



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

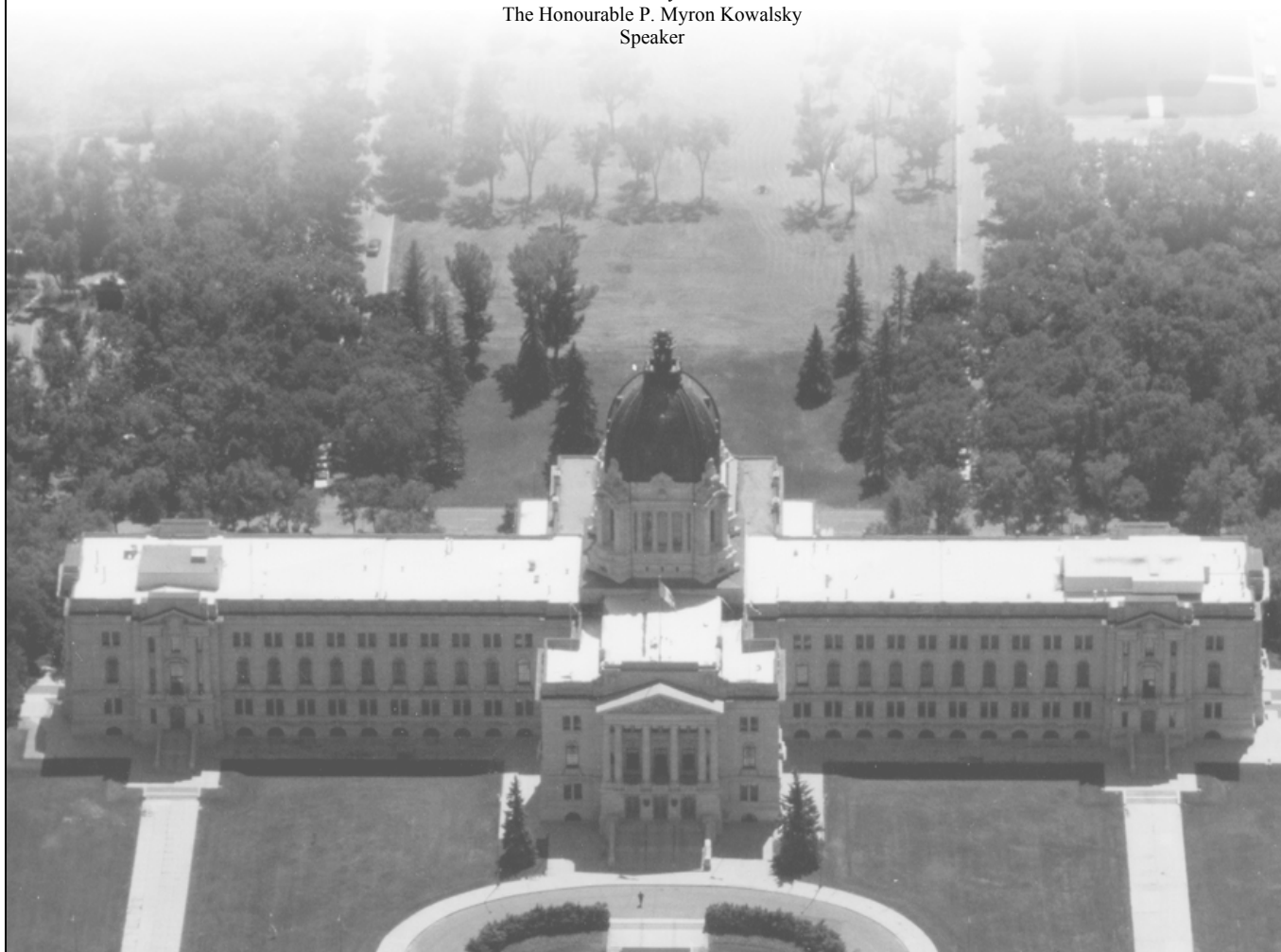
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, with leave to introduce some guests that have to leave fairly soon.

The Speaker: — The member for Swift Current has requested leave for introductions at this time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: —Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wall: — M. le président, je veux vous présenter un groupe d'étudiants de la cinquième année de l'école Oman.

(Translation: Mr. Speaker, I would like to present to you a group of grade 5 students from Oman School.)

Mr. Speaker, there are 52 students in the east gallery here today from Swift Current from l'école Oman School. And I do want to introduce them, and I appreciate leave to do that now as the students have to leave for another tour.

I also want to acknowledge the teachers that are with them, Mr. Franz, Ms. Linklater, Ms. Kelln, and the chaperones Mr. Ramage, Mr. Nichol, Mrs. Roy and Mrs. Gates, they are joining them here.

This is a very special group of students. I know many of them personally. And it's not just because they are from one of the best elementary schools in all of Saskatchewan, not just because they have great teachers and great parent involvement at that school, Mr. Speaker, but also because one of the students is particularly special; she's Megan Wall, our oldest daughter.

So I appreciate leave, and I would ask all the members of the Legislative Assembly to join with me in welcoming this group from l'école Oman School in Swift Current.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Cypress Hills and some from Wood River concerning health care provision at the Border Health Centre in Climax. 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 actions to ensure that the Border Health Centre in Climax remains a 24-hour facility.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by people from the communities of Frontier, Climax, and Bracken.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present to this Assembly brought to us by many people from across this province. And I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to take immediate action to reduce the levels of education tax on rural properties for 2004 by initiating a rebate program for education tax on rural properties, and commit to increase the provincial share of K to 12 education funding to 60 per cent in 2005, and to further increase the provincial share on an annual basis to move the provincial share to 70 per cent by 2009.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have a petition today signed by people from the communities of Quinton and Punnichy, I so . . . Wishart.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present today on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan requesting that education property taxes be reduced both for rural and urban ratepayers.

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition as well to present on behalf of taxpayers concerned about the education portion of tax on property. The people who have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Invermay, Sheho, Foam Lake, and Insinger.

And I so present.

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of citizens concerned on the issue of the education portion of property tax. I'm proud today to represent those who signed this petition from the community of Punnichy, Saskatchewan.

I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm also pleased to rise today on behalf of people from Sheho, Insinger, Foam Lake who are concerned about the high levels of education property tax.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a similar petition entitled, fair education tax on property. And I'd ask for immediate action to reduce the levels of education tax on rural properties. Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from the Rosetown-Elrose constituency, primarily from the communities of Eston and Plato. And I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present from rural residents, asking the government to deal with the extremely heavy load of education tax on property. The communities and signators involved, Mr. Speaker, are of the communities of Kamsack, Runnymede, and Togo.

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the exorbitantly high rates of property tax for education purposes. And this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Invermay, Sheho, and Foam Lake.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Lloydminster.

Mr. Wakefield: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured to present a petition on behalf of the people of Eston concerned with the unfair education tax on property.

I so present.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of citizens from Sheho and Insinger, a petition concerned with the inordinately high amount of education tax on real property and look to the House to deal with that, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on the issue of education tax and the unfairness that we see all across this province, especially on ag land. This petition is signed by people from Foam Lake.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also stand today to present a petition regarding the unfair education tax on property. And the signators are from Langbank, Whitewood, Corning, Kipling, Wapella, Broadview, Manor, and Moosomin.

I so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too am proud to stand with my colleagues and present petitions on behalf of citizens concerned about fair education tax on property. Signatures on this petition today, Mr. Speaker, are from many communities in the province of Saskatchewan. I am pleased to present on their behalf.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to stand today with a petition of taxpayers concerned about the heavy burden of education tax that's on their property. And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from the community of Wynyard.

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

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to make the necessary repairs to Highway 35 north from the United States border in order to prevent injury or loss of life, and to prevent the loss of economic opportunity in the area.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Weyburn, Radville, Tyvan, Trossachs, Ogema, and Tribune.

I so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to stand today to present a petition on behalf of citizens concerned about exorbitantly high education portion of property tax on both urban and rural properties. The petition is signed by people from the good city of Saskatoon and Eston.

I so present.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise with a petition from taxpayers that are very concerned about the unfair education tax on property. And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks of Eston and Plato.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also rise in Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Semans and Raymore. And their plaint is on the unfair education tax on property.

I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition with citizens that are very concerned about the unfair education tax on property, signed by citizens from all over my constituency — from Semans to Tate to Wynyard to Raymore to Elso, and varied locations throughout. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also am proud today to stand and present a petition from citizens that are concerned about the high rate of education tax on property, signed by the good citizens of Wynyard.

I so present.

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

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today and present a petition on behalf of residents of Saskatchewan who are concerned with the extremely high levels of education tax on their property, Mr. Speaker. And I present on behalf of the good citizens of Wishart, Saskatchewan. Thank you, sir.

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise about the fair education tax on property. And I am pleased today to present the petition on behalf of the people from Foam Lake and Wadena, Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Chisholm: — Mr. Speaker, I also rise to present a petition regarding the unfair tax burden being placed on property owners in this province. This petition is being presented on behalf of the fine folk from Foam Lake, Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition today on the unfair education tax put on property. And this particular petition are signed by citizens of Eston, Plato, Kindersley, and Eaton, Saskatchewan.

I so present.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be able to present a petition on behalf of citizens who are concerned about the high level of education tax on property, and call upon the government to take immediate action. Mr. Speaker, signatures to this petition come from the community of Wynyard.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition for the good citizens of Saskatchewan on the disproportionate share of property tax, and it is signed by the good citizens of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to rise and table petitions from Saskatchewan citizens who support Saskatchewan's request for a fair deal from Ottawa. This petition says:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to continue to pressure the federal government for fair and equitable treatment of Saskatchewan within the equalization program.

I so present.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I also stand today on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens to present a petition on the issue of equalization. The prayer says:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to continue to pressure the federal government for fair and equitable treatment of Saskatchewan within the equalization program.

And, Mr. Speaker, I so table names from across the province of Saskatchewan.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional papers nos. 96, 107, 165, 167, 182, 196, and 201.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 14, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 2004 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill No. 14 be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister Responsible for SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance).

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The minister for SGI has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole for Bill 14. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall this be read a third time?

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 14 — The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 2004

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for SGI that Bill No. 14, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 48, The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act, 2004 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 48 be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Again thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill as well.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole of Bill 48. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When will it be read a third time?

(13:45)

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 48 — The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act, 2004

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for SGI that Bill No. 48, The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 29, The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2004 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 29 be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Again, Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill as well.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole on Bill 29. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall this Bill be read a third time? I recognize the minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 29 — The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2004

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you. I move this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for SGI that Bill 29, The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report Bill No. 13, The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2004 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill No. 13 be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall the Bill be read a third time?

THIRD READINGS

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I move this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Industry and Resources that Bill No. 13, The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report Bill No. 15, The Workers' Compensation Board Pension Implementation Act without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill No. 15 be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Labour has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill 15. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall Bill 15 be read a third time?

THIRD READINGS

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Labour that Bill No. 15, The Workers' Compensation Board Pension Implementation Act be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 59 ask the government the following question:

To the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation minister: can the minister please provide which rules and policies are in place right now for the CVA government car division relating to use of these vehicles by government employees for personal recreational use?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 59 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Highways and Transportation: do conservation officers have the authority to enforce the law dealing with the trail permit portion of Bill No. 29 of 2004, An Act to amend The Snowmobile Act?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and . . . To you and through you to members of this Assembly and on behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce and welcome to their Legislative Assembly many, many delegates from the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, as well as their president, Neal Hardy who I understand is also joining us this afternoon. I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords, the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I as well would like to, on behalf of the government, welcome President Neal Hardy, the board members of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, and all those who are in the Chamber today to view the proceedings. On behalf of the government, welcome to your legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A little anxious earlier there with the introduction, but I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly a resident of rural Saskatchewan, a teacher, and a partner in a successful farming operation for most of her life.

She's a recent graduate of the University of Saskatchewan. She raised two boys, one more of a handful than the other. Mr. Speaker, I'd like all members to help me welcome my mother to her Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I just wanted to say, Mr. Speaker, mom's been roaming the halls of this wonderful legislature this morning, introducing herself to members on both sides of the House. And her and I had an opportunity to go to the Shania Twain concert last night in Saskatoon and I think she's more excited to be here. She said it's like meeting movie stars. Well I assured her that there's no movie stars in this Assembly but that's what you get from watching the legislative channel a little too often. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Yorkton.

Support for Saskatchewan Farm Families

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise this afternoon to recognize Saskatchewan farm families across our province. Over the last four years, Mr. Speaker, our Saskatchewan farm families have been affected by the issue of BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy), they've been affected by the issues of drought and have experienced low commodity prices, and have witnessed some of the most difficult times in our province and for that matter, Mr. Speaker, in Canada.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we're in a federal election campaign. We're now three weeks into the campaign and I have yet to see any major farm policy in our programs from our national leaders.

In Saskatchewan and Canada today, Mr. Speaker, we suffer from something called trade injury, of which members would know that through representation over the last couple of years have been able to get, through partnership with workers or people from SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural

Municipalities) and from our government, from the opposition, have been able to find 600 million new dollars for Canada of which \$180 million came to Saskatchewan.

We need to talk about the 60/40 and hear politicians talk about the 60/40 change so that we see more money coming from Ottawa to Saskatchewan. We need to see more money, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that our safety nets are stronger. And we need to see additional dollars for our BSE and we need to see borders open in Saskatchewan and in Canada.

And today, Mr. Speaker, I say to all members of this Assembly, we need to be working collectively with our federal partners to make sure that in their platforms and their agendas we see additional resources and revenues and equal opportunity for Saskatchewan farmers and Saskatchewan farm families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Legislated Election Dates

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When a good idea's time has come it's usually not the sole possession of a single political party or ideology.

Such is the case for setting general election dates with legislation to prevent silly political games from being played by federal and provincial leaders over the actual choosing of the day voters go to the polls.

A recent CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) Environics poll found an astounding 81 per cent of Canadians would prefer fixed election dates. Two provincial Liberal governments, BC (British Columbia) and Ontario, have led the way by putting forward a simple and sensible law to set election dates every four years.

New Brunswick's Progressive Conservative Premier Lord is also considering this modern, democratic reform. At the federal level, the new Conservative Party and even local NDP (New Democratic Party) MP (Member of Parliament) Lorne Nystrom, strongly supports set election dates. In fact, just this past February Mr. Nystrom was lamenting that no provincial NDP government had enacted set election dates. Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin rejected the opportunity to implement this measure and he may regret calling an early election if national voting trends continue.

Today I will be introducing a private member's Bill that supports the Saskatchewan Party's commitment to establish set election dates every four years in Saskatchewan. I encourage all members to support this legislation so that our province may proudly join other innovative leaders in keeping . . . in leading, rather than keeping a practice which voters strongly oppose.

Mr. Speaker, we know the NDP is trying to remove the guarantee of timely by-elections. We ask them to consider modern democratic reform and support the Saskatchewan Party's private member's Bill for set election dates. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

17th Annual Regina Children's Festival

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 17th annual Regina Children's Festival which began on Tuesday and runs until today at the Regina Exhibition Park.

Mr. Speaker, not only is the children's festival loads of fun but it's also educational and provides young kids and schoolchildren with an opportunity to experience live entertainment and a variety of interactive cultural activities.

This year's activities include face painting by Street Culture Kidz, a sound tent where children can bang away on unique instruments to their hearts' content, a dance tent, a merchandise tent, a craft tent, and new to the festival this year is a mini-teepee village featuring a First Nations puppet performance and First Nations arts and craft lessons.

This year's lineup of performers included Art Richard, a bilingual artist who performs traditional interactive singalongs; Rock 'N' Fables, a pop opera for kids; Circus Cowboys, a humouristic dynamic duo; Don Freed, a Métis singer and songwriter extraordinaire; Canadian juggling champion Robin Chestnut; Double Vision, a magical act; and the Fabulous Fat Brothers, Mr. Speaker.

The Regina Children's Festival is a non-profit charity event presented by volunteers for the benefit and growth of children and for the child in all of us.

I'm sure my colleagues will join me in recognizing all those involved with this year's festival including the volunteers, the sponsors, and the performers. I extend a big thank you to everyone and I wish them every success.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Government's Environmental Record

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last three months we've heard the members opposite invoke the phrase, green and prosperous economy. We've heard them say that over and over again in a vain attempt to somehow explain what there is of their economic strategy for Saskatchewan. However, like so much else we see and hear from this government, they are indeed empty and hollow words.

Mr. Speaker, after vowing to everyone in Saskatchewan to champion the cause of the environment, let's look beyond the hollow words and see the real actions of the members opposite. Let's just revisit the provincial budget.

The budget for environmental protection — cut. The budget for

water management and protection — cut. The budget for provincial parks — cut. The budget for resource stewardship — cut. The budget for forest ecosystems — cut. The budget for environment compliance and field services — cut.

Mr. Speaker, whatever the priorities of the members opposite, protecting the environment seems way down the list. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite talk a good game about the environment, but when push comes to shove their actions simply don't match those words.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Spring Convocation of the First Nations University of Canada

Mr. Borgerson: — Mr. Speaker, last night I had the pleasure of attending the annual spring convocation of the First Nations University of Canada, held here in Regina at the Delta Hotel. It was an impressive evening, Mr. Speaker, with 111 students honoured for achieving degrees and diplomas in 13 disciplines, ranging from fine arts to science to justice.

Valedictorian, Tanja Maxie, from the White Bear First Nations, gave a heartfelt speech about the importance of incorporating her culture into her education. She said part of what made the ceremony so special was that many of the graduates had encountered similar obstacles in life.

Mr. Speaker, all of the graduates deserve special mention, but I wish to acknowledge seven students from my constituency. Six are from the Sturgeon Lake First Nation — Tracy Kingfisher and Rick Daniels who received diplomas in interdisciplinary studies; Melinda Daniels and Gordon Ermine for Bachelor of Indian Social Work degrees; Cecil Daniels and Mary Ermine for Bachelor of Indian Education degrees. And I'd also like to congratulate Lisa Marie Sakebow from Big River First Nation for earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Indian studies.

Mr. Speaker, the entertainment was provided by Mr. Joe Naytowhow and Ms. Erika Haug, and the Red Dog Drum Group performed the honour song and grand entry. Guest Speaker Bob Morgan, an Aboriginal scholar from Australia, compared the issues in education that indigenous people face in both of our countries and praised the groundbreaking work of the First Nations University of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all of my colleagues will join me in recognizing all of the graduates for their hard work, perseverance, and dedication.

We congratulate them on their outstanding accomplishments and wish them the very best as they contribute to their communities and to this province. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

(14:00)

Performance of the NDP Government

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, one thing we have seen in this session is the absolute hypocrisy of the members opposite when it comes to agriculture policy in Saskatchewan and their disgraceful treatment of our agricultural producers.

Like so much else they have said, Mr. Speaker, their words in this regard appear to be just that — words.

Since the provincial government, the NDP has failed to fully fund our commitment to CFIP (Canadian Farm Income Program). The NDP at first demanded that higher caps and negative margins be part of the new CAIS (Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization) program. Then when the federal government agreed to put those very things in, our provincial government refused to provide the necessary funds to allow our farmers to take full advantage of those improvements to CAIS.

After vowing to promote the cause of a green Saskatchewan, the members opposite cancelled the Conservation Cover Program. Those members eliminated the hog loan program. They closed 22 of the province's 31 rural service centres.

After vowing to promote opportunities for family farms in our province, the NDP cancelled the family farm opportunities initiative. Those members reduced the rebate on farm fuel. They slashed funding to vet labs. They dramatically increased crop insurance premiums for the third year in a row. After vowing to reduce the burden of property tax on farm families, the members opposite now say that they might get around to it some day.

More hollow words from a visionless Premier and a directionless government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

70th Wedding Anniversary

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask members of the Assembly to join me in recognizing a very special 70th wedding anniversary celebration for two of my constituents.

Mike and Anna Kuzyk were married on June 3, 1934 in Albert Town Church just north of Hafford, Saskatchewan. They farmed together in Hafford for many years, and in 1946 moved to Speers, where they operated a mixed farm. They later moved into Saskatoon where Anna pursued dressmaking, worked at Royal University Hospital, and ran a hairdressing shop, while Mike continued to travel to Speers to run the farm.

Mike and Anna have been blessed with two daughters, Emily and Victoria; two grandsons; and now two great-grandchildren.

In August of this year, they will both be celebrating their 92nd birthdays. They still live in their own home, take care of a large garden, follow political matters with great interest, and enjoy

good health.

Mr. Speaker, Mike and Anna Kuzyk had a wonderful celebration of their 70th wedding anniversary a few short days ago, with a large number of people in attendance. They look back on their life with much happiness and are very delighted to be together.

I would ask all members of the Legislature to join me in expressing congratulations to these two remarkable pioneers, Mike and Anna Kuzyk, on their life together, their contribution to our province, and the very special accomplishment of celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Reception of Rural Municipal Delegates

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, hundreds of Saskatchewan people have travelled hundreds of miles to be here in the capital city today — here at the legislature to voice their concerns about property taxes, to voice their concerns about a government that would say one thing in an election campaign and do quite the opposite once they won that election.

Mr. Speaker, so they came here to hear from the government. What did they get in return for their trip? Well they got stood up by the Premier, who didn't bother to meet with them. And then, Mr. Speaker, they were threatened by the minister of Municipal Government, who told them, keep it up, he said; keep it up, and the Premier isn't going to continue to talk to you about this issue any more. That's what that minister said to those people who came to this Legislative Assembly and talk about this property tax issue. He said, keep it up.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we hope they do keep it up. We hope they continue to hold this government accountable for the promises that it made in the election. My question to the Premier is this: will he apologize for the actions and the words of his minister today? Has he directed that that minister apologize to these leaders from rural Saskatchewan who have come here with a serious issue?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, please. I would like to extend my own personal welcome to all of our guests and thank them for their presence. And I would also ask at the same time that they observe the traditions of the Assembly, and this is not to participate in the debate in any way, and that includes applause. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Government Relations has already — both to the executive of SARM and to the public through the press — made apologies for some unfortunate comment that he may have made on the platform this morning.

What I want to report to you, Mr. Speaker, is that minister and myself have just come from a very fruitful discussion, in my view, with the president and executive of SARM. That follows on a large number of meetings and opportunities to address the delegates that I've had, and that the minister have had, and the government members and ministers have had.

Mr. Speaker, I have taken the opportunity and had the opportunity to attend, I believe, each and every of the SARM conventions that have been held in Saskatchewan since I assumed this office and many before that, in the presence of 1,000 or more delegates. We've met regularly with the president and with executive of SARM on this very, very challenging issue. And, Mr. Speaker, I have travelled across this province and met farming people, rural people, in their communities, in their homes, and in their coffee shops, up and to and including yesterday.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Education Portion of Property Tax

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, truth be told, the Premier has done more than just meet with officials from SARM. He has done more than just meet with those concerned about this issue. He has made promises, Mr. Speaker. He has promised them, prior to the election campaign, that this government would do something about the education portion of property taxes.

He said the status quo wasn't on. He has said similar things after the election, Mr. Speaker. He said during the campaign, he said his platform, his party's promises had room to receive the Boughen Commission. If only we knew it only had room to receive the part of the Boughen Commission that recommended a tax increase and no property tax relief.

He has done more than met with these leaders of rural Saskatchewan and with the people of this province. He has made them promises on this issue. The question to him today is, will he keep his promise? Will he keep his word, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, before the election, at the SARM convention of 2003, during the election, and since the election, I continue to say exactly the same thing. I make exactly the same commitment. And that commitment, Mr. Speaker, is as follows: to make the next significant package of reform, when it comes to taxation in Saskatchewan, the priority is property tax. That's the priority; we've identified it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to achieve that goal, is not going to be achieved overnight. We didn't get in this circumstance overnight and we're not going to get out of it overnight. And it is going to take a solid plan with real commitment, and in some cases real courage, to ensure that this plan brings about a goal we seek, Mr. Speaker. It means some structural reform and it means some new financial resources. And it means taking the solid time to get it done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier says that property is his commitment; his promise on reducing the education portion of property tax, that's his priority. That's what he says. That's what he continues to say. In fact all we get is words on the issue. Because the actions of the government speak louder than the words, Mr. Speaker.

The government pleads poverty to rural Saskatchewan and tells them, the Premier tells them he can't keep the promise he made in the election because of the fiscal state of the province. Yet, Mr. Speaker, they've got \$26 million to lose on a dot-com in Atlanta, Georgia. There's \$25 million they can blow on a BC telephone company. Mr. Speaker, 28 million more on SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company). And 50 million more in this budget for more risky direct interventions in the economy, Mr. Speaker.

This is about priorities. This is about choices. Why doesn't the Premier choose to keep his word and provide this tax relief to the province of Saskatchewan, rural and urban?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about priorities — I'll talk about priorities. It is the number one priority of Saskatchewan people, rural and urban, that we devote the resources we have to providing quality health care in Saskatchewan — in this budget \$173 million. Day after day the opposition comes into this legislature encouraging us to put more resources in health. Fair enough. We've done it.

Priority education. In this budget 18 million new dollars for K to 12 (kindergarten to grade 12) education alone, and that represents over \$100 million in the last several years. We put in this budget as priority, Mr. Speaker, support for our municipalities; another \$10 million, Mr. Speaker — \$10 million — which brings to a total of 30 new million dollars over the last three years. What do we have is an opposition who votes against every one — every one of those measures.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as long as that Premier, as long as that NDP government continues to bring forward measures, including this last budget, that represents broken promises, that represents the fact that they were prepared to look people in the eye in the campaign and say one thing, Mr. Speaker, and not fulfill those promises after that election is over, we'll vote against those measures — we'll vote against that kind of a budget 10 times out of 10, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, it's June 10 today, but I think the

Premier must be confused that it's Groundhog Day, Mr. Speaker, because he popped his head out of the legislature today, saw the huge crowd, and popped back in. And what it means, Mr. Speaker, is that we're going to have many more years of high property taxes in Saskatchewan. That's what it means.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — The Premier didn't promise in the campaign to eventually getting around to providing relief in rural and urban Saskatchewan on this issue. He made direct promises. I ask him again to stand in the Assembly and explain, why is he not keeping those promises?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, this party opposite made promises during the election. They promised some, they promised some action on the matter of property tax relief. But I note in their promise, what did they say? What did they say? Well they said these measures will be phased in as they are affordable. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's a fair position — that's a fair position. Every, every government charged with making the tough decisions has to balance the demands and the priorities.

In this budget year our priority has been health. In this budget year our priority has been education and highways. And by the way, Mr. Speaker, the only other department of this budget to receive exceptional money in this budget beyond Health and Education is the Department of Agriculture — support for agriculture.

Now, Mr. Speaker, does that change our commitment? Absolutely not. We've put new money into K to 12, new money into revenue sharing. We're going to build a platform for real, substantial, long-term change. And, Mr. Speaker, we are going to address this issue over the course of this mandate — mark my words.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that the Premier . . . I am grateful that the Premier would answer the question the way that he answered the question because he highlighted for the people of the province the difference between that side of the House and this side of the House.

This former leader of the opposition, this party was honest with the people of the province of Saskatchewan. That party promised immediate tax relief. That Premier told SARM that he could implement Boughen in the current fiscal situation. That's what he said. That is a promise about today.

Do you know what else he said, Mr. Speaker? The Premier said back in July of '89:

When a political party goes to the people before an election and says one thing, and then having won the

election, after the election turns and does just the opposite, Mr. Speaker, that makes a sham of parliamentary democracy.

The question then for the Premier is this: why is he, why is he allowing that party, why is he personally making a sham of parliamentary democracy?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, we're here to debate a very substantive issue. We have guests in the chambers. But if the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about turning democracy into a sham, I say he need look no further than the very front benches over there.

I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, when democracy becomes a sham. When an opposition comes into the House, when an opposition comes into the House and will say to government and to the people of Saskatchewan, well I'll tell you what: you're not spending enough on environment, you're not spending enough on K to 12 or post-secondary education, you're not spending enough on highways, you're not spending enough on health, you're not spending enough on education, you're not spending enough on anything, but you should cut all the taxes — that's a sham.

What we need is a responsible opposition who, for once, would offer a positive suggestion to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, here's a positive solution for the Government of Saskatchewan to help them immediately keep the promises that they made, Mr. Speaker, to the people of this province on rural taxes. They could choose, Mr. Speaker, not to, not to continue to risk millions of taxpayers' dollars in business ventures. This budget alone that Premier's budgeted \$50 million for that. They could have chose not to lose \$26 million on a dot-com in Georgia, \$28 million on a failed potato plant, 25 million more on a telephone company in British Columbia. Those are some positive choices that government could make.

The fact is, is that given the priorities that are even in this budget with respect to that Premier's — that Premier's — determination to risk millions of taxpayers' dollars in business, there is room here. All he's got to do is stand up and say, I'm a man of my word and I'll keep my promise. Will he do that, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I will not do that. I will not do that because the consequence of that public policy decision taken by the Saskatchewan Party, recommended by the

Saskatchewan Party, would say to rural communities across Saskatchewan and to entrepreneurs across Saskatchewan, you will never find a partner in government. You would never find a partner in government.

And I would like the Leader of the Opposition today just to travel up to the community of Meadow Lake and explain to the people of Meadow Lake how it would be that he would say absolutely not, he would not invest in their community with the tribal council, with the First Nations and Métis people in building the world's largest OSB (oriented strand board) plant, employing people and providing very good dividends — very good dividends. How he would explain to the people of Saskatchewan he would have not have earned one point — what it is? — \$1.8 billion for the people of Saskatchewan. That kind of policy, Mr. Speaker, would be economic havoc.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Support for Agriculture

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Farm families are quickly learning they just can't trust anything the NDP government tells them. The Premier promises property tax cuts during the election, and then raises the PST (provincial sales tax) instead after the election. The Premier promised to fund the CAIS program before the election, but now we find the total claims from farm families will total well over \$220 million for 2003, and yet the NDP is putting up just \$99 million to cover those claims.

Mr. Speaker, why should Saskatchewan farm families believe anything the Minister of Agriculture or the Premier says?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to recognize the consistency that there has been in our agricultural policy around CAIS. We committed to \$1 billion over five years for business risk management. That commitment is solid; we are continuing in that process.

Recognizing the overpayment costs that there are in place for CAIS for '03, we had to push the federal government for more funding. To think that this province should pay five times more than the per capita provincial average than any other province is absolutely bizarre, Mr. Speaker.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we have now gone to the federal government. We are in discussion with them to make sure that there will be a fair deal for Saskatchewan producers. That's what we're doing, and we will continue to do it to support our producers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, you just have to be

careful what you ask for. Mr. Speaker, the NDP's backtracking on the support for the CAIS program is just the start of this government's attack on rural Saskatchewan. This year the NDP jacked up crop insurance rates once again. And to add insult to injury, the NDP also cut insurance coverage.

In fact over the past three years, this NDP government has increased crop insurance costs by a whopping 120 per cent. Is it any wonder, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP was pounded by rural Saskatchewan in the last election?

Broken promises on property tax reduction, broken promises on support for safety net programs, and massive increases in crop insurance fees during one of the worst years on the farm since the Great Depression — Mr. Speaker, why should the rural leaders in the gallery today or any family in Saskatchewan trust this Premier or this NDP government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite really does understand crop insurance better than what he's letting on in those comments. He should recognize that as an insurance program, it has to fund itself. It funds itself over 15 years. And, Mr. Speaker, in doing that, when it has faced a number of very, very difficult years, then the coverage costs go up. And in order to make affordable program, some of the coverage is decreased.

But at the same time with crop insurance, we have recognized the diversity of cropping in this province. And so we have been expanding the base of things and developing new areas for insurance in order to support our producers.

Mr. Speaker, we are consistent in searching out the best ways that we can find to support our producers and to doing it within the resources that we have. That is our commitment, and we will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — I can assure all those present here today, Mr. Speaker, that I understand crop insurance a whole lot better than the Minister of Agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, this morning an NDP cabinet minister told SARM leaders that the government couldn't keep its word because of the federal government's equalization formula. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's no wonder the NDP can't seem to get the federal government to listen.

Last year the NDP held out on signing the federal agriculture policy framework agreement because the minister wanted an increase in the program cap and he wanted negative margins included in the program. And the Saskatchewan Party agreed with that.

But, Mr. Speaker, when the federal government finally agreed to both conditions, it was the Premier and his NDP government that backed out on its own deal. Mr. Speaker, how can this NDP government expect the federal government or Saskatchewan farm families to trust them when they keep on breaking their word on virtually every agreement they make?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the former minister of Agriculture worked very hard to get the very best program that he could in place and we got that program in place. Mr. Speaker, I agree that the program, the APF (agricultural policy framework) is very, very good and it's good with the amendments as well.

But what it is not, is affordable when you look at the years that we have come through and when you look at the trade injury. Mr. Speaker, we are not alone on this. Other provinces are also saying to the federal government, this program on a 60/40 basis is not affordable.

Mr. Speaker, we are far beyond any other province in terms of our commitment and in terms of the cost that we put into this. In any way to say that this government is not backing the producers is absolutely wrong, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — The evidence is there that we are up in front on this issue. We have helped design a good program, and we are now trying to make that program affordable for all the people of this province. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Education Portion of Property Tax

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier today in his member's statement talked about the 60/40 split with the federal government on farm programs. The current Ag minister continually says the 60/40 split is not fair. And we agree, Mr. Speaker. Forty per cent for Saskatchewan taxpayers to pick up is a heavy load.

But let's turn the tables here. When that government came to power, the government of the day picked up 60 per cent of education costs in the province of Saskatchewan. Rural and urban taxpayers in the province picked up 40 . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. The member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The truth hurts because originally the taxpayers of Saskatchewan only had to pick up 40 per cent of the cost of education. Well now it's not fair for the federal government to ask them to pay 40; how on earth is it fair for this government to ask rural ratepayers to pay

60 per cent? What is it? You can't have it both ways, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Premier show us how it's fair on one hand to do one thing and ask the federal government to do another?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, we understand that there are concerns about property taxation levels and taxation levels across the province. I can tell you that as we have had more money come into the provincial treasury, we have spent more money back out into support of education and health care.

Indeed, since the last provincial election, since 1999, this government has committed \$125 million in new revenue. That budget is \$125 million larger than it was in 1999 on an annual basis. In total in that time period, Mr. Speaker, we have spent — just since this new Premier came into office — almost \$2 billion on K to 12 education alone. Certainly education is expensive and all of us believe that we need to have those resources available to educate young people throughout the province. What we need to look at is a fair way to do it and the platform, the plan that we've introduced in response to the Boughen Commission, is a fair and equitable way to deal with this.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I'm glad the Education minister got up to answer because I have another question for him, Mr. Speaker. I have a comparison. I have two tax notices, one from the RM (rural municipality) of Churchbridge in my constituency. And the tax bill, Mr. Speaker, the education tax bill for a quarter of land right along the Manitoba border is \$477. Education tax only; that doesn't count municipal.

I've got another tax notice, Mr. Speaker, in the RM of Shellmouth-Boulton. The thing is, it's on the Manitoba side — 99 feet away. The total tax bill, education and municipal, is \$428. Mr. Speaker, the amazing part of this, that's also an NDP government. So not only are we falling behind the rest of the country, we're now falling behind other NDP governments in this country.

To the Education minister, Mr. Speaker: how do you expect farm families to make a living, feed their families, and continue when you double tax them in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I too am pleased that the member has raised this comparison because this comparison speaks exactly to what the problem is, the problem between the way the taxpayers in Manitoba are treated and the way taxpayers in

Saskatchewan are treated; the fact that if we compare the equalization payments in a province of roughly the same size, Manitoba gets \$1.2 billion a year more, enough to run the entire education sector for a year — 1.2 billion. And that Manitoba government does not have the weighty debt left by cabinet ministers from the 1980s. They're not still paying off as much in interest as we . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, members. The Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the amount of interest Saskatchewan taxpayers pay on that debt is equal to the amount they pay in education support. It is unfortunate that we do not have fair and equitable treatment by the federal government. The plan that we have introduced, the three-phase approach, will restore equity within the province, it will call on fair treatment for Saskatchewan, and when we receive that money we will share that benefit with taxpayers directly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that government has become famous for saying it's unfair because of this, it's unfair because of that. It's Grant Devine's problem, it's the federal government's problem. And now Manitoba, they're way better off than we are and they don't have half our resources, Mr. Speaker. This is just a prime example of how this NDP government does business. How do they expect farm families to make a living and prosper and continue under that regime?

Taxes in Manitoba are less than half of what they are in Saskatchewan. You can't blame that on Grant Devine; you can't blame that on the federal government. You know what you can do? Look in the mirror and make changes, because you did it, Mr. Premier.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, will the Premier get up today and tell the people of Saskatchewan, the rural ratepayers, that he's going to address the problem? He's the Premier; he has the power. Deal with it today, Mr. Premier; they're sitting here waiting for your answer. Will you do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, if the member will just sit tight in his seat, in a few moments he's going to have an opportunity to vote for a motion that commits this legislature to tackling this problem in a real way, Mr. Speaker. He ought to just sit tight in his seat.

Now while I'm on the subject of the member from Saltcoats, it's an interesting thing. He says one thing here, but he says quite a different thing in his own community and his own press.

Right here in his own local newspaper he said the following, the following:

The Sask. Party is firmly opposed to increasing taxes, (well we understand about that) and would have no choice but to block any provincial sales tax increase, noted Bjornerud, (in quotations here) even though it may mean the retention of the education tax on agricultural (land) . . .

Willing, willing for his own doctrinaire purpose to retain the educational property tax on agricultural land. Mr. Speaker, this government has a plan, a solid plan, and we're going to implement that plan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:30)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 202 — The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council (Set Election Dates) Amendment Act, 2004

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to move first reading of Bill No. 202, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council (Set Election Dates) Amendment Act, 2004.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Rosetown-Elrose that Bill No. 202, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council (Set Election Dates) Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Next sitting.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Members, before orders of the day I would like to be able to table the annual report and operations for the year ended March 31, 2004, from the Office of the Provincial Auditor.

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day I request leave to move a motion under rule no. 49.

The Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition and member for Swift Current has requested leave under rule 49. Would the member from Swift Current please briefly identify the nature of the motion and perhaps read the motion into the record.

MOTION UNDER RULE 49

Education Tax on Property

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the motion I believe is particularly relevant today given the events earlier this day, the rally on the steps of the legislature, and the issue that was addressed by both sides of the Assembly all through question period — that of the Premier's promise to lower the education portion of property tax. And, Mr. Speaker, the nature of the motion is simply that the Premier would outline immediate measures as to how he would be able to fulfill his own promises in the election.

Agriculture in the province today is under some stress, Mr. Speaker. We're still recovering from years of drought. Of course the border is still closed in terms of BSE. There's a commitment . . . or rather a lack of a commitment by this current government to fully fund its share of CAIS. Agriculture is in crisis. And this motion on property tax deals specifically with this issue, and we would ask all members to support proceeding with this motion immediately.

The Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has requested leave to bring forward an emergency motion at this time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Leave has not been granted.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Support for Boughen Commission Findings

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move the following motion, seconded by the member of The Battlefords. I move:

That this legislature recognize the Boughen Commission's finding that inequities exist in the province's education property tax system and supports the government's intention to provide education property tax relief throughout the province at such time as sustainable financial resources are available, and in conjunction with the Minister of Learning's school division restructuring proposals.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, as others have done this afternoon, I want also to extend a welcome to the SARM

delegates and others who are here today in the legislature. And their presence obviously underscores the demand that is placed upon government for change respecting the funding of education and the level of property taxation.

Mr. Speaker, we respect and we understand the dimensions of the problem and of the demand. If I may say, we are equally aware of other demands on government, funding for health care being number one.

And, Mr. Speaker, if I may say, I believe that this has been illustrated during the course of this session where, for every question that's been asked by the opposition in terms of property tax relief, there must have been 20 or more questions on health care. And that's fair enough. Appropriately so, health care does remain and is the number one priority of Saskatchewan people — number one concern. And so to that demand we have responded. We have responded in this budget year with 173 million new dollars to enhance health care in Saskatchewan and to ensure that services, particularly long-term care services, remain available in communities right across Saskatchewan.

But, it's not only in health care as we well know, Mr. Speaker, there are demands. Only yesterday the opposition critic was demanding more money for post-secondary institutions. We have demands for more money, more resources to be available for agricultural support, demands for more resources to be available for highways. All of these, Mr. Speaker, are not without just cause.

There are demands for new resources in the Environment department, new resources in Culture, Youth and Recreation, new resources for pension. These are all valid and just demands. And the choices that government must make — not the kind of choices the opposition must make — but the kind of choices that the government must make are to prioritize those demands.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget we have had to make some tough choices. We've made some priority decisions, and those priorities are health, education, municipal funding, highways, and agricultural support programs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — So, Mr. Speaker, there are many, many demands on government. And to all of these demands, we have to set priorities, and we've responded with the fiscal resources available to us.

Now that said, Mr. Speaker, we are the first government in decades in this province to set the matter of the funding of education and its relationship to the property tax base as a priority — the first government in decades.

Mr. Speaker, you will well remember, and members will well remember, several years ago, we set as the priority of this government on the taxation side, the reform of the personal income tax system in Saskatchewan. We set that as our priority at that time, and we established the Vicq commission. The Vicq commission did its work. We received the work of the Vicq commission and over the course of now several years — several

years, Mr. Speaker — we have put those goals set by the Vicq commission, the goals of this government, in place. In fact this most recent budget brings essentially to conclusion the goals that we set around the reform of the personal taxation system in the province.

We did that, Mr. Speaker, because we understood from hearing the people of Saskatchewan, the burden particularly on low- and middle-income people, we did that because we wanted to achieve a personal income tax system that was more fair and simpler and one that made Saskatchewan more competitive on a national basis.

Well we've achieved those goals, Mr. Speaker. And having achieved those goals, at the SARM convention about a year and a half ago, I stood in the presence of 1,000 or so farm delegates and indicated to those delegates that our next priority task in taxation reform in Saskatchewan would be the funding of education and the relationship of that funding to the property tax base.

Now I say again to members present and those who may be observing in the gallery or beyond this Chamber, I say again, we did not get into this circumstance overnight, and we are not going to get into this circumstance in a short, short period of time.

Now the fact of the matter is — and I believe the member from Moose Jaw North would recall this as well as I do — when first I chose to enter public life it was about 1985, and at that time we had opportunity to meet with the R.M. of Moose Jaw. I remember the meeting. And we had opportunity at that time to meet with the school boards of Moose Jaw, the public and the separate school boards. At each of those meetings in 1985, Mr. Speaker, the issue of the provincial share of funding for education was raised with us. This, Mr. Speaker, is not a new issue. That's virtually 20 years ago.

And let's not be confused by any information brought to this House by the member of Saltcoats during question period. The fact of the matter is, there was no such thing as a 60 per cent of provincial share of funding in the early '90s. I don't think we've ever reached that level. To the best of my knowledge we've reached was in the 1970s under the Blakeney regime, when the province contributed about 55 per cent of the funding.

I tell you where it went south, Mr. Speaker. It went south in the 1980s. It went south in the 1980s when we saw the record levels of deficit and debt being rung up in this province and the inability therefore of the province to fund education properly. So this is not a new problem, Mr. Speaker. This is not a new problem. It's been around for many years.

Now throughout the decade of the '90s, Mr. Speaker, members will know that we've employed a variety of strategies to endeavour to bring some resolution to this. We endeavoured to use a strategy of some property tax rebate. We invested over two years about \$50 million. Well it may have provided some short-term relief, but it provided no long-term solution.

So we've adopted other strategies — a strategy of investing more public dollars into municipal revenue sharing, more public dollars into K to 12 education. So as the Minister of Learning

reports, over the last five years we've invested now \$125 million, new dollars, in K to 12. In the past three years alone, we've invested \$30 million in new revenue-sharing dollars to the municipalities. Again, Mr. Speaker, these dollars have provided some level of relief. They've enabled many of our municipalities in fact to hold the line on property taxation. But, Mr. Speaker, these dollars have not achieved the fundamental goal of the restructuring that's necessary, have not achieved the goal of seeing a significant shift off of the property tax base.

It was therefore and is, Mr. Speaker, our conclusion that more long-term structural change must occur. And that is why, that is why, Mr. Speaker, we engaged the good work, the great work of the Boughen Commission to look at this very issue. And the Boughen Commission consulted widely with the Saskatchewan people, with Saskatchewan communities, with trustees, with municipal representatives, with the business community, the community of the working people, First Nations community. They consulted widely and provided to government and to the public the results of their work.

Conclusions of the Boughen Commission generally in my view fall into two categories: those conclusions which indicated we need to bring more fairness and more equity into the provincial-wide distribution of property taxation for the purposes of education.

And so, Mr. Speaker, as difficult as it is, we are undertaking the challenge of the first major restructuring of educational governance and finance in this province in 60 years, Mr. Speaker.

Second, the Boughen Commission spoke of increasing and broadening the base of the provincial sales tax as a means by which we should fund education. Well, Mr. Speaker, the concept of broadening the provincial sales tax, particularly to restaurant meals, was a concept widely rejected by the people of Saskatchewan. I think petitions in the numbers of 130,000 petitioners delivered by members of the opposition saying the government should not engage in that direction. We heard the people, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of increasing the provincial sales tax, in terms of increasing the provincial sales tax, Mr. Speaker, every dollar that we've taken from an increase in the provincial sales tax had no other — had no other option but to go to the funding of quality health care. No option, Mr. Speaker. And so the simple option as some would see it, by simply broadening and raising the tax, was not available to us at this time.

And so, Mr. Speaker, our plan is as follows. It is to work through the difficult task of restructuring. It is to work through a very significant review and change of the foundation operating grant, so that in both cases we can achieve both quality education and equity in the funding of that education. What that is doing, Mr. Speaker, is building a real platform for substantive long-term change. Without building that platform, the strategies we've used in past have not worked. We are going to build the platform for real long-term substantive change. And then, Mr. Speaker, as we build the fiscal capacity of this province, new resources will be, can be, directed therefore to lessen our dependence on property taxation.

The question then, Mr. Speaker, from whence do come these new financial resources? Well here it is, Mr. Speaker, the key — the key. The key to new resources for the funding of education in this province, the key in fact to new resources for the funding of all of our valued social programs, is in building a strong economy. That's the key; that's the key.

Now somebody over there, I don't know who; if he'd care to put his hand up I could identify him, somebody over there says, how you making out? Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you just how we're making out. I'll just tell you . . . oh, it's the member of . . .

The Speaker: — Thank you for the order, members. Order, please. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Wood River — and I don't want to exceed my time here — but the member of Wood River asked how we're making out. I'll tell you just how we're making out. We just had two months of record employment in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:45)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — April and May, record employment.

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you how we're making out. Right in his own constituency, we are having record levels of activity in the oil and gas sector. We're having, Mr. Speaker, record levels in mining activity. We're having record levels in the forestry. And, Mr. Speaker — Mr. Speaker, I tell you we're having record levels in tourism, in information technology and research in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, with the continuance of decent moisture conditions in this province, we could see a return to an average crop — if not better than an average crop — this year. And if . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Would the members allow the Premier to complete his speech. Order, please.

Why is the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford on his feet?

Mr. Chisholm: — Leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member is requesting leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Chisholm: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly, I would like to introduce in the east gallery, 22 grade 9 students from Neilburg Composite High School. Teacher Lynne Steuart and parents Cindy Olchoweki, and Lana Brookman, Coleen Hegel, Janet Ryan, and Brenda Gross.

We welcome you all to your Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Support for Boughen Commission Findings (continued)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, let me return to my main point. The ultimate solution to the funding of all of our valued social programs is a strong and vibrant economy. We're building that economy in Saskatchewan with Saskatchewan people from border to border; north, south, east, west. All of our people, we're working to build that strong economy.

And it is here, Mr. Speaker, it is here at this point that this whole matter of equalization becomes so important. An equitable, fair equalization formula for the people of Saskatchewan will accomplish two things. In the shorter term, Mr. Speaker, it will accomplish more immediate financial resources, fairly provided to the people of Saskatchewan. Resources which we can use for the funding of education. Resources which we can use very directly to lower the burden on the property tax base. And we have made that commitment. We have made that commitment to our partners in municipal government. We've committed 30 per cent.

But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, in the longer term, a fair and equitable equalization formula. It means a stronger economy today and it means a much greater opportunity to maximize our economic potential for tomorrow. From that equation comes the resources, the resources that can make a real difference to provide quality education, because that's the goal — quality education to our young people in a fair and equitable way.

I want to say today, Mr. Speaker, I am grateful, extremely grateful for the support of SARM, particularly for the support of President Hardy and the executive who have lent their considerable weight to support the province's efforts to achieve a fair equalization formula, and our common goal — common goal — to build our economy.

Mr. Speaker, this government . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, this government is well aware — well aware — of the long-standing demand for change in how we fund education. Our commitment, which now we put into a motion of this legislature, is to move forward with a solid plan. Our commitment in terms of taxation reform is to fairness and equity in the funding of quality education with fairness and equity on the share that will be borne by the property tax base.

Mr. Speaker, I am therefore pleased to move this motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Saskatoon Riversdale, the Premier; and seconded by the member for The Battlefords, the minister for Government Relations:

That this legislature recognize the Boughen Commission's finding that inequities exist in the province's education property tax system and supports the government's intention to provide education property tax relief throughout the province at such a time . . . at such time as sustainable financial resources are available and in conjunction with the Minister of Learning's school division restructuring proposals.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Swift Current.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, the amazing thing about this motion that we're dealing with — notwithstanding the Premier's special remarks there about how this government intends to break its promise that it made in the campaign — what the . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. I would just caution the member about implying intentions that are unparliamentary. Carry on, member for Swift Current.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the amazing thing about this motion is how it equivocates on the position that the Premier took during the campaign.

The Premier didn't have any of this to say at SARM. He didn't have any of this to say during the election campaign — how it must be attached to the new restructuring that the Minister of Learning is going to do, and maybe if equalization is better, and the sun shone a little longer — there was none of that, Mr. Speaker. There was no equivocation.

Do you know why? Because he was looking for votes then, Mr. Speaker — because he was looking for votes then. So he went in the campaign and he said quite clearly that his government currently, currently had the fiscal capacity to accept the recommendations of Boughen. That's what the Premier said — that's what he said.

Unfortunately, we found out that apparently what he meant is that they only had the capacity to accept the tax increase part of Boughen and no intention to deliver tax increases, Mr. Speaker. That is not acceptable.

You know, the Premier himself, back when he was an erstwhile member of the opposition sitting on the left-hand side of your predecessor here, he was pretty clear about what he thought, what he thought about a political party that would say one thing in an election campaign to get elected and then do quite the contrary once the election was over. Here's what he said — this is in *Hansard*, from *Hansard*, July 25, 1989 — here's what the current Premier of the province of Saskatchewan said:

When a political party goes to the people before an election and says one thing, and then having won the election, after the election turns and does just the opposite, Mr. Speaker, that makes a sham out of parliamentary democracy.

That's what the Premier said.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? As I look at this motion, which basically highlights a whole bunch of excuses and reasons why this Premier is not going to keep this solemn promise he made during the campaign, you know what I see there, Mr. Speaker, I see what the Premier was talking about — there is the sham of parliamentary democracy, Mr. Speaker. There it is right there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we have, we have heard this government, since the election especially find . . . discover a new excuse for all things: a new excuse for its inability to keep its promises on health care; to keep its promises to continue to reduce tax when they increased the PST; or to keep this promise for rural and urban property owners, the issue of property tax. The new excuse is the equalization formula, Mr. Speaker.

Now don't get me wrong. The first day that I was on this new job we sent a letter to the Premier and indicated that we supported the government's position that the equalization formula is unfair. But we quickly added after that, Mr. Speaker, we invited the Premier, we asked the Premier, please don't use this as an excuse though. Don't use it as an excuse to not have a long-term vision for our future, don't use it as an excuse to run up deficits or to break promises, Mr. Speaker. That's what we asked the Premier to do.

And more importantly, we said don't just go to Ottawa, don't go to Ottawa and try to negotiate more assistance for us as a have-not province when we all know, at least those on this side of the House and the people of this province know that our resources here is too great, are too great. Our potential is too great. This province should be a have province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — We should give more to the country than we ever need to receive in return, Mr. Speaker. And, and we should be able to afford to keep promises like the one the Premier made on property taxes in the election and since, Mr. Speaker.

I was surprised at the ministers that were in attendance. And it is unfortunate. I understood the Premier had made a commitment to be there today, this morning, on the steps of the legislature. I understand he's met with them since. But I was surprised, frankly, to see all of those ministers and MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) of the government there this morning and not make an excuse for the bad weather, blaming it on the equalization formula frankly, Mr. Speaker.

I want to tell you it's getting real old for the people of Saskatchewan. It's getting very, very old for them to listen to this Premier, who knew what the equalization formula was, who knew the fiscal situation when he made this promise on property tax in the first place. It's getting very old and tiresome for them to now hear him use this as some sort of an excuse. It's not an excuse at all, Mr. Speaker. It's a way for the Premier to break a promise that he made. That's the only explanation.

It's a way for the Premier to try to get some votes, maybe with some success in some parts of rural Saskatchewan even. Try to

get a few votes there in this last election — say what you have to say, get elected, and then break your promise. Well it wasn't on then, Mr. Speaker, it's not on now, and I have a feeling the people of this province will remember it the next time he has the courage to call an election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, if you put this whole issue in context, the way we fund education in Saskatchewan and what has happened over the last 13 years, then it's particularly stark, it's particularly stark the fact that the government hasn't kept the promise.

Well the member from Nutana is chirping from her seat. I think she was an Education minister, was she not, at one point or another over these NDP years, Mr. Speaker? I think she was one. So she will remember that that government opposite, that NDP government cut education funding 350 to \$400 million. That's her legacy for education.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — And that's why, and that's why, that's why we're now in the situation we're in. They've downloaded those hundreds of millions of dollars onto RM councils, onto school boards in cities and in towns and in rural Saskatchewan across this province. They've downloaded the responsibility for funding to the point where rural Saskatchewan can't take it any more. And it's been thus for some time.

I think the revolt started in about 2000 — there were tax revolts across this province. This issue's been boiling since then, back as far as 1999, because they can't take the burden any more that was put on them by this government.

Mr. Speaker, producers in Saskatchewan, farmers in Saskatchewan, they can't afford to pay any more. They simply can't. They simply can't. And that's why they're here. That's why they've come here in the past; that's why they send e-mails and write letters and call. They call us.

I'm sure they call their MLAs opposite. And they're saying . . . What they're asking for, Mr. Speaker, it isn't very radical, you know. They're not really asking for something that wild or that outlandish. They're asking the Premier of their province to keep his word. That's what they're asking for.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Because of the downloading that has happened over the last decade under the NDP and under the special direction of the member for Nutana, Mr. Speaker, and under the Premier's direction, it has become very difficult for rural councils, for local government, for school boards, to do what it is they need to do without increasing taxes.

And we've seen the product of it. We've seen the taxes go up in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We've seen the revolts. We've seen the rallies. We've seen the discussions at SARM and at SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) and at councils around the province.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, we've also seen something else. We've seen the NDP go to those meetings. They have a lot of meetings. They'll go to no end of meetings, Mr. Speaker. They'll go to conventions, and they'll stand in front of the microphone, and they'll say things like, in terms of this issue the status quo is not on. That's what they'll say. They'll say, we can do Boughen — absolutely. We can reduce property taxes. We can accept Boughen in the current fiscal framework. We'll do that. They have no trouble doing that, Mr. Speaker. They've got a lot of courage to do that, to stand up at a microphone and say that.

But then, Mr. Speaker, after those promises are broken, after they break those promises and people of rural and urban Saskatchewan gather on the steps of the legislature to hold them to an account, Mr. Speaker, are they prepared to run up to the microphone? Will the Premier, did the Premier run up to that microphone? Did he have the courage to do that? No, Mr. Speaker, he stayed in his office.

He stayed in his office and he gives us, he gives us this motion, these words about how maybe one day sort of kind of if we happen to succeed on the Minister of Learning's plan for restructuring, maybe then, maybe we'll get around to keeping our promise. That's why they're upset, Mr. Speaker. That's why the people of the province are upset.

And I'll tell you this. This is just not the time to be putting any more strain on rural Saskatchewan. I don't care if you live on Albert Street. I don't care if you live just off of 8th Street in Saskatoon. I don't care if you live in Swift Current or in rural Saskatchewan. This is not the time. This is not the time to put any more stress, to have your broken promises affect agriculture and farm families.

(15:00)

Because let's take a look at what has happened here recently, Mr. Speaker, in terms of things that, yes, aren't always in control of any government obviously, like drought and the BSE situation. Those are very, very serious issues and as we even come out of the drought hopefully in much of the province, it's still the lingering effects of it to be sure, Mr. Speaker. The borders are still closed; there's problems with that.

And then there are some issues that were made by this government, and by governments, more problems for agriculture. I remember, Mr. Speaker, the member for Thunder Creek and the agriculture critic for the Saskatchewan Party saying to anyone that would listen, saying to the media, congratulating the then minister of Agriculture, the current deputy minister . . . Deputy Premier of this government, for properly negotiating on a couple of important issues with respect to CAIS, the cap and negative margins. Made a powerful case I think to the federal government. Hopefully aided by what we did on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, and, and the federal government agreed.

The federal government said, you know okay, we're going to, we're going to agree to that, Government of Saskatchewan, NDP Government of Saskatchewan. We will agree to make those changes. And incredibly then, Mr. Speaker, what we have seen since then is the realization that the changes that this

government asked for, those changes that this NDP government asked the federal government for, now that they've been made, now that they will cost some money, they're not going to sign it. They won't sign CAIS.

And so farmers will be underfunded relative to the potential that they could be receiving under this program because that minister would apparently sit at a cabinet table and vote to lose 26 million on a dot-com in Georgia, but he has not a thin dime to keep the very thing that that Minister of Agriculture asked for only months ago, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — And we have seen other attacks on rural Saskatchewan in the budget. And you know I get a sense as I travel around Saskatchewan that urban, urban people are beginning to fully understand that the long-term hope for our province, for our future, for our chance to become a have province, it's founded, Mr. Speaker, on growth in all sectors of Saskatchewan in the North and in the South, with respect to the First Nations community, and yes, in urban Saskatchewan, and in agriculture, and rural Saskatchewan.

They're understanding that I think way better than the government opposite is understanding it, Mr. Speaker. We aren't going to achieve our full potential unless we've got a government that understands it needs to keep its priorities right and that it needs to keep its promises it made, especially during an election campaign, especially in rural Saskatchewan.

The Premier says at the end of his speech — I think he went off script a little bit, frankly — and he started to talk about all of the things that he says are going for the province of Saskatchewan, and he mentioned record oil and gas drilling, Mr. Speaker. He mentioned it. You know this budget, his own budget, I think budgeted the costs, budgeted the revenues from oil and gas to the government at about 26 or \$27 West Texas . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . \$26. Well the prices are much higher than that.

The Premier may have answered his own question when he pleads poverty to SARM and he pleads poverty to do something meaningful in terms of post-secondary education. He may have answered his own question. Because we're going to see, I think, windfall revenues in oil and gas that are available. The Premier is going to have a hard time using that excuse to keep his promise.

And we know that in this budget, this government has enough money, apparently they don't have enough to keep their promises on property tax, but they've got more than enough to commit \$50 million, Mr. Speaker, \$50 million risking money in businesses — the same tired, old strategy this government, the one before, and the one before that, for 60 years, the same strategy we've used.

They've got \$50 million to invest in things like SPUDCO, Mr. Speaker, to invest in things like SPUDCO, but they don't have a dime to keep their promises to rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They don't have a dime. Fifty million dollars to do the same thing, yes, absolutely, that this government and its predecessor did, absolutely — policies that have failed our

province; policies that have betrayed the potential of Saskatchewan. He's got 50 million more to do that, to risk and lose of taxpayers' money, but not a dime — not a dime — to keep the promise that he made to rural Saskatchewan, not a dime to keep the promise that he made at SARM.

Mr. Speaker, before the orders of the day I was going to move a motion, and I'm going to talk about the motion. We have an amendment for the Premier's motion; we hope he accepts it. But I want to tell you a little bit about the motion that we were going to make had we got leave from the Assembly to make it. Because it wasn't all these words and gobbledegook and equivocations about why the Premier can't keep his promise. It was pretty basic.

The motion said that this Assembly urge the Premier to fulfill the commitments he made at the 2003 SARM convention and during the 2003 election campaign by taking immediate action to reduce the education portion of the property tax. That was the motion that we were going to present. So we were going to propose something so radical, Mr. Speaker, as for all members of this Assembly to stand up and say, you know if the Premier made a promise, here's an idea — keep it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — But they wouldn't grant us leave to do that; they wouldn't grant us leave. Instead they wanted to propose this motion and link their promises that the Premier made to financial resources that are available in conjunction with the Minister of Learning.

They've even forgotten some of their own excuses in the motion. They've lost track of their excuses. Because you remember what they said earlier when this delegation was here before, the Premier came out and said well, and I think the Minister of Learning said, well when we have fixed equalization — there's that word again — when we've got our equalization formula fixed, then we can provide, then we can keep the promise.

They didn't mention that either at SARM, nor did they mention that in the campaign; the Premier did not. But that was their latest excuse and, you know, they've got so many of them — all of them lame as the last, I might add — that they had forgotten their own excuses.

That's not even in here any more, and I think I know the reason why that's not in here any more, Mr. Speaker. Because shortly after they said, well when we increase our equalization payments then we'll keep this promise, the Minister of Finance himself had to speculate himself about the real possibility — given the high price of oil and gas — he had to speculate about the real possibility that they wouldn't get any equalization money any more. So they had to kind of rip up that excuse.

And now thanks to the Minister of Learning, they got a new one. And it's centred around restructuring. It's centred around how many school boards and where lines should be drawn on a map.

Is that the measure of how and when a promise should be kept by any political party? Is that the measure for the NDP, Mr.

Speaker, about when they may get around to keeping a promise? If they can throw out some sort of an excuse like restructuring or a new map for education that is needed, if that's what the Premier meant, if that's what he meant, that's what he should have said in the campaign and that's what he should have told SARM, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — And so, Mr. Speaker, well you know the member for Moose Jaw chirps from her seat. You know, she has a choice too. She could voice at cabinet, she could speak up in cabinet, like she's willing to do here, and say I have an idea, let's keep the promises we made to the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — But I don't think she's speaking up much at cabinet, Mr. Speaker. I don't think they can be heard over the hare-brained scheme from the Minister of the Environment that we saw on the budget, frankly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we're going to be proposing an amendment to this motion. We're going to be . . .

The Speaker: — Order please, members. Order. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, now apparently their feelings are hurt. They have the courage to chirp from their seats and try to intervene in this debate, and then when they're challenged on where they were the day this government decided to break its promises, when that member for Nutana is challenged about where she was, did she speak up for the people of the province in cabinet? Did she speak up for keeping promises? No.

So she has the courage to chirp from her seat but apparently not the courage to speak up for the people of the province. And now her feelings are hurt, Mr. Speaker. I don't care that her feelings are hurt, Mr. Speaker. Because we're not talking about personalities; we're talking about keeping your promise. We are talking about policies for the people of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the need in rural Saskatchewan for this Premier to simply do what he said he would do on the issue of property taxes, and that is what that member now and all the other members over there have a chance to do at their next opportunity at cabinet. I encourage them on behalf of SARM delegates, on behalf of urban residents in the province of Saskatchewan, to speak up for the truth, Mr. Speaker, to speak up, Mr. Speaker, for the promises that the Premier made.

And so we're going to move an amendment that we hope the government can support because really it's pretty fundamental; it just goes to keeping promises. The amendment that I'm moving, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the member for Melville-Saltcoats is:

That all words after "legislature" be deleted and the following substituted:

urge the Premier to fulfill a commitment he made at the 2003 SARM convention and during the 2003 election campaign by taking immediate action to reduce the education portion of the property tax.

Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to move it; I hope all members will support it. It's seconded by the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition and seconded by the member for Melville-Saltcoats:

That all the words after "legislature" be deleted and the following substituted:

urge the Premier to fulfill the commitments he made at the 2003 SARM convention and during the 2003 election campaign by taking immediate action to reduce the education portion of the property tax.

Debate will continue on the motion and on the amendment concurrently.

I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to have the opportunity today to speak to this important issue, and that we have the opportunity to respond to SARM delegates here today.

Mr. Speaker, what the SARM delegates are here doing today are asking for a fair deal. It's not unfair. It's a response to the government because this government, as we have said before, in the 2003 SARM convention the Premier made a commitment that he would deal with the high education tax on property.

In the last election, he made that commitment to all Saskatchewan people, not just to rural taxpayers but to rural and urban taxpayers. And, Mr. Speaker, right there in front of everyone — right during the election — he said we will deal with it because, he said, the Boughen Commission has come out with their report, recommendations, and I can deal with them with the resources I have at hand.

So really I think what he was saying is that with the money that we have available . . . And he should have known; he was the Premier at the time. That government's been there for 12 years. They should have known the resources they had to use. And he made that commitment knowing that. And then all of a sudden, what happens? November 5 comes along and out goes dealing with the education tax.

Of course that wasn't the only thing, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me a part of the Boughen recommendation was to raise the PST and turn that over and put it towards the education tax. The Premier only got part of it right, Mr. Speaker. He raised our taxes, put it in his pocket, and left the rest of us out there to pay the rest of them. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, SARM delegates are here today asking for their fair share, because they were promised. And this Premier and this government doesn't back

their promises.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, it's almost like they have the McGinty factor in Saskatchewan now. McGinty signed a contract while the election was on in Ontario and he said, I promise I will not raise taxes. Sound familiar, Mr. Speaker? Because for 28 days in Saskatchewan we heard the same thing, Mr. Speaker, exactly the same thing . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order, members. Order. Order. Order. I would ask all members to come to order so that the debate on this important issue can proceed.

Order. Order. Order. Order. I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(15:15)

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think we've hit a nerve over there. Member for — what? — Regina Victoria, Moose Jaw, got all upset when I said the Premier put it in his pocket. Well I don't know where he put it because none of us have seen it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — It's for darn sure, Mr. Speaker, that the SARM delegates — today asking for help with the education tax — they haven't seen it because if they had, they wouldn't be here. They'd be home on their tractors finishing seeding. That's how important this issue is, Mr. Speaker.

So those members can get as upset as they want. And the truth hurts, Mr. Speaker. But if that government and that Premier would honour their promises and honour their commitments, we wouldn't be having this debate today. That's all SARM delegates were asking. Be fair with us; meet us halfway and honour the commitments you made during the election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — And, Mr. Speaker, I could even go further of what they've actually done to these same SARM delegates. And let's go over a little bit of this. I get a kick out of it, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier goes on and on about his green and prosperous . . . Well let's look at this green and prosperous budget we just had. I'd like to talk about the green part. That must be . . . What the Premier must be talking about . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I've been listening very carefully to the member, and at one point, the member imputed that the Premier personally benefited from tax increases by — in the member's words — by putting the money in his pocket.

And I think that . . . I don't think the member intended to say

that. But the member should make it crystal clear that in no way did the Premier of Saskatchewan personally stand to gain or benefit from certain fiscal measures taken . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The member's raising a point of order, and the Speaker will have to deal with this, and I want to be able to hear in entirety the point of order that's being raised. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — What the member said was that when taxes were increased in Saskatchewan that the Premier put it in his pocket. The imputation is that the Premier personally gained from this.

The member then — after he sat down — stood up again and tried to make light of it and tried to move on. But the member did not retract this allegation. I think the member would do well to withdraw his remarks and then move on, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it's clear in debate that there is a big difference between making a personal allegation and using some literary licence in explaining to the people of the province that deep pocket is like the black hole of the General Revenue Fund.

I think that it was clear that the member was implying that this money went and just disappeared into the General Revenue Fund. I am confident that if you review *Hansard* it'll be very clear that there was no personal attempt made in the way the member worded his statement. It's simply literary licence. And I'm sure that you will see in reviewing *Hansard* that that would be the fact.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I thank both members for raising an issue. And I will take a look at the record and bring back a ruling in the near future. I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I hate to break it to the members opposite, but I know the Premier had no personal gain. The members on this side know exactly what I was talking about. The problem is the members on that side know exactly what I'm talking about too, Mr. Speaker, and it's hitting a nerve over there. They didn't keep their election commitments they made to the people of Saskatchewan, and now it's bothering them. That's all the problem is, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to where I was and talk about this green and prosperous Saskatchewan that the Premier keeps talking about. But I guess the only part that I could find that would fit with being green in the province came in the budget, and it was in a program called Conservation Cover Program. And what did this government do? They cut that program, Mr. Speaker. So out goes the green, and that

theory the Premier has doesn't fit any more.

Well now let's go to prosperous. I was looking to see what he was talking about as prosperous when it comes to farm income and agriculture. And then I looked farther down and I find the farm family opportunity initiative. And do you know what that is, Mr. Speaker? That's finding new ways to improve your farm income.

What did this government do, Mr. Speaker? They cut that program. So there we go, green and prosper out the window. Oh well, we're okay. We'll go for four years because we don't have to make any more new promises for four years, and then we'll worry about keeping them after that, Mr. Speaker.

Let's look at agriculture for a minute, Mr. Speaker, because this is the same people that were in here today. And let's go kind of review the last three or four years.

Remember we had a \$25 million tax rebate, and that was specifically to deal with the high education tax. And that kind of put the problem on the back burners. And SARM and urban taxpayers, rural taxpayers were happy to see the government doing something to deal with the problem. But it lasted — what Mr. Speaker? — about two years, and the government saw fit to cut that program and to this day have done nothing to fill that shortfall and that gap.

Mr. Speaker, these same people that were in the galleries today had their crop insurance premiums in the last three years raised about 50 per cent each year, for three years. Well at the same time they cut the coverage that farmers have.

And then we went on and we get to the point where we've got a new farm program coming in, and there's transitional money needed to adjust from the old program to the new program. How much is that government putting in for these same farmers, Mr. Speaker? Zero. Zip, zero, nothing. Because that's the commitment that government makes to rural Saskatchewan and our farmers.

And I find it a little odd, Mr. Speaker. They talk about negotiating with the feds, when we know by this time the feds are just laughing at them because they don't keep none of their . . . no credibility. They keep none of their promises. They deal with the federal government . . . And a good example was the new program we're talking about, and they wanted the cap raised. And they said, we're not signing that program — to the federal government — until you raise that cap. And then they also talked . . . they went on to talk about . . . they wanted the negative margins included within the program. And they said, we're not signing this program until you include negative margins.

You know what, Mr. Speaker. The federal government called their bluff. They finally said, okay, if that's what you need there in Saskatchewan, we'll give it to you. And what did this Ag minister, that Premier, and that government do? Uh-oh, we've got a problem now because now we will have to make a commitment to farmers in Saskatchewan.

But we know in the past 12 years there has been no commitment from that NDP government in no way, shape, or

form to help the farmers of this province. No commitment at all, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — We had the CFIP program, and now it looks like we're going to end up getting about 80 per cent of what the farmers of Saskatchewan should have got because this government won't make their commitment to agriculture. We'd have the new CAIS program . . . if the problems of Saskatchewan farmers should be receiving about \$229 million. And you know what this government budgeted, Mr. Speaker — \$99 million. You know it would be better to be a farmer anywhere in the country of Canada than in Saskatchewan — anywhere, Mr. Speaker.

We're always told that we can't compare ourselves to Alberta. And there's days probably we can't because they have a right-wing government, and we have a socialist government, and I guess it isn't fair, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — But, Mr. Speaker, the farmers in Alberta are getting a lot more help and commitment from their government than we are.

But the worst part for me, being on the east side of Saskatchewan, is that I've only got to look a few miles east, and I see a NDP government backing the farmers to a greater degree than they are in Saskatchewan. Some of the farmers that were here today, and may still be here, farm right along that border, Mr. Speaker. They have land on the Saskatchewan side; they have land on the Manitoba side.

And it comes back to what we talked about in question period. You compare your tax notices. The Saskatchewan side, for a quarter of land on this side, and a quarter of land on that side that are very comparable, about the same number of acres broke on both quarters, and the tax bill on the Saskatchewan side thanks to the high education tax is \$848. Jump in the half-ton, drive across the road, 99 feet, pick up my tax bill, and guess what? — \$418. It makes you wonder why I don't load mama up, and we move the cows and we'll all go to Manitoba.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — And you know what, Mr. Speaker, we laugh at that. But you know what? That's the problem in Saskatchewan. That's the attitude our people are getting because they're forced to have that attitude. The grass is greener on the other side.

And as we're talking about that, we have young people leaving this province, young people from farm families that we need to stay and farm the land. They're not staying here. And it isn't because they don't want to stay; they want to stay. It's because of 12 years of socialist rule in the province of Saskatchewan. It's 12 years of high taxes. And it just goes on and on, and finally they give up and leave.

Well what we're doing here, Mr. Speaker, is we're chasing many more people out of this province by high taxes and

hurting the exact people that this Premier and that government promised to help during the last election.

So, Mr. Speaker, when the Premier made that commitment, that he could deal with the Boughen Commission report and he could do it within the resources he had, that's all they're asking. He should have done that. He didn't have . . . He said he didn't have to raise the PST because not one person in this province during the election campaign heard a word about raising taxes.

And in fact while I was campaigning, if I heard it right, Mr. Speaker, I think he said we're going to continue to keep lowering taxes. I think he made that commitment. November 5, 12 o'clock, new NDP government, 30 to 28 — out the window go all the promises.

Well I don't think . . . You know, Mr. Speaker, that may of worked this time. And the scare tactics about the Crowns, they might have worked this time; and don't trust those bad Sask Party people because they'll close hospitals. You know what they said in my area, Mr. Speaker? They said you elect that guy from Melville-Saltcoats from the Sask Party, and he'll close long-term care beds. Can you believe that, Mr. Speaker? I would close long-term care beds. Well, no I wouldn't. But that government on that side sure would, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — And they didn't stop there, Mr. Speaker. They closed hospital beds. They're chasing nurses out of the province. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? They're getting good at chasing nurses out of the province because from '92 on, they chased a whole bunch out. The problem we have today is we can get none of them to come back, and now we're short of nurses. And their solution to that problem is fire more nurses and let more of them leave, Mr. Speaker.

So sometimes you got to be careful what you ask for. You know, there's an old saying — what is it? — that the devil you know is better than the devil you don't know. They ran their whole campaign on that. They knew what they were talking about when they said, the devil you know. We know, they know, and now the public know.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — And you know, Mr. Speaker, I can hardly wait for the next election to see what kind of a myth they fabricate on that side.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — It's got to be something really imaginative, and it's got to be something the people of Saskatchewan can buy. And I'm not sure that all the money in the treasury in Saskatchewan will buy them smart people smart enough to think of one that will win the next election for them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — So, Mr. Speaker, I want to finish today saying I feel sorry for the SARM delegates that made their way in here today. I feel sorry for Neal Hardy, president, and the

directors of SARM who felt insulted today by this government making commitments and not backing them. I believe they were insulted by the Minister of Government Relations. I believe they were insulted outside this building when the Premier didn't see fit to come out and speak to them.

And I just feel sorry that these people are having to go home, finish seeding, and know they got to make a living under this socialist government. And the Agriculture minister keeps saying, times are tough. Well God knows these people know times are tough. They got to go home and try and survive. And they will, Mr. Speaker — in spite of that government on that side of the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — So, Mr. Speaker, I support the amendment that this Assembly urge the Premier to fulfill his commitment he made in 2003 SARM convention and during the 2003 provincial election campaign by taking immediate action to reduce the education portion of property tax.

That's all they were asking, Mr. Speaker. I support this amendment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords, the Minister for Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I appreciate the opportunity to be able to enter into the debate today. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, it is nice to be able to enter into the debate today because it is a debate.

We stood in this Chamber here not too long ago on the day that the SARM held an emergency convention. They came to the Chamber to hear what was going on with regards to property tax — education property tax. We had a debate in the Chamber here, Mr. Speaker. And in that debate the opposition made the accusations that they're making today about broken promises and the government claimed and stated at that time, Mr. Speaker, that indeed we were going to maintain our commitment and fulfill that promise.

(15:30)

Well here we are today, Mr. Speaker, a number of meetings have taken place. Good, productive meetings with . . . good, productive meetings, Mr. Speaker, with representatives of SARM and SUMA, rural Saskatchewan and urban Saskatchewan. And we're working very closely at finding ways, finding solutions to a very complex and challenging problem.

But today, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that the government today is making the commitment to take this matter forward in a reasonable, in a responsible and in a sustainable way, what are we hearing from the opposition in their motion today and in their arguments? Exactly the same thing that they said a couple

of months ago, Mr. Speaker.

We were asking at the time for input from around the province, from SARM, from SUMA, from the opposition to find solutions to this complicated problem. And today after two fairly intense speeches from members of the opposition, not one, not one idea that moves us to a solution. Not one idea, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I would ask the members to just allow the member who's got the floor to continue with his remarks unimpeded. The member for The Battlefords.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And in fact, I listened very closely because this is a file that's important to me, Mr. Speaker. I personally am very committed to seeing that this issue of inequities in education property tax be corrected. I am very supportive of my Premier, who says with integrity that we will on this side of the House deal with this issue.

So, Mr. Speaker, I listened closely for solutions and I listened to the Leader of the Opposition who in his opening remarks . . . I'll paraphrase him as he often does to members on this side of the House. I'll paraphrase his opening remarks. He said, this motion is an amazing thing. We're delighted, Mr. Speaker, because we think that there is some amazement throughout the opposition that in fact the government would be working this hard to try and find a solution to a very complex problem.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Speaker, leave to introduce guests.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the east gallery, it's my pleasure to introduce 51 grade 4, 5, 6, and 7 students from Vanscoy. This is the second group of Vanscoy students to visit the legislature today. It's kind of Vanscoy days here in Regina.

I'd like to welcome the students and also teachers, Mrs. Streisel, Mrs. Harper, and chaperones, Mr. Harvey, and Mr. Sparrow. And I look forward to meeting the group later for a photo and a visit.

Please join me in welcoming the school group from Vanscoy, Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

**Support for Boughen Commission Findings
(continued)**

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And from me as well, welcome to the students from Vanscoy. It's always a pleasure to have young people from around the province in our legislature to see how policy is developed and, Mr. Speaker, to engage in this process of governing the province.

Mr. Speaker, the debate earlier, as I indicated, focused around the opposition's comments that — in fact the entire opposition leader's speech was based on the fact — that there's a broken promise in place. And they will continue to argue that and yell across the floor — keep the promise, keep the promise.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the important thing that the people of Saskatchewan, I think, have recognized and will continue to recognize is that there is no broken promise, Mr. Speaker. We are in the process of fulfilling that promise, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — And if fulfilling that promise, Mr. Speaker, is the basis for which Saskatchewan people will vote in the next election, I have no doubt that by the time the next election comes around and this promise has been fulfilled, as we have made the commitment, that the people of Saskatchewan will re-elect this government in record numbers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — There's no doubt in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that this government intends to keep its word with regards to education property tax.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the motion in front of us today, I think it's important that we understand exactly what it says. And I'll quote:

That this legislature recognize the Boughen Commission's findings that inequities exist in the province's education property tax system and supports the government's intention to provide education property tax relief throughout the province at such time as sustainable financial resources are available, and in conjunction with the Minister of Learning's school division restructuring proposals.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is very carefully written because number one, the government is sending the message to the people of Saskatchewan that there are inequities in the property tax system, Mr. Speaker, and we realize it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The Boughen Commission made it very clear to us that those inequities exist and need to be addressed.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the motion says very clearly that it is the government's intention, not just the Premier's, not just one

member of the legislature, but the government's intention to provide property tax relief throughout the province, urban and rural, Mr. Speaker. That's the intention, that's the commitment that's being made here.

It also states, Mr. Speaker, that we are not going to be irresponsible, create new debt for the province, or create unsustainable financing for a system that's going to continue for a long period of time. If we make a fix to the problem it's got to stay in place, Mr. Speaker, we can't have a fix that's here today and gone tomorrow. It's not acceptable to the people of Saskatchewan, it must be sustainable.

So, Mr. Speaker, the motion says very clearly that we will be responsible, that we will be sustainable. and . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Some members are continuing to disrupt the debate, and I would ask members to respect the right of every member in this Assembly to make remarks when they are . . . when they are on the floor. I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I continue that comment that I was making earlier, that we need to have the sustainable financial resources to make sure that whatever fix is put into the system, that it's sustainable and will last for a long period of time. That's what the people of Saskatchewan want.

And, Mr. Speaker, part of the response to the Boughen Commission is the Minister of Learning's school division restructuring proposals. With the efforts that are being made from the Minister of Learning and the efforts that are being made by the government on equalization, we are confident that we will have a system that is capable of accepting money — money that will be go to work for students in the classrooms and allow the government the opportunity to provide relief on the property tax side.

Mr. Speaker, we're not alone in this world of ours — certainly not in North America, not in the world — of trying to address ways in which we are going to finance education. The other evening representatives of this Assembly were hosts to some of our American state counterparts. Under the auspices of the Midwest Legislative Conference we had state representatives from Indiana and Ohio and other parts of the United States, Mr. Speaker.

And they were asking us what are the major issues in Saskatchewan? And of course we mentioned that one of our priorities is dealing with education property tax. The response from the representatives in the US (United States): oh yes, that's an issue here too. Mr. Speaker, governments all across North America and across the world are addressing financing of education, and we can learn a lot from each other as we discuss these issues.

Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting being in two different types of meetings today. Mr. Speaker, I'm here in the Chamber this afternoon, listening to debate that's occurring on an issue — debate that's to a certain extent inflamed by the issue of politics.

The other meeting that I had earlier today, Mr. Speaker, was with the Premier and the president and the executive of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. Mr. Speaker, I've had a very good working relationship with SARM since my appointment last November, and we have developed a way in which we are addressing a number of issues of common interest.

And today, Mr. Speaker, sitting down with the executive of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, we had a very good discussion: number one, of the state of finances on the farms in Saskatchewan; number two, of the state of finances of the Government of Saskatchewan; number three, the need to address the property tax issue; number four, the ability to generate some revenue from outside Saskatchewan so that we aren't required to further tax the people of Saskatchewan to address this need to fix property tax.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have reached some agreements and we are going to continue to work together to find a solution to this problem. We are going to work together on the issues where we have reached common ground and find a solution to this problem.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — It is refreshing, Mr. Speaker, to be able to meet with people who really want to help, who really want to find a way to address an issue that's affecting their constituency. And, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I think the member from Kindersley is asking some interesting questions from across the way.

I'll address the provincial budget just for a second, Mr. Speaker. And let's just take a look again at revenues that are available to the Government of Saskatchewan to solve all of our problems — health care, education, highways, social assistance, agriculture. Mr. Speaker, on the side of revenue that comes into the province, I think the members opposite understand that we raise from taxes about \$3.5 billion for this year. Mr. Speaker, we're going to spend on health care and education this year close to \$3.9 billion.

So in other words, Mr. Speaker, to address the education and health care issues that we currently have, Mr. Speaker — not the challenges that we're working on, but just to address the issues that we currently have — we do not raise enough money in taxes to pay for the services that are currently being delivered.

So, Mr. Speaker, we need to find other revenues. And where in the budget are those other revenues coming from? Number one, Mr. Speaker, \$250,000 this year is coming from the Crown investments. Mr. Speaker, they talk about the need to withdraw money that's set into the investment portfolio, Mr. Speaker, but if we don't put money in for investments there's no way to take the revenue back out again for the benefit of the Saskatchewan people. Two hundred . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Once again I ask members to allow the member to continue unimpeded in the debate. Other members will have the opportunity to participate. But at this stage, the floor belongs to the member for The Battlefords.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The opposition was hooting and hollering when I was talking about \$250,000. I meant 250 million, Mr. Speaker, so I imagine there will be a lot more hooting and hollering. Anyway, \$250 million is anticipated in revenue from the Crowns, thanks to the investment portfolios that they're engaged in and proper and strong management, Mr. Speaker — \$200 million last year.

The province of Saskatchewan has benefited to the tune of one and a half billion dollars over the last few years, Mr. Speaker, thanks to investments made. Those investments, Mr. Speaker, when made inside this province are primarily made in rural Saskatchewan, places where we have been working very hard to create jobs for people who are looking at supplementing revenues off the farm in circumstances that are worldwide, Mr. Speaker.

Where do the other revenues come from? Fines and penalties, Mr. Speaker. We don't want to have to address those issues too much. The only other source of revenue that we have, Mr. Speaker, is the equalization payments and transfers from the federal government — this year, Mr. Speaker, almost \$500,000 expected in equalization payments, compared to just a little under 200,000 last year.

So, Mr. Speaker, that equalization process is really important to us. Yes, millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. And it's interesting to be able to read the documents with the . . .

(15:45)

In any case, Mr. Speaker, the point that I want to conclude on in my remarks today is that the support that this government is getting from SARM, from SUMA, from business people across the province, from oil and gas producers, in our bid to fix some of the equalization problems that occur here, the opposition signed on to that. They seemed to be backing off throughout the term of this session.

And, Mr. Speaker, the better opportunity that we have to address the equalization problem, the sooner we're going to get the opportunity to address not only the education property tax issue which is the commitment of this government to do, but also address some of the other problems that the opposition raises regularly in health care, highways, and, more particularly, agriculture.

So, Mr. Speaker, I urge the members of the Chamber to support the motion today to allow us to move forward, to continue to work with the directors and the members of SARM and others in this province to be able to address this very important issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. There being no more speakers, the questions before the Assembly is the motion moved by the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, seconded by the member for The Battlefords, which reads:

That this legislature recognize the Boughen Commission's findings that inequities exist in the province's education property tax system and supports the government's intention to provide education property tax relief

throughout the province at such time as sustainable financial resources are available, and in conjunction with the Minister of Learning's school division restructuring proposals.

And the amendment, the second question, is the amendment to the main motion moved by the member for Swift Current, seconded by the member for Melville-Saltcoats:

That all the words after "legislature" be deleted and the following substituted:

urge the Premier to fulfill the commitments he has made at the 2003 SARM convention and during the 2003 election campaign by taking immediate action to reduce the education portion of the property tax.

We will first vote on the amendment as moved by the member for Swift Current and seconded by the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Those who favour the amendment say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Those who oppose the amendment say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

I believe the nos have it. Call in the members for a standing vote.

The division bells rang from 15:49 until 15:53.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the amendment to the main motion, the amendment moved by the member for Swift Current, seconded by the member for Melville-Saltcoats:

That all the words after "legislature" be deleted and the following substituted:

urge the Premier to fulfill the commitments he made at the 2003 SARM convention and during the 2003 election campaign, by taking immediate action to reduce the education portion of the property tax.

Those who favour the motion please rise.

Yeas — 27

Wall	Toth	Elhard
D'Autremont	Krawetz	Draude
Hermanson	Bjornerud	Stewart
Wakefield	Morgan	McMorris
Eagles	Gantfoer	Harpauer
Bakken	Cheveldayoff	Huyghebaert

Allchurch	Brkich	Weekes
Kerpan	Merriman	Chisholm
Dearborn	Hart	Kirsch

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the amendment, please rise. Order, order, order, order. Order. Please proceed.

Nays — 29

Calvert	Addley	Lautermilch
Hagel	Van Mulligen	Serby
Atkinson	Cline	Sonntag
Crofford	Prebble	Forbes
Wartman	Belanger	Higgins
Thomson	Nilson	

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I would ask members not make any comments through the proceeding of voting. Please proceed.

Beatty	Hamilton	Junor
Harper	Iwanchuk	McCall
Quennell	Trew	Yates
Taylor	Morin	Borgerson

Clerk Assistant: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 27; those opposed, 29.

The Speaker: — I declare the amendment lost.

Amendment negatived.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, seconded by the member for The Battlefords:

That this legislature recognize the Boughen Commission's finding that inequities exist in the province's education property tax system and supports the government's intention to provide education property tax relief throughout the province at such time as sustainable financial resources are available, and in conjunction with the Minister of Learning's school division restructuring proposals.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Those in favour of the motion, say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion, say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — I believe the ayes have it, on division. I declare the motion carried on division.

Motion agreed to.

Clerk Assistant: — Committee of the Whole.

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

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 1 — The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2004

The Chair: — Committee of the Whole. The first item before the committee is the consideration of Bill No. 1, An Act to amend The Financial Administration Act, 1993 and to make consequential amendments of that Act. I recognize the Minister of Finance to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, seated beside me is Terry Paton, the Provincial Comptroller, and seated directly behind me is Chris Bayda, the executive director of the financial management branch. And seated beside Mr. Bayda is Lori Taylor; she is a manager with the financial management branch.

Clause 1

The Chair: — Clause 1, short title. I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And welcome this afternoon to you, Mr. Minister, and to your officials. As we have had a fair amount of time to discuss Bill No. 1 in committee, I will try to keep my comments to the very specific sections that I had proposed in amendments in committee. And I'm going to be asking again for reconsideration of those amendments here in Committee of the Whole.

(16:00)

Mr. Minister, before I do that though, I'd like to make some comments about the fact that The Financial Administration Act is an Act that I think the province of Saskatchewan was — or should have been — amending a long time ago. The Provincial Auditor for many years has recommended that the province of Saskatchewan should get in step with many of the other provinces and move towards summary financial budgeting, where indeed we see the complete financial picture of the province of Saskatchewan before us. And, Mr. Minister, as I've indicated in committee, the government under your leadership as the Finance minister has moved forward, and we see for the first time a budget prepared on that basis.

Mr. Minister, there are a number of things in the Bill that were of housekeeping nature or the need to make some amendments whereby renaming of certain funds took place, and you were trying to also improve the language to ensure that it was gender-neutral. Mr. Minister, one of the other things that I feel as an official opposition, and we have concurred with this, is that the passing of this Bill will ensure that the expropriation needed for the first month of a new fiscal year will in fact be in place with the presentation of budget. The restriction of course will be that the funds are only there for old budgetary items. And that's a good thing.

Mr. Minister, we asked you to move I think a little bit further to ensure that some of the problems that are being encountered in businesses, in various departments across the government as we look at the federal scandal over the whole issue of patronage and sponsorship — where we're not sure where certain monies went in respect of federal expenditures — we suggested that you move just a little bit further than what your amendments are proposing.

Mr. Minister, I think it's important to note that the generally accepted accounting principles — that other provinces like British Columbia have actually put into legislation — make sure that the province deals with their reporting, deals with their accounting, in a manner where they follow the generally accepted accounting principles. Now, Mr. Minister, I was asked after our last discussion by some people who were watching that committee discussion, who makes up these principles, was the question that I was asked.

And, Mr. Minister, the principles, no question, are developed by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. They are the body that is known nationally and internationally of course, and they are the ones that recommend the generally accepted accounting principles that senior governments should follow — the province of Saskatchewan should follow.

And you've indicated, Mr. Minister, that that is normal, that you would follow or your officials would follow that. However I think you added a caveat and you said well, but there will always be the opportunity in the province of Saskatchewan for the auditor to point out when we don't do the kinds of things that are supposed to be done.

And, Mr. Minister, I think that that's wrong. I think it's important that the people of the province of Saskatchewan have confidence in our system, that they understand that the kinds of dilemmas that the executive members at Nortel are currently facing were . . . I believe an accounting firm is going to be looking at about the third or fourth set of numbers to verify whether or not the accounting principles that that group followed were the correct ones.

And, Mr. Minister, I have indicated to you that I will be proposing two amendments, again to indicate to you that we are not proposing anything radical other than the fact that the province of Saskatchewan should follow the generally accepted accounting principles of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. That's all we're asking. We're not asking for anything radical.

When you indicate in your report . . . in your changes to the Act that it is the board who determines that, and I think it should be much more clearer. And in fact, if the auditor then notices that the generally accepted accounting principles that are understood to have been followed were not followed, then we'll see an auditor's report that will identify that.

So, Mr. Minister, at the appropriate time I will be asking you to reconsider the two amendments that I proposed in Committee of the Economy where we now will be reintroducing those amendments to ask for you to put into place in legislation that the generally accepted accounting principles as determined by the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants will in fact be

followed.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I appreciate the member's comments. Let me just make a few remarks in response to the issues that he raises.

Let me say, Mr. Chair, that the government's financial statements are prepared in accordance with the generally accepted accounting principles for senior governments as recommended by the Public Sector Accounting Board, PSAB, of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. And this is outlined in the notes to the financial statements and any exceptions are clearly identified.

And I would read from page 48 of the last year's Public Accounts, which are the financial statements for the government. And I read on page 48, where it says:

Notes to the Summary Financial Statements

1. Significant Accounting Policies

It states:

These Summary financial statements are prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles for senior governments, as recommended by the Public Sector Accounting Board of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. The significant accounting policies are summarized below.

So first of all I would indicate, Mr. Speaker, that we are in fact following generally accepted accounting principles.

In addition thereto, the Provincial Auditor audits the government's financial statements, the summary financial statements, and the General Revenue Fund financial statements against generally accepted accounting principles for the public sector. And this is identified, in the auditor's opinion, that the issues on the government financial statements . . . And I would turn to page 43 of the Public Accounts for last year, Mr. Chair, and in the auditor's report where it states that:

In my opinion, these summary financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Government of Saskatchewan as at March 31, 2003 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with (general) Canadian generally accepted accounting principles for governments.

So we do follow the general accounting principles. If there are exceptions to that, we note those so it's clear to anyone that wants to look at our financial statements what those exceptions are. The Provincial Auditor audits our financial statements, and he too makes reference to, in his notes, to how we do that.

The Public Sector Accounting Board of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants observes, Mr. Chair, that for senior governments in Canada, these standards are generally accepted in the true sense of that phrase. The federal, provincial, and territorial governments are sovereign governments; they can't be forced to follow the standards. Yet there is a very high voluntary compliance with the standards in the CICA (Canadian

Institute of Chartered Accountants) PSA (public sector accounting) handbook.

Mr. Chair, PSAB advises users of financial statements to look at the notes to the financial statements for accounting policies used in their preparation and the auditor's opinion on the financial statements.

I might also point out that standards of the Public Sector Accounting Board are constantly evolving. This means that at any point in time a situation may arise where the government believes that PSAB standards are not appropriate.

I would also point out that in addition to putting forward a budget, the government also puts forward a four-year plan. And our balanced budget legislation demands that after an election, the government not only put forward the budget but then also a plan for the next four years. And that plan also stipulates that the government must observe the accounting policies that you put into place at the beginning of the four-year plan over the course of the four-year plan, so that anyone who tries to observe that plan cannot then be fooled by any changes in accounting policies.

So therefore I would be reluctant, from the viewpoint of people observing our plan and how we perform relative to that plan, I would be concerned that someone trying to do that would be . . . might find it difficult to get a true picture of what is occurring in Saskatchewan if the government were to midstream change its accounting policies. And so if we were to do that in lockstep, if you were, with any amendment that you might put . . . or that the opposition might put forward. And so we would have that concern.

I would also point out that there have been occasions, one that I recall that has been reported to me, where PSAB has explored certain standards; in that particular case, with respect to foreign currency standards. Ultimately PSAB did not proceed with that, but if they had, that would have been very problematic — not just for the province of Saskatchewan but for all provincial governments.

And so there's always the question of, if an external body puts forward standards and these standards are simply not acceptable to the government of the day — yet it's the government of the day that is accountable to the people of the province — there needs to be an opportunity for the government to say that we do not accept those standards and therefore we note the following exception from those accounting principles. Provinces — and Saskatchewan is no different — have to maintain some independent appraisal of standards that we try to follow, Mr. Chair.

I would also point out that no province has legislated these standards. All provinces try to follow these standards, as PSAB notes, and there's a high voluntary compliance. But no province has gone to the extreme as proposed by the member in committee, that we would legislate adherence to these standards as enunciated by an external body. So no province has done that and we do not believe that it is appropriate or in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan to do the same.

There may be, in the interest of some parties, where they tried

to convey an impression or give the impression that they can be trusted with respect to the handling of the financial affairs of the province because they can point to third parties that have standards and that these standards are in legislation, and therefore you can trust this party because it's obviously there in the standards. But I would point out that that didn't save Nortel either, Mr. Chair. Nortel had standards and Nortel is in trouble notwithstanding those standards.

I would also point out that there are many elements of improving accountability and reporting, and for the public to get a sense of confidence in what it is the government is doing with their finances that fall outside of generally accepted accounting principles. The issue of timely reporting, the issue of independent third parties that are called upon to review the government's financial affairs, such as the Provincial Auditor — those are not necessarily items that are accounted for or in the generally accepted accounting principles. And therefore can give . . . to adopt these principles cannot give the public the kind of confidence that the member is hoping to give by adopting this amendment.

So I know that's a long-winded answer, Mr. Chairman. We appreciate the member's suggestion but we are, in fact, following these generally accepted accounting principles. Where there are any exceptions, these are clearly noted for anyone that looks at our financial statements to look at and to understand that.

And finally, we do have a Provincial Auditor that reviews these financial statements and draws it to the attention of the public. So thank you very much, Mr. . . .

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chairman, a couple of points I want to make before we move on to the actual clauses.

Mr. Minister, first of all, in the British Columbia budget transparency and accountability Act, you've indicated that no one has legislated it. And a point that I want to make with you, Mr. Minister, is that, under section no. 5 . . . clause 5, subsection (2)(e) it specifically instructs that a summary of the accounting policies of the government reporting entities must follow the rules as assigned or set out by the Treasury Board and that it is in the Act when it states this:

. . . and disclosure of any material variance of those policies from generally accepted accounting principles for senior governments in Canada;

(16:15)

That must be reported. So while you're saying it's not, it's not an order that they do, it does state that the accounting policies as established by the Treasury Board are what must be followed. And if the Treasury Board decides that they are not going to follow the policies from the generally accepted accounting principles in senior governments in Canada, that they must report that. So, Mr. Minister, I'd like you to clarify that.

Secondly, Mr. Minister, you noted in the Public Accounts document on page 48, that you indicated that the summary

financial statements as prepared in this Public Accounts document, as recommended by the Public Sector Accounting Board of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. . . And, Mr. Minister, the part that's a bit confusing is that in the actual Bill that you've proposed, or the Act that you've proposed, clause no. 7 and clause no. 8 make reference to the Provincial Comptroller following and preparing the financial statements according . . . established by the board.

I would suggest then, Mr. Minister, that that is not the same board. Could you clarify that the word board in section . . . clause no. 7 and clause no. 8, sections 15 and sections 16 do not in fact refer to the Public Sector Accounting Board. Could you make comments on both of those questions, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, the board that the member refers to is Treasury Board. At the end of the day, it's the government, and through the government or the Treasury Board, that at the end of the day determines the standards that will be followed, but the Treasury Board has directed that these be the generally accepted accounting principles for senior governments as recommended by the Public Sector Accounting Board of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. And that's what we do, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — Clause 1 short title. Is clause 1 agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That's carried.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 6 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 7

The Chair: — Is clause 7 agreed? I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move an amendment to clause no. 7 of the printed Bill and would read that clause 7 of the printed Bill:

Amend section 15 of *The Financial Administration Act*, 1993, as being enacted by Clause 7 of the printed Bill by striking out "in accordance with the accounting policies established by the board" and substituting "in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles".

I so submit.

The Chair: — It has been moved by the member for Canora-Pelly, that clause 7 of the printed Bill be amended to read as follows:

Amend section 15 of *The Financial Administration Act*, 1993, as being enacted by Clause 7 of the printed Bill by striking out "in accordance with the accounting policies established by the board" and substituting "in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles".

I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — I just want to indicate that we will not be accepting the amendment. The member spoke earlier about trying to do something that would provide some comparability with the province of British Columbia in terms of how they handle these matters. This would go far beyond that. British Columbia's legislation does not require compliance, as the member's amendment would suggest, only reporting where policies differ from the generally accepted accounting principles.

I would also point out that their Budget Transparency and Accountability Act states that the public accounts for the fiscal year must include the following:

a summary of the accounting policies of the government reporting entity as established by Treasury Board . . .

And simply, that any disclosure of any material variance that deals policies from general, except with accounting principles. Not that the government be absolutely, rigidly be expected to follow those generally accepted accounting principles.

What the member is suggesting is something that has not been done in any Canadian jurisdiction, and goes far and beyond what is expected of governments, and would remove a great deal of responsibility from the hands of government. Again, I believe at the end of the day that political parties and governments must be judged on their performance and how they handle the financial management of their jurisdiction, not because somebody said, see, we believe in what some other third party has said.

I would also encourage the member to reflect on where it is that this adherence too rigidly to third party guidelines might negatively impact the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: — The question before the committee is the amendment to clause 7. Is the committee ready to put the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Chair: — Is this agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Chair: — All those in favour say, aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Chair: — All those opposed say, no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Chair: — I believe the nos have it.

Some Hon. Members: — Standing vote.

The Chair: — Standing vote. Call in the members.

The division bells rang from 16:21 until 16:26.

The Chair: — The question before the committee is the amendment to clause 7. All those in favour of the amendment, please rise.

Yeas— 27

Wall	Toth	Elhard
D'Autremont	Krawetz	Draude
Hermanson	Bjornerud	Stewart
Wakefield	Morgan	McMorris
Eagles	Gantefoer	Harpauer
Bakken	Cheveldayoff	Huyghebaert
Allchurch	Brkich	Weekes
Kerpan	Merriman	Chisholm
Dearborn	Hart	Kirsch

The Chair: — All those opposed, please rise.

Nays— 28

Calvert	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		

Clerk Assistant: — Mr. Chair, those in favour of the motion 27; those opposed 28.

The Chair: — I declare the amendment lost.

Amendment negatived.

The Chair: — The question before the committee is clause 7 without amendment. Is clause 7 agreed?

Clause 7 agreed to.

Clause 8

The Chair: — I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'd move an amendment to clause number 8, and the clause would . . . or the amendment would read:

That clause 8 of the printed Bill be amended:

Section 16 of The Financial Administration Act, 1993 as being enacted by clause 8 of the printed Bill by striking out "in accordance with the accounting policies established by the board," and substituting, "in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles."

I so move.

The Chair: — It has been moved by the member for Canora-Pelly, clause 8 of the printed Bill to be amended as:

Amend section 16 of The Financial Administration Act, 1993, as being enacted by clause 8 of the printed Bill by striking out “in accordance with the accounting policies established by the board,” and substituting, “in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.”

Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Chair: — Is the amendment agreed? All those in favour say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Chair: — All those opposed say nay.

Some Hon. Members: — Nay.

The Chair: — I believe the nos have it. On division.

Amendment negated on division.

The Chair: — The question is clause 8 without amendment. Is clause 8 agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Clause 8 agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 21 inclusive agreed to.

(16:30)

The Chair: — Therefore, Her Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan enacts as follows: Bill No. 1, An Act to amend The Financial Administration Act, 1993 and to make consequential to other Acts.

Members, there are a number of schedules at the end of this Bill. Is schedule I agreed? That’s carried. Is schedule II agreed? That’s carried.

Schedules I and II agreed to.

The Chair: — And therefore, Her Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan enacts as follows: Bill No. 1, An Act to amend The Financial Administration Act, 1993 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

And I would invite the minister to move that the committee report the Bill without amendment.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Chair, I move the committee report the Bill without amendment.

The Chair: — The minister has moved that the committee report the Bill without amendment. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That is carried.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That is carried.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 1 — The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of committees.

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 1, The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2004 without amendment, and to ask for leave to sit again.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a third time? I recognize the Government House Leader, the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It’s been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 1, The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a third time and passed under its title. 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.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again?

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 70

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen that **Bill No. 70 — The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion proposed by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 70, The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. 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. 70, The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 70 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 at the next sitting.

Bill No. 71

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 71 — The City of Lloydminster Act** 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. 71, The City of Lloydminster Act be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. When shall this . . .

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: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 71, The City of Lloydminster Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for Government Relations that Bill No. 71, The City of Lloydminster Act 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: — The 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 at the next sitting.

Bill No. 7

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Sonntag that **Bill No. 7 — The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege a few days ago to speak to this particular piece of legislation and at the time I had a number of comments that I wanted to include on the record, and we ran out of time at that particular instance. So if I may be indulged the opportunity to just speak a few more minutes on this particular piece of legislation, I would appreciate that.

I am reminded by the member from Cannington that it's my right to speak on this piece of legislation, so I guess I'll exercise that today, Mr. Speaker.

Having said that though, I do want to correct an impression that I left on the record when we spoke to this legislation the day prior. The subject at the time was the appeals commission and the opportunity for legal representation. And I think at the time I indicated that SGI is regularly provided legal counsel as part of the appeals process and that claimants were not allowed legal representation, and I stand corrected.

I was speaking from memory at that time, Mr. Speaker, and as it turns out, there is legal representation possible for people who make claims to the appeals commission. But what often happens, Mr. Speaker, is that the people involved in the appeals process are actually waiting for a settlement from the insurance company as a result of an accident or some other mishap and don't have the financial resources to engage a lawyer to attend the appeal commission on their behalf. So while we might, in fact, have the right to legal representation on the part of any claimant, in practice it's not a reality.

And so while there's a fine line there between what is, in fact, the provision and what happens in reality, I think the fine line shows a very stark difference between the representation that's allowed for SGI, in fact, and what's allowed in terms of a practical application for any claimant that might go to the appeals commission.

You know, the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that we have many people who are injured and through the process of resolution because of no-fault insurance provisions in the legislation, people are finding that too often they aren't allowed the full support they need to recover properly. And issues relating to settlement of claims have become very contentious and difficult, and the appeals commission is being utilized more frequently as a result.

One of the other elements of this particular piece of legislation also deals with the appeal commission and the process, and we touched on it briefly in the earlier opportunity when we spoke to this particular legislation. But I just think it's important that we just look at some of the issues here and put them in the context of the day-to-day reality for individuals who are using the appeal process.

In the new section, 195, this is being added, and it's 195.1(1):

Subject to subsection (2), if an appeal before the appeal commission is not set down for hearing within six months after the application for appeal has been filed, the appeal commission may dismiss the appeal as abandoned.

And I think the experience, Mr. Speaker, has been that the delay is often on the part of the insurance company, not the person who made the claim in the first place. So I'm concerned about this particular part of the legislation.

And subsection (2):

Before dismissing an appeal pursuant to subsection (1), the appeal commission shall notify the parties in writing . . . the appeal shall be dismissed unless the parties within 15 days after the date the notice is served on the parties apply to the appeal commission to show cause why the appeal should not be dismissed.

You know I think the fact that notice is served is a good idea, but that's again, it's addressing it possibly to the wrong party. It really should be addressing it to where most of the delay is coming. And as I understand it most of the delay comes on the part of the insurer, not the claimant.

We have just a couple of other things we want to raise here, and just briefly we also talked earlier about the limitations in this legislation for individuals who use a vehicle to commit suicide. And as a result of our raising that issue, I spoke with a representative from the government side who gave me an explanation as to why this limitation was included in the legislation.

The understanding is that we don't want to encourage people to use a vehicle to commit suicide. And a way to limit that is to indicate through the legislation that there is no insurance to be paid to the individual who committed suicide or his family or,

I'm sorry, the individual's family or children as a result of that action.

And while I don't think anybody wants to encourage suicide by the provision of insurance underwriting, the question remains, Mr. Speaker. By putting this into the legislation, how many people are we going to dissuade from using a motor vehicle to commit suicide versus how many people — innocent people — are going to be hurt by the fact that insurance proceeds are not paid to the parties that were related to the individual who did the act of suicide?

You know, the penalty is much greater for the people who are left behind. We are penalizing them twice — they've lived with an individual who's suffered from a mental health issue and then we've penalized them financially. So I understand how we wouldn't want to encourage suicide by providing for insurance, but I think the penalty will be borne by the most innocent parties if this provision is put in there.

Mr. Speaker, there's one other thing that I want to refer to and I found that, actually, on page 16 of the minister's second reading speech. I really appreciate this because as one of the baby boomer generation, I'm finding this might actually apply to me. It says now that changes in legislation will provide for the fact that individuals who forget to renew their licence won't be without insurance coverage.

Mr. Speaker, at our age, forgetfulness is becoming a much more common occurrence, and I think that's true in our society. It's nice to know that I won't be penalized if I forget. If I deliberately do not pay my bill or deliberately refuse to buy insurance, that's one thing. But if I forget, I'm going to be absolved by continued insurance coverage.

Mr. Speaker, those are the comments I wanted to make in conclusion of the debate on this particular piece of legislation. And I would move that the legislation move forward now for further consideration by committee.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister Responsible for SGI, that Bill No. 7, The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 7, The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and

Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for SGI that Bill No. 7 be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

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

(16:45)

The Speaker: — Order. Members of the Assembly, I am advised that Her Honour is here for Royal Assent.

ROYAL ASSENT

At 16:49 Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took her seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bills.

Her Honour: — Pray be seated.

The Speaker: — May it please Your Honour, this Legislative Assembly at its present session has passed several Bills which in the name of the Assembly I present to Your Honour, to which Bills I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

Clerk Assistant: —

Bill No. 12 - The Purchasing Act, 2004
 Bill No. 3 - The Certified Management Consultants Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 4 - The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 5 - The Saskatchewan Pension Annuity Fund Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 6 - The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 301 - The Bethany College Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 302 - The Fountain of Life School of Ministry Inc. Act
 Bill No. 303 - The Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 8 - The Gas Inspection Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 20 - The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act, 2004
 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
 Bill No. 32 - The Powers of Attorney Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi de 2002 sur les procurations
 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
 Bill No. 24 - The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 28 - The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2004

Bill No. 16 - The Geographic Names Board Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 17 - The Department of Energy and Mines Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 22 - The Saskatchewan Farm Security Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 37 - The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 25 - The Adoption Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'adoption
 Bill No. 26 - The Adoption Consequential Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 38 - The Credit Reporting Act
 Bill No. 40 - The Fatal Accidents Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 51 - The Limitations Act
 Bill No. 52 - The Limitations Consequential Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 sur les modifications corrélatives découlant de la loi intitulée The Limitations Act
 Bill No. 44 - The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 45 - The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 46 - The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 43 - The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act
 Bill No. 10 - The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi sur l'administration des successions
 Bill No. 53 - The Securities Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 34 - The Psychologists Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 49 - The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les services de l'état civil
 Bill No. 14 - The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 48 - The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 29 - The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 13 - The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2004
 Bill No. 15 - The Workers' Compensation Board Pension Implementation Act
 Bill No. 1 - The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2004

Her Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these Bills.

Her Honour retired from the Chamber at 16:54.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that this House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 16:55.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Elhard	1509
Toth	1509
D'Autremont	1509
Krawetz	1509
Wall	1509
Draude	1510
Hermanson	1510
Bjornerud	1510
Stewart	1510
Wakefield	1510
Morgan	1510
McMorris	1510
Eagles	1510
Gantefoer	1510
Harpauer	1510
Bakken	1510
Cheveldayoff	1510
Huyghebaert	1510
Allchurch	1511
Brkich	1511
Weekes	1511
Kerpan	1511
Merriman	1511
Chisholm	1511
Dearborn	1511
Hart	1511
Kirsch	1511
Trew	1511
Yates	1511

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk	1511
--------------------	------

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies	
Addley	1512
Standing Committee on the Economy	
Lautermilch	1513

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 14 — The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, 2004	
Sonntag	1512
Bill No. 48 — The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act, 2004	
Sonntag	1512
Bill No. 29 — The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2004	
Sonntag	1513
Bill No. 13 — The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2004	
Cline	1513
Bill No. 15 — The Workers' Compensation Board Pension Implementation Act	
Higgins	1513
Bill No. 1 — The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2004	
Van Mulligen	1540

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Brkich	1514
Weekes	1514

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Wall	1509, 1514
Taylor	1514
Cheveldayoff	1514
Chisholm	1524
Weekes	1532

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Support for Saskatchewan Farm Families	
Serby	1514

Legislated Election Dates	
Hermanson	1515
17th Annual Regina Children's Festival	
McCall	1515
Government's Environmental Record	
Huyghebaert	1515
Spring Convocation of the First Nations University of Canada	
Borgerson	1516
Performance of the NDP Government	
Stewart	1516
70th Wedding Anniversary	
Prebble	1516
ORAL QUESTIONS	
Reception of Rural Municipal Delegates	
Wall	1517
Calvert	1517
Education Portion of Property Tax	
Wall	1517
Calvert	1517, 1521
Bjornerud	1520
Thomson	1521
Support for Agriculture	
Stewart	1519
Wartman	1519
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS	
Bill No. 202 — The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council (Set Election Dates) Amendment Act, 2004	
Hermanson	1522
TABLING OF REPORTS	
The Speaker	1522
MOTION UNDER RULE 49	
Education Tax on Property	
Wall	1522
ORDERS OF THE DAY	
GOVERNMENT MOTIONS	
Support for Boughen Commission Findings	
Calvert	1522
Wall	1525
Bjornerud	1529
Van Mulligen (point of order)	1529
Gantfoer (point of order)	1530
Taylor	1532
Recorded Division (amendment)	1535
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE	
Bill No. 1 — The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2004	
Van Mulligen	1536
Krawetz	1536
Recorded Division (clause 7)	1539
GOVERNMENT ORDERS	
ADJOURNED DEBATES	
SECOND READINGS	
Bill No. 70 — The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2004	1541
Bill No. 71 — The City of Lloydminster Act	1541
Bill No. 7 — The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2004	
Elhard	1541
ROYAL ASSENT	1543

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Hon. L. Calvert
Premier

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