



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

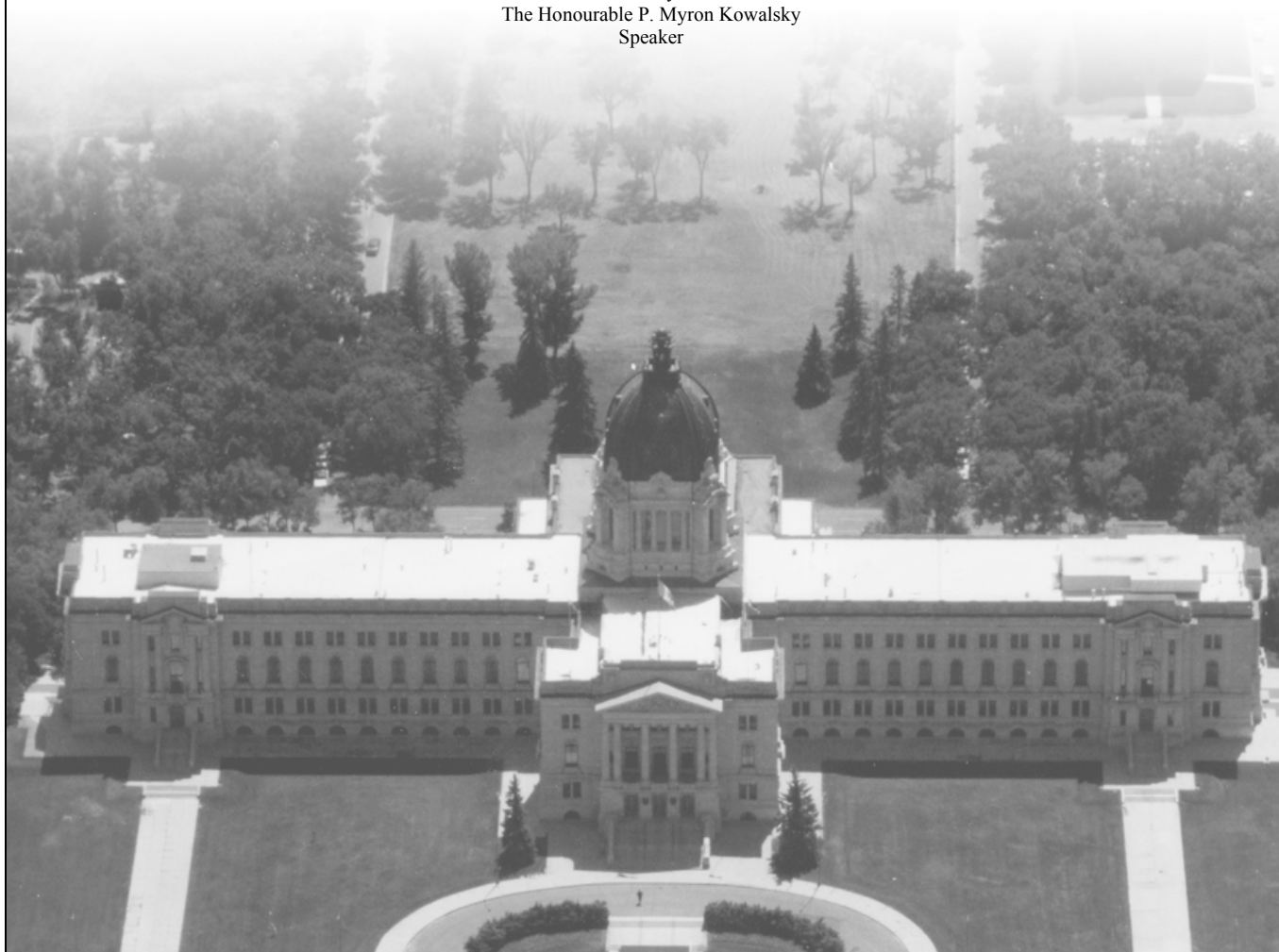
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In keeping with the wishes of the more than 600 people who spilled out of the hall in Climax the other night at a public meeting, I'm pleased to present the following petition:

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 today is signed by constituents from the communities of Frontier, Climax, Eastend, and Shaunavon.

I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have another petition from people who have signed it to save the Luseland and Dodsland ambulance services. And, Mr. Speaker, people are concerned that loss of these services would put the residents of these areas at risk in emergency situations. The prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the Dodsland and Luseland ambulance services are not discontinued.

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

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of pages and a number of signatures here. I see primarily signatures from Dodsland, Plenty, and Stranraer.

I am pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the possible downsizing or closure of the Craik Health Centre. And the prayer reads:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Craik, Davidson, and Kindersley.

I so submit.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise with a petition from citizens that are very, very concerned about the attack on rural Saskatchewan's health care from this government. And the petition 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.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the good citizens of Bracken, Climax, and Orkney.

I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here from citizens that are disgusted that this government wouldn't hold public hearings on closures and layoffs in Saskatchewan before they actually implemented them.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government, through the legislative Human Services Committee, to hold public hearings in each of the communities affected by the changes recently announced by the Minister of Health, prior to those bed closures, facility closures, and layoffs taking place.

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

Signed by the good citizens from Davidson, Kenaston, and Bladworth.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition from constituents who are opposed to possible reductions of health care services in Biggar.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Biggar Hospital, long-term care home, and ambulance services maintain at the very least their current level of services.

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

Signed by the good citizens of Sonningdale, Langham, and

Biggar and district.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again I rise in the Assembly to present a petition on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan concerned with the alarming deterioration of health care services. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the Eatonia ambulance services are not discontinued.

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

Mr. Speaker, I can see from this petition that this is signed by the best farmers in the province, from the towns of Eatonia, Mantario, and Kindersley, Saskatchewan.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order a petition concerning balancing the budget without raising taxes is found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper no. 72, 73, 166, 167, 174, 180, 182, 198, and no. 201.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure

Mr. Harper: — I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure to report Bill No. 71, The City of Lloydminster Act without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be heard in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

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

The Speaker: — The Minister of Government Relations has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole for Bill 71. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall this Bill

be read a third time?

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 71 — The City of Lloydminster Act

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — 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 Government Relations that Bill 71 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: — 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 of Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Speaker, I have been instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 23, The Regional Parks Amendment Act, 2004 without amendment.

The Speaker: — And when shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Environment.

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

The Speaker: — The Minister of Environment has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole for Bill 23. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

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

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Environment that Bill 23, The Regional Parks 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: — 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 Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Speaker, I've been instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 33, The Archives Act, 2004 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the minister for the . . . the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The Provincial Secretary has requested to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole for Bill 33. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. When shall Bill 33 be read a third time? I recognize the minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 33 — The Archives Act, 2004

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Provincial Secretary that Bill 33, The Archives 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: — 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 Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Speaker, I've been instructed by the committee to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its first report. I move, seconded by the member for Melville-Saltcoats:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure now be concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Northwest and seconded by the member for Melville-Saltcoats that the first report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure be now concurred in. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

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. 65, The Agri-Food Act, 2004 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 65 be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

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

The Speaker: — The Minister of Agriculture has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole for Bill 65. 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. 65 — The Agri-Food Act, 2004

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture that Bill 65, The Agri-Food 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. 66, The Cattle Marketing Deductions Amendment Act, 2004 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Ag.

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

The Speaker: — The Minister of Agriculture has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole for Bill 66. 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. 66 — The Cattle Marketing Deductions Amendment Act, 2004

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture that Bill 66, The Cattle Marketing Deductions 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 am instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report Bill No. 47, The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, 2004 without amendment.

The Speaker: — And when shall this Bill 47 be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

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

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has requested leave to waive consideration of Bill 47 in Committee of the Whole. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 47 — The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, 2004

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — 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 Justice that Bill 47, The Pension Benefits 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: — 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. 50, The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2004 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 50 be read . . . be heard 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 of Bill 50 in Committee of the Whole. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 50 — The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2004

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 50, The Labour Standards 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: — 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. 70, The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2004 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall Bill 70 be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

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

The Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole of Bill 70. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Leave has not been granted. When shall this

be referred to Committee of the Whole?

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I have been instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report Bill No. 36, The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2004 without amendment.

The Speaker: — And when shall Bill 36 be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

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

The Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole on Bill 36. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Leave has not been granted. When shall the Committee of the Whole meet?

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting. I recognize the Chair of the committee.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its first report. I move, seconded by the member from Thunder Creek:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Prince Albert Northcote, seconded by the member for Thunder Creek, that the first report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be now concurred in. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

(13:45)

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 63 ask the government the following

question:

To the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency: with reference to the reassessment that SAMA will be undertaking this fiscal year, what are the preliminary proposals and when will those be released to the public? What is the expected impact on property taxes? When is it expected that reassessment will come into effect? Will public hearings be held prior to the recommendations being implemented, and if so, when and in what communities?

I so present.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to and through you to all members of the legislature a number of people in your gallery who are here to . . . and have been part of the effort to deal with the reduction of the use of tobacco in Saskatchewan. So I'd ask them to stand when I read their names.

Lynn Greaves from the Saskatchewan Coalition for Tobacco Reduction; Keith Karasin, executive director of the Canadian Cancer Society, Saskatchewan division; Yvonne Graff, the Saskatchewan division of the Canadian Institute for Public Health Inspectors, she's . . . yes, there's Yvonne; Jennifer Miller, from Health Canada; Linda Muzio from the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association; Rhae Ann Bromley from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Saskatchewan; Susan Antosh, president and CEO (chief executive officer) of the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations; and Alex Taylor, chairperson, Saskatchewan Association of Health Associations.

I ask all members to welcome them here to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the minister in welcoming the guests in your gallery this afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in welcoming them, I would also like to extend this Assembly's gratitude to their tireless work in terms of the issue around tobacco and destabilizing the usage of tobacco to build a healthier province for the future. And I think we would like to extend our congratulations for their tireless efforts, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand on my feet today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly 22 students, grade 8 and 9 students, from Arborfield School at Arborfield in the great riding of Carrot River Valley, Mr. Speaker. They are accompanied today by

their teacher, Warren Jacobson, and chaperones Trevor Campbell, Jo Ann Rusk, Colette Peoples, and Lorne McEwan.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to welcome these fine young folks from Arborfield to their Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislature, 19 grade 7 and 8 students from the community of Grayson. They are accompanied by their teacher, Jeremy Rasmussen, and their chaperone, Mrs. Kathy Crosswell.

I'll have the good fortune of meeting with them shortly after question period. And I ask all members to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier, the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to welcome to the House today a former member of this legislature, although not for some years now; to welcome, seated in the chairs at the back of the government side, Mr. David Lange, who represented the then constituency of Assiniboia-Bengough — I believe it then changed to Bengough-Milestone — back in the 1970s.

David, as many know, many will know, is now heavily involved with Ecce Energy and hydrogen work across Canada. So it's very good to see David here, and I would ask all members to welcome him back to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — There are two people that I would wish to introduce to the Assembly, and they're seated in the Speaker's gallery. And these people are Shannon Shaw — if she would give a little wave, please — and her friend, Chris McConnel.

Now Shannon has come here to see her father at work. Her father is our Sergeant-at-Arms, Pat Shaw. I want to pass on to Shannon and Chris that not only is her father the steward of our security here, but his fine figure and super grooming brings some class to this Assembly. So welcome to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

The Battlefords Celebrate Centennial Anniversary

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. One hundred years yesterday, the village of Battleford was formally incorporated as a town in Saskatchewan. And last night the

present-day citizens, Mayor Gail Sack, members of town council, former residents, visitors, guests, and Saskatchewan's Lieutenant Governor, Her Honour, Dr. Lynda Haverstock, celebrated the centennial at an event called the Governor's Ball.

And what an evening it was, Mr. Speaker. The dinner menu — including homemade molasses bread, oven roasted potatoes, roast beef, and bread pudding with caramel sauce — was extraordinary. The organizers, led by Chairperson Ann McArthur and many guests, dressed in period costumes. Decorations featured images of the old Battleford Opera House and one . . . which is one of the many heritage buildings in Battleford that is still standing.

The chamber of commerce displayed the newly minted Battleford centennial dollar, and world renown local photographer Menno Fieguth presented his newly published book on Battleford images dedicated to the town's centennial.

First settled in 1874, Battleford is one of Saskatchewan's oldest continuous communities. It remains to this day as a growing vibrant place to live and work. Battleford has contributed a great deal to the history of Saskatchewan.

I urge all members to join me today in congratulating the town of Battleford on its first 100 years and wish them well as they lead Saskatchewan into our province's own centennial celebrations in 2005.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Archaeologists Research Doukhobor History

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I wish to highlight one aspect of Saskatchewan's rich cultural history.

Earlier this month, archaeologists and volunteers have launched an archaeological dig near Blaine Lake in hopes of learning about the early life of Doukhobors who immigrated to Saskatchewan from Russia in the late 1890s. The Doukhobors came to Canada to escape religious and political persecution.

This month about 24 people began searching at one of the first places they settled in Western Canada, a site with historical and religious significance. Archaeologists want to find out more about the 300 people who lived in rough houses or caves built in the sides of hills on the banks of the Northern Saskatchewan River, some 35 miles north of Saskatoon.

Sam J. Popoff, a history buff, had a dream of having an archaeological dig take place to better understand how these early settlers lived. In winter, he said, the blizzard winds had blown so strong that it buried the homes on the north end of a ravine and their neighbours on the south side had to tunnel them out. It was a hard beginning for the newcomers but they were a tough lot.

Doukhobors proved to be good farmers in their new country. The Blaine Lake group believed in becoming independent entrepreneurial farmers, leaving behind the Russian communal

shared land philosophy.

I must share a humorous anecdote with you, Mr. Speaker. These early settlers were told that there were no rocks on the Canadian prairies, so they brought their own from Russia. Little did they know that they would have more than they could handle when they started ploughing the prairie.

For Sam Popoff's daughter, Brenda Cheveldayoff, seeing her father's dream fulfilled has renewed her sense of heritage. Plans are to eventually open the site to tourists who want to touch a piece of Saskatchewan's rich and historical past. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Regina Woman Named President of Canadian Society for Civil Engineering

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to share with the Assembly today that Cathy Lynn Borbely who lives in the constituency of Regina Lakeview, was recently elected president of the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering. Mr. Speaker, Ms. Borbely is the first woman to serve as president of this organization in its 117 years of history.

Born and raised in Regina, Ms. Borbely enrolled in engineering at the University of Regina because of influences from her father, an electrical engineer; and her mother, a nursing professor. Back then, Mr. Speaker, it was rare for women to study engineering, and even today she says few women think of it as the first choice for their profession. Mr. Speaker, Ms. Borbely is a role model for women pursuing careers in engineering, math, science, and a wide array of non-traditional occupations.

As the manager of business development within Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation, Ms. Borbely plays a key role in the department's business and strategic planning and budget development, and has made a significant contribution in many areas, including highway design and construction, technical research, and transportation policy.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Borbely's appointment is reflective of her skill and professionalism. I'm sure my colleagues will join me in congratulating her on breaking new ground with her recent election and in wishing her the best of luck. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Thursday evening of last week I had the pleasure of joining with the grade 6 class and teachers and parents of Dr. Isman Elementary School in Wolseley. Mr. Speaker, this graduation ceremony was a ceremony to celebrate their graduation from the D.A.R.E. program. D.A.R.E. is Drug Abuse Resistance Education.

Mr. Speaker, I find this program to be a very worthwhile program. And certainly a number of schools in the Moosomin

constituency have picked up on the program and have offered their grade 6 students the D.A.R.E. education program. And in view of the debate we've had in the Assembly most recently about drugs and their effects on young people, it's certainly worthwhile to note that there are parents, there are teachers and individuals in communities who are concerned about their children and want to give them a proper education about the effects of drugs and alcohol.

Mr. Speaker, this program would not have happened without the assistance of their teachers, Mr. Tim Taylor and Ms. Lori Meyer, and most importantly, Constable Peever from the Indian Head RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) detachment. The guest speakers for the evening were Todd Ripplinger, a scout with the Regina Pats, and Jamie Heward, a former Regina Pat and NHL (National Hockey League) hockey player. I know the students all enjoyed the presentation. I want to again say congratulations to the grade 6 D.A.R.E. class of Dr. Isman School in Wolseley. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame Induction Dinner

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame preserves our province's sporting heritage by recognizing and commemorating individuals and teams who have achieved excellence in sport.

Last Saturday over 900 people attended the 36th Annual Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame Induction Dinner to see five athletes, three builders, and three teams honoured by having their names added to the list of inductees into the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame. The envelope, please.

Athletes: Murray Balfour and Vic Lynn for hockey, Glenna Fairbrother for gymnastics, Nada Hlohovsky for softball, and Sandy Shields for equestrian.

In the builders category, Laurie Artiss was honoured for curling, Mike Renouf for judo, and Bob Van Impe for softball.

Mr. Speaker, the 1974 and 1983 Rick Folk curling teams were inducted as well as the 1973 Saskatoon Blue Angels softball team.

I congratulate all the inductees. Their accomplishments are a source of pride to the people of this province, and they have earned the right to take their place among Saskatchewan's most influential and well-respected athletes and builders. I acknowledge all the dedicated volunteers who contributed much to the growth and development of sport in communities across the province and who, by so doing, help create and nurture the inductees of tomorrow.

I also want to recognize the board of directors and staff of the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame for all the work they do on behalf of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan sporting community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

First Special Olympics In Kindersley

Mr. Dearborn: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday last evening I had the honour of attending the opening ceremonies of the very first Special Olympics to be held in Kindersley, Saskatchewan. It was a wonderful turnout with many dignitaries including the mayor, volunteers, and parents and coaches. It was an inspiration to see these athletes from all across the province and to bring the much needed rain to west central Saskatchewan.

It was a very loud opening ceremonies with the RCMP being present and coming into the arena with the sirens blaring, much to everyone's delight. And then of course the torch was carried in and the flame lit outside. At the same time that all of this was happening, Mr. Speaker, the Relay for Life was occurring on the other side of the West Central Events Centre. So the special Olympians had a very large crowd cheering them on.

I had a chance to talk with many of the athletes, members from all across the province, and I know that they were looking forward to the games. And I've heard since they had a very successful games regardless of the weather. Some of the events had to be moved. But all in all it was an inspiration to hear the athletes recite the coaches' creed and the Olympians' creed for Special Olympics, and I was honoured to bring greetings from the Legislative Assembly, and welcomed them all to visit us here in the chambers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

(14:00)

Job Creation and Small Business Financing

Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, three community organizations were recently recognized at a special ceremony in Wynyard for their efforts in creating new jobs in rural Saskatchewan through the province's Small Business Loans Association program.

Job creation certificates were presented to Saskatchewan Country Vacation Co-operative Ltd. based in Lumsden for creating 29 jobs, to Wynyard Economic Development Co-operative Ltd. for creating 58 jobs, and to Wynyard Small Business Loans Co-operative II for creating 28 new jobs.

Mr. Speaker, since they were formed, these two organizations have made almost 100 loans to local businesses totalling more than \$600,000. These businesses include bed and breakfast establishments, florist shops, fitness centres, small manufacturing operations, and businesses that service the oil, mining, and forestry sectors. In turn those businesses have helped create a total of 115 jobs.

Since its inception the SBLA (Small Business Loan Association) program has made funding available through community run organizations just like these three to beginning and non-traditional entrepreneurs. All across the province

thousands of small businesses have been assisted and thousands of jobs have been created.

Mr. Speaker, not only do small businesses create jobs and support families and communities, but they also contribute greatly to the high standard of living for which Saskatchewan is known.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating these fine community development organizations. They're an example of the energy and enthusiasm that marks the drive and spirit of the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Waiting Times for Treatment of Cancer

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to discuss the case of Mr. Dennis Scott of Regina. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure everyone will remember the case of Mr. Scott. He and his family bravely came forward in March to tell the people of this province not to put their faith in the health care system.

Dennis Scott waited almost seven months for a biopsy to confirm prostate cancer. Seven months, Mr. Speaker. By the time he finally had a biopsy, the cancer was not only confirmed, but had spread. Mr. Scott's story prompted other families to come forward — some who told us how their loved ones died waiting.

Mr. Speaker, what action has the Minister of Health taken to specifically address inhumane wait times for biopsies so that other families do not have to live through what the Scott family has?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The attention that was focused on this particular area has meant that the people in the various health authorities, but particularly in Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority, have been working to provide extra time for some of the surgeons so that some of these procedures can go ahead.

Also they have looked at the overall lists of people who were on the waiting lists and have been working to make sure that people get in, in the priority way, to make sure that they can try to get them to the optimum treatment times.

Also there's plans and they've been working at making sure that the patients have better access to information as the whole process goes along.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, Stan Szostak of Preeceville was another Saskatchewan man dealing with prostate cancer. Once diagnosed, he was told the wait for surgery was three to four

months. Imagine the news that you have a cancer inside you at risk of spreading and you must wait that long.

So Mr. Szostak called his quality care coordinator with his concerns about the long wait. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you'll remember what he was told — that he was lucky, lucky because others in the health region were waiting six months to a year and a half for cancer surgery. All the while, no one thought to tell Mr. Szostak that the wait in Saskatoon was significantly shorter.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell this Assembly if there has been a change in policy since then? If one health region cannot provide timely access to cancer surgery, will patients be informed of their options and sent where they can get timely surgery?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That particular issue has been addressed with dealing with the medical chiefs of staff, and specifically in Regina they have talked to the surgeons and the other physicians, but primarily the surgeons who deal with these cases, to make sure they understand that there are other options across the province and that that's part of the information that's provided.

This is always a challenge, to make sure that the patients understand all of the information, but it is something now that they are specifically addressing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it isn't just patients with prostate cancer who get lost in this maze the NDP (New Democratic Party) call the health care system. John Barnsley of Assiniboia came to his legislature this April to tell the government his frustrations trying to navigate through that system.

John Barnsley had a cancerous tumour the size of a baseball growing near his kidneys. When diagnosed, he was told his case was urgent. Having survived an earlier bout of cancer, he was understandably worried about waiting to have it removed. Yet after three months he still didn't have a date for his urgent surgery.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has on several occasions asked the NDP to create a health care commissioner or cancer ombudsman to help people navigate through the system. That is something the Canadian Cancer Society supports. Mr. Speaker, has the minister realized how great a need this is and will he support this idea?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, my concern, and I know the concern of people working within the health system, is always that the patients get the best care possible. There are ideas like this one which have some merit. It's one that I have discussed with people within the various cancer groups about how we can

make sure that the care is provided in a coordinated fashion. It's a challenge for the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, and also for the regional health authorities, and for the general practitioners and specialists who work in the cancer agency to make sure people all have the consistent information.

But with all that said, what I would say is that in Saskatchewan we provide very good cancer care. There are some times when things don't go quite as we all would like, but on the whole we have very, very good care, and we need to continue to build on that. If this particular idea is something can improve upon that, then I think that we have many dedicated professionals who will see how that can fit. And if that makes sense then we will look at it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Waiting Times for Magnetic Resonance Imaging

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, Normand Laberge of the Canadian Association of Radiologists had this to say about Saskatchewan's long MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) waiting lists, and I quote:

“This is really a denial of care . . . they are getting away with murder.”

This is in the *Leader-Post* of January this year.

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, people with suspected brain tumours are considered elective. Forty-year-old Bernie Tyson was told in February of this year that his urgent MRI would be done in August.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Association of Radiologists recognizes that Saskatchewan's wait-lists are the longest in Canada and that patients are suffering as a result. When will this Minister of Health just do the right thing and send people out of province if he can't find technicians to operate Saskatchewan's MRIs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, in the budget this year we have committed money for another MRI in Regina. We're also looking at the further needs that are in the Saskatoon and northern Saskatchewan area.

We are using money in this year's budget to increase the capacity of the . . . and use of the existing equipment that we have, whether it's MRIs or CTs (computerized tomography) or X-rays — all of the diagnostic equipment. We're going to continue to do that in an orderly fashion using the resources that we have.

We will look at what kinds of national comparisons there are to see how we fit into that. We're going to be working to make sure that we provide the best care that we can, and we will look at those cases that don't go quite right to see what we can learn and see how we can fix them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, MRIs are now a standard diagnostic tool. Waiting a year or two for a diagnosis can mean the difference between life and death. Clara Hansen's back problem put her in a wheelchair. She lost function of her bowels. And Saskatchewan Health told her she could wait up to three years for an MRI. So Clara Hansen did what any person who had the ability to do would do — she went to Alberta, she had her MRI, and she came back and had surgery.

Mr. Speaker, why does this Health minister think that people like Clara Hansen should suffer for three years? Why does he allow people to anguish in pain and uncertainty when he has the ability and the responsibility to do something about it? And why would a government that professes to own the social conscience title allow people to suffer?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, all of the people who work within our health care system and those of us who have some roles in getting the resources for the health care system are . . . the reason we work as hard as we do is so that nobody would suffer. But we know that some people will suffer — that's how this world works unfortunately.

What we will do though is we will do our utmost to get the resources, to get the equipment, get the professional people, so that we can provide the care in the appropriate fashion across this province. As I've said before, we have major challenges when it comes to access to care across a very broad, sparsely populated province. But we are working to do that. We're also working to provide the best care that we can in the centres of treatment that we have across the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to work very hard and do that, and we'll ask all people to work with us as we do that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Out-of-Province Medical Referrals

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also for the Minister of Health. My colleagues have outlined a number of individuals and families that have come to the legislature pleading for help because they had been ignored by the Minister of Health and his NDP government. But the case I think that most clearly demonstrated how little this government cares was the case of young Kathryn Wipf, a six-year-old girl from near Rosetown.

Kathryn's condition required specialized treatment that was not available in Canada. But the NDP minister stonewalled the family and refused to approve out-of-province treatment until the family came to Regina, like so many others, and asked the Saskatchewan Party to raise the issue in the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, why does it take public embarrassment and the suffering of a six-year-old girl before the minister and his NDP government approve out-of-province medical treatment for families like the Wipfs when no treatment options are available here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, all of us have concerns when people require medical care and it's especially difficult and especially challenging when it's children.

But, Mr. Speaker, that member opposite has the ability to choose whether he reads the stuff that's given to him, and I would say, Mr. Speaker, that what he said is not accurate. What happened in that particular case was that the application was before the committee that looks at who goes outside of the province and how we pay for that. That request for information went out on a Tuesday and it was approved by Friday afternoon.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that that's a very quick response in a very challenging case where there weren't experts in Canada that knew what to do. And I resent — and I think that the member opposite should apologize for — the kind of characterization that he's made about that particular case.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Kathryn Wipf's case was going nowhere until she and her family brought her case here to the legislature. Mr. Speaker, she was being put through the wringer by an NDP government.

We think this six-year-old girl deserved a lot more respect. Her out-of-province medical treatment should have been approved in a more timely manner. And the decision to approve the treatment should have been immediate, and it should have been clear, and it should have been communicated to the family. Mr. Speaker, the Wipf family should not have had to come to Regina and embarrass the NDP government in order to get the minister to do the right thing.

What specific steps has the NDP taken to ensure that no more families are left waiting and wondering about the much needed out-of-province health care treatment that they need, when it is clear that there is no acceptable treatment for them here in Saskatchewan?

(14:15)

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, there are some changes that are being made around the communication of information as it relates to out-of-province care, and it will be done carefully to make sure that the doctors are involved in communicating with patients, but we will make some changes.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting in this particular session and on day 59 or whatever day we have, we still have not heard

from the new leader on his policy for health care. We still haven't seen a health care policy forum, or whatever that they're going to have. We have the former leader here, who basically had no dollars for health care in his plan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And a freeze.

What, Mr. Speaker, what we want, is to make sure we provide the best care for health care in this province, and the members opposite have a role to play. But they also have a role to play to put forward some public policy, and we'd look forward to having that there so we can discuss it. And we will be happy to work with them and in discussion, as we move forward.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

Emergency Room Issues

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, Dr. Alan Drummond of the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians said what the Saskatchewan Party has been saying all along. He said the real problem is, and I quote, the "warehousing" of patients in the ER (emergency room). And he went on to say overcrowding is more than a matter of patient inconvenience, patients are suffering unnecessarily.

Dr. John Witt was fired for just attempting to warn the regional health authority of this situation at the Royal University Hospital. Last week heart patient Jackie Sands-Harwood lay on a gurney in the ER for three days. Three days, Mr. Speaker, at St. Paul's Hospital. Mr. Speaker, when will this government start listening to the front-line care workers who have grave concerns over the warehousing of the patients in emergency?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, We are working at many of these challenges that relate to emergency rooms. I think if anybody looked at the papers across the whole country, they would see that in every paper in the country issues of emergency rooms are there. And basically that's because there are some challenges. But there are also many positive things that we've been able to do.

I'd also point out that Dr. Witt continues to work in the emergency room in Saskatoon. He just no longer has some of the administrative functions that he had before.

But, Mr. Speaker, what we are doing on this side of the House is we're working with the professionals, we're working with the doctors, we're working to make sure that we have the facilities, the equipment, the various things that we need, because that's how we do it. We work with people, and we're going to continue to do that as we move forward.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, when the ER rooms are overcrowded, hospitals go into code burgundies, or they have ambulance deferrals and elective surgeries are cancelled. It's no wonder, Mr. Speaker, that people are waiting for three years for elective surgery. And the frequency and the duration of code

burgundies is increasing dramatically. The SUN (Saskatchewan Union of Nurses) members are concerned.

Mr. Speaker, the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority now has 569 beds between its two tertiary care centres. But in 2000, it was 608 beds, Mr. Speaker. That's a reduction of almost 40 beds by this NDP government. How does the Minister of Health expect to deal with the overcrowding in our ERs and the longest surgical waiting list in Canada if he continues to cut back on the number of acute care beds?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, in our health care system in Saskatchewan we have about 1 million people. We have many of them seeking help, and we know from previous discussions here that there are four and a half million doctors' visits in a year. There are also people that go to specialists, almost 1 million.

Mr. Speaker, there's many, many things that happen in our system. But what we are doing is we're making to . . . working to make this better. One of the challenges that we have is how do we get the resources from those places, where maybe they're not being used as much, to other places where there are the demands. And that becomes a big challenge because, unfortunately, many of those changes need to take place in some of the areas that don't have as many people in the province. But we can't not have some care for those people as well. These are all tough choices.

Mr. Speaker, being in government means that you make tough choices. It means that you have to deal with the pressures that the public bear. It means that when you make decisions, you stick with them. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to stick with the good decisions that we've been working at for many years, and we'll continue to do that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Staffing Resources in Health Care

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. During the last election campaign, the Premier emphasized his commitment to provide more nurses and health care professionals for the people of this province. In fact on the very first page of his election platform it states, and I quote: “. . . more nurses and health care professionals . . .” for Saskatchewan.

After cutting nurse training seats and firing nurses in the early 1990s, it appeared that the NDP finally realized that we have a nursing shortage in this province. For a moment we thought that the NDP had come to its senses.

Then last month this NDP government announced more health care cuts, including firing 40 more nurses and possibly as many as 100 when all is said and done. Mr. Speaker, what kind of recruitment and retention strategy is this?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, there are challenges related to health professionals, whether it's doctors or nurses or physios or X-ray techs or whatever the position is. We know that and we've been working very diligently together with the Department of Learning to make sure that we have bursaries in place, that we have training spots in place.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are training more nurses. We have a number of new positions that are available. They're being filled. There's a great demand for these particular jobs, or spots at the schools, and also for the jobs when people are done. And basically what has to happen is that we have to continue to work not only on our provincial basis but on a national basis about how to provide the supply of people.

We are in a time where we know many people who are in their 50s and 60s are looking at retirement. We have to replace to them. But that's true in many professions. We're going to continue to do that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again for the minister. The NDP government hasn't even set a start date for the construction of the integrated academic health sciences facility at the University of Saskatchewan. When will this government realize this facility has the potential to be a magnet for health care professionals?

It is well documented that magnet hospitals or institutions attract world-class specialists and other health care professionals. Mr. Speaker, if we are going to educate, attract, and retain the number of nurses and health care professionals we desperately need to address our waiting lists, this facility must be a priority.

Right now Saskatchewan's claim to fame is a mass exodus of nurses and other professionals. When will this government actually start recruiting health care professionals instead of firing them and forcing them to seek work outside of the province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I have been amazed by the tone and the rhetoric of the members opposite during this session, as it pertains to the health care system and it pertains to the work that is being done on this side to make sure that professionals are recruited, to make sure that we've got new services in place, not the least of which will be the new academic health sciences building at the U of S (University of Saskatchewan).

We have had this discussion many times during the last several weeks. We have made that commitment. We will make good on that commitment. And it's time for the members opposite to recognize that and stop their carping.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Health Care Issues

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. This afternoon the Premier's been reminded of cancer patients who've died while waiting too long for treatment and others who continue to suffer on the longest MRI waiting list in Canada.

The Premier's been reminded of an NDP government that responded to a critical shortage of acute care and long-term care beds by closing even more of them.

The Premier's been reminded of an NDP government that ignored an emergency room doctor's warning that patients' lives were in danger and then had the doctor fired for raising the issue directly with his Minister of Health.

And the Premier's been reminded of a Minister of Health who callously referred to sick and dying people as no more than, quote, "patients of the day". Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that the Health minister doesn't care. Is there anyone on your side of the House who does?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, over the course of this session and again today, I have been reminded of the 4.5 million visits to family doctors that occur in this province every year. I have been reminded of the virtually 1 million visits that are paid to medical specialists over the course of this year. I've been reminded of the tens of thousands of diagnostic tests that are conducted. I've been reminded of the hundreds of people who are provided out-of-province coverage.

Equally, Mr. Speaker, we have been reminded of those areas and those locations in the delivery of health care where the system has not provided as it should for an individual or a circumstance. When we are made aware of those, with the health professionals of this province, we do our very best to take the corrective steps. That's what we've been doing.

In this session, a new MRI; in this session, new CT scanners; in this session new commitments to the bursaries for the training of health care; in this session, \$173 million — new dollars — for the provision of health care. I invite the critic and the party opposite to support those initiatives.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier appears to be happy with the Minister of Health who claims 95 per cent of all cancer cases are treated within three weeks, when the truth is just 5 per cent of cancer cases are treated within that time frame. The Premier appears satisfied with the Health minister who brags about increasing health care funding, and then tells the health regions to cut \$20 million from their budgets. And the Premier congratulates a Health minister who has demonstrated that he is even more concerned about bureaucratic process than he is about ensuring the timely health care for a

six-year-old girl.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has made health care the most important issue in this legislative session because Saskatchewan families are telling us it's their most important issue. Isn't it time for the Premier to admit that the health . . .

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

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, isn't it time that the Premier had to admit that the health care system is failing from a lack of leadership, and replace the Health minister, and replace him with someone who will get the job done properly?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, for the critic for Health to stand opposite and say that he and his party have made this the most important issue of the session is an interesting admission from the critic, whether from the leader or from that party, when not once during the course of this session have they spoken to a health policy initiative they would support. Not once have we heard a policy of health from the members opposite.

No, in fact what they do, what they do is I suppose what every opposition in Christendom will do. They will just say, more, more, more. More for health, more for education, more for highways, more for agriculture — but in the meantime cut all the taxes. That's the kind of health-kind of thinking and the kind of policy we have over there.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it has been an important session in the discussion of health. I believe government has learned; I believe changes have been made. But I would hope also that the opposition, that the opposition would give credit where credit is due.

We have one of the best health care systems on the face of the planet. We as Canadians, we in Saskatchewan, we have the privilege of universal access where we are not reliant on our wallet to fund that health care, Mr. Speaker, and if we could just in this nation rebuild a fiscal balance between the federal and the provincial governments, all Canadians would benefit.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:30)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — Order, please. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions no. 502 through 504 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 502, 503, and 504

have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker to facilitate the work of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies and the Standing Committee on Human Services, 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: — Motion is carried. House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 14:31.

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