No one will build a new house in a town without a hospital.

Mr. Speaker, what the people in Foam Lake area are asking of this government is a plan — a long-term, sustainable plan that doesn't change with the whims of the day. How does gutting the Foam Lake health care centre fit with NDP's so-called commitment to the five principles of health care?

How can the NDP assure residents of Foam Lake they have affordable, accessible, universal, publicly administered, portable, and comprehensive health care as they continue to close hospitals and slash long-term care beds? With this latest attack on our health care centres, Mr. Speaker, they can't. So much for Tommy Douglas's medicare dream.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Regina Squids Capture National Water Polo Title

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Regina Squids youth men's water polo squad has captured a national title. Earlier this month the Squids outplayed teams from across the country at the 2004 Youth Men's National Club Championships, 18 and under, in Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, the Squids finished the Canadian championship tournament with seven wins, no losses, outscoring their opponents by a blistering 88 to 25.

Mr. Speaker, 17-year-old Matt Sinclair, who moved to Regina from Winnipeg to play with the Squids, was named most valuable goalie in the tournament. Brad Ward was named to the all-star team. And team captain Kevin Graham, who lives in the fine constituency of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, was the tournament's leading scorer.

The Regina Squids' coach, Mike Mortin, was named most valuable coach in the tournament. Mr. Speaker, it was 14 years ago when I played for the Regina Squids in this very same tournament, and our team captain was one Mike Mortin. He was a leader then, Mr. Speaker, and it gives me great pleasure to see that he is still putting that leadership to good use.

Mr. Speaker, this disciplined team of young men can often be found practising in the pool at the Lawson Aquatic Centre. The championship banner from 1992, when the team last won nationals, hangs high above the pool and will now be accompanied by a spanking brand new championship banner — one of which the Squids can and should be very proud.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure my colleagues will join me in acknowledging the team's commitment to their sport, their dedication to staying focused throughout a very demanding tournament, and their ability to play well as a team. I congratulate the Squids on their outstanding accomplishment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, before we go to oral question period could we ask leave of the Assembly to go back to introductions.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave is granted. I recognize the member for Cumberland.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome 21 grade 9 students from Churchill High School in one of the most beautiful parts of the province, in La Ronge. I would ask all my colleagues to help me to welcome them to the Saskatchewan legislature. And I hope they enjoy their visit to Regina.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Health Care Services

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health. Today the NDP announced its plan to close 90 acute and long-term care beds and to fire 90 health care workers including 40 nurses. And the Minister of Health said that slashing of health care services will save a total of just \$5 million. But that's not the worst of it, Mr. Speaker, the minister also said health districts will be asked to cut \$20 million from their budgets this year.

Mr. Speaker, if the NDP's plan to close 90 beds and fire 40 nurses will save just \$5 million, how many more nurses will the NDP have to fire in order to cut another \$20 million out of this year's health care budget?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as I explained to people who raised this question this morning, there will be other changes. We estimate that the total number of jobs that are concerned are about 250 jobs.

So the other amount of money that the member raises around the 20 million will affect about another 160 jobs. And so practically we know that there's about 30,000 plus workers within the health care system. 26,000 full-time equivalents. And if you do the percentages of that, you'll realize that these are substantial number of jobs, but in comparison to the total workforce in health care in Saskatchewan it affects the ongoing operation and can be dealt with as people retire and we replace them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister claims today's announcement is good for health care. But the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, and the minister himself are saying that the

NDP's plan will result in the firing of 250 health care workers, including at least 120 nurses in total.

Mr. Speaker, it's the chronic shortage of nurses that's given Saskatchewan the longest hospital waiting lists in Canada. It's the NDP's failure to recruit and retrain nurses and other health care professionals that have caused life-threatening overcrowding in our emergency rooms and code burgundies.

So, Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain how the NDP's plan to fire another 250 health care workers, including at least 120 nurses, is going to do anything other than make serious problems in the health care system even worse?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, there are many people who retire each year when you have a workforce in excess of 30,000. We'll be dealing with some of these positions by making sure that there's an appropriate transition for people to other jobs. We know we'll have a few challenges related to the areas where some of the jobs are being eliminated, but we'll continue to work very closely with the regional health authorities to make sure that these valued workers are included in the system.

I very much appreciate that the member opposite now values all of the workers within the health care system in an equal fashion, which is a change from his previous position.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, health care workers in this province today understand how this minister values their services by laying off 250 of them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan needs more nurses, not less. Saskatchewan needs more acute care beds, not less. But instead of coming up with a plan to strengthen health care, this NDP government continues to close acute care beds and lay off and fire nurses.

Mr. Speaker, this morning's announcement demonstrates that the NDP has no long-term vision for health care, no long-term plan to shorten waiting lists, no idea how to recruit more nurses and doctors.

Mr. Speaker, how does this NDP plan to fire at least 120 nurses and other health care professionals in this province shorten the wait list for surgery? How does firing more nurses clear the crowds in hospital emergency rooms? Mr. Speaker, how does the NDP's plan to fire 120 nurses improve health care services for Saskatchewan families?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, one of the things that's a great challenge in Saskatchewan is to provide health care that's

accessible right across the province, while also making sure that the appropriate services are there and the quality services are there.

We continually work together with the regional health authorities and on a province-wide basis to try to get that balance. We know that the most serious matters are dealt with in our major centres and that . . . but there's also good care being provided right across the whole province.

We will continue to work with regional health authorities to make sure that all of the people who wish to work in the health care system, including the nurses and other professionals, find another spot within the system because that's . . . we need those people.

The member asked what we've been doing, Mr. Speaker. We have a whole range of things that we've been doing around retaining our existing members and recruiting new ones and training new people. We're going to continue on those things which are set out in our action plan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Services at Herbert Hospital

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, the Herbert hospital is the only hospital on the Trans-Canada Highway between the cities of Moose Jaw and Swift Current. This morning the Health minister announced that this hospital will not only lose seven acute care beds but it will also be converted and it will no longer be able to provide the services it does today.

Herbert doctor Suresh Kasset, who has practised in the community and surrounding area for 20 years, and a number of other community officials, are obviously disappointed with this announcement.

This hospital deals with numerous fatalities and accidents on the Trans-Canada as well as farm accidents in the area. And last summer, when the province faced a significant bout of West Nile virus in the Southwest, beds at Swift Current and at Herbert were full.

To the minister: in cases of peak loads, where are people supposed to go now? Acute care beds have been cut almost in half in Herbert.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we've been working with communities right across the province around building integrated facilities.

Herbert is in a situation where they have a separate facility for their long-term care and a separate facility for their hospital. What is being planned in Herbert is working with the local people around setting up a new structure which integrates these facilities. We anticipate that there will be some reduction in the number of the acute care beds and long-term care beds but we also anticipate that this will be like other integrated facilities in

the province where there are more services available for the individuals in that community.

I ask the member opposite and all of the members of Herbert and surrounding area to work closely with the Cypress Regional Health Authority, as I know we can have a positive building project or other things that are needed in that community to provide services for the people in the long term.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, how you can cut beds and integrate a . . . turn a hospital into an integrated health facility and increase services is a mystery to me.

The NDP's announcement this morning also included the reduction of 15 long-term care beds at Herbert's nursing home. Mr. Speaker, this is a facility with 99 per cent occupancy rate on any given day and a significant waiting list.

The Health minister should know that this facility is one of the least costly to operate in Saskatchewan. Both the long-term care facility and the hospital have a high satisfaction rate as far as level, type, and quality of service. The community is at a loss as to why the Health minister would make cuts to a facility that provides such excellent service and one that has such a high occupancy rate and a waiting list.

Mr. Speaker, can the Health minister explain to the people of Herbert and area where long-term care patients are expected to go and what impact this will have on surrounding communities.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I understand that in the member's riding there's also a community called Central Butte. And Central Butte has worked very carefully with the regional health authority — the Five Hills Regional Health Authority — around integrating their hospital services and their long-term care services into a new facility. And they are very proud to have opened a facility this year which they see as providing good services for that whole area.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the member opposite and all of the people in the community there to work together with the Cypress Regional Health Authority as they move forward to put in the appropriate care in that particular area.

Mr. Speaker, it's curious that we haven't yet heard from the new Leader of the Opposition about his long-term health care plans or ideas. And I look forward to receiving those as we continue the discussions with communities across the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the minister should mention Central Butte. Dr. Suresh Kasset says that the hospital has got busier.

A few years ago the town of Central Butte experienced similar changes that Herbert is facing today. Dr. Kasset says that he is seeing more and more people from the Central Butte area and he expects the changes his hospital is now facing will mean more pressure on Swift Current.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain where the people needing services in Herbert will go?

Mr. Speaker: can the minister explain where the people needing services in Herbert will go?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the question that the member raises is exactly why we came forward with our Action Plan for Saskatchewan Health. We wanted to talk about health care services provided right across the province. We have 12 regions plus the Athabasca Health Region that work together as a unit around planning for care in the province.

Some of the issues that relate to community hospitals and district hospitals, regional hospitals, and then the tertiary care hospitals all are reflected in the plan which talks about people need to get the care in the most appropriate place. We will continue to work with the regional health authorities and with communities to make sure that these kinds of plans are there for the long term. Our concern is that we have a sustainable health care system that's going to serve us for the rest of this century.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

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

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, if there is any kind of a plan, it apparently ignores the need for beds in Saskatchewan. If there is such a plan, it only looks at the bottom line. Officials and citizens from the town of Herbert and surrounding communities are also worried about the impact these changes will have on the local economy.

A number of people working at the hospital and the nursing home are supplementing farm income in the area. The income these employees receive is needed to keep these farms going. The job losses expected as a result of today's announcement are bound to have a dire impact on the rural economy in the Herbert area.

Mr. Speaker, is this the NDP's idea of rural revitalization? Has the minister taken into full consideration how devastating these job losses will be to the community?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as I have explained on many occasions when I go to visit in local communities and also as I explained this morning when questions like this were asked of the members from the press, what we do on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, is get the information around the kinds of resources that we have, but then we listen very carefully to communities about what kinds of things are needed to have their community grow.

We know that this is all about the kind of hope that communities can have on building for the future. I like to describe it this way, Mr. Speaker, that health care is one leg of a stool, education's the other leg of a stool and then communications, which include highways, SaskTel, all these other things, is the third part of that three-legged stool. All of these things need to be healthy and functional to provide the base for which the local economy can grow.

Mr. Speaker, we've looked at this and listened very carefully because we want our communities to grow and we want our communities to be good and supported in the long term.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Health Services in the Southwest

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, this morning we learned that the NDP government will be reducing services at the Border Health Centre in Climax and according to the Minister of Health, the centre will now only operate eight hours a day, five days a week. No emergency care will be administered outside of those hours. In fact, the centre's doctor has no key for the facility so he can't physically come in to attend to an emergency outside of working hours even if he wanted to. Mr. Speaker, emergencies don't simply happen between the hours of eight and five each day.

On hearing this announcement, Dr. Pierre Louwrens said that emergency care and certain defined procedures will not be allowed at the Climax centre. People will now have to be transferred to the community of Shaunavon.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP government taking away the Border Health Centre's ability to provide emergency services to the communities of Climax and Frontier?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as I explained previously, one of the big challenges in Saskatchewan is to provide access across the province, and also quality services and quality care. And we continue to try to make that appropriate balance, because it's not possible to have the full extent of emergency care in every facility in every community in the province.

But what we do try to do is make sure that communities working with the regional health authorities can get care in appropriate places, so that its good care, so that they have appropriate emergency medical services. This continues to change as communities change, and we will continue to work with communities as this goes forward.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress.

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, the need for this facility to provide emergency services to the community was demonstrated just yesterday when a terrible accident occurred in the area. Mr. Speaker, an individual working for the RM about 20 minutes outside of the community of Climax, got his arm caught in a piece of equipment and his forearm was nearly

severed. In severe pain from his injury, the doctor at the Border Health Centre says a systemic shutdown from shock and trauma had set in. Fortunately, the Border Health Centre was open. The doctor says if this individual hadn't been stabilized at the centre, there's a good chance that he may not have survived.

Now Shaunavon has been designated as the emergency hospital in the area. If this accident, Mr. Speaker, had occurred outside of the eight working hours at the Border Health Centre, this man would have had to wait an additional 50 minutes to simply get an ambulance to attend to his needs. How is cutting that centre's ability to provide timely emergency care good for those isolated communities?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I know we're all concerned for the individual involved in this terrible accident. But, Mr. Speaker, we also end up having to try to balance once again, as I had said previously, access and quality care and do it together with the local communities. And that's one of the huge challenges we have in Saskatchewan. It's very much the case in health care, but it's also true in many of the other services that are provided, and of the kinds of things that happen in our province.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that we have, as a society, made some very good choices around some of these things, but sometimes there are situations where it doesn't meet exactly the needs that we require and then we have to ask the question, how do we make things different or how do we do things in another way. But, Mr. Speaker, in this particular situation, we are trying to provide the best services we can in that sparsely populated part of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, not only will this announcement today have a significant impact on the availability of emergency services in the area, Dr. Louwrens says these changes will drastically hamper his ability to practise effectively. The lab services out of the Border Health Centre have been reduced to three days a week and the doctor says he cannot operate a clinic without regular lab services available.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the doctor is now questioning his very future at that centre. And if he goes, Dr. Louwrens argues that it will be almost impossible to find a replacement. Today's announcement is jeopardizing the very future of this doctor in this isolated rural community.

The people of Climax and Frontier are here today to tell the minister that this is not on. Will the minister explain to this group how the changes announced today are going to be beneficial to the communities of Climax and Frontier.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, once again I'll explain that we are working with communities, the whole Cypress Regional Health Authority, to provide needed services across a broad,

sparsely populated area. This is a challenge. We will continue to try to figure out how to do this.

Some of the things that are being done now are changes that have been suggested by the people who are running the system in that area now. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't apologize for the fact that changes may have to be made.

But, Mr. Speaker, I also recognize that the communities have the ability and, I think, the obligation to come forward with suggestions and ideas about how to provide the services that are needed. That will be an ongoing dialogue; not this year, not next year, but over many, many years as we try to provide services right across our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday an air ambulance got stuck in a pothole on the runway in Frontier. It took two and a half hours to get a second air ambulance to the community to evacuate this patient. One week ago today, the Department of Highways couldn't even clear the highway of a foot and a half of snow within 48 hours.

Mr. Speaker, today we're seeing cutbacks in emergency service opportunities at the Border Health Centre. In fact, the doctor is now questioning his very future in that community and, as it goes, we know that it'll be very difficult to find a replacement. Today's announcement is jeopardizing the future of the people of those two communities. The people from Climax and Frontier are here today to tell the minister of their concern and their needs. Will the minister commit today to meet with the delegation from Climax and Frontier? At the very least will he plan and promise to meet with them before these proposed changes go into effect?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, last week I was asked to insert a couple of meetings with groups which I did and had a very, I think, good discussion with local communities. Mr. Speaker, I have a very busy day lined up with a lot of responsibilities as well, but I will work with the member opposite to meet with these people from that particular area.

Mr. Speaker, I have many, I guess, friends who have come from that area and who have lived down in that particular area, so I understand the challenges that the member has identified.

One of the challenges we all have as residents of our province is how do we provide these services right across the very beautiful province that we have, but also maintaining the quality of the services and the accessibility of the services. And we are going to continue to work at that; that's our goal in our health plan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Staffing Resources in Health Care

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we have some questions for the Premier today as well, because today's announcement is the latest example of the Premier breaking his word.

Mr. Speaker, in the election campaign, in the election campaign this fall on page 1 in a letter from the Premier to the people of the province, signed by the Premier, what does the Premier say? He says, and I quote:

We can go forward together, with more nurses (more nurses) and health professionals . . .

That was what the Premier said when he was looking for votes, Mr. Speaker, last fall.

We would ask the Premier to stand today in the wake of these announcements, stand today and answer to the people of the province why he is breaking his promise to provide more health care professionals, why he is announcing today that 90 nurses and health care professionals will immediately lose their jobs and 160 more to follow. Will he answer that question?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, those whose positions are being affected by the announcements made today, many of those, Mr. Speaker, will continue to work and deliver health care services to the people of Saskatchewan.

As the Minister of Health has pointed out, there are many, many opportunities for those workers to continue to serve in the health care system in Saskatchewan. And as they continue to serve, we are increasing the number of bursaries, we're increasing the number of training spaces; we are building the numbers of nurses and the number of health care professionals in the province.

Mr. Speaker, we made a commitment to the people of Saskatchewan that we would provide the best publicly funded medicare and health care for Saskatchewan people that we could.

In this budget we added \$160 million of new resources. Today we have added even further resources to ensure that in communities across Saskatchewan these health care services — acute and long-term care services — are available to the people of this province as close to home as we can bring them, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier's Minister of Health today announced that as a result of the actions of this NDP government, 90 nurses and health care professionals are going to be fired. They're going to be fired. And that when the smoke clears after the plan, the number will grow — nurses and health care professionals — to 250 in places like Herbert and in

Climax and across this province.

In the election campaign, Mr. Speaker, the Premier started his platform with a letter to Saskatchewan people. It says "Dear Friend" and it goes through all of the plans of the NDP and then it says, Mr. Speaker:

We can go forward together, with more nurses and (more) health (care) professionals . . .

Will the Premier answer to the people of the province why yet again he's breaking his word?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, correct. Correct, that is exactly what I said.

Let me complete the sentence, Mr. Speaker. More nurses and health professionals. Yes, Mr. Speaker, there will be more nurses and more health professionals, Mr. Speaker.

And I said there will be new hospital equipment. Mr. Speaker, commitment made, commitment kept. New CT (computerized tomography) scanners, commitment to do MRIs (magnetic resonance imaging), where you can be sure you get the care you need when you need it.

And note these words, Mr. Speaker, in publicly funded and publicly run health care facilities, as opposed to the policies of the Saskatchewan Party and their cousins in Ottawa, the Conservatives, who would promote the privatization of health care, the private hospital model in Canada.

If the Leader of the Opposition disagrees with that model, then the people of Saskatchewan wait for him to say so — finally say something about health care.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Why is the member, the Government House Leader on his feet?

(14:30)

TABLING OF FURTHER ESTIMATE

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, it is my pleasure to submit further estimates accompanied by a message from Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor.

The Speaker: — Members, would you please rise for the message from the Lieutenant Governor. The message is as follows:

The Lieutenant Governor transmits further estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the twelve months ending March 31, 2005, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly. (Signed), the Hon. Dr. Lynda M. Haverstock, Lieutenant Governor, province of Saskatchewan.

Please be seated. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, today I am tabling a further estimate to increase the Department of Health's budget for the 2004-05 fiscal year. As a result, I am also tabling further estimates for the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and the four-year financial plan.

We are increasing the Department of Health budget by \$13 million to \$2.7 billion, which is a 6.9 per cent increase over the 2003-04 estimates. This new money will be withdrawn from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

We are also reallocating \$6 million within the existing health budget. This \$19 million . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, please. Order, please. I just want to be able to hear what the member is saying. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — This \$19 million total will be added to the regional health authorities for their operating grants.

These changes to the health budget are occurring primarily because the regional health authorities, or RHAs, require additional money to maintain necessary community services for Saskatchewan people. This government made this decision to increase funding after reviewing the RHAs' operational plans. The funding increase will help minimize facility closures and conversions, and the loss of acute and long-term care beds.

Some changes will still proceed. It is critical to make changes in health care to ensure its sustainability in this province. However we must balance that need with the equally important need to manage the changes over time to avoid major system disruptions.

What this means on the balance sheet at the end of the current fiscal year is we will withdraw \$171 million from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund rather than the \$158.1 million to balance the budget. The balance remaining in the fund at March 31, 2005 will decrease by \$13 million to \$130.5 million. The surplus at year-end after this withdrawal remains unchanged.

The other change is to the four-year financial plan. In the budget we projected a \$68.9 million increase in operating spending for the year 2005-06. That will now be reduced by \$13 million, resulting in a \$55.9 million increase in spending in 2005-06. Everything else remains the same. By the end of year four, in 2007-08, we will generate a \$42 million surplus.

I would like to stress that we are continuing to meet our commitments to wean ourselves from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and to reduce the gap between revenue and expenditure.

We are still forecasting a surplus by the year . . . by the end of year four. At the same time we're ensuring these changes do not come at the expense of vital programs and services in Saskatchewan such as health care.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Yorkton:

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, please. It has been moved . . . Order, please. Order please, members.

It has been moved by the member for Regina Douglas Park, the Minister of Finance, seconded by the member for Yorkton, the Deputy Premier:

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

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Call in the members for a standing vote.

The division bells rang from 14:36 until 14:43.

The Speaker: — Order. The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Finance, the member for Regina Douglas Park, seconded by the member for Yorkton:

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

Those in favour of the motion please rise.

Yeas — 55

Calvert	Addley	Lautermilch
Hagel	Van Mulligen	Serby
Atkinson	Cline	Sonntag
Crofford	Prebble	Forbes
Wartman	Belanger	Higgins
Thomson	Nilson	Beatty
Hamilton	Junor	Harper
Iwanchuk	McCall	Quennell
Trew	Yates	Taylor
Morin	Borgerson	Wall
Toth	Elhard	Heppner
Krawetz	Draude	Hermanson
Bjornerud	Stewart	Wakefield
Morgan	McMorris	Eagles
Gantfoer	Harpauer	Bakken
Cheveldayoff	Huyghebaert	Allchurch
Brkich	Weekes	Kerpan
Merriman	Chisholm	Hart
Kirsch		

Nays — nil

The Speaker: — The motion is carried unanimously.

Motion agreed to.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to move a motion with respect to the sitting hours of the legislature.

The Speaker: — The House Leader has requested leave to move a motion. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I recognize the Government House Leader.

MOTION

Hours of Sitting

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Melfort:

That notwithstanding the motion adopted on April 5, 2004 regarding sitting days of the Assembly, when this Assembly adjourns on Wednesday, May 19, it shall stand adjourned until Wednesday, May 26 at 1:30 p.m.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader, the member for Regina Douglas Park, and seconded by the Opposition House Leader, the member from Melfort:

That notwithstanding the motion adopted on April 5, 2004 regarding sitting days of the Assembly, when this Assembly adjourns on Wednesday, May 19, it shall stand adjourned until Wednesday, May 26 at 1:30 p.m.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely pleased to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions no. 315 through 323 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 315 through to 323 inclusive have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 54 — The Tobacco Control Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Tobacco Control Amendment Act, 2004. Mr. Speaker, two years ago in March 2002, our government broke ground with The Tobacco Control Act.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we are going even further. The Tobacco Control Amendment Act, 2004 will strengthen certain sections of The Tobacco Control Act, clarify the intent of some provisions, and add regulation-making authority in a number of areas. Most importantly, it will protect Saskatchewan people from the devastating health effects of second-hand smoke.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand today and say that this legislation means that Saskatchewan public places; such as restaurants, bars, bingo halls, casinos, and bowling alleys, and private clubs, will be 100 per cent smoke-free starting January 1, 2005.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, tobacco use is the leading cause of disease and premature death in Canada. It is a social problem with major implications for the health and well-being of smokers and non-smokers alike. Today, Mr. Speaker, we are doing something about this.

The smoke-free public place amendment to The Tobacco Control Act reflects our government's priority to building safe and healthy lives, families, neighbourhoods, and communities across the province. It furthers our commitment to protecting the health of Saskatchewan people, to reducing tobacco use in this province, and to stopping preventable disease.

Mr. Speaker, the provision for smoke-free public places is one amendment to The Tobacco Control Act. There are others that I want to mention because they are also important to our goal of reducing tobacco use in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we want to reduce the visibility of tobacco products, de-normalize smoking, and reinforce that tobacco use is not a mainstream or normal activity in our society. That is why we have an amendment to ban the selling of tobacco products in places that cater to young people — places such as amusement parks, theatres, and arcades.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, we would like to acknowledge and once again thank the special all-party committee on tobacco control which you chaired, Mr. Speaker, for the work and strong emphasis on protecting youth from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke.

Other committee members who I'd like to recognize are the Vice-Chair and the member from Estevan, the members from

Melville-Saltcoats, Saskatoon Sutherland, Moose Jaw Wakamow, Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, and Weyburn-Big Muddy.

We also applaud recent leadership by many of our Saskatchewan municipalities in implementing, considering, or exploring the option of smoke-free bylaws. I am talking here specifically about the cities of Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Humboldt, and Yorkton.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — With this amendment we are also giving municipalities the jurisdiction to enact bylaws that go beyond the 100 per cent smoke-free enclosed public places and restrict smoking in outdoor places such as open-air sport grounds and entrances to public buildings.

Other amendments, Mr. Speaker, include providing the authority for charging proprietors and individuals in places and premises where smoking is prohibited or restricted and occupants who are found to be smoking. The current legislation does not include provisions for penalizing those who do not comply. We believe there needs to be a shared responsibility on proprietors and customers to comply with the provisions of the Act.

We are also providing regulation-making authority related to the requirements for signage and the locations where signage can be placed in tobacco retail establishments, and for places where smoking is prohibited or restricted. This is as a result of feedback from tobacco retailers and the tobacco enforcement officers.

We are establishing further clarification regarding the minimum number of tobacco products sold in a package to include cigarillos. The Tobacco Control Act already prohibits the sale of single cigarettes. This change will require that cigarillos will not be sold in packages that contain less than five.

Health advocates and tobacco retailers support this move to make tobacco and tobacco related products less accessible and affordable to young people.

We are establishing provisions for an appropriate forgiveness period for previous convictions in the application of penalties to prohibit a tobacco retailer from selling tobacco. Good compliance for retailers should be recognized. Keeping tobacco convictions on the books for an indetermined amount of time was too harsh. We are proposing a change so that an increased penalty because of an offence will not apply if the previous conviction had taken place three years or longer from the date of the current conviction.

As well, with the amendments previous convictions will not apply to non-family successors of businesses and affiliated franchises in other communities. This is to ensure that there's not unreasonable hardship on businesses.

We are providing powers to tobacco control officers to request information from a person who has left a retail establishment and who an officer has reason to believe is underage, and was sold tobacco products. This is to give tobacco enforcement

officers the authority to gather evidence that a retail establishment may have sold tobacco products to a person under 18.

And finally, we are increasing fines for obstruction of a tobacco enforcement officer. Currently these fines are too low compared to fines for other offences in light of the serious nature of this offence. With this amendment the maximum fine for a first obstruction offence will be \$3,000, and the maximum fine for all subsequent obstruction offences will be \$5,000.

And so, Mr. Speaker, our government is doing much to promote a safe and healthy province for Saskatchewan people, and we are on the forefront of a growing trend to move toward a healthier, smoke-free society.

For example, the province of Manitoba recently introduced The Non-Smoker's Health Protection Amendment Act, which prohibits smoking in enclosed public places and indoor workplaces. Prince Edward Island has implemented smoke-free public place and workplace legislation, Ontario has announced plans for a smoking ban within the next two years. And last November Nunavut Legislative Assembly gave Royal Assent to a tobacco control Act which prohibits smoking in all workplaces.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said, but it deserves repeating, tobacco use is the leading cause of disease and premature death in Canada. The Tobacco Control Amendment Act, 2004 does many things, but most importantly it makes us a smoke-free province. This, Mr. Speaker, is an important public health step. It is not, as some might say, an attack on businesses and smokers; it is an attack on preventable disease and premature death.

We want to work with and support Saskatchewan people who are taking responsibility for protecting their own health and the health of their families and communities, and provide everyone with the opportunity to be smoke free.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of The Tobacco Control Amendment Act, 2004. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 54, The Tobacco Control Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

I recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this Bill. This Bill responds to a growing wave of legislation that is moving across North America. At the present time there are five states that have enacted similar legislation. The state of New York, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, and California have enacted very similar legislation, and the state of Florida has enacted a slightly less restrictive legislation. There are hundreds of communities that have enacted ordinances at a municipal level in the United States that give similar protection to workers and hotel and restaurant and bar patrons from the problems of

second-hand smoke, Mr. Speaker.

We recognize the health hazard posed by second-hand smoke and wish to try and do everything we can to be supportive of this type of legislation. We recognize the impact that second-hand smoke has on workers that work in the hospitality industry and are pleased to be supportive of legislation that will give them some degree of protection.

Mr. Speaker, we note that this legislation deals with enabling municipalities to regulate what takes place in open-air facilities and we look forward to seeing what municipalities do to try and enact or deal with the risks posed in open-air facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on issues that arose in the state of California in their earlier legislation that was passed and came into force in 1995. It initially limited smoking within five feet of a doorway to a public facility. In 2003 they increased that to 20 feet.

Given the cold weather in Saskatchewan, I'm wondering whether we're going to have similar issues here, whether we're going to have to set back a further set back because I note now that in a large number of buildings there is a huddle of people outside the doors during our winter months. So I would encourage those people to look at options to give up smoking.

Mr. Speaker, I had opportunity to travel to California during the mid-1990s. And I was at restaurants in a municipality that had passed a municipal ban at that time. At the time that I was there smoking was not banned or segregated in Saskatchewan as it is now with designated areas, and was surprised by the pleasant reaction when you would go into a restaurant or an eating establishment that you would smell food rather than second-hand cigarette smoke.

I had discussion with some of the restaurant operators because at that time it was a new enactment. And their reaction was that it did not limit or reduce their business and to the contrary. More people came out that were non-smokers that had stayed away before and people that did come to the restaurant were actually ordering more expensive meals and were actually eating more because they enjoyed the eating experience. So there's a significant economic benefit to those restaurants.

So I know we have reluctance of some of the restaurants and some of the bars in this province and I'm hoping that the reaction will be the same as my experience was when I was in California some time ago.

So we encourage this type of discussion and we want this to take place. I'm still troubled by the fact that one of the exemptions in here is to allow common areas in apartment complexes would not be designated as common areas. So I'm troubled that there may be some loopholes and are maybe some issues that are there. And so I'm hoping that as this Bill passes through a committee that those issues are dealt with.

(15:00)

I'm also pleased, Mr. Speaker, to see that there's some significant increases in the penalties for selling tobacco to young people. I think it's clear that if we're going to eliminate

tobacco as a problem, as a health issue, we have to take steps to prevent young people from smoking. So this is something that should be allotted.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move adjournment of debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Southeast that debate on second reading of Bill No. 54 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. 49 — The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les services de l'état civil

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, the health registration and vital statistics branch of Saskatchewan Health plays a very important role in our health care system and is responsible for providing services such as the administration and maintenance of a province-wide system for registering births, deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, and changes of name that occur in Saskatchewan.

The registering of vital events and the gathering of vital statistics information, Mr. Speaker, is done in co-operation with many individuals. Division registrars — most who are municipal secretaries and town or city clerks — record births, stillbirths, and deaths. Clergy and marriage commissioners report weddings, and the courts report divorces and adoptions.

Mr. Speaker, the Act is being amended in order to make it compliant with the June 2003 ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada. The Supreme Court ruled that provisions in British Columbia's vital statistics legislation, that permitted a birth mother to choose not to acknowledge a birth father on the child's registration of birth, was a violation of the birth father's rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's Vital Statistics Act, 1995 contains similar provisions to the ones struck down by the court in British Columbia's vital statistics legislation. And in January 2004 these provisions were challenged in the Court of Queen's Bench in Saskatchewan.

In response to that challenge, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan Justice lawyers asked the court to suspend, for one year, any declaration of invalidity to allow amending legislation to be presented to the Legislative Assembly at the current sitting of the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, as part of our government's commitment to quality, accessible, and responsible health care service for the people of Saskatchewan, we believe it is important to bring this legislation to the House today.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of the amendments to The Vital Statistics Act, 1995. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 49, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

I recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and respond to Bill 49, which is An Act to amend The Vital Statistics Act.

Mr. Speaker, upon first blush it looks like this is a pretty common sense piece of legislation which allows either the father or the mother, or both parents, to register a child's birth. We know, Mr. Speaker, that . . . Of course those of us who have had children know that this is quite an exciting and interesting time in our lives as we welcome a new child into a family and the decisions are made about what the name of the child would be, and discussion is undertaken as to naming the child and making sure that all the paperwork is done. It's always a happy occasion. I'm sure it can also cause a little bit of interesting dialogue between the mother and father if they discuss such things.

I noticed in the paper the other day that actress Gwyneth Paltrow had a child and named the child Apple, because this child was the apple of her eye. And I'm not sure if she consulted with the father of the child when she made that decision. But obviously the repercussions of doing things right lasts with the child for quite some time. So the more flexible our legislation can be, and the more fair and equitable it can be in allowing both parents input in the registration of a child's birth, the better that is.

Mr. Speaker, obviously we do want to see if there is any feedback. I can't think of any negative feedback that would come forward from a piece of legislation like this, but we don't always see things in its entirety the same day that a Bill is introduced into the legislature. So therefore, while we look favourably upon this Bill, at this point I would move that we adjourn debate on it.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Rosetown-Elrose that the debate on second reading of Bill No. 49 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. 14 — The Highway Traffic
Amendment Act, 2004**

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 2004.

The Highway Traffic Act regulates roads and their uses in Saskatchewan to meet safety needs and to promote the safe and efficient flow of traffic. Mr. Speaker, this year's proposed amendments include a number of traffic safety initiatives that are designed to reduce injuries and save lives at specific intersections in areas that pose greater risk across our province.

Mr. Speaker, the first amendment related to traffic safety will create safer neighbourhoods for our children by mandating that all communities across the province must have school zones. And the amendment will also set, provincially, consistent fines for speeding in a school zone that reflect the serious nature of this offence. Speeding up to 30 kilometres above the posted speed limit would result in a fine of \$140 plus \$2 per kilometre. Excessive speeding over 31 kilometres above the posted speed limit would cost \$140 plus \$4 per kilometre.

Currently, each municipality in Saskatchewan is responsible for setting a speed limit in their school zones if they so choose. As a result, some municipalities have speed limits posted in their school zones while others do not. For those municipalities with a speed limit, that speed limit varies from community to community at either 30 or 40 kilometres per hour. Requiring all communities to have the same speed limit in the school . . . in school zones will make it easier for all Saskatchewan drivers to recognize and remember that they must slow down in school zones and they must slow to the same speed, no matter where they are in Saskatchewan.

It's important the needs and concerns of each community in the province be heard before a consistent speed limit is decided. As a result, the provincial speed limit in school zones will be set following consultations with Saskatchewan municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, keeping our children safe is a top priority of our government and that's why we are proposing the province take over the responsibility for setting the speed limits in school zones across our province. It's the only way we can all be sure that all our children, wherever they live in the province, are better protected as they learn and play.

Mr. Speaker, the second traffic safety initiative I'm outlining today deals with Saskatchewan highways. Highways can be particularly dangerous for those working on or around them due to the high speeds of passing vehicles.

This government has already made changes in recent years to ensure the safety of all workers on Saskatchewan highways, including highway and emergency workers like police officers. We've already set a speed limit of 60 kilometres per hour when passing highway crews and police, fire, and ambulance vehicles who are stopped with their lights flashing.

Today, we are proposing tow truck operators be added to that list. The amendment will make it law for all motorists to slow to 60 kilometres an hour when passing a tow truck stopped on the highway with its amber warning lights flashing when the operator is assisting a motorist with their vehicle. The fine, Mr. Speaker, for not slowing down will be the same as for other scenarios — \$140 plus \$2 per kilometre over the limit. Excessive speeding of over 31 kilometres over the limit will cost \$140 plus \$4 per kilometre.

Like the other workers, tow truck operators are at risk from other traffic when providing assistance, especially on the highway. Mr. Speaker, this amendment will make their job safer as they continue to aid Saskatchewan motorists in need on our highways. Excessive speed is always a traffic safety concern.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there are always reckless motorists willing to disregard their own personal safety and the safety of other motorists and pedestrians on the road to get to their destinations as fast as possible. Many motorists are also willing to go to great lengths to get away with speeding, including the purchase and use of a radar detector to avoid getting tickets for their actions.

Avoiding a ticket is not the only consequence of using a radar detector, however. Excessive speed can be dangerous and deadly on Saskatchewan roads, especially in the following circumstances. In the case of commercial vehicles like semi-trailers, they can take twice as long to stop as smaller vehicles at highway speeds. The faster a semi is travelling on the highway, obviously the longer it takes to stop.

Because the issue of excessive speed is even more of a traffic safety issue for large vehicles like semi-trailers, the proposed amendment will ban the use of radar detectors in these vehicles. The fine proposed for this offence will be \$100 plus the victim's surcharge.

The following proposed amendments I will outline are related to the Highway Traffic Board and its responsibility to monitor the safety of all large carriers.

The Highway Traffic Board, Mr. Speaker, is responsible for administering the National Safety Code in Saskatchewan. Amendments are proposed to streamline administration for the Highway Traffic Board. The amendments will simplify the procedures for imposing a safety plan on a carrier. Currently a show-cause hearing is required before a safety plan can be imposed on a motor carrier. This can be time consuming, cumbersome, and expensive, ultimately a concern to public safety.

The proposed amendment will allow the Highway Traffic Board to issue a directive to a carrier outlining the steps it must take to address safety concerns. A show-cause hearing, Mr. Speaker, will now only be required if a carrier fails to meet the initial directive.

Mr. Speaker, the Highway Traffic Board is also currently bogged down in hearing appeals with many appellants continuing to appeal issues after the board has made a decision. This backs up the hearing process and increases the amount of

time other appellants must wait to access an initial hearing. The proposed amendment will clarify the board's authority. Once the board has heard an appeal and rendered a decision, that decision will be final and cannot be appealed back again to the Highway Traffic Board. The only exceptions will be where an appellant can prove they have new evidence or their circumstances have changed since the initial hearing and ruling.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments will ensure any safety issues regarding a trucking company or carrier are dealt with on a timely basis, reducing the risks to traffic safety resulting from unsafe motor carriers.

Mr. Speaker, there is one other proposed amendment related to trailers I'd like to outline today, specifically related to farm trailers. Currently certain heavy farm trailers do not have to be registered in Saskatchewan. The intention of this exemption when it was developed decades ago was to exclude farm wagons that were being towed by farm trucks.

At the time, these wagons were considered to be more farm equipment than trailers and were used primarily on the farm. Today although farm semi-trailers are required to be registered, these exemptions — this exemption I should say — is also covering large stock trailers and pintle-hitch farm trailers that are used on the highway.

Registration fees for heavy vehicles are meant to help pay for road damage on Saskatchewan roads and highways caused by these vehicles. It is important to recognize that heavy farm trailers, besides semi-trailers, also do damage to Saskatchewan's roads and highways. In order to be fair, Mr. Speaker, to all trailer owners, this must be accounted for in registration fees.

The proposed amendment will require registration of all heavy farm trailers that weigh more than 4,600 kilograms with their load. It will also require that weight to be included in the registered weight of the vehicle towing it. These changes will take effect in 2005, resulting in a more balanced system where we work toward every class paying its fair share.

Mr. Speaker, there is another exemption in The Highway Traffic Act that the government proposes to eliminate — the exemption from wearing a seat belt while driving in reverse. This exemption was originally implemented to accommodate the drivers of large trucks when they are backing up. Because of advancements in vehicle technology and seat belt design, this exemption is no longer necessary.

Mr. Speaker, seat belts save lives and reduce injuries. The proposed amendment will reinforce the message that buckling up at all times is a safe and healthy choice no matter what vehicle you are driving or the conditions you are driving in.

I'd now like to turn to amendments that deal with enforcement, Mr. Speaker, and I know the opposition is listening intently.

Identity fraud is a serious issue, and as such it is already an offence to alter a driver's licence. In Saskatchewan those who do not drive can obtain a photo identification card though no driving privileges are associated with the card. Currently, Mr. Speaker, there is no offence associated with altering this photo

identification card. The proposed amendment will make altering a photo identification card an offence, and it will carry the same fine as altering a driver's licence — \$105 including the victim surcharge.

(15:15)

Mr. Speaker, the following two proposed amendments deal with strengthening enforcement of two important programs, the vehicle impoundment program and the impoundment of vehicles following prostitution-related charges.

The vehicle impoundment provisions under The Highway Traffic Act dealing with prostitution-related offences enable a vehicle to be impounded if it is being used in the commission of that offence. And, Mr. Speaker, if the individual is found guilty the impounded vehicle is forfeited and becomes the property of the province. However there have been cases where an individual has avoided having to forfeit their vehicle despite a finding of guilt when they receive a conditional or absolute discharge.

The proposed amendment will clarify that any finding of guilt by the court, regardless of the sentence imposed, will result in the guilty individual's vehicle being forfeited to the province.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment relating to the vehicle impoundment program will add another offence to the list that can result in a vehicle being impounded. Currently drivers who are suspended who do not purchase a driver's licence after completing a suspension period or continue to drive without a valid driver's licence are subject to impoundment of their vehicle.

The amendment will expand the program to include drivers who are participating in the ignition interlock program. It will ensure that drivers restricted to driving vehicles equipped with an ignition interlock device will face consequences for driving a vehicle that does not have a device installed, Mr. Speaker.

The amendment will define this driver as an unauthorized driver and will allow for that vehicle to be impounded for 30 days for a first occurrence, and for 60 days for a second occurrence.

Even though the vehicle may not be owned by the restricted driver, the vehicle can indeed be impounded. The threat of the impoundment is meant to discourage the restricted driver from seeking other transportation from family or friends, and to discourage family or friends from loaning their vehicles to that restricted driver.

Mr. Speaker, this is part of the government's ongoing commitment to aid law enforcement agencies in our mutual goal of making our communities and streets a safer place for all of us.

The following amendment also deals with instances where vehicle owners share liability with drivers. Across Canada vehicle owners are held jointly responsible at law for any harm or damage caused by the vehicle operator. Following the introduction of choice in auto insurance . . . in injury insurance in 2003, some vehicle owners were protected from this liability at law while others were not. Namely if a vehicle owner had

chosen no-fault coverage, they were protected from injury lawsuits caused by their driver, while tort coverage vehicle owners remained at risk.

Mr. Speaker, this proposed amendment will repeal an owner's vicarious liability in all instances. It will remove the risk from all vehicle owners regardless of the type of insurance coverage they elect. Mr. Speaker, no-fault and tort vehicle owners will now each be protected equally from being held personally responsible for harm or damage he or she did not cause.

Mr. Speaker, the final two proposed amendments I will outline today are related to clarifying areas already laid out in the Act.

First, in 2002 The Highway Traffic Act was amended regarding the accident reporting system in Saskatchewan. Up until then, all collisions needed to be reported to the police. Now only collisions involving bodily injury, death, hit and run, an impaired operator, or where vehicles have to be towed need to be reported to police. All other incidences . . . all other accidents, I should say, are reported to SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance) through its Dial-a-Claim service.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment will add one more type of collision to this list that will still need to be reported to police. All accidents involving out-of-province vehicles will need to be reported to police. SGI's Dial-a-Claim service cannot process out-of-province vehicles. This proposed amendment will correct the omission in the legislation.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the last amendment to outline today will . . . that I would like to outline today will more clearly define residency for the purposes of a driver's licence and vehicle registration requirements.

Many of the current residency rules are set out in policy and are not accessible to enforcement or the public. The proposed amendment will clarify in legislation that those who reside for more than 90 consecutive days in Saskatchewan must register the vehicle in Saskatchewan and if applicable must acquire a Saskatchewan driver's licence. The amendment also provides visitors up to 180 days before attaining the residency status. And it provides for clear definitions of exemptions related to students and short-term workers to be defined in regulations. This amendment will make the rules more enforceable and more accessible to law enforcement and the public.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes the outline of the proposed amendments found in The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 2004, and therefore Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Transportation that Bill No. 14, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 2004 be now a read a second time.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unlike the last Bill that I spoke to, Bill No. 14, an Act to amend The Highway Traffic Act, is far more complicated and deals with a number of issues, is going to take a fair bit of review and consideration by

the members of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, the issue of transportation is particularly an important issue in the province of Saskatchewan, probably more so than in many jurisdictions. We all are impacted by transportation and the rules of the road. The Highway Traffic Act is particularly important to us in our personal lives and in the commercial work that is carried on in the province of Saskatchewan.

Also a great deal of trepidation, Mr. Speaker, in wondering if this Bill was ever going to see the light of day . . . we wondered if there was something seriously wrong with the Bill because, as you know, the minister responsible for this Act did not bring it forward for first reading for quite some time which indicates that there could be some problems with this piece of legislation. And obviously we will have to put it under a great deal of scrutiny to make sure that if there were problems, that they have been rectified. Mr. Speaker, the official opposition will very carefully review Bill No. 14 to ensure that it serves the people of Saskatchewan in a positive and constructive way.

Mr. Speaker, in doing that, we will consult with stakeholders that are impacted by this Bill. And the stakeholders, as I mentioned, would be considerable because our province is so impacted by The Highway Traffic Act.

For instance, we will have to review the part of the legislation which regards farm trailers over 4,600 kilograms. Mr. Speaker, I think this is an area where the government has been a bit lax in even making people who use these trailers aware of the present regulations and the coverage that they have. I think there's a great deal of misunderstanding about the coverage that farmers and others have, who are pulling trailers, who may or may not have a licence on it, and what that licence is good for and how the licensing of that trailer might actually impact the vehicle that is towing the trailer.

So there is certainly a lot of review that is required in that regard because the option in this Act is to either provide insurance or not to provide insurance, depending on which course of action the register of the trailer would undertake.

But we also note with some concern, Mr. Speaker, that there's going to be a rather hefty increase in registration fees for a number of farm trucks that are five axle and smaller. Fee increases up to 25 per cent at a time when the agricultural industry is concerned about reducing input costs . . . to see some of these fees increase by 25 per cent is of great concern, Mr. Speaker. And we also know that most of these vehicles and these farm trucks are used in areas where there is very little traffic. And perhaps in fact it would be a better argument to lower the insurance rates rather than to raise the insurance rates, given the fact that the likelihood of having an accident with these vehicles is particularly low. So that needs to be reviewed.

There's also concern about the amendments that deal with the Highway Traffic Board's ability to rehear a matter where there is new evidence that was not available at the date of the initial hearing. This causes us concern, Mr. Speaker, because really this will empower the board to ignore new evidence once they've made a ruling. And perhaps the new evidence is something that they shouldn't have overlooked, and they're a

bit . . . they might potentially be a bit embarrassed by this new evidence coming forward. They might not want to recognize that they didn't do a proper job in reviewing and looking at potential evidence when they made their first decision.

So we are rather concerned that the Highway Traffic Board will have the right to deny hearing new evidence that might alter the outcome of a ruling that they have made. Mr. Speaker, a no-appeal option is always one that concerns me, and I'm sure it would concern the people of Saskatchewan. And so we'll have to review the impact of that part of this new piece of legislation.

And there is also a part in the Bill that talks about safety profiling of commercial operators. As we know we're very concerned about privacy and the concern that Big Brother needn't know all, but yet we also know we need to provide safety. And we want to make sure that unsafe drivers aren't on the road. So this is another issue that is going to require some very close scrutiny to ensure that the legislation accomplishes its proper motivation of making our highways safer, without infringing on the right of privacy of the people that are impacted by this part of the legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will be talking with the stakeholders that are affected by this amendment to The Highway Traffic Act. Obviously, as I have pointed out, we have some concerns. This Bill will take some scrutiny. As I said, we were concerned because the minister took a great deal of time in gathering enough courage to even bring this Bill to first reading. And so here we are at second reading, seeing some of the reasons why perhaps that there was some concern. Least probably amongst our concern is wearing a seatbelt while driving in reverse, Mr. Speaker. That seems like it shouldn't be an issue that will require too much consideration.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, at this point I would move that we adjourn debate on this Bill until a further opportunity.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Rosetown-Elrose that debate on second reading of Bill No. 49 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. 50 — The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise in support of The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2004.

This Act is good for working people in Saskatchewan. This Act is good for families in Saskatchewan, and this Act is good . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I just want to revert back. I made an

error in the proceedings. The motion for adjournment was for Bill No. 14, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, and not Bill 49, the previous motion. I thank the . . . I beg the minister's indulgence. I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, members will know that our labour legislation sets out the rights and responsibilities that govern the employer-employee relationship in Saskatchewan workplaces. I want to first outline what these amendments will do, and why they are being put forward at this time.

The two sections of The Labour Standards Act being amended are section 15 and section 44.2, the changes related to job protection, compassionate care leave, and the operation of the Minimum Wage Board. To avoid any confusion I will deal with each separately.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation before us amends section 44.2 of The Labour Standards Act. The rationale for this is straightforward. We are amending this part of The Labour Standards Act to provide workers with job protection while they access compassionate care benefits recently introduced by the federal government as part of the Employment Insurance program. The amendment ensures that Saskatchewan people can fully access federal Employment Insurance benefits when caring for loved ones who are gravely ill or dying.

Members will recall that last year the federal government amended the Employment Insurance Act. Since January, working people who qualify can access up to 8 weeks of compassionate care benefits in any 26 week period or up to 16 weeks in a year in order to care for dying or seriously ill loved ones. Such provisions are a step forward, and we welcome them, Mr. Speaker.

Section 44.2 of the Saskatchewan labour standards Act prohibits the firing or disciplining an employee who has worked for the same employer for at least 13 consecutive weeks and who is absent from work due to an illness or injury of the employee or a dependent family member. In most cases, this section already affords job protection for employees who are required to care for a seriously ill family member.

However the changes to the Employment Insurance program that came into effect in January revealed inconsistencies in eligibility between the Employment Insurance Act, and our provincial Labour Standards Act.

(15:30)

First, under The Labour Standards Act, an employee is entitled to job protection only after he or she has been employed for 13 consecutive weeks with the same employer. The new provisions of the Employment Insurance Act requires only that an employee have 600 hours of insurable employment accumulated in the previous 52 weeks with any employer. It does not require that those 600 hours be consecutive hours of employment or with the same employer. Secondly, our labour standards Act extends job protection only if an ill or injured family member is dependent on the employee. The federal Employment Insurance Act does not require dependency to be eligible for compassionate care benefits.

As a result of these inconsistencies and without the amendment before us, some Saskatchewan workers eligible for EI (Employment Insurance) compassionate care benefits would not have full job protection under provincial legislation. The proposed amendment extends job protection to those employees who are eligible for and access the Employment Insurance compassionate care benefit regardless of whether they would otherwise qualify for protection under The Labour Standards Act.

Mr. Speaker, there are also differences in the time periods under the two systems. Under provincial legislation, employees are protected for up to 12 weeks absence in a year. Under the federal legislation, employees may access benefits for up to 8 weeks in a 26-week period or twice a year for each eligible family member.

The amendment before us in this Assembly gives employees job protected leave each time they receive Employment Insurance compassionate care benefits up to a maximum of 16 weeks in any year. Employees who access the federal benefits for less than 16 weeks will be entitled under this amendment to job protection for the balance of the 16 weeks if and when they use them. However in no case will an employee be entitled to protection under provincial legislation alone that is greater than the 12 weeks.

Simply put, Mr. Speaker, the provision means that the only way an employee in Saskatchewan will be eligible for more than 12 weeks of job protection currently provided in our legislation is if, and only if, they are using the compassionate care provisions of the Employment Insurance program.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment is a big step forward in balancing work and family. I hope I don't need to spend time today explaining the importance of families to all of us here. It was Charles William Elliott, the American educator and president of Harvard University, who said, and I quote:

The security and elevation of the family and of family life are the prime objects of civilization, and the ultimate ends of . . . industry.

I think it's also true to say that within families the care of the seriously ill and dying is of paramount importance. By this legislation we are strengthening the capacity of working people to deal with trying and tragic circumstances that confront families from time to time. And I don't think anyone here today can possibly object to that.

Mr. Speaker, the other section of The Labour Standards Act being amended is section 15. Section 15 deals with the Minimum Wage Board and the amendment does two things. First, it requires that the Minimum Wage Board review the minimum wage at least every two years.

Second, the amendment deals with the regulations respecting matters contained in section 15 of the Act. Those matters include, among other things, the minimum wage, the maximum deduction for board and room, the minimum age of employment, employer provided transportation, and the provisions of uniforms.

Mr. Speaker, I note that the makeup of the board remains the same: two business representatives, two labour representatives, and an independent Chair — of whom at least two must be women. And those matters the board considers and makes recommendation about remain the same.

Requiring the Minimum Wage Board to review the minimum wage at least every two years is reasonable. If the Minimum Wage Board does not meet regularly, it can result in recommendations to increase the minimum wage that reflect a need to catch up in order to maintain the minimum wage's traditional relationship to the average industrial wage.

Mr. Speaker, the potential for substantial increases when the board does not meet regularly is a legitimate concern for some employers. More timely reviews of the minimum wage will ensure that the minimum wage better reflects current economic conditions here in Saskatchewan. Requiring the board to review the minimum wage at least every two years also ensures greater consistency in the reviews.

The amendment before us also affects the way that regulations are made. I stress again that the board will continue reviewing those matters under its authority and will continue to make recommendations to the Minister of Labour.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear about two facts. First, this amendment in no way restricts the board's examination of issues within its purview. Second, this amendment in no way attempts to influence what position the board may take on those matters. The intent of the amendment is to simplify the process and ensure that regulations are made in a timely manner.

Mr. Speaker, I draw the members' attention to the fact that Saskatchewan is the only province in Canada that does not have its regulations in this area made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. This portion of the amendment therefore brings us into line with the practice in every other province.

Before concluding, Mr. Speaker, I would like to set to rest any concerns there may be about the financial implications of these amendments to The Labour Standards Act. All members can be assured that there is no cost regarding the amendment dealing with the Minimum Wage Board. Similarly, there will be only minimal cost associated with the inclusion of the compassionate care provision.

I say the cost will be minimum, Mr. Speaker, because The Labour Standards Act already provides 12 weeks of job protection for workers who are ill or who require time off to care for a family member who is ill. A greater cost would be incurred, and only if, an employee were to access the compassionate care job protection twice in one year. That of course would be a relatively rare occurrence, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure every member in this Assembly would agree that a family in such a circumstance would deserve all the help and support they could get.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude as I began, by emphasizing that we are making these changes for the benefit of working people in Saskatchewan, their employers, and their families. We're changing our provisions for job-protected leaves in section 44.2 of The Labour Standards Act to provide working people who

qualify with job protection while they make use of the recently introduced compassionate care benefits through the Employment Insurance program. We believe that this is the right thing to do.

Families are the basic building block of any society and compassion is the mortar that holds these blocks together.

We're amending section 15 of The Labour Standards Act to improve the operation of the Minimum Wage Board by ensuring the minimum wage is reviewed more regularly. Minimum wage earners should not have to wait years between reviews. Employers should not have to worry about large catch-up increases that are more likely to result from infrequent reviews.

As I said in the beginning, all members who value family, fair play, and compassion will be able to support this legislation. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of this Bill, The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2004. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Labour that Bill No. 50, The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to respond to the second reading of Bill No. 50, An Act to amend The Labour Standards Act.

And I sat listening to the minister and would certainly agree that all people on both sides of the House would recognize the importance of family and the issues around family and the support that family gives; and in the time of need, if there is a family member that was sick or dying, that some compassion would have to be given.

It was interesting to hear her talk that this Bill was for working people and people of Saskatchewan. And that would be true, that it is regarding working people or people of the province, but it's also for employers as well.

I mean, she's talking to the tone that employers really have no care or compassion and that was kind of the gist of her speech as she went through it. And I really found that, quite frankly, a little distasteful; that the employer wouldn't have as much care or compassion for family members as working people, Mr. Speaker.

So she talks about amending two different provisions of the Act, section 15 and 44.2. Section 44.2 is the area where the Act talks about allowing more time for a member to have off if a family member was sick. And it really looked like it was, and by the sounds of it, just dealing with, coming in line with the federal legislation and making sure that our legislation is in line with the federal legislation; that if a person is off from work because of a family member that's sick, I think the numbers that we're given is that, in the federal legislation, they were allowed eight weeks twice a year. And our provincial legislation didn't

cover the same time frame and so what this Act does is brings it in line with the federal legislation.

I found the one area — and I guess it was consistent with the federal Act, but I'd sure like to find this out — is that a person, before they're entitled to this leave of absence, they had to, I guess, prior to . . . in Saskatchewan, have worked for this employer for at least 13 weeks, and now it's being changed to 600 hours working for any employer.

So it doesn't necessarily matter I think, is the way I understood that, is if a person just newly starts on a job — he's worked for, you know 600 hours throughout the year — and starts on a job and only has been there for a couple of weeks and then has to apply for leave, that that would be granted. And you know, there is some concerns with that. She also, at the very end of her speech, said that it would be minimal cost; there wouldn't be much cost because really it is just bringing it into line with the federal Act.

Well I'd be very interested in talking to members of the business community and seeing what type of costs they'll be incurring because of these changes, or whether it will be any change in cost. Because far too often — and I've seen it whether it's in WCB (Workers' Compensation Board) or anything else that the government says well the cost isn't that much — but there's really only one person paying that cost, and it's the employer.

As I said at the outset, it seemed to be that it really didn't matter what the employer thought; it was all for the working people. And I'm not having any problem with granting compassionate leave, but I think there's two sides to this equation, and when I listened to the minister, she only spoke to one side of the equation.

The other issue is a Minimum Wage Board and review every two years. It sounds like the board remains the same but they will be reviewing the minimum wage every two years.

Personally I think the bigger issue that we face in our province — not that these issues aren't important — but the biggest issue we face over and over and over again in our province is the lack of jobs. Now compassionate leave only is effective if you have a job to be away from for a while, and minimum wage is only effective if you have a job.

And for years and years we've heard the government talk about how many jobs they're going to create — 30,000 jobs at one point they promised — and they came nowhere close to that. They were certainly making it well known that there was an increase in jobs over the last, I guess it was quarter, but I guess when you compare it to what they had promised would happen in this province it came far, far short.

So, Mr. Speaker, until we would move this Bill on, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of groups, not only working people in the province, but also employers in this province that we would need to consult with to see the real impact that they can see on their businesses. So at this time, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Indian

Head-Milestone that debate on second reading of Bill No. 50 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Debate adjourned.

(15:45)

Bill No. 53 — The Securities Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Securities Amendment Act, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, a healthy and vibrant securities marketplace depends on a modern regulatory structure. The amendments in this Bill are part of this government's ongoing efforts to ensure that Saskatchewan security law remains up to date and consistent with the legislation of other jurisdictions. In addition to fulfilling these ongoing objectives, this Bill also contains significant protection for Saskatchewan investors.

In recent years major accounting scandals in the United States have affected investor confidence throughout North America and beyond. Securities regulators in North America have responded to these events by placing greater obligations upon corporations and their executives to provide full and fair disclosure to investors, and by providing regulators with additional tools to require better corporate governance on the part of security issuers.

A new provision in the Act codifies and strengthens the common law by requiring that brokerages and their employees deal honestly, fairly, and in good faith with their clients. An additional provision prohibits unfair practices with respect to providing services related to securities.

Unfair practices are defined as any conduct that puts unreasonable pressure on individuals to purchase, hold, or sell securities, or conduct that imposes oppressive terms and conditions on transactions involving securities. In addition it becomes an express contravention of the Act to take advantage of a person's inability or incapacity to protect their own interests due to infirmity, ignorance, or age.

A further amendment will increase investor protection by broadening the scope of current prohibitions on market manipulation. Under the amendments any conduct that results in or contributes to a misleading appearance of trading activity or an artificial price for a security is prohibited.

The amendments will enable the commission to enhance investor confidence by prescribing minimum corporate governance standards, including a requirement that issuers have audit committees composed of independent directors and a requirement that chief executive officers and chief financial officers certify that their financial statements do not contain any misrepresentations and that they fairly represent the financial

condition of that company.

The amendments to The Securities Act also reflect provisions that further harmonize Saskatchewan securities law with the securities legislation in other jurisdictions. Amendments necessary to adopt national instruments dealing with continuous disclosure obligations, that is financial reporting obligations for issuers and capital raising exemptions, are included in this Bill.

In addition to the amendments relating to investor protection and the harmonization of Saskatchewan securities legislation with other jurisdictions, there are a number of more technical amendments that seek to cure certain procedural difficulties encountered by the commission in the exercise of its power.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of The Securities Amendment Act, 2004.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 53, The Securities Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again it's a privilege to rise and speak to Bill No. 53, An Act to amend The Securities Act.

It is a Bill that does have some real technical components to it. And just listening to the minister, I think I'd have to agree that with some of the major scandals that we've seen down in the States, and the odd one in Canada here, that you want to make sure that this legislation is as tight and protects people that invest as much as possible.

It seems to be . . . I think it would be a very, very tough area to legislate and guarantee. He was talking about that, you know, for a securities person couldn't take advantage of an investor that was sick or maybe not have the proper knowledge. Well, you know, that's kind of a tough area. Is it the person's responsibility to be informed? Or, you know, it really kind of deals with some grey area, Mr. Speaker.

In going through the explanatory notes, there are a number of issues that come to mind as I was leafing through the explanatory notes, Mr. Speaker. So I think we'll need more time to review the Bill and talk to parties that would be interested in this Bill, which I think will be a number, not only from the investor's perspective but also from the security broker's prospective. I think we'll need to do more time, need more time to do more research on the Bill. So at this time I move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Indian Head-Milestone that debate on Bill No. 53 second reading 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.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 39

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 39 — The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur l'exécution des ordonnances alimentaires** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 39, The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I move that Bill No. 39, The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Government House Leader that Bill No. 39 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This Bill stands referred to the Committee on Human Services.

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

Bill No. 40

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 40 — The Fatal Accidents Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to comment briefly on this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, because it's an interesting and very brief particular item. The Act to amend The Fatal Accidents Act came to our attention a few weeks ago. And, as we are wont to do, we took some time to look it over and found that it was going to be a

piece of legislation that would make certain financial payouts available to individuals who suffered seriously as a result of an accident.

The Fatal Accidents Amendment Act will provide damages now for individuals who are afflicted with grief and loss of guidance, care, and companionship. Now that's over and above what was normally provided under earlier legislation.

What we have is a situation where people were, at previous stages, protected for economic loss as a result of unexpected death. They were protected in terms of funeral costs and health care costs and possible future earnings, but they weren't protected in terms of loss of companionship or care.

Now while this is an interesting step, and probably a step in the right direction, Mr. Speaker, there are limitations to the amount of money that would be paid out to people in this particular case. We have a \$60,000 cap on payout to the spouse of a deceased person, we have a \$30,000 cap to each parent of a deceased person, and a \$30,000 payout to each minor child of a deceased person.

What's more interesting than anything else, Mr. Speaker, is that while this change is being brought forward, it's only going to apply to a very limited number of people in the province of Saskatchewan. This is not legislation that will benefit all of the people who currently are holders of no-fault insurance through SGI. This is legislation that will only impact the individuals who have deliberately and consciously chosen the tort coverage for their automobile liability. And that particular anomaly, should I say, is going to I think create some misunderstandings in the public.

Now part of the problem, Mr. Speaker, is that as it stands right now, agents for SGI insurance, auto insurance, are not obligated to tell their customers that there is an option other than no-fault insurance. We had the tort insurance introduced into the province as a result of public pressure a couple of years ago.

But so far, the uptake on that has only amounted to somewhere between 5,000 and maybe 6,000 individuals in the province of Saskatchewan. And even the president of SGI, at a news conference just a few weeks ago, indicated that he was surprised by that because he actually thought there would be a higher percentage of automotive insured taking out the tort coverage but that didn't happen.

So, Mr. Speaker, because this particular piece of legislation is probably a step in the right direction but will only cover a certain limited number of individuals in the province, I think it's important that the issue be raised in this particular House and that more awareness be brought to this particular piece of legislation. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I will still move that this particular Bill, Bill No. 40, An Act to amend The Fatal Accidents Act, proceed to committee for further study.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 40, The Fatal Accidents Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion's carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I would move that Bill 40, The Fatal Accidents Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the policy Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Government House Leader that Bill No. 40 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

Bill No. 43

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 43 — The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 43, The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I would move that Bill 43, The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Government House Leader that Bill No. 43 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This Bill stands referred to the Committee on Human Services.

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

Bill No. 44

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 44 — The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 44, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill 44, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 44 be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This Bill stands referred to the Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

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

Bill No. 45

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 45 — The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion moved by the Hon. Minister for Government Relations that Bill No. 45, The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Minister for Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill 45, The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 45 be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

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

Bill No. 46

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 46 — The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 46, The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

(16:00)

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 46, The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 46 be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

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

Bill No. 47

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 47 — The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 47, The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. I move that Bill No. 47, The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Government House Leader that Bill No. 47 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

Bill No. 48

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Sonntag that **Bill No. 48 — The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the pleasure to join the debate on this particular Bill. I want to make a few comments on it. I know it deals with quite a bit of safety regulations, which is good. That's what the people of Saskatchewan will like to see is, you know, everybody wants safety and nobody wants nobody hurt when it comes to vehicles or accidents.

And surprisingly, one of the most . . . about the only thing that was talked about with the media with this particular Bill was going to a single licence plate on vehicles. And that was about

the only thing that they I think talked about it quite a bit on the news media. Which is . . . it's a little interesting is . . . I think five provinces and two territories have gone to single plate. But we've also been hearing that a couple of them are thinking of going back to the two-plate system.

Now we don't know . . . we don't have all the reasons yet that . . . we want to do some researching and talk to them, whether the cost savings weren't there, that may have been one of them, or another concern is that . . . which we have been approached is from the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) and policing detachments of the cities that it makes it a little harder to identify vehicles with only one plate. And especially in the cities there has been some concern and I know that they've raised some questions about it. And I think I want to talk to some of the other provinces and jurisdictions to see if it has affecting the crime in them particular cities — if it's a little harder to identify vehicles at that end of it, when it comes to the single plate.

I know most cars, some of the new cars coming out, don't even have a place to put a plate on it. And when it comes to the two-plate system, I'm not sure that I'm in favour of it or against it. I mean our vehicles all have two plates; we've always had them. I know it will make it easier for people especially on some newer vehicles, which unfortunately I don't have any. I'm not in the position to buy a new vehicle; mine still have the two plates on them. And I know a lot of, it's kind of one of them issues where a lot of people are for it.

I know most of my constituents who don't break the law say yes, I have two plates; yes, I'd just as soon just have the one on it. But you talk to the enforcement and it will be more mostly in the cities here where it's, where cars zip and a car . . . the police is following a particular car and it's zipping in and out of traffic. You may only be able to have a few seconds to catch a particular licence plate number. You may not be able to chase it down and with the plate number you may be able to catch it, the front plate a little easier if you happen to be in a different situation.

So that's one of the issues that are out there and I think it's worth debating a bit and also waiting to get some more information on this particular piece of Bill when it comes to it.

There's a few other things that this Bill addresses and I know one of them has a quite a bit of proposing amendments to it. That addresses driver education.

Currently a driver with a poor driving record is required to attend an interview with SGI which I think is a good thing. They should be given a warning — you know, a chance. Know what the record is, that one more ticket, one more offence will affect their licence, because I think everybody realizes out there that a licence is a privilege; it's not a right. But also that people should have a warning, it should be warned in there where they have ample warning to do that.

Another amendment is on dealing with vehicles that are only used periodically: semis, big trucks. There is a criteria where they have to be — not service, I was going to say — be tested for regulations to a truck to go through a service — safety, safety rating is the words I was looking for, Mr. Speaker. And

this also deals that there is certain trucks out there, and the minister had mentioned one of them, oil service rig trucks, that'll sit for months and then only move a few miles down the road.

And he's talking about that SGI will have the right to waiver that particular . . . that they won't have to test that particular vehicle, and I think that's good on that. It allows some flexibility with SGI, and that's a good thing. I mean it helps . . . (inaudible) . . . to help businesses, and that's one of them. Because there are certain trucks out there like that, that sit for very long periods of time and only move a few miles down the road.

Under the old rules they would have to go . . . I think I remember the member for Swift Current had mentioned that they would have to take . . . The testing is at Swift Current if it was oil trucks rigs, service rigs, they would have to be taken to Swift Current, then brought back to the well site. And in the whole time . . . the only time they were doing . . . was sitting there. But their period of time had happened to come up when they were due for a test, and they would have to basically go there and it was a waste of time. Basically be taken down the highway, be safety . . . brought back to the rig where they would be just sitting there another six months.

So this way, you can approach SGI and say, listen we won't be moving this particular truck for four months down the road, at that particular time then we will go and we can do a safety rating on it. So that flexibility is good at that end, Mr. Speaker.

Another part of the amendment deals with, I believe with being able to . . . deals with the \$30 administration fee. If you were involved in an accident being allowed to make your payments over a period of months, which is fine. The \$30 administration fee, I'm not that sure of, I don't know whether . . . Is that a cost recovery or is that extra. I mean that's something I guess we'll ask in committee. But I think SGI probably has to keep a . . . (inaudible) . . . or it wouldn't be costing an extra \$30 at that particular time.

I think they could probably waiver that fee, just offering the service over a period of time because they do that with insurance, with other things and there is . . . they've already got that on certain times.

But with that, Mr. Speaker, I've mentioned a couple of things but I would like to adjourn debate on this until we find out some more stuff on this particular Bill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Arm River-Watrous that second reading debate on Bill No. 48 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. 29

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Atkinson that **Bill No. 29 — The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2004**, be now read a second time.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to get up to this particular Bill, and make a few comments on it. I've just kind of gone through it a little bit. When it comes to snowmobiling I think we've all . . . it's a very enjoyable sport. We've all enjoyed it. I did it in my past time. I have owned one for a number of years.

But one of the issues that . . . it's unfortunate you do hear of accidents, of snowmobile accidents. There was a few last year of that. And it deals also with young drivers which . . . The snowmobiles out there when I had one were quite slow. You really had to push them if you wanted to hurt yourself. But I know a friend of mine has a machine and I mean they can really move now so when it comes to younger drivers I think there should be a little more safety gone into it.

And also dealing with licence registration, stuff like that. That needs to be . . . I think it does need to be enforced out there. Because you put a young kid on some of these machines and they'll do in excess of 100 miles an hour. That's quite a bit of power out there, Mr. Speaker.

But there is a couple of concerns other with this Bill. I'd just like to make a couple of comments. We've gotten some letters from the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association dealing with trails. I've never . . . out our way we don't really . . . in my constituency I have a few I think, but they're on the outer edges so I'm not that familiar with it, but I want to talk to my snowmobile associations along that area. But it deals with insurance on Crown land. I know that they're having a little bit of trouble. I think it deals with liability and the issue quite hasn't been cleared up yet, Mr. Speaker.

And so with that we'd like to talk and also get some more clarification on this particular Bill and maybe talk to some more stakeholders on this with some of the amendments that do deal with it. I know the safety end of it we're in favour of. I mean everybody is when it comes to safety. Nobody wants to see anybody get hurt or killed on a snowmobile.

But there's also some amendments dealing with some of the liability and insurance on snowmobile trails on Crown land which are quite enjoyable. I know a lot of people load up their snowmobiles, will take them to these particular places to ride them because that's . . . some places that's the only place you can ride them. Well if you own a snowmobile in the cities that's basically all you can go. You hate to go out in the country, ride on other people's lands. I mean there's fences, especially in our area, a lot of electric fences gone up in the last eight, nine years. It's very hard to see when you're snowmobiling. So when you're on familiar territory it's not safe, so it's a lot of the cities will use these trails.

So with this particular Bill I'd like to adjourn debate on it till we get some more information on it. Thank you.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Arm River-Watrous that debate on Bill No. 29 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. 30

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 30 — The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 30, The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 30, The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 30 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

Bill No. 31

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 31 — The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal (Regulatory Reform) Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — The motion before the Assembly is the one moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 31, The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal (Regulatory Reform) Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to

adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 31, the miscellaneous statutes repeal (regulatory reform) amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 31 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

Bill No. 32

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 32 — The Powers of Attorney Amendment Act, 2004/ Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi de 2002 sur les procurations** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 32, The Powers of Attorney Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 32, The Powers of Attorney Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 32 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

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

(16:15)

Bill No. 33

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Beatty that **Bill No. 33 — The Archives Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Provincial Secretary that Bill No. 33, The Archives Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — I move that Bill 33, The Archives Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Provincial Secretary that Bill No. 33 be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

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

Bill No. 34

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 34 — The Psychologists Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion proposed by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 34, The Psychologists Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be

referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 34, The Psychologists Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 34 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This Bill stands referred to the Committee on Human Services.

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

Clerk: — Committee of Finance.

The Speaker: — I do now leave the Chair for the Assembly to go into Committee of Finance.

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Environment Vote 26

Subvote (ER01)

The Chair: — The first item before the committee are the consideration of estimates for the Department of the Environment, vote 26, found on page 53 of the Estimates book. And I invite the minister to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my left is my deputy minister, Lily Stonehouse. To my right is Alan Parkinson, associate deputy minister. Behind Alan is Bob Ruggles, assistant deputy minister. Behind myself is Dave Phillips, assistant deputy minister. Beside Dave is Lynn Tulloch, executive director, corporate services division. Behind Lynn is Donna Johnson, director of finance and administration. And Stuart Kramer is here, president of the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority.

So with that, I made a brief statement last time, so we'll just get right into questions right away. Thank you.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And welcome again to the officials from Environment and the minister.

To the minister, I just want some clarification on something we spoke about in the last set of estimates that we had the opportunity of doing. I know we talked an awful lot about cuts to forest fire programs and there was some discussion back and forth between yourself and myself as to what part of the geographic area of Saskatchewan these were contained in. And I did review my questions and my questions did not specifically refer to any geographical area of the province. That being said,

that's just an individual item.

But what I do want to ask is, in your answer in *Hansard*, page 1057, the minister had said:

There were reductions in the South in Cypress Hills, Swift Current, and Saskatoon, and so those were aligned.

And what I would like the minister to do is to identify if he would, the cuts that are going to occur, that have occurred, that are forecast to take place within the context of his answer in *Hansard*, in the reductions of Cypress Hills, Swift Current, and Saskatoon.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Chair, in response to the question about the positions lost in fire branches in the South, there are five vacant positions: three clerical admin positions, three firefighters, two forest protection people . . . officers, and one fire ecologist.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Could you have that forwarded over to me? I wasn't writing it down quite as fast as you were being briefed on it. So could you eventually get it to me? I don't need it right now, but I'd like it eventually. And would you confirm that this is in Cypress Hills, or is it in all three of the areas that you announced?

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — It's in the South including Cypress Hills, Swift Current, and Saskatoon.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Now I'd like to be more specific into that area. Firefighting positions . . . that's what I was just quickly writing down, three forest . . . three firefighters were eliminated and three forest something, and I didn't get it . . . management?

But my question, my question is going to be along the same line. Is the cutting of forest fire people — firefighters or forest whatever the other wording that you used — in an area like . . . well like any place in the province, but in Cypress Hills, it's a very fragile ecosystem in Cypress Hills. And this morning I had the opportunity to sit in Public Accounts, when Environment was up in Public Accounts. And I'd just like a quick explanation if I could because in Public Accounts I'd asked questions from the auditor's book about values at risk. The department should prepare a complete record of the values at risk in the forest and update that record.

Now it seems, it seems to me at first blush that there's not as much emphasis of value at risk in the Cypress Hills area if you're cutting forest firefighting capability from that area. So I'd like your comments of how Cypress Hills and the ecosystem of the forest of Cypress Hills is classified. If it's a value at risk, and if it is, why does forest firefighting capability reduced in that area, or is it not considered a value at risk in that area?

(16:30)

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Chair, I appreciate the question because Cypress Hills truly is a jewel of our province, and it's one that we value very much. So I'd like to say three parts to the answer.

First is we have two initial attack crews in place there to be ready at any given moment to fight a fire if that happens. As well, if the fire does get out of hand, we're ready to bring people and crews in from the North which is about two hours away, so we feel that's ready and available as well.

But as well we've been preparing the forested area over the past number of years, increasing the fire breaks, reducing the vegetation, that type of thing. So we feel we've been managing the fuel load in the area in Cypress Hills. So we're working, understanding the dynamics of fire if that were to happen in that area.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Just another quick question. Specifically out of Cypress Hills area, how many people were reduced?

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Chair, it was reduced by three firefighters in Cypress Hills.

The Chair: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, as you're aware and your department's aware, the May long weekend is upon us. It's a busy weekend certainly in the camping area, and with the weather we're experiencing today and the southern part of the province with the moisture we had last week, we expect a number of people will take advantage of any camping opportunity. Especially when I see what the gas prices have done today, they're going to stay a little closer to home. They may not venture that far.

What I would like to know however, Mr. Minister, is how many camping sites are available in Moose Mountain Provincial Park. Are they all open or available for this weekend?

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have the specific number with me right now, and I could get that to you, but I believe it's over 200 camping sites in Moose Mountain Provincial Park.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I've been informed that the overflow section is not going to be open this long weekend. Can you confirm whether or not it is? And if it isn't, I'd like to know why, Mr. Minister.

It happens to be a park that is well used, and especially on the May long weekend is certainly a lot of traffic flow. We do get a lot of traffic flow from the United States, and we would like to promote tourism. And if you could respond and let me know exactly whether or not it is . . . If it isn't, why it isn't going to be open if the need arises?

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Chair, Moose Mountain Provincial Park has a bit of a history on May long weekend for people getting together and having a bit of a boisterous time. And so we're taking precautions this year to make sure that the kind of things that happen in the park are things that we feel pretty good about. And so the overflow campsites won't be available. They tended to be the situation, the areas where there were problems before, and I understand that most of the sites now have . . . the regular campsites have been booked up.

There has been a real trend in the last couple of years. I can tell

you some of the numbers. For example, 2003 there were some 87 charges laid last year, 401 warnings given out, the year before that 59 charges and 293 warnings given out. So we're trying to make sure the park is a welcome place for families and for individuals who want to have a relaxing time on the May long weekend. And we're working hard to make sure that those kinds of situations don't arise where we have any kind of violence or potential for accidents, that type of thing.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, to the minister. Mr. Minister, while those numbers certainly aren't flattering, I think basically it speaks to the fact of the type of crowd that at times that does arrive. There are a lot of people though that enjoy the camping opportunity.

And I would think in the past what we have seen is, over the long weekend, additional resource people available as a result of . . . key to parks like the Moose Mountain Provincial Park because not every park receives the same amount of crowd and traffic flow.

Now if an overflow group of campers arrives, what happens, Mr. Minister? Are you just going to turn them away? If people have driven for even two or three hours to come to the park and all of a sudden find that regular camping is full and the overflow isn't available, it's certainly revenue away from the park, from your department. And so what I would suggest, Mr. Minister, is what we've done in the past . . . is look at ways in which we can provide some additional support.

And maybe the other thing is more of an education as well for people to respect other people's rights and privileges when they go to a park. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Well, Mr. Chair, thank you for that question. I appreciate the comments too because the parks are really special, and it's important that people have a good experience, especially on the May long weekend.

So there's several things that we're doing. First of all I'd made the comment that we'll have the same support — additional support — that we had in previous years at Moose Mountain. In fact we'll have some RCMP as well on site to help us out with this. This is very important.

As well we're going to some of the schools in Estevan and Brandon to talk to some of the students in some of the classes about having a positive camping experience at Moose Mountain and as well some of the consequences, and what are some of the . . . what are the rules and laws that are in the provincial parks, so they're aware of that before they head out. And so we want to make sure they're responsible and they have a positive experience.

As well, as with any long weekend, when you head out to the park and you're hoping to find a camping spot, I would encourage first to phone ahead and reserve one. Now unfortunately at Moose Mountain it looks like they may be all booked up. And so if they're looking to go there, there are other parks on that side of the province — Crooked Lake, Good Spirit — that would be worthwhile checking out. And we would encourage people to try another park, but phone ahead first. But we're planning to make sure it's a great weekend in our parks.

(16:45)

The Chair: — I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I've got a few questions today and realizing, of course, this is mostly a federal issue but I mean part of the issue, I think, that very much affects Saskatchewan is the Qu'Appelle Valley and the lakes involved and the impasse we seem to have been at for the last two or three years.

Can you give me somewhat of an update, Mr. Minister, as to what you know of where we are at right now? Because about a week ago, the last I talked to the people out there, I think there was two feet of water going out the far end and the blocks had no evidence of being put back in. It seemed like there was no agreement of any kind there. And I know QVIDA (Qu'Appelle Valley Indian Development Authority) has been dealing on behalf of the bands out there.

But it was my understanding and mostly by the rumour mill that there may have been an agreement with a couple of the bands out there, but still there's a number of them that have not come to the table and had agreement. Can you maybe give us an update to start with on what's happening out there from your perspective?

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. First I'd like to just really stress that this is mainly a federal issue and we're there to support them and offer technical advice and that type of thing. But we're interested in how this all proceeds.

So we were quite happy this spring when two of the bands involved in the upper lakes signed on to a one-year interim agreement that will allow us to have time to solve this permanently. And I understand the logs are in place for Echo Lake, so the structure is holding back water right now. And so we're happy about that and we hope that goodwill continues on and we can resolve that issue in a permanent fashion.

The issue remains at the lower lakes, and that's around the Crooked Lakes, and so there's four bands involved in that. The federal government has indicated they would like to proceed band by band, structure by structure on that. We understand that one band is interested; Cowessess is interested in pursuing that, but they haven't gone too far with that. So we're waiting to hear from the other bands involved, and that is the update as we hear now. So I'm not sure if you have further questions on that.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and I agree it's a federal issue and it's the federal government that has to deal with it. I'm wondering though in the . . . if this isn't the perfect time, that maybe pressure could be brought to bear with them with a federal election coming. And I know there's not much time but I guess my concern, Mr. Minister, is this has gone on, as you are well aware of, for the last two or three years out there.

We've got businesses right now that are bordering on going under. We have a great area out there, if you're familiar with it at all — great tourist attraction out there. We have everything going for us. We have a group out there that are taking it upon themselves now. We've gone to oceans and fisheries

departments to put in a new boat launch because the water's lower, although they're doing it in a way that it will serve the purpose down the road and it actually will be a benefit down the road.

But we have businesses out there that are trying to attract tourism. They're trying to build on what they had built up. And we're losing that tourism because I've toured that area a number of times out there by people that either live along the lake or the business people that I've been out there with a number of times lately, and it's just killing them out there. It's hurting the whole area. And let's face it, in the long run it hurts the province of Saskatchewan. It hurts us all.

We have an area there that I believe we could build as one of our biggest tourist attractions in the province. Manitoba being so close that a lot of Manitobans come across; the Americans come up, and it's just a great area to be in.

And again realizing of course that this is not your responsibility to the . . . you know, that you can solve the problem, but I'm wondering what pressure we can put to bear on the federal government to maybe not give in to exactly what the bands want out there.

But on the other hand, we're caught in the middle. My constituents are caught in the middle. And I believe the province in a way is being caught in the middle because there's many tourist dollars that would be brought in for whatever reason when tourists come to the province. They spend money and the province loses.

And, Mr. Minister, I think that constituents out there are coming to a wit's end of what they can do out there. In fact a couple of business people that I talked to are already getting to the point where they're considering picking up and pulling out because they're . . . you know, they're frustrated. It's not your fault, it's not my fault, and it certainly isn't their fault, but they're caught in the middle.

I'm glad to hear that we have a couple of bands that have actually come to an agreement, if only be for one year. It's a start. If the bands at our end had have done that in good faith, I think that we would all feel a lot better about it. There's hard feelings out there on both sides, I think, over this issue. And I think the sooner it's resolved, the better it is for everyone out there.

So I guess what I'm asking today, Mr. Minister, maybe if even writing to the federal minister, contacting him right now because of the federal election. We see Mr. Goodale doing all sorts of announcements right now because there's an election in the works — if he wouldn't be another good one to contact, being that he's our only federal MP (Member of Parliament) in the province at this point — if maybe we couldn't bring some pressure to bear because this can't keep going on year after year after year and the people in . . . you know, that have businesses out there and the people actually that have boats and that and live along the lakes.

It's amazing if you see how low the water is. And there's two feet of water going out the far end and have been for about the last two and a half . . . six weeks probably, last month and a

half. So it's just amazing the natural resource we have. And we're wasting it and we're watching it go out because we can't come to some sort of an agreement. So any pressure to bear that you could bring, Mr. Minister, through your department or your government I think would be greatly appreciated at this point.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — I appreciate, Mr. Chair, the comments that the member from Saltcoats makes, because it truly is a great tourism opportunity out there in Qu'Appelle Valley, and it is an important part of our province as well.

I understand though, that really the next step is with the First Nations on the lower lakes. They need to decide whether they want to stay together with QVIDA, or do they want to go negotiate band by band. And that's the decision the federal government has indicated by their work in the upper lakes that they are willing and ready to move. And so that's the issue where it's at right now. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the member from Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Minister, I really wanted to get this question in because the long weekend is approaching, and the camps, as we already talked about will be open.

One of my questions that have been coming to me from so many people, is the now infamous wiener roast tax, that is in the publication, the firewood burning permit of \$3 a night. And the question that I'm getting and I think a lot of people around the province are fielding or asking the same question. How is it going to be collected? What if I don't want a fire? What if I bring my own firewood? If it's pouring rain and I'm already there, do I still have to pay a fire tax?

There's just a host of questions surrounding this, and because the long weekend is coming up, if you could just take a minute or so and just explain to the people, just exactly how this is going to be implemented, enforced, collected, monitored, and the whole gambit.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the question. And you know, this campfire permit I think is an important innovation in terms of how we can make the parks more sustainable. And so it's going to be much like when you buy a camping permit. You can pick it up at the office or if you're in a situation or a camp or a park where there's no one in the office, it's self registration. And so it's largely on the good old Saskatchewan honour system.

And I appreciate the question about what happens if it rains that night or something like that. That's why we have a series of fees. So if you're doing one night and it looks like it's a great night, you buy the fee; it's \$3. If you were there over the weekend for three days, it's \$7. And if you're there for a week, it's \$15. So it includes some of those times where you might not have a fire that night, you know, that type thing.

As well it's really important to understand — and I appreciate the question because it's important that campers understand — you cannot bring firewood into the parks because of disease and that type of thing. And this relates to that.

And so, as well the enforcement of it will be done on a regular basis as people drive around but there won't be people . . . it'll be more . . . I really think this year it will more of an educational . . . education part in terms of compliance as people get used to this fee. And I think it will work out well. So thank you.

And I appreciate . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . This is the last question. Thank you for your questions this afternoon. I want to thank the officials for coming and having the good answers today. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, I move the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The Deputy Chair: — Moved by the Government House Leader that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is it agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: — Carried.

(17:00)

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Chair of committees.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the committee to report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Later this day, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — Later this day. It now being 5 p.m., this House stands recessed until 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 19:00.

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