



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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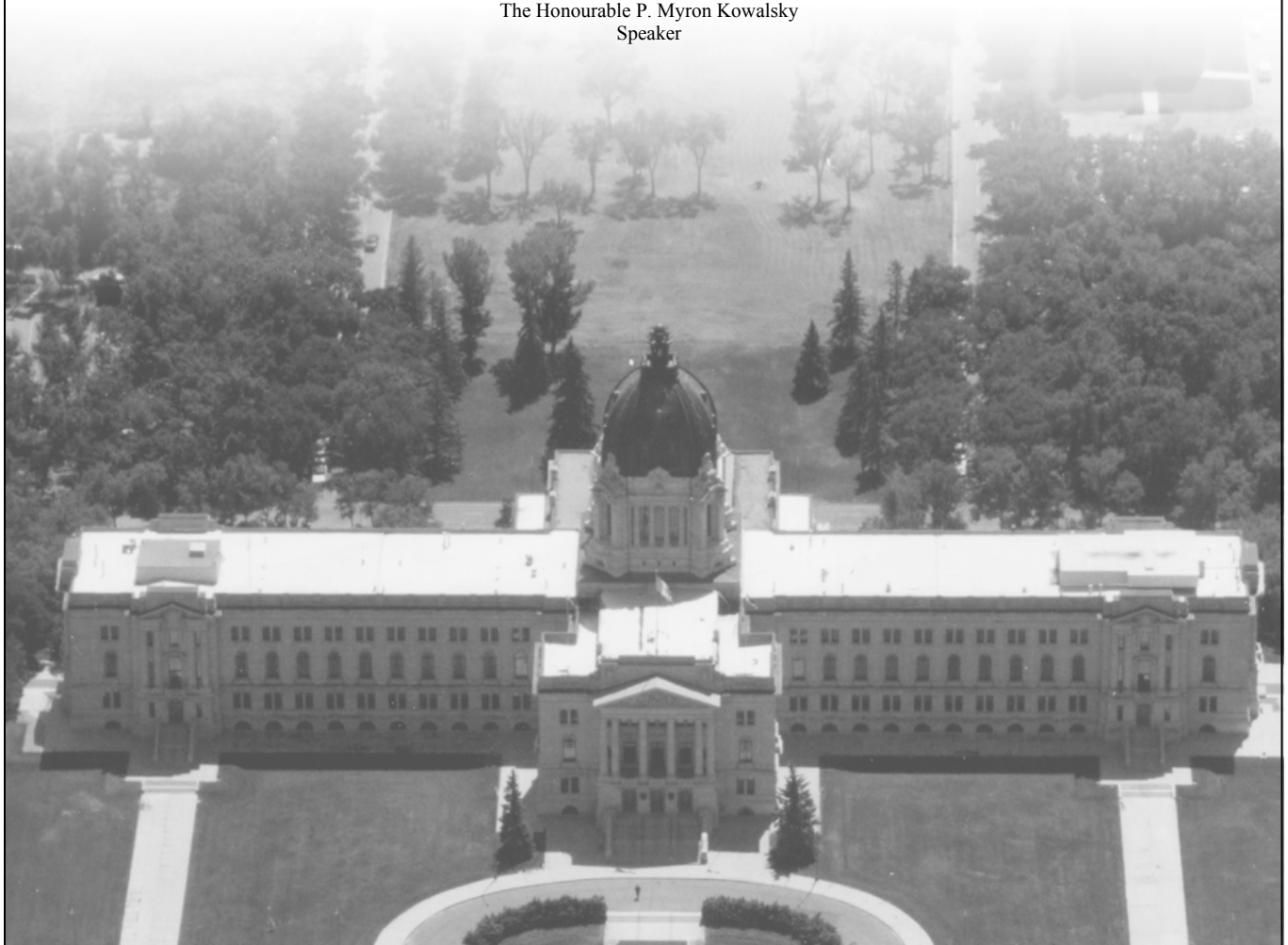
**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(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

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
Addley, Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Bakken Lackey, 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:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Cypress Hills.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise on behalf of constituents of the area of Cypress Hills concerned about the serious deterioration in Highway 32. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 32 in order to address safety and economic concerns.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I have three and a half pages of signatures from the communities of Abbey, Lancer, Cabri, Kyle, Pennant, Swift Current, Shackleton, Lacadena, and even three from Manitoba. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege again to rise on behalf of residents of southwest Saskatchewan who are concerned with the level of residential support offered to people who have lifelong disabilities. The prayer of their petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to provide the funding required for additional residential spaces for Swift Current residents with lifelong disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from the communities of Pambrun, Saskatchewan, and McMahon. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want you and all members to know I'm receiving a number of petitions on behalf of the staff, participants, and families of the Wheatland Regional Centre Inc. and other like centres across the province that provide services for individuals with disabilities. Mr. Speaker, the prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners will humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly will please consider implementing the minimum compensation recommendations for staff members who support people with disabilities, as outlined in SARC's human resources plan.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from the communities of Rosetown, Herschel, Zealandia, and Brock. And I am pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Estevan.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of this province who are concerned about cellular service in rural Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all necessary actions to install the technical equipment necessary to ensure that all rural areas of Saskatchewan are protected by reliable cellular telephone coverage.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens of Radville and Weyburn. I so present. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken Lackey:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are very concerned about the forced amalgamation of school divisions. 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 rescind its decision to force school divisions to amalgamate.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Radville and Bengough. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents of Saskatoon who are outraged at the obscene consulting contract of former Saskatoon Health Region CEO [chief executive officer], Jim Fergusson. The prayer of 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 action to ensure that the consulting contract is immediately terminated.

The petition is signed by residents of Saskatoon. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Arm

River-Watrous.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here where citizens signed that they want to resurface Highway 15 or at least if nothing else to repair it from the junction of Highway 11 east to the junction of Highway No. 2.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that this portion of No. 15 Highway be resurfaced immediately or at least repaired so as to remove the safety hazard to all motorists who rely on this vital road for transportation and economic purposes.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by citizens from Hanley, Loreburn, Saskatoon, Davidson, Kenaston, and Martensville. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present another petition to revisit the effects of the TransGas Asquith natural gas storage project. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately address the concerns of all individuals affected by this project, pay 100 per cent of the costs involved to rectify disruptions to water supplies, produce an environment assessment study encompassing a larger area outside the scope of the project, disclose the project's long-term effects on these areas, and consider alternative sources of water for the project.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Grandora and Langham and Saskatoon. I so present.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I am pleased to rise and present a petition on the excessive consulting contract of CEO Jim Fergusson for the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray and your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the consulting contract is immediately terminated.

And in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Presented by the good citizens of Saskatoon.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I too rise today regarding the

contract of Jim Fergusson. I will read the prayer for relief, Mr. Speaker.

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 consulting contract is immediately terminated.

Mr. Speaker, this contract is signed by citizens of Saskatoon.

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Kindersley.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan concerned with the rerouting of Highway 51.

And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that Highway 51 is rebuilt to go through the town of Kerrobert so that local businesses may be given the opportunity to promote themselves to and gain business from patrons passing through Kerrobert.

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

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by citizens of both Kerrobert and Luseland. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are very concerned about this government's plan to force the amalgamation of school divisions.

The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to reverse the decision to force the amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan and continue reorganization of school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Bulyea, Earl Grey, and Regina. I so present.

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Deputy Clerk:** — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 637, 639, 640, 666, and 800.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND  
SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Standing Committee on House Services**

**Clerk Assistant (Committees):** — Mr. Gantfoer presents the fifth report of the Standing Committee on House Services which is hereby tabled.

**The Speaker:** — The Deputy Chair of House Services Committee is hereby recognized.

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move, seconded by the member from Regina Douglas Park, that the fifth report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Melfort, seconded by the member for Regina Douglas Park, that the fifth report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in. 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.

**NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Mr. Speaker, I give notice I shall on day no. 109 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SGI: do all 1A driving instructors hold a class 1A licence? What screening is done on people who conduct 1A driver testing? What provisions have been implemented for training new drivers to make our roads safe? Does Saskatchewan have the same standards and system of testing 1A drivers as Alberta and Manitoba? Have discussions been held with respect to standardization of 1A testing across Canada or Western Canada?

I so present.

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**The Speaker:** — Members, it's my pleasure today to extend a very special welcome to some very special guests who we have with us today. There are 22 Saskatchewan Olympians seated on the Chamber floor and in the gallery. They are from the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece, and the 2004 Summer Paralympians in Athens, Greece. And with them today as well are many Olympian volunteers and family members.

I ask that the members greet with a legislative welcome these Olympians.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure all members, I want to welcome the Olympians and the Paralympians, their coaches, and their families who are with us today. It is a significant honour for this Chamber to welcome these individuals.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals have brought distinction and honour to themselves, to their families and friends and coaches. They've brought distinction to their communities, and they've brought great distinction to the province of Saskatchewan as our representatives in the Olympics and the Paralympics.

Mr. Speaker, as we soon will hear through individual introductions, these Olympians come from virtually every corner of the province of Saskatchewan, from many communities. And they've shown the nation — and they've shown the world — the great talent that comes from this province.

But in my view, Mr. Speaker, it takes even more than talent to achieve at this level of athletics. It takes determination. It takes courage. It takes endless labour and sacrifice to compete at that level. And so we honour these individuals of our province, and in this centennial year as we celebrate 100 years of heart, you truly are examples of Saskatchewan heart. We congratulate you, we welcome you, and we look forward to a day of celebration.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join with you and the Premier, and — as the Premier has highlighted — every single member of this Legislative Assembly in welcoming the Olympians, the Paralympians, the volunteers, the coaches, and the families who have joined us today. And it is fitting that we would take some time today here in this Legislative Assembly, and later outside in a ceremony, to honour these individuals — all of them — not just the athletes, but as well the volunteers and the coaches and family members.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals, these Saskatchewan residents represent the best of the best province in the country. They represent people who not only set goals, but then achieve them. They not only dream dreams, but they go out and make them happen with the support of those who are attending here.

It is no secret that the people of Saskatchewan regularly aim high and dream big, and these, our guests today, are examples of that. So on behalf of the official opposition, we want to join with the Premier in welcoming them, each and every one, to their Legislative Assembly today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — It'll be my pleasure to recognize the individual members for individual introductions. And I would ask the Olympians as they are introduced to please stand or give

us a good wave so we know who it is that is being recognized and introduced.

The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

[13:45]

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce to the Assembly, Mr. Riley Janes, member of the Canadian swimming team. Riley is unable to be here. He is represented today by his father, Spencer Janes, and his grandmother, Donna Matthews. Welcome.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Douglas Park.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce to the Assembly, Nicole Cargill from the synchronized swimming team. Nicole is unable to be here but she is represented today by her mother, Donna Cargill, and her grandfather, Donald Bennett.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce to the Assembly one of my constituents, Mr. Cameron Baerg, silver medalist for the Canadian rowing team.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Lakeview.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature, Rachele deJong, who is a member of the Canadian rowing team and a very, very proud . . . a person that we're proud of in our constituency.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

**Mr. Addley:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my great privilege to introduce to the Assembly, Ms. Erin Cumpstone, member of the Canadian softball team.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Martensville.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce to the Assembly, Ms. Viola Yanik, member of the Canadian women's wrestling team.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce to the Assembly, Ms. Amy Alsop, who won gold in goalball in the 2004 Summer Paralympics in Athens.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce to the Assembly, Mr. Mike Bacon, a resident of Saskatoon Southeast, a silver medalist in wheelchair rugby.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thanks very much. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce to the Assembly, Mr. Alan Semeniuk, silver medalist in wheelchair rugby.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce to the Assembly, Ms. Lisa Franks, winner of two gold medals at the Paralympics in Athens, in the 200- and 400-metre in wheelchair athletics. And we, too, are very proud of our constituents in Saskatoon Nutana.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege and indeed a great pleasure to introduce to the Assembly, Mr. Clayton Gerein, bronze medal winner for marathon in wheelchair athletics.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege again to introduce to the Assembly another resident of Saskatoon Southeast, Mr. Rick Reelie, who participated in the 800, 1,500, and 5,000 metres in wheelchair athletics, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Coronation Park.

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce to the legislature, Mr. Bruce Heidt, who participated in the 10-metre air rifle event in the 2004 Summer Paralympics.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — For the third time the Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my continuing privilege to introduce yet another fine resident of Saskatoon Southeast, Mr. Todd Hinds, the volunteer wrestling coach at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Lloydminster.

**Mr. Wakefield:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed my pleasure to introduce to the Assembly, Ms. Sherry Gross, volunteer massage therapist, the Canadian medical team, in the 2004 Summer Olympic Games.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Eastview.

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure and privilege to introduce to the Assembly, Ms. Liz Harrison, volunteer physiotherapist at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Cypress Hills.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce to the Assembly, Ms. Connie Burton, a volunteer at the Athens health sport massage team at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current.

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce to the Assembly, Ms. Sandra Roberts, volunteer synchronized technical official at the 2004 Olympic Games.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce to the Assembly, Mr. Pat Fiacco, sometimes known as His Worship, sometimes as Mayor Pat, and I think formerly as Sugar Ray Fiacco. And he was volunteer boxing technical official at the 2004 Olympic Games.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege on behalf of my colleague from Moosomin to introduce to the Assembly, Mr. Bill McFarlane, Canadian speed swimming technical official at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Batoche.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce to the Assembly, Mr. Ryan Flannigan, Canadian representative to the Olympic youth camp at the 2004 Summer Olympics.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Dewdney.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce Mr. Lorne Lasuita, volunteer administrative officer, Team Canada mission.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, there were five other of our residents who were participating in the Olympics or Paralympics in Athens this summer. I would like to —and they were unable to be here today or unable to be represented today — and I would like to add their names for the historical record: Mr. Mike Mintenko, who was a member of the Canadian swimming team; Mr. Jake Wetzel, silver medallist, the Canadian rowing team; Ms. Noreen Murphy, a volunteer and the softball assistant coach; Mr. Braydon Coburn, member of the Team Canada hockey team; and Mr. Ryan Getzlaf, member of the Team Canada hockey team.

Mr. Speaker, we are all proud of these athletes and the volunteers and the coaches from the constituency of Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

**Mr. Addley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm really pleased to introduce some special guests in your gallery, and if they could just give a quick wave as I mention their name. Mayor David McCall from Indian Head, Councillor Randy Goulden from Yorkton, Mayor Gordon Hall from St. Walburg, Councillor Tony Leeson also from St. Walburg, Mayor Jim Stiglitz from Prince Albert, and Keith Schneider, executive director for SUMA, [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and also Cam Baker from SUMA.

Mr. Speaker, we had a very good meeting this morning and they've come to the legislature to highlight the issue of addictions and offer their support. And I know they'll be

meeting with the members of the opposition later today to reiterate their support for this important issue. And if all hon. members could welcome them here to their Assembly today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Addley:** — Mr. Speaker, and while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I also notice a constituent of mine — I guess a former constituent of mine — has joined the gallery. Mr. Thomas Linner, who I didn't recognize him because he's dressed up so nicely in a suit. I've known him for a number of years and his parents, Tony and Donna, will be very proud. He just started work here in minister of CIC's [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] office, so if members could welcome him here today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood River.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition I'd like to join the municipal leaders here today. And I hope you enjoy the proceedings of the House and we look forward to some of us meeting with you after question period.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Cumberland.

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to introduce to the Legislative Assembly a guest in the west gallery, Tahirih Vejdani, who is one of Saskatchewan's talented young artists in the national artist program. The national artist program is a very important part of the 2005 Canada Summer Games. It brings together talented young artists from each province and territory and challenges them to use the games as an inspiration for their art.

Tahirih is an 18-year-old graduate of Campbell Collegiate enrolled at the University of Regina in the faculty of music. Her major is vocal performance and music history. Some of her accomplishments include first soprano in both school and community choirs, solo in the musical *Hair* performed by the Do It With Class Musical Theatre Company, and first soprano in the University of Regina Chamber Singers.

She is an accomplished oboe player, talented stage performer, and was recognized for her musical talent and leadership with a Candice Tetreault Fine Arts Award scholarship as well as the Girls Choral Music Award.

Please join me in congratulating and welcoming Tahirih.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the members today I'd like to introduce

31 grade 10 students from the Melville Comprehensive High School, along with their teacher, Perry Ostapowich. And I might add Mr. Ostapowich has been a faithful visitor with his classes to the legislature in the last number of years, and I think he should be commended for that. So on behalf of myself, Mr. Speaker, but also the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood where some of the students reside, I would ask all members to welcome them here today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Dewdney.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly some special guests I have here today — my mom and dad, Don and Sharon Yates, and they're accompanied by my daughter, Catharine.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — And the Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly a constituent of mine sitting in the east gallery, Mr. Joe Donlevy. Joe is what they call a high maintenance constituent. Not only was Joe my campaign manager during the election but he's also been my business partner for the last 13 years. And I'd like to welcome Mr. Donlevy to his Legislative Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the House, sitting in the west gallery, Larry Hubich, president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour. And also Lily Olson is there, and Lily is employed with the Grain Services Union. Mr. Speaker, it's always a pleasure to have these individuals here in the House and I would like all members to welcome them, please.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

#### Regina Student Wins Canada Day Poster Challenge

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every year the federal Department of Canadian Heritage sponsors the Canada Day Poster Challenge. This competition is about providing young Canadians 18 years of age and under an opportunity to visually express their vision of Canada.



Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to tell the Assembly today that this year's winner of the Canadian Heritage Canada Day Poster Challenge, chosen from more than 7,500 entries from coast to coast, is Jennifer Truong, a grade 8 student at W.S. Hawrylak School in the constituency of Regina Wascana Plains.

This year's theme was Canada East to West, and Jennifer's poster captured it beautifully with an extraordinary montage of colourful and dynamic images depicting the scope of Canadian history in both time and space. I note, Mr. Speaker, that at least one image is specific to Saskatchewan, the fieldstone home of W.R. Motherwell, our province's first minister of Agriculture.

As national winner, Jennifer will be going on a seven-day trip to Japan to visit the Canadian Pavilion at the 2005 World Exposition. And, Mr. Speaker, her poster along with the other finalists' from across the country will be on display from June to September in the Canadian Children's Museum in the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

Jennifer's poster has been rightfully described as amazing and spectacular, and I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ms. Truong on her outstanding achievement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Northwest.

#### **Saskatoon Bantam AA Raiders Capture Three Titles**

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am rising today to inform the legislature of the exploits of a minor hockey team centred in the constituency of Saskatoon Northwest. The Saskatoon Bantam AA Raiders were able to capture the triple crown of minor hockey in Saskatoon by finishing first in the city standings, capturing the city championship title, and then going on to win the provincial championship presented by the Saskatchewan Hockey Association.

This team, coached by Sheldon Boyd, exemplified the best of minor hockey in Saskatchewan and Saskatoon through the application of dedication, practice, and effort to achieve the winning season they enjoy. It is noteworthy that this team had a regular roster of just 12 skaters and their goalie, Duane Smith, and that with a short bench they prevailed against teams such as Battleford Bruins in the northern provincial semifinal and the Moose Jaw Extreme in the provincial final.

These 13- and 14-year-old boys and their coaches are great examples of team work and coaching. And I would like to congratulate their head coach, Sheldon Boyd; assistant coaches Lindsay Lester, Rod Churchman, and Joe Donlevy; and all the players of the Saskatoon Bantam Raiders for an excellent season, achieving the position of the city and provincial championships. I'd like to especially note and congratulate defenceman Christopher Donlevy, my godson.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

#### **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day**

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day in Regina. And right now, as I speak, an event sponsored by the Regina FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder] Community Network is taking place at the Core Ritchie Neighbourhood Centre.

Mr. Speaker, FASD is a term used to describe the range of disabilities caused by the consumption of alcohol during pregnancy. These lifelong disabilities can include behavioural and learning problems and could potentially have a major impact on the individuals diagnosed with FASD and their loved ones, and the community as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, today's event is primarily aimed at creating awareness about FASD and acknowledging how far the community has come in working toward a solution for this preventable disorder. This afternoon, community members, organizations, and agencies will have the opportunity to celebrate and reflect on the progress they've made in implementing prevention strategies and providing support for people living with FASD, while looking to the future and the work that is still left to do.

Mr. Speaker, the Regina Community Clinic is one of 11 in Canada that houses a diagnostic and intervention centre. With early diagnosis, early intervention, and continuing support, individuals with FASD can become productive members of our society.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all my colleagues will join me in recognizing the Regina FASD network and all of the agencies and organizations across Saskatchewan for the important role they play in creating awareness about FASD, and for their commitment to ensuring that our province's children are born healthy and receive the support that they need in life. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current.

#### **Swift Current Constituents Recognized**

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to acknowledge some of the achievements of constituents from Swift Current over the last number of weeks. First of all, congratulations to the Swift Current Comprehensive High School's drama directorate for winning several awards at the regional drama festival in Rosetown. The comp high school drama group was named the top regional play, and several actors and crew members won individual awards. They'll compete in the provincial high school drama festival later this month here in Regina.

Also, Mr. Speaker, there was mention in the House earlier — a number of days ago — of the success of the Saskatoon Contacts who won the national midget hockey championship. It's good

news for my hometown for a couple of reasons. Swift Current native Jeremie Houde was solid on defence for the Contacts, and another Swift Current native, assistant coach Darren Evjen, worked hard behind the bench to get the job done. Additionally, goaltender Travis Yonkman and the tournament's top scorer, Kyle Bortis, are both prospects of the WHL's [Western Hockey League] Swift Current Broncos. So the Broncos will be looking forward to having those players in their lineup soon.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Cody Yolland of Swift Current. The young boxer was selected earlier this spring as one of nine Saskatchewan boxers to travel to England to take part in a boxing exchange program. Cody has fought in provincial, western, and national competitions, and he won both of his boxing matches in England.

Once again, congratulations to the Swift Current Comp drama directorate, Jeremie Houde, Darren Evjen of the Saskatoon Contacts, and Cody Yolland. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for The Battlefords.

#### Saskatchewan 4-H Public Speaking Competition

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Mr. Speaker, the words mean so much — head, heart, hands, and health. 4-H in Saskatchewan is an 88-year-old youth club organization serving approximately 4,500 members and 1,200 leaders throughout the province. On Saturday in North Battleford, 4-H Saskatchewan held their provincial public speaking competition and 24 outstanding young people aged 9 to 21 from the four regions of the province competed in three age categories for the prestigious provincial awards.

All of the young people participating on Saturday were winners. Each had already won at three previous levels of competition before they reached the finals. But each was competing for the provincial title, and at the end of the day there could be only three winners.

In the junior category, the winner was Dominique Pouliot from the northwest region. His topic was "Killing Chickens." In the intermediate category, the winner was Andrea Oleksyn from the northeast region. Her subject was "An Artist's View of the World." And in the senior category, the winner was Jamie Mack from the southeast region. His topic was "Welcome to the Real World."

Mr. Speaker, these young people show us all, once again, that Saskatchewan's future is very bright and promising. These extraordinary young people are benefiting from a wonderful program. And for their unending support, I thank the Saskatchewan 4-H Council, its president, Karen Kvale, and the competition host committee and district no. 34 led by Tanya Snyder and Maxine Lehmann. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

#### Kelvington Hockey Victory

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, there is a town in my constituency that is producing championship teams. In Kelvington last fall the senior boys' high school volleyball team won provincial gold. In March, the Kelvington Midget Wheat Kings capped off a very successful hockey season by winning the provincial C hockey title.

Game one of the two-game combined total point series ended with a 2-2 tie in Kelvington on March 17. The rink was packed. On March 20, the Kelvington Wheat Kings travelled to Redvers for the showdown to determine who the midget provincial hockey champions would be. Two charter buses plus one small bus headed for Redvers carrying enthusiastic fans and players.

After a very high-paced game, the final score of 5-5 sent the provincial final into sudden-death overtime. Despite the Kelvington Wheat Kings receiving a penalty in this overtime play, they achieved success. Short-handed, with one minute and 22 seconds remaining in their major penalty kill, Bryce Walker scored from behind the Redvers net. He did this on his knees, banking the puck off the goaltender's skate and into the net for a winning goal.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Assembly to ... the Assembly to join with me in congratulating coaches, Tom Boyes, Warren Melrose, and Greg Standish; manager, Karen Standish; trainer, Curtis Nordmarken; players, Spencer Hawryluk, Matt Halpape, Bryce Halpape, Kyle Marshall, Kalan Marshall, Bruce Walker, John Plasky, David Berlinic, Adrian Sunderland, Justin Lamoureux, Matt Melrose, Logan Boyes, Scott Standish, Stephen Standish, Rylan By, Mike Comfort, Tyson Anthony, Charlie Patrick, and Sean Patrick in their gold medal win and wish them success in future hockey championships.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

#### Special Olympics Saskatchewan Awards Banquet

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, last Saturday night I was extremely pleased to attend the Special Olympics awards Saskatchewan banquet in Saskatoon. There were over 350 athletes, coaches, volunteers, and family members in attendance to honour outstanding achievement and recognize volunteers for years of service that ranged from 5 to over 30 years.

Mr. Speaker, honoured were Colleen Morestad of Swift Current and Ryan Roznowsky of Prince Albert, named Female and Male Athlete of the Year.

Saskatoon's Bob Thomas was Volunteer of the Year. Nancy Layman and Orest Schiller, both from Regina, were named Female and Male Coach of the Year.

Adam Booker of Saskatoon was Junior Coach of the Year. And, Mr. Speaker, the Team of the Year is the Special Olympics curling team from Nipawin.

The medal-winning bowlers in the Bob Pedde Memorial Tournament also received their awards, and I had the privilege of awarding Saskatchewan centennial leadership medals to Alex Harnum of Regina and Imogene Watt of Melfort.

As well, Mr. Speaker, Jean Meckling of Regina was named honorary life member, and Jean Miskamin of Nipawin received special recognition with the presentation of the Bob Pedde Memorial Award.

Mr. Speaker, it has been some time since I was in a room with more enthusiasm and smiles. Following the presentations, I was invited to stay for the dance that capped off the evening.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to join me in congratulating the nominees, the award winners, and everyone involved in Special Olympics Saskatchewan for a great event. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Members of the Assembly, a word to our guests. We are about to go into the proceeding known as oral questions, and in this proceeding it participates as a very competitive debate. And one of the rules of the Assembly is that only members can participate. So I would ask all our guests to refrain from applauding even though you know that our members love to be applauded, but so that the proceedings can proceed in the fashion that we have and obeying our own particular rules.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### Labour Legislation

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week I introduced a Bill to repeal section 13.4 of The Labour Standards Act, known as government-directed hours. Even the president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour wonders why the NDP [New Democratic Party] isn't supporting this Bill. In today's *Leader-Post* Larry Hubich questions why the NDP are wrapping the repeal of section 13.4 into another Bill, and I quote from his article:

“Is the objective to obscure and deflect criticism away from their cowardly act? They can't have this on its face, they've got to hide it inside another bill?”

Mr. Speaker, Larry Hubich thinks the NDP should pass our Bill. Is this something we can count on from the minister?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting the member opposite yesterday was quizzing me on why I hadn't introduced a Bill. And now he's saying, why bother? Support mine. And this is the way they have treated everything. It

depends on the issue, who's in the gallery, whom they're speaking to.

Mr. Speaker, when we were doing the repeal of 13.4, we took the opportunity to review the legislation to do any updating of language and to clarify some titles where legislation had changed but we had missed updating some titles, so we added some other housekeeping issues with it, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today the Saskatchewan Business Council issued a news release that says Bill 87 will give the Labour Relations Board, and I quote, “sweeping search and seizure powers.”

The council asserts that this power exceeds that of the police. It appears Bill 87 gives the LRB [Labour Relations Board] more leeway to conduct a search than the Criminal Code of Canada gives police. Section 487 of the Criminal Code lays out criteria police meet in order to conduct a search. Bill 87 fails to outline any such criteria that the LRB must meet before a search can be conducted. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why are these changes necessary?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, about two Fridays ago in a scrum made some comments and I'd like to quote, and quote:

We don't need to have legislation a different balance here between worker and employer than there is anywhere else.

Well, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the amendments to the Labour Relations Board to access workplaces, this is not a radical move. It is not unique. This is allowed in six jurisdictions across Canada — Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, and the federal government. Mr. Speaker, it's not unique.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our point here is that there doesn't appear to be anything broken with the current system. Is the Minister of Labour saying that this NDP government does not trust the courts to make the proper decision in cases like these where warrants may be required? Does she not trust employers? What problems will Bill 87 fix?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, one of the clearest solutions that we are looking for for the Labour Relations Board . . . And I will say that the members opposite have asked a number of written questions over the last two years respecting the length of the board rendering decisions. Mr. Speaker, part of the role of this is not to expand the powers, it defines the powers and makes them clearly laid out; powers that the board already utilizes and has to proceed with the cases, be able to render their decisions in a timely fashion, and not have to go through the judicial reviews that have become commonplace at the board.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, Bill 87 does give to the director or the Chair of the LRB additional powers. So the question to the minister is quite simple. She throws accusations across the floor, but she does not answer the question.

This Bill before us in this Legislative Assembly will make significant changes to The Trade Union Act. If the minister can't answer this question, then why did she bring Bill 87 to this House?

Again to the minister: who asked for these changes, and what problems will they fix?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, again we are seeing extended periods of time where there is more complicated cases, there is pre-hearing information that is needed. Mr. Speaker, these are powers that the board currently utilizes which are often called, or at times called and taken before judicial reviews. Mr. Speaker, we are going to clearly define the powers of the board so we can improve the processes that are currently at the board, and get quicker and more timely decisions for the parties involved.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before the election the Premier promised there would be no changes to labour legislation in this province without full consultation. That was before the election, Mr. Speaker. Now after the election the minister introduces these Bills without having consulted with affected parties. Say one thing, do another.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister please stand in her place and do her job. Will she tell this Assembly who asked for the changes that are set out in Bill 87 and what is she trying to fix if this system isn't broken?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, I will say to the member opposite, he should be aware of how processes have changed in this Assembly and he should stick to the facts, Mr. Speaker.

The legislation was tabled in the fall session. There was a number of months before the spring session starts. We have had ample time for any type of input that parties wanted to give on the legislation. We also have a process of policy committees and, Mr. Speaker, the new process is in place. We will follow that process. And we have received a great deal of input on this piece of legislation and others. Mr. Speaker, I have always met with stakeholders. I value the input from stakeholders and, Mr. Speaker, I will continue to do that.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. The Premier has stated in his letter that there will be, and I quote:

. . . no . . . [legislative] changes would occur without extensive consultations with all stakeholders.

The Saskatchewan Business Council and other leading people in this province claim that they were not consulted on Bill 87. They have put this forward. Will the Premier stand and talk to this Assembly and guarantee the people that are affected that there was consultation or will he ask his minister to pull Bill 87 until proper consultation takes place?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, I met with the Saskatchewan Business Council; Mr. Speaker, I met with the Business Council. They were quite clear in their comments on this legislation, on additional hours, and also on Bill 86 . Mr. Speaker, they were quite clear. I understood quite clearly what they said. That's part of our consultations, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have been very open with meeting with stakeholders. There has been ample time between when the legislation was tabled and this session when it will be passed, Mr. Speaker, and I will continue to meet with stakeholders.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

#### Contracts with Angie and Jim Fergusson

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, Angie Fergusson is a long-time government and New Democratic Party employee. She has been hired as the director of the provincial cabinet office in Saskatoon for a salary of \$91,500. Mr. Speaker, Angie Fergusson replaces one Murray Gross who according to page 88

of the 2003-04 Public Accounts salary was \$63,369.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier explain why the new director of the provincial cabinet office in Saskatoon is earning almost 50 per cent more than the old one?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to take this question on behalf of the government today. And I want to say first of all to the member opposite and to the Assembly, that Ms. Fergusson is, Ms. Fergusson is being hired exactly within the same grid that that position has held now for a number of years, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Fergusson is coming to . . . Mrs. Fergusson is coming to the job, Mr. Speaker, at a level that is not at the top of the grid. She brings to the job, Mr. Speaker, organizational development management skills from SaskEnergy. She's worked as a director of human services with STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company].

Mr. Speaker, she is a university graduate with a Commerce degree with great distinction, Mr. Speaker. She has an exceptionally good understanding of the social and business climate in the city of Saskatoon and we're very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to have her as one of our employees at the cabinet office.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, salary ranges for positions in the Premier's office are set by order in council. The person Angie Fergusson is replacing held the title special advisor to the cabinet. According to the government's own table of salary ranges, that title comes up with a salary of 65,856. That means Angie Fergusson is making over \$25,000 more than the prescribed salary ranges. Why, Mr. Speaker, why is the Premier ignoring his own law and determining on . . . NDP patronage an appointee \$25,000 more than the prescribed salary, Mr. Speaker?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, the facts about Mrs. Fergusson are these, Mr. Speaker. The facts are these, that Mrs. Fergusson is replacing the position that was previously held by Doug Zolinsky, not Murray Gross. And the position that Murray Zolinsky held, Mr. Speaker, had a top range of \$92,000 a year. Ms. Fergusson is getting less than the top of the range, Mr. Speaker, and she's coming to work, coming to work in the cabinet office, Mr. Speaker, to do the work of managing the community of Saskatoon. The member opposite says one thing, Mr. Speaker, but the facts are something different, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier talks about facts and qualifications. I'll tell you about facts and qualifications. Jim and Angie Fergusson appear to have become the first family of NDP patronage. This couple is taking over a quarter of a million dollars in taxpayers' money. This is at a time when working people across Saskatchewan are being asked to show restraint, and for what, Mr. Speaker. Jim Fergusson is getting \$160,000 a year to answer the phone once a week. Angie Fergusson is getting more than \$91,000 for her job — \$25,000 more than the salary range calls for. Why is there one rule when you're an NDP supporter, and another for everyone else?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I'm hugely troubled, Mr. Speaker, by the comment that the member . . . hugely troubled by the comment, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Order please, members. Order. Order. The Chair recognizes the Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, I am troubled by the comment because what we have here today, Mr. Speaker, is we see the previous Conservative leader taking the high road, Mr. Speaker. And the previous Conservative leader said on Monday that the Saskatchewan Party MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], quote:

. . . Elwin Hermanson . . . [says that] the party does not object . . . [with] the appointment [of Angie Fergusson] to what is essentially a political . . . [position].

Is what the previous leader of the Conservative Party said. And now, Mr. Speaker, the new role of the new Conservative Party that's here across from us under the new leadership, Mr. Speaker, today attacks, Mr. Speaker, the fundamental issues of who gets employed, Mr. Speaker, in this province.

And I say to the members opposite, you should tread very, you should tread very tenderly, Mr. Speaker. You should tread very . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, please. The Deputy Premier ought to continue with his remarks through the Chair.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — The new Conservative Party should tread very carefully, Mr. Speaker, when they attack members of the public. Because you should not throw, Mr. Speaker, you should not throw stones when you live in glass houses, Mr. Speaker.

They're examples on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, where in fact there have been situations where people have seen situations that are difficult, and on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we've . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order. Next question. The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, if the Deputy Premier doesn't

want to talk about Angie Fergusson any more, let's talk about Mr. Fergusson. Mr. Speaker, former district health board Chair, Bob Bundon, had this to say about Mr. Fergusson's departure. He said, Mr. Fergusson was, quote, "at the end of his string." And he wanted to leave the Saskatoon Health District because "his . . . heart wasn't in it."

Mr. Speaker, why would a man who's heart isn't in it anymore get \$160,000 a year contract? How does that make up for your heart feelings, to answer the phone once a week? And what assurances do we have from the minister that Mr. Fergusson's contract is not going to be renewed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, on a number of occasions the Minister of Health and other members of this government have responded to this question, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the new Conservative Party, Mr. Speaker, doesn't have any respect for the health boards, Mr. Speaker. We know that because they've said on a number of occasions, Mr. Speaker, that if they were ever to be in the chairs of government, what they would do, Mr. Speaker, is they would fold up the entire health district boards in the province and they would do away with them, Mr. Speaker.

But that isn't the position that this administration and this government takes, Mr. Speaker. We respect the, we respect the decisions, Mr. . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please, members. Order. Order. The Chair recognizes the Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we recognize and support the work of the health district boards and Chairs across the province, Mr. Speaker. And for the member from Saskatoon to be speaking loudly about patronage, Mr. Speaker, well I have here, Mr. Speaker, June 25, 1980, where Mr. Morgan, in quotes, Mr. Speaker: "Mr. Morgan receives the patronage appointment," Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order, please. Order. Order. The Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I just want to quote, Mr. Speaker, because the member from Saskatoon Southeast enjoys quoting from their newspaper on a regular basis. And here, Mr. Speaker, the quote is, Morgan says his new job, now the patronage appointment after 10 years, lawyer receives the patronage appointment to the legal aid commitment, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. Order. The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm extremely pleased the members opposite are so capable in their research. I'd like nothing better than to trade that patronage appointment for the one that I received.

Mr. Speaker, let's review this situation a little bit. A \$60,000 severance payment, a . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:30]

**The Speaker:** — Order. The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, if they want to talk about a small severance package, let's listen to what this one is. A \$60,000 severance payment, \$160,000 consulting contract for which he answers one or two phone calls a week. All for a man who is at the end of his string, for a man whose whole heart wasn't in it, and his spouse earning \$25,000 more than the salary scale.

Mr. Speaker, it's the same story. Will this government commit to . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order please, members. We must allow the questions to be put. We must allow the responses to be given. And they should, all ought to be audible.

The Chair recognizes the . . . Order, please. The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, how can these salaries be justified while working people are being forced to adhere to rigid salary guidelines? And will the government today commit to not renewing Jim Fergusson's contract any further?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we know that the new Conservative Party in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we know that they don't support the health districts in the province, Mr. Speaker. They don't support them. And what they would do, Mr. Speaker, is they'd roll them up and . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please, members. Just allow the response to be given. The Chair recognizes the Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — Mr. Speaker, we know that the members opposite, this new Conservative Party, Mr. Speaker, doesn't support the district health boards in the province, Mr. Speaker. They don't support the work that the administration within those health districts do. They don't support the structure of the health districts because they'd roll them up, Mr. Speaker. And so it's not unusual for them to be standing in their places today and saying, Mr. Speaker, that they want Mr. Fergusson's salary reduced or reverted or removed completely.

That, Mr. Speaker, those decisions were made by the district health boards. We support them, Mr. Speaker. We recognize them.

And unlike, Mr. Speaker, unlike the member opposite who received his patronage appointment, Mr. Speaker, in 1990, I

will . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — '88.

**Hon. Mr. Serby:** — In 1988. In 1988. Mr. Speaker, we'll let the district health boards do their work in . . .

**The Speaker:** — The member's time has elapsed.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

#### Low Water Levels at Crooked Lake and Long Lake

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the annual debate between cottage owners at Crooked and Round Lake is once again pitting First Nations and cottage owners against each other.

The cottage owners are concerned with low water levels again this summer. And, Mr. Speaker, as usual at this time of year, water levels are starting to go down.

First Nations are asking for compensation for flood damages. And yes, Mr. Speaker, I know what part of the answer will be — it's a federal jurisdiction problem. Well, Mr. Speaker, this has gone on for three years and we still have the same problem.

To the minister, Mr. Speaker: what is the NDP government going to do to help solve this problem?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Clearly it's important that we let the negotiations go on. We had success last year; we had an interim agreement. This year we're hopeful again. But it's very important with these long standing out issues, that we resolve them in a way that's suitable for everyone. And that's what's really important to the people of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly the same answer I got last year; that's exactly the same answer I got from another minister the year before. The only difference is the answers are getting shorter, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's time someone dealt with this issue. We know that a lawyer from Saskatoon has been appointed to oversee . . . to resolve the issue but the provincial government has a responsibility to the people of Crooked Lake and Round Lake to see that the resolve comes and happens. This is the third year, Mr. Speaker. We have boat docks three feet out of the water in the middle of the summer, we have cottages losing value out

there. The problem just keeps magnifying, Mr. Speaker, as time goes on.

Will the minister tell us or the Minister of SaskWater tell us, what are the NDP doing to promote a resolve to this problem?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Once again, Mr. Speaker, it's clear the opposition over there, the Conservative Party of Saskatchewan here, are saying one thing . . . but let's get the facts straight. The federal government here is working hard to resolve this issue. We're there to support them but the federal people, the federal government, is working hard to resolve this issue. It's a very important one to all the people in the Qu'Appelle Valley. And we'll work hard to resolve this issue.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't think the minister's fully aware of what's going on with the problem. There was no agreement with Crooked and Round lakes last year. There were other agreements but there's never been an agreement with Crooked and Round Lake.

And maybe, Mr. Speaker, that shows exactly why this problem continues to grow and go on. The minister doesn't even understand the problem, he isn't paying attention to the problem, and once again we're going to have low-water levels at Crooked and Round Lake. It's affecting tourism, it's affecting fish stocks, it's hurting the business owners along the lakes, and it's especially hurting the value of cabins and cottages along Crooked and Round Lake.

Doesn't the minister, Mr. Speaker, think it's time they took a leadership role and tried to prod the federal government into dealing with this problem once and for all?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, over there, the opposition, the Conservatives are alarming people of doom and gloom. Clearly, we are working hard at this. There's many stakeholders involved. We have to make sure we get the facts straight with very little help from the opposition here who are just concerned about getting doom and gloom out there.

Now the federal government's working hard. They've got new people working on this and we're there to support the federal government in resolving this issue to the satisfaction of everyone. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 122 — The Miscellaneous Labour Statutes Amendment Act, 2005

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 122, The Miscellaneous Labour Statutes Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Labour that Bill No. 122, The Miscellaneous Labour Statutes Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

### Bill No. 123 — The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2005

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 123, The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of the Environment that Bill 123, The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time. The Chair recognizes the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

### Bill No. 124 — The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2005

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 124, The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Transportation that Bill No. 124, The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased once again to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions no. 1,027 through 1,032 inclusive.

**The Speaker:** — Responses to questions 1,027 to 1,032 inclusive have been submitted.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 118 — The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act, 2005

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to address our government's ongoing commitment to ensure safe supplies of high-quality water for Saskatchewan people. After these remarks I will move second reading of The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act, 2005.

Mr. Speaker, in July 2002, as a result of our government's long-term safe drinking water strategy, The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act was passed in the legislature. The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority legislation was proclaimed on October 1, 2002. The Authority brought together waste management . . . water management responsibilities from three separate agencies: SaskWater, Saskatchewan Environment, and the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, our government is pleased to report to you today



that since the Watershed Authority's inception two and one-half years ago, it has accomplished and will continue to accomplish excellent initiatives aimed at managing and protecting the quality and quantity of Saskatchewan's water. We have completed the public consultation process to develop a water conservation plan made for Saskatchewan which will be finalized by year-end. We have developed the watershed and aquifer planning model for Saskatchewan, and planning activities involving local people are under way in seven key areas of the province. And we are actively working to develop a process to monitor and report on the health of our watersheds.

However, Mr. Speaker, we have identified amendments to The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act to strengthen the Watershed Authority's capacity to ensure proper management of our water resources into Saskatchewan's second century.

Part of the Authority's mandate, Mr. Speaker, is to protect the province's watersheds. This includes helping landowners resolve disputes over the use and diversion of water. At times disputes do occur. Saskatchewan people who suffer injury, loss, or damage due to drainage works have the right to file complaints under the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act.

Authority employees have had considerable success in resolving complaints between landowners using an informal process, Mr. Speaker. So we are refocusing the complaint process so that rather than starting with a more formal process, the first effort is to resolve disputes . . . will be on an informal basis. Civil provisions to the complaint procedure are added to enhance the authority's ability to enforce its orders and the orders of the Water Appeal Board. Mr. Speaker, we believe that these changes will make the complaint process more efficient and at the same time more effective.

A further amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will require that fees collected under the legislation shall be established by regulation. This move will ensure greater scrutiny and transparency of the process. Saskatchewan has a legal history regarding the ownership of the beds and shores of water bodies, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Both The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act and The Provincial Lands Act reserve for the province and prevent disposition of any interest in its beds and shores. However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to allow the province the benefit of a federal capital works program that could benefit Saskatchewan's commercial fishing industry, amendments to The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act and a consequential amendment to The Provincial Lands Act are necessary.

Mr. Speaker, allowing the federal government limited conditional administration and control of Saskatchewan's beds and shores for the purpose of building or expanding wharfs in northern Saskatchewan is good for our commercial fishing industry. It's good for the people in northern Saskatchewan, and it's good for a green and prosperous economy.

Now our government is committed to improving the health of our watersheds. Mr. Speaker, this includes our groundwater. Protecting and providing technical support for managing aquifers is important for Saskatchewan people. Having reliable groundwater data is also important. Now, Mr. Speaker, that is

why we are changing the legislation to allow the licensing of contractors as opposed to the current method of licensing drilling equipment. Contractors in the drilling industry were consulted, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they strongly support this measure.

Also, Mr. Speaker, The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act, 2005 will streamline and modernize provisions currently found in The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act. The provisions of that Act will be significantly restructured. It will include the incorporations of provisions of The Ground Water Conservation Act which will be repealed.

As we move into Saskatchewan's second century, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these amendments will strengthen the watershed's authority and strengthen water management. Mr. Speaker, thank you and I now move the second reading of The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act, 2005.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:45]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 118, The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to get up and do a debate on second reading of this fairly sized Bill that they talk about. Went through a bit of it, but there's quite a bit of to go through.

Every time the minister gets up of SaskWater, they always tell they want to improve the quality of water, that this Bill is to improve the quality. Well sometimes I wonder because he's been saying that for years. I was hoping that they've always had, that were working on the quality, good quality water here in the past. I don't know why they're tinkering with some of these Bills.

Now some of the things he talked about was fees in regulations again. And whenever this government starts doing something like that, again you always know that the fees are probably going to go up. You know, it seems like this government has a consistent pattern of every year fees going up.

I was at a meeting in Osler not that long ago dealing with SaskWater and a water pipeline there. And a couple of councillors and the mayor informed me that their water fees had gone up 55 per cent in one year. That's a huge, huge adjustment, and they were finding it very hard to pass that on to the ratepayers. And when that pipeline was put in, there was talk about oh, it would be just cost recovery, but you know the fees probably wouldn't be going up all that much. Well I call going up 55 per cent quite a bit at that end of it, Mr. Speaker.

So that always makes me a little nervous on this side when this government always talks about adjusting fees in regulations at that end of it. You can pretty near guarantee that they're probably going to be going up.

And also, talked about consulting with drillers and said they

were quite in favour of that. And if they are, that's fine. But I'll tell you what, on this side of the House we'd like to check with them because this government kind of has a reputation of saying one thing and doing another. So saying that they consulted with the stakeholders in this, we'd kind of like to check on this side. I mean, you never know. It's always . . . to make sure that these guys are doing what they're saying at that end of it because it has been proven in the past that they haven't consulted on some Bills that have gone through here and said that they did extensive talk on stakeholders.

And there was . . . a member from North Battleford was talking. I think he'd introduced a Bill and then had to pull it, if I remember right, dealing with the municipal Act because he didn't consult that much with the municipal leaders. And I remember he had to adjust it from last fall till now. So you know, that's just one example that I can bring up here, at that end of it, Mr. Speaker.

And there's different Bills. There's a labour Bill that they've had to readjust since then, Mr. Speaker, at that end of it.

So that's why that at this side of the House, we like to do our homework, and we can take our time with the Bills. And so with this Bill, Mr. Speaker, we'd like to make sure that the government did consult on it and put it out to the stakeholders. So at that time, I'd like to adjourn debate on this second reading.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

#### **Bill No. 96 — The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act has not been substantially revised in several years. As a result, the current Act no longer accurately reflects the operation of the Legislative Assembly, particularly with respect to the expanded committee responsibilities under the new rules of this Legislative Assembly.

Accordingly this new Bill will repeal the existing Act and introduce new legislation that will update the procedures of this Legislative Assembly to better reflect current practices. Mr. Speaker, revisions are proposed in this Bill to consolidate and update the allowance and remuneration provisions of the Act, and to set out the powers and duties of the Board of Internal Economy to better recognize its functions as a management board of the Legislative Assembly.

In accordance with the existing practice, the Bill will now make all such allowances and payments subject to board directives under the direction of the Speaker. Changes are also being introduced in this Bill that update the functions and duties of the various officers and employees of the Legislative Assembly under the direction of the Speaker and the Clerk of the Assembly. This includes the introduction of the newly created Legislative Assembly service as the organizational unit within which the various employees of this Legislative Assembly will provide their valuable services.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the ongoing co-operative effort in the preparation of this Bill with your office and that of the Clerk, and the Legislative Counsel and the Law Clerk, soon to be parliamentary counsel and the law clerk. In addition the members of the Board of Internal Economy, the all-party management board of this Legislative Assembly played a significant role in the development of this legislation. Mr. Speaker, this Legislative Assembly operates both as a historic sovereign body exercising ancient rites and as a modern institution that needs to efficiently serve both the members of the Legislative Assembly and the public which they represent.

I am confident that all members of the House can support this Bill as an important step forward in ensuring both the sovereign independence of this Legislative Assembly and its continuing relevance and efficiency as a 21st century institution.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act respecting the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and the Executive Council of Saskatchewan and making consequential amendments to other Acts. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 96, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Melfort.

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise today and speak briefly on the Legislative Assembly Act of Saskatchewan and the Executive Council and making consequential amendments to other Acts.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister outlined in her opening remarks in regard to the second reading of this legislation, it has indeed been some time since the legislation governing the functioning and rules of the Assembly has been updated. And, Mr. Speaker, as members are aware in this Chamber, there have been some substantial changes in the way we are conducting the affairs of the province in terms of our organizational structures, including moving to a fall session and standing field committees that have increased authority to investigate and make decisions about legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed appropriate that this legislation be updated and amended to reflect those current practices and to make sure that the governing legislation is indeed in harmony with what the practices are.

Mr. Speaker, it also outlines various functions and remunerations to members and other officers of the Assembly,

and we too think that that's important, that these issues be addressed in a forthright and transparent way, and also in a way that is fair to all those involved. Mr. Speaker, it's a fairly significant bit of legislation, and we will want to make sure that nothing has been overlooked in its preparation. And in order to do that, I would move to adjourn debate.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That's carried.

**Bill No. 97 — The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Consequential Amendment Act, 2005/Loi de 2005 sur une modification corrélative découlant de la loi intitulée The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Consequential Amendment Act, 2005.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you are aware, through the co-operation of both sides of this Legislative Assembly and your office, as well as that of the Clerk and the Legislative Counsel and the Law Clerk, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005 has been introduced for consideration by this Legislative Assembly.

This additional Bill is required to make bilingual consequential amendment to The Jury Act, 1998 that will update the reference in that Act to the new Bill. I would note for the Legislative Assembly that it is the intention of this government to pass an entirely bilingual Act based on the new Act in an upcoming session of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act to make a consequential amendment to a certain Act rising from the enactment of The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The minister has moved that Bill No. 97, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Consequential Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. I recognize the member for Melfort.

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and speak briefly to Bill No. 97 with the consequential amendments to, really, Bill 96 and others.

Mr. Speaker, it's appropriate when we're in the process of updating legislation that we also make sure that this very important legislation is also done in a way that everyone in the province can understand it. And it's very much paired with Bill No. 96, and therefore to keep these Bills moving through the process together I would move to adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Melfort has moved debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to

adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That's carried.

**Bill No. 116 — The Osteopathic Practice Repeal Act**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Osteopathic Practice Repeal Act, 2005. Mr. Speaker, this Bill proposes repealing The Osteopathic Practice Act. It does so for two reasons: one the Act is obsolete; and two, there are currently no osteopathic physicians practicing in Saskatchewan nor have there been for many years.

Mr. Speaker, if the Act remains in place it would be difficult for a Canadian-trained osteopath to practise in Saskatchewan. This is because licensing provisions in the existing Act require that their education program be approved by the American Association of Osteopaths.

However, osteopathic medical training in the United States has changed over the years to include a broader scope of practice. Consequently a Canadian-trained osteopath would not likely be eligible for licensure under the current Act. Graduates from an American program could potentially be licensed in Saskatchewan, but they would be unable to practise to the full scope of their education.

The repeal of the Act will not prevent an osteopath from establishing practice in the province as long as they do not engage in any treatment that encroaches on the scope of practice of any other regulated professionals.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to an accessible, quality health system. We will provide leadership in making the changes needed to strengthen and sustain the system for the future. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of The Osteopathic Practice Repeal Act, 2005. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 116, The Osteopathic Practice Repeal Act be now read a second time. I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a privilege to respond to the minister's second reading of Bill No. 116, The Osteopathic Practice Repeal Act. Regarding this Act and the repeal of it, after looking at the Act and listening to the minister, the fact that there are no osteopathic practitioners in the province and haven't been for a number of years — I don't believe there are any . . . I believe France is about the only area that this is actively practised — it doesn't seem that there is much need for this Bill, or the existing Bill, and it seems like there is a need for this Bill to repeal it.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I would move to adjourn debate because we do want to just check a couple of issues with it and make sure that it is all the way it's supposed to be. So, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, at this time I'd adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Indian Head-Milestone has moved debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 114

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Thomson that **Bill No. 114 — The Education Amendment Act, 2005/Loi de 2005 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation** be now read a second time.]

[15:00]

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

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Mr. Deputy Chair, I had an opportunity to speak very briefly yesterday to this Bill. And as I said yesterday, that the minister when he did the second reading comments had indicated that this is basically a Bill, in his opinion, which is mostly a housekeeping Bill. And I'd also said yesterday that I would differ with that opinion on this Bill. There are some fairly substantive parts to this Bill that deal with the structuring of our school division and the forced amalgamation of our school divisions.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel that perhaps that this Bill is the Bill that gives the minister the authority to actually force the amalgamation of school divisions. Even though he hasn't said that, he had made some comments that would lead one to believe that he may not have had as much authority as he needed to make these substantive and very significant changes to boundaries of school divisions. And therefore it is required that this Bill be passed so that, to legitimize some of things that this government is doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Normally when this government introduces a Bill, you can count on that day a news release is issued to explain to the media and people of the province what the Bill is about. I searched through the government news releases, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to find the news release that accompanied this Bill and I was unable to find such a news release.

**An Hon. Member:** — I wonder why.

**Mr. Hart:** — And exactly. I wonder why. I did find the news release dated February 14 in which the minister took it upon himself to announce the dates of . . . the election date for the new school divisions before any legislation has passed this Assembly. He also talked about establishing a panel to recommend a framework of local accountability and community involvement in the schools.

The news release went on. The minister talked about the three-pronged program that the government is calling the government's education equity initiative. It's a three-phased approach which includes restructuring of schools, the forced amalgamation; improving our system of school operating grants, which we have seen very little of; and determining a long-term solution to education property tax, which we have seen absolutely nothing from this government on. In fact it's an issue that they run from and hide even though they said would address that issue in their 2003 election campaign.

And Mr. Speaker, I must have hit a sore spot because when I mention that, I hear the Minister of Government Relations chirping from his seat, but if he would only chirp less and actually take some action to address this problem, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of this province would certainly be much better off, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So as I said, it leads one to wonder why this Bill is being downplayed to the extent it is. Yet when you look through the Bill, there are some very significant amendments to The Education Act which will allow this government to put in place their forced amalgamation. And what will these provisions do, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well what they will do is they will allow for elections of school boards for school divisions that don't exist. And they won't exist until January 1, 2006.

It allows them to hire a director of education and the secretary-treasurer so at least they have some staff. Now we'll have this convoluted system where we have current boards operating a number of school divisions, and then we have this other super board which has very little staff, very little ability to plan, a very short time frame, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to put all these pieces together so that they have an effective school division as of January 1, 2006.

And many people across this province are asking, what is the rush? Why is this government in such a hurry to accomplish this forced amalgamation of school divisions? Well that is a good question, and we have never heard this government give a legitimate answer. Sure, when that question was raised with the Minister of Learning in last fall's sitting during committee, the minister of Education used the feeble excuse that, well our education system is in dire straits and therefore we need to take some drastic action to fix it because the sky was falling in. It reminded me of Chicken Little going around the province and hollering, the sky is falling in, the sky is falling in.

Yet prior to that point in time, whenever concerns were raised with the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] education system, this government was so proud of pointing to increased funding and telling the people of the province, and anyone else who would listen, what a great K to 12 system we have. Now in the matter of a couple of months, the sky is falling in on the education system and on the K to 12 education system, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And one would have to wonder, how did we arrive at this situation where we have a forced amalgamation of school divisions for no apparent reason? At least the haste of what is . . . the pace that is being set out by this government. They cannot legitimize and provide satisfactory information. There is disarray, particularly in rural Saskatchewan because that's the

area that's going to be the most impacted by this forced amalgamation. School boards are wondering, parents are wondering, administrators are wondering, well you know, well what was the need for such a massive change and a massive change so quickly. And I think what one needs to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is step back and look at what has transpired in the last 18 months, and perhaps we'll get a clue as to why we are in this mess that we have here today, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Back during the 2003 election campaign, the NDP, the Premier said that their election platform could receive the Boughen report. And the Boughen report was a report of Ray Boughen and his commission that this government set up a year or two earlier to study this whole area of the way we fund the K to 12 system. And his report . . . He was going to deliver his report in early 2004, which he did. And as I said, the NDP and the Premier, they said their plan could accept the Boughen report. Well it could accept it, except it had no ability to deal with it. And so there was a problem.

The Premier had been at SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] for a couple of years and said as far as education tax on property that the status quo was not on. I was at those conventions, and a number of my caucus colleagues were at those conventions. There was 1,800 SARM delegates heard the Premier on two different conventions, on two different occasions say that the status quo was not on, that something will be done to address the education tax on property.

So what we had in January 2004, we had Ray Boughen delivering his report, putting out a plan. Certainly there was some stakeholder groups said there was some problems. It wasn't a perfect plan, but it was a plan. And there was . . . Some of the recommendations were very reasonable. One of the recommendations — no. 5, I believe it was — talked a bit about some restructuring.

Well what the Minister of Learning, when he was pressured — and I believe this is probably what happened — when the Minister of Learning was pressured to come up with a response to the whole issue of property tax or education tax on property, he looked through the report and said, well okay, here's something that we can do.

And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I say, you have to wonder, well why did we end up in this. And I think one might, with very little imagination, may be able to understand the process. And that's what I would like to outline — what I think perhaps may have happened and why we ended up in this situation.

As I said, the pressure was building in early 2004 for this government to do something about property tax. And I would, one could imagine that the Premier would on a regular basis remind the Minister of Learning that, hey we've got to come up with something and that's your responsibility. And the Minister of Learning, being a fairly new member to cabinet, saw this as not only as a challenge but an opportunity to come up with a creative solution.

And I'm sure, you know, that the Minister of Learning, as most cabinet ministers . . . Regardless of what party is in power, I

understand that the workload as a cabinet minister is fairly heavy and probably would require taking some of your work home with you. And so I could imagine that perhaps this was weighing on the Minister of Learning. And so he took this file home with him one evening and studied it and tried to come up with some ideas as to how to address this situation.

And one could imagine that maybe he fell into a troubled sleep and had a bad dream, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And he dreamt about, how are we going to address this situation of education tax on property. Well he thought to himself, perhaps that first of all we have to create a problem. Because, I mean, up until this point in time we didn't have a real problem as far as . . . other than the education portion and the way we fund it. But if we're not prepared to address that part of it we have to take another tack, and that would be maybe amalgamating school divisions.

Because that is a message that this government likes to put out across this province on a regular basis. We saw it with the attempt to force the amalgamation of rural municipalities where their message is that out in rural Saskatchewan there is far too much government. Far too much government, and it's costing the people of this province a fortune — that's the message that this government puts out on a regular basis. And nothing could be further from the truth.

Certainly there is some . . . we need to make some adjustments. That is happening. It could be encouraged by some moves on behalf of the government, and things would happen. We see some of the voluntary amalgamations in school divisions. Some of that, more of that could have been accomplished by a bit of prodding and some leadership from this government.

So that I would suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this bad dream that the Minister of Learning was having, he was saying, thought perhaps if we create the problem that the sky is falling in on our education system, our K to 12 system, and then we can come to the rescue, and we'll carry the torch of amalgamation, and that will be the solution to fix all the problems in the K to 12 education system.

And the more the minister dreamt, the better the plan got. He could see himself leading the charge across the province. And you could just see it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There is the Minister of Learning, Chicken Little, and the amalgamation choir spreading out across this province, singing the glories of forced amalgamation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And he took that plan to the caucus, not thinking that they would buy in. But they were desperate, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And so therefore they said, well we haven't got anything else, so let's go for.

I mean, this government is very prone to using children to bolster their initiatives. So we saw it out at Belle Plaine, when they bussed the children out there. And they put up the tent, and they had the big event with the imaginary ethanol plant.

So we'll use that plan. We'll go out to Balgonie. We'll gather up all the students, and we'll bring our officials out there and the media, and we'll make a big media production of this amalgamation which is going to cure all the ills in the K to 12 system, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, nothing could be further from the

truth. This forced amalgamation is creating a lot of uncertainty out there. It's creating a lot of concern amongst current boards of education, particularly in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's creating division and concern amongst their Saskatchewan School Board Association. They're being tasked with putting this plan into effect.

They don't have the proper legislation. At the time the minister announced this ill-conceived plan, he told us, told the public that the only thing that needed to be done was a small piece of legislation to change the election date of school divisions. And so last fall we saw Bill 80. Well now we seen a number of Bills that are impacting on this whole process. And why are we seeing these Bills? Because that government hasn't done their homework.

This is the same . . . we're seeing the same scenario as we saw with the Minister of Labour's ill-conceived attempt to revive the section thirteen four in The Labour Standards Act. That was another situation where this government was desperate. They needed to find something to bring to the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, so they reached in their grab bag to see what they had, and they went forward. And this is the same scenario here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So now we're faced with this situation where the government has to set up a coordinating committee to help with the amalgamation, something they never had to do before when we had voluntary amalgamations because those school divisions that undertook voluntary amalgamation set up their own committees.

[15:15]

We can look at a model that many people have looked at and referred to as far as amalgamation, the amalgamation of the school divisions that surround Regina and the Qu'Appelle Valley. They call themselves the Qu'Appelle Valley School Division now. Those three school divisions that were involved in that amalgamation, they took three years to amalgamate. They had 30-some committees set up to look at all the various issues. They took ownership of amalgamation, and they got it right. There was very few complaints. In fact my office received no complaints and a good chunk of my constituency was affected by that amalgamation.

So there was the model. And the key was, they took their time. They worked at it for three years, not ten or ten months or twelve months or less than that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And so therefore, you would wonder why people in rural Saskatchewan are concerned.

Well they have good reason to be concerned, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And not only that, in the process of this whole amalgamation debate, what did the Minister of Learning do? He tried to build a case that the sky was falling in on the education system. He insulted the board members of the school boards. He insulted the teachers. And he insulted members of this Legislative Assembly when they challenged him on his actions, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So this started as a move of desperation in response to the whole issue of education tax on property. And it's got out of

hand to the point where, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of my greatest fears is that it'll affect what happens in the classrooms across this province. I'm afraid that through this whole process, we may see children — particularly children with special educational needs — that won't get the services that are required. They'll fall through the cracks. And they, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will be the biggest victims of this ill-fated attempt of forced amalgamation . . . when it could have been accomplished, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through consultation with school divisions, some leadership and vision, and on behalf of this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And as I said, I have that fear. I hope it doesn't happen. But if we impact some of our students in our classrooms in a negative way, it'll be on their conscience, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because we certainly have raised the issues on this side of the House. And if they fail to take notice of these issues, they will have to deal with them in the future, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Iwanchuk):** — I recognize the member for Melfort.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and speak on Bill 114, The Education Act amendments.

Mr. Speaker, it is really unfortunate that we are going through this process of putting in place legislation after decisions have been made that have not been, in my opinion, in the best interests of the province of Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan has an excellent education system. The reason it does is because people have been empowered in this province to provide leadership and direction for the education system that serves our children so well. Mr. Speaker, that's been a tradition that's gone over decades of time and has proven to be a very good model.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that this province is in transition. There is no doubt that there is an alarming movement of people away from rural locations to the cities and out of this province entirely. And this government has lacked any leadership in terms of dealing with the issues that are arising as a result of this movement of population.

Mr. Speaker, certainly no one would argue that the original configuration of school districts and divisions in this province should stay fixed forever. No one would argue that the number of school divisions that we had 30 years ago should be etched in stone and should stay in this province forever. But, Mr. Speaker, what we do not appreciate very often here in Regina is the ingenuity and the leadership and the commitment that people have to the education system right across this province, and certainly in rural Saskatchewan. And I would submit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this legislation and these Bills that we're going to talk about today — because they all have varying aspects on the same general topic, the forced amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan — they largely are only involving rural Saskatchewan.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a situation where we have decided in Regina, in our infinite wisdom, that the government knows best, the NDP government knows what's

best for rural education in this province. And by and large, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are no NDP members in rural Saskatchewan. They sit in Regina, and they sit in Saskatoon and the urban centres. And they look out and they survey the scene, and they decide from these urban locations that they know what's best for the configuration of school districts in Saskatchewan and particularly in rural Saskatchewan. And they discount, they discount the years of commitment and leadership that have been made to the school system by community leaders over the years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's too bad that the decisions have been made, and this whole exercise feels for people in the system as a done deal, a fait accompli that is gone so far down the road that it is impossible to slow it up or stop it or change direction. And that's really too bad because this government could learn a lesson if it truly consulted with people before it made these rash and impetuous decisions. Mr. Speaker, what this government may learn is that people out in the communities have a lot of insight, have a lot of wisdom, have a lot of knowledge about how things should be organized and restructured.

Mr. Speaker, in every part of this province, virtually, there has been the recognition that changes in the organizational structure should occur. There have been recognition that school divisions could best serve their students if they had an appropriate number of students in the division.

In many school divisions there have been very heart-wrenching decisions made over the years about the continued viability of facilities. And many school divisions have looked at their communities and the facilities in them and made the heart-wrenching decision that they could no longer continue to have those facilities open. And closures have occurred in the past because community leaders were responsible, and they understood that sometimes, if they're going to preserve the quality of the education system, that difficult and heart-wrenching decisions are going to have to be made from time to time.

Mr. Speaker, it hasn't been any different in regard to the amalgamation of school divisions. Divisions have voluntarily gone forward and talked to their neighbours, in many instances decided that their interests would be better served if they amalgamated their regions so that they could provide a greater mass, a critical mass, that would allow them to provide for a vast array of subject matter and support services that the children in their divisions needed. And that has proceeded very, very well on its own, thank you very much. But this NDP government in Regina has decided it was going to do what's best and say, we're going to impose these forced new divisions on the province of Saskatchewan, largely rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, and when they have done this, it seems that there's been almost a terrible rush to get this done. Now I can't understand what the hurry has been because in the past when the voluntary amalgamations proceeded, in every single case, I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there has been the experience that it takes more time and it takes enough time in order to get the new dimension put together correctly. There are cultures that build up around the school division, around the division and the teachers and the students as to how they operate and conduct their affairs. There is a precedent, almost a heritage and a

history, that becomes part and parcel of who and what a school division is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you make an amalgamation of different cultures and realities, it takes time to get those kinds of accommodations done correctly and properly. Mr. Speaker, in the past, divisions have found it's taken anywhere from two to four years to properly discuss all the issues surrounding an amalgamation in order to get it right. And what we've done here is we've said it has to be done almost overnight and on a massive level. Mr. Speaker, I think it's going to be very, very challenging for the school divisions for many years to come to rebuild that culture and trust that has been taken away from them by this NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, first when the government decided to do this, they came out with a theoretical map that virtually no one appreciated or liked. They came out with some sort of pretext about that there had to be so many students and you had to have so much mill rate and all the rest of these criteria for establishing these divisions. But the reality is that in many instances representations were made — in most instances, I would submit — that the boundaries that were proposed were not appropriate. And then they put another hearing process, again put together in haste, that went and went through with the illusion of listening to what people were saying, and at the end of the day changed very little.

And so divisions are now being created that were not supported by the vast majority of school divisions that were being affected by it, but it's imposed. The minister's signature is on the order in council that says these new school divisions are going to be created. It's a done deal. It's past the fact.

Mr. Speaker, there was a very diverse opinion in this province about the wisdom of doing this, and there was no acknowledgement of the diversity of that opinion. And there was no attempt to allow for people to come to a common consensus as to how this should proceed. It was simply jammed forward, and now we're going to end up with a situation that is in effect irreversible.

As a new critic for Learning, I'm also finding that there is a reluctant resignation across this province to the fact that this is going to proceed — a reluctant resignation. There is no enthusiasm. There is no joy about facing the challenges that are before the system. There is simply this reluctant resignation that this is a done deal, and we better make the best of it.

And try as best we can from each of our perspectives — from the teachers, from the boards, from the parents — to say how can we make the best possible result happen out of this whole pressured situation. Because at the end of the day, what we're all trying to do is something positive for the children. That is everyone except the NDP government, who hasn't realized the impact that this is going to have on the system. And ultimately that affects the children.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's time that these Bills move forward because there are decisions that are going to be . . . need to be made by certainly the school systems. They're going to have to cope with this reality as best they can. Mr. Speaker, it is certainly with a heavy heart that I address these issues. I think

any of the specific details and questions can be asked in committee.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's important to note that the NDP government is going to bear the responsibility for the mess that they're creating in this legislation. And I hope — I think everybody hopes and prays — that it's going to have not as negative an impact on the children as it may have. And that's because of the quality leaders in the education in this province who are going to pick up the mess that the NDP has laid on their laps and make it work in spite of this government.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're prepared to move this legislation and these related Bills forward to committee for further consideration.

[15:30]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Iwanchuk):** — The question before the Assembly is for second reading. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt this motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Iwanchuk):** — Carried. Second reading of the Bill.

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Iwanchuk):** — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill 114, The Education Amendment Act, 2005 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Iwanchuk):** — It has been moved by the member from Battlefords that the Bill be referred to the Human Services committee. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Iwanchuk):** — Carried.

### Bill No. 115

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Thomson that **Bill No. 115 — The Education Property Tax Credit Act** be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Iwanchuk):** — I recognize the member from Melfort.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise and speak briefly on An Act to provide Education Property Tax Credits, Bill No. 115.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, certainly again this points to the NDP government's lack of vision in terms of the needs of the educational system. You know, repeatedly over the years people have said to this government that some significant changes into the way educational property tax is levied in this

province has to be committed to. In addition to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there has been the great need to say that there is an incredible shift of the burden of the cost of education that has moved from the responsibility of the provincial government to the property tax owners.

I remember in the late '80s when I was on the Melfort Board of Education, we used to calculate that 60 per cent of the cost of providing education for our students would come from the provincial government, and that 39 or 40 per cent was raised in the local community by way of educational property tax. And that seemed to be a pretty acceptable ratio of responsibility — 60 per cent from the provincial government and 40 per cent from the local ratepayers by way of property tax.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the years this government has slowly but surely decreased the level of commitment that they have made to the educational system in this province. And faced with that reality of an increasingly diminishing percentage of the cost of education coming from the provincial government, boards of education have had to do really two things, is all they could do.

One is that they have looked very closely and with a great deal of scrutiny as to how they were spending the money to make sure that they were doing everything they possibly could to wring out the last drop of efficiency from their own operations that they could. And included in that was the possibilities of doing voluntary amalgamations and reorganizing structurally how they were operating. It became even more important that divisions would be doing relationships like shared services for speech language pathologists and support staff of that nature.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, no matter how hard they worked at creating these efficiencies in the system, at the end of the day, boards of education were forced into the reality that they had to increase property taxes for educational purposes because it simply was impossible to make everything work.

This government negotiated settlements with the teachers and the other support staff, and then they would refuse to fund them. And so it fell onto the local taxpayers to make sure that the appropriate numbers and appropriate contracts were supported and honoured in the educational system.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is again we are forced with a situation of considering a Bill that provides a mechanism for an ad hoc rebate process on property tax for education. There is no vision, there is no plan in the long haul; there is just simply a knee-jerk reaction to a promise that was made to do something about it and the increased pressure from ratepayers right across this province of saying something needs to be done.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we have here is a piece of legislation that simply provides a vehicle for a property tax credit. And that's well and good in itself and I'm sure that property taxpayers across this province are going to be glad that they are receiving a rebate. But, it's a rebate. They have to pay the money upfront and it isn't a rebate that's going to be long term, and it isn't a rebate that's going to address the inequalities of the funding relationships between the province and property taxpayers.



So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again this speaks to the lack of vision of this NDP government. They're putting band-aids on wounds that they have created and we would be told that this is . . . should be some type of progress, where in reality it's simply patching up a system that is been sincerely compromised by this NDP government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, again as I indicated in my remarks on the previous bit of legislation, we're being told now, from stakeholders in the education system, that with heavy hearts and much regret, they recognize that this is inevitability and they need to have the tools to make decisions going forward.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are issues that we'll want to address and questions we will want to ask in committee, which we would suggest we move to at this time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion put by the minister that Bill No. 115, The Education Property Tax Credit be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That's carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that Bill No. 115, The Education Property Tax Credit Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister that Bill No. 115, The Education Property Tax Credit be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

### Bill No. 80

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Thomson that **Bill No. 80 — The Education Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again it's a pleasure that I rise and speak to these education Bills that are before this Assembly today. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it at a risk of not being willing to repeat comments that I have made on the other Bills. They're all related and they certainly have similar sorts of information that's required.

Bill 80 was introduced last fall when this whole process was announced. And with much fanfare, we were told that this was

going to be a great cost saving and that they were learning from other jurisdictions where amalgamations were a sign of the times. And so we wanted to do some checking to see what the experience, indeed, was in other jurisdictions.

And it's very interesting that we received some information from our neighbouring province of Manitoba, who is ahead of us if you like or behind us, but is further along the process of forced amalgamation. And in Manitoba, the members of the educational community was told that they were going to save \$10 million annually and that would be a very good deal.

However what was . . . they were also told that the first year costs would be \$17.1 million extra and that was sort of sold to them. However, Ms. Carol Duhamel spoke to the SSBA, the Saskatchewan School Boards Association spring seminar and she confirmed that it cost Manitoba approximately \$72 million from July 2002 to December 2004 — far more expensive than what was initially indicated. And there are now questions about why did we go in this direction because the promised efficiencies are also not happening.

Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba they are suggesting to us that if they could do it over again, they might take a lot more time and a lot more thought into the process, about the amalgamations of school boards. Because while in theory this was going to be a good thing, the practice and the reality has been something very different.

Mr. Speaker, in this regard as well we have found in our discussions with the School Boards Association and others that, even in this initial planning process, the government thought this was all going to be very simple. We've got an extra piece of legislation this spring that is before the House — 114 — that actually is fixing some of the loopholes that were not envisaged when Bill 80 was introduced last fall. And we are told that there are further accommodations, perhaps legislatively, that will have to be made in order to dot all the i's and cross the t's about what is necessary to empower this forced amalgamation across the province.

Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it goes without saying that this whole process has been a very fundamentally hurried, ill-thought-out, and ill-conceived process that is going to create a great many challenges for the high quality professionals in our learning system to accommodate. And it probably is not a useful purpose to say we wish we hadn't have gone down this route. We warned the government. The past Learning critic has said on the record that difficulty is going to occur, and exactly the things that we predicted as problems and challenges that were going to occur in the learning system are indeed coming to fruition.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of these Bills are related to each other and should move through the process together so that they can be accommodated in a constructive way, so that all of the tools that are required by the learning professionals in this province are made available to them. They certainly do not need any more difficulties from this government than they've already received. And in order to allow that to happen, we are prepared to allow this to go to committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is

a motion by the minister that Bill No. 80, The Education Amendment Act, 2004, be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

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

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

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — I move that Bill 80, The Education Amendment Act, 2004, be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 80, The Education Amendment Act, 2004, be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

#### Bill No. 104

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 104 — The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2005** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm pleased to rise on Bill No. 104, which is An Act to amend The Planning and Development Act, 1983. Mr. Speaker, this Bill, like many, are connected to the municipal Act, the new Act that was first introduced into the legislature and then withdrawn after hearings were held across Saskatchewan, and has been reintroduced.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of elements to this Bill, but I want to focus on just two or three of them. First of all, we were told by the Minister Responsible for Government Relations that this was to be a permissive Act rather than a prescriptive Act. And of course we know municipalities have for quite some time, beginning with the cities, been calling for more permissive legislation so that they would be able to take charge of their own affairs to a larger degree. And we were pleased to support The Cities Act because it was more of a permissive document rather than a prescriptive document. And the minister assured us that the new municipal Act would be moving in the same direction. And there may be parts of it that in fact are moving in that direction.

However there is some concern about a portion of the Act which introduces some changes in the ministerial approval process for municipal planning efforts and zoning bylaws, by introducing a new concept of provincial interest. Mr. Deputy

Speaker, we know that certainly the province should be interested in municipal affairs, but we are concerned about what the exact definition, what the exact consequences of provincial interest as outlined in this Bill might mean.

[15:45]

It certainly seems to be less permissive than perhaps the minister was indicating in some of his comments. We recognize that there could be a potential bottleneck if several provincial interests involving many different provincial ministries and departments are involved.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have seen many instances where the NDP government has put roadblocks in the way of progress in this province. And that's one of the reasons why Saskatchewan lags behind so many provinces in Canada. In spite of our rich resources, in spite of the ingenuity and hard work and the overall work ethic of the people of this province, we have not prospered and moved forward as a province the way we should have, particularly here in Western Canada where the other three Western provinces have seen more growth, have seen more progress, have seen more prosperity than we have here in Saskatchewan.

So we would hope that Bill 104, an Act that would allow municipalities to plan and develop their own areas, we would hope that this Act would facilitate growth and facilitate initiative at the local level, at the municipal level. But we are concerned, in fact, the concept of provincial interest might in fact harm and hurt the ability of local municipalities to make independent decisions and to move in the best interests of their citizens, of their ratepayers, and of the people who vote at the municipal level.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to know more about what the concerns of the provincial interest or the concept of the provincial interest might be. And those are questions that we will continue to ask of the NDP government, and we would like to have some answers. We would like to see a more forthright response from the NDP government than we have seen in the past.

You know, they can talk about flowery concepts, and they can talk about being progressive and allowing permissive legislation to come forward, but in fact they need to explain more clearly the consequences of portions of this Act, such as the concept of provincial interest. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will certainly be asking them about that.

The other area that there is some concern over is with regard to new points about approving authorities require the owner of land that is being subdivided to provide part of that land, in consultation with the minister, as an environmental reserve where necessary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a beautiful province, a province rich in environmental strengths. We have clean water. We have fresh air. We have beautiful scenery. We have lakes, rivers, forests. And obviously we want to work with all of the government, with the private sector to ensure that the beauty and the cleanliness of our province remains intact.

How this part of Bill 104 will impact environment and impact the owners of land is not yet clear, and we want to see more of those issues clarified in the debate around Bill 104.

We've seen some problems in the environmental area when the federal department of oceans and fisheries became very involved in the inland waters of the province of Saskatchewan. And I would suggest there was some bad decisions made. There was an overextension of authority by Fisheries and Oceans, where they really had no business exercising that authority. There was no positive . . . no or little positive impact on the environment. In fact it was more of an interruption and a frustration to municipalities and to even provincial departments, including our own Department of Environment, who had to sidestep and work around the impacts of decisions made by the federal department of Fisheries and Oceans.

What we need in the whole area of environment and environmental authorities interaction with citizens, with local governments, is a mood and an attitude of co-operation — working together to ensure that we maintain a sound environment, but also that we work co-operatively and constructively to build the province.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're curious about how Bill 104 might impact on the environment, especially where we read that the owner of the land that is to be subdivided will have to consult with the minister of . . . regarding environmental reserves where necessary. Who decides where these reserves might be necessary? What rights does the owner have? What role do municipalities play? What role does the federal department of Environment play in this issue? These questions need to be answered, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The whole purpose of changing our municipal Act is to allow municipalities to function at their optimum level. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have seen an NDP government in Saskatchewan that has hindered and disappointed municipalities. We have seen an NDP government that has failed when it came to funding for municipalities. We have seen an NDP government that has ignored and failed to consult with municipalities. We saw that in the introduction of the municipal Act, which in fact is connected and is the reason why Bill 104 has actually been introduced and being debated here on the floor of the legislature.

It's time for consultations to be forthcoming and to be sincere. It's time when the . . . It should be the time when the NDP government actually does do its consulting before it brings forward legislation so that it doesn't have to withdraw legislation and reintroduce it, so that it doesn't have to bring in piecemeal other Bills around it, you know, before the original municipal Act was fully thought through.

It's because of this lack of cohesiveness on the part of the NDP government that we scrutinize these Bills so closely. We have seen so many mistakes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the NDP government as it affects rural Saskatchewan, as it affects municipalities, as it affects urban municipalities and the cities of this province — failures in revenue sharing; failures in dealing with amalgamations, whether they be municipal amalgamations or school board amalgamations. Just one failure after the other.

And those failures cause us a great deal of concern when we see a huge number of Bills — several that we've debated today and others in the past — that are related to municipal politics, municipal structure, school board structure. These are concerns that must be carefully considered.

It is for that reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we would want to review this Bill some more. We want to consult with the stakeholders, the municipalities who are involved and will be affected by Bill 104, and also, as we find out, ratepayers and voters in these municipalities who may be affected by the government's taking upon itself the concept of provincial interest and asking for environmental reserves where necessary. For that reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would now move that we adjourn debate on Bill 104.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Rosetown-Elrose that debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That's carried.

#### Bill No. 105

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 105 — The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2005** be now read a second time.]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm also pleased to speak to Bill 105, An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act.

The previous Bill spoke to municipal governments. This one as well speaks to local governments, but it also includes the election of the new and expanded school boards that are being created across the province. And so we've got quite an intricate matrix of legislation affecting both municipalities, school boards, amalgamations. It's quite a lot to digest, and it certainly requires a lot of scrutiny and a lot of review.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is not the first province in Canada — as my colleague, the MLA for Melfort, mentioned — we're not the first province to delve into the whole idea of changing the structure of school boards, making them larger. Manitoba has just gone through this process.

And in fact a few months ago I had the opportunity to speak to an official who had been very involved both from the government side and from the organization called MAST, which is the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, who had to work through the new process of expanded school districts in the province of Manitoba.

And as my colleague, the member from Melfort, correctly and accurately indicated, a lot of promises were made when new

legislation was brought forward into the Manitoba legislature. There was to be considerable cost savings. There were to be efficiencies. There was the argument made that the whole education system in Manitoba was overgoverned and needed to be thinned out.

And in talking to this official, he talked about the bitter disappointment in Manitoba over seeing, not money saved but additional dollars, tax dollars, spent after the restructure. Not even including the restructuring, which was expensive, but following the restructuring, costs did not drop in the province of Manitoba. They increased. Education became more expensive. And also local contact and local connection between ratepayers and voters and parents with their school boards became more distant, more remote, more removed.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a great deal of concern over the process and the attitude expressed in this legislature and around the province by the Minister of Education, who is following in the footsteps of his colleague, the Minister of Education in the province of Manitoba, and seems to be doomed to make the same mistakes as have been made in Manitoba.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I guess if we were pioneering in this province and trying something out and it didn't work, we could say, well at least we tried. We had no experience. We had no examples to observe, to study in other parts of Canada. At least you can't fault us for trying to be innovative and try something new.

But in this case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is not a new initiative. This is something we can observe as having occurred in other parts of Canada, in fact in our neighbouring province to the east, the province of Manitoba. And for Saskatchewan to make the same mistakes that Manitoba is making, is indeed disheartening and is causing real consternation for the Saskatchewan School Boards Association and for those of us who are deeply concerned about the quality of education and the ability of an electoral system that will properly allow parents, voters, and ratepayers in this province to have meaningful impact in the development and the strengthening and the delivery of education here in the province of Saskatchewan.

As you no doubt know, Mr. Speaker, I have presented a number of petitions in this legislature from the riding of Rosetown-Elrose, the constituency that I represent, who are just appalled by the way the NDP government has arrogantly and independently moved to create a new school district in west central Saskatchewan — one that was not asked for by the ratepayers and parents of the area, and one that is causing them a great deal of concern as they see that their property taxes will rise, the cost of education will increase, and the quality of education for young people, in fact, will likely diminish.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, ratepayers and voters, parents and teachers and existing school board trustees in my part of west central Saskatchewan are concerned about a loss of representation. They're concerned about the fact that these school boards will follow in the footsteps of the health districts where they become so large that there isn't that feeling of ownership, of owning and having meaningful input into local government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this Bill itself it talks about polling stations, and it suggests that the legislation would allow a reduction of polling stations. And that, in and of itself, is neither good nor bad, but I can see the potential through the passing of Bill 105 that some areas of these large school districts may be, be placed too remote, are too far away from polling stations.

We've seen that in provincial and federal elections where there's been manipulation over polling stations. Ad I doubt that would occur at the school board level; I would hope that that would not happen. But I'll tell you, the public do not like to have to travel for three-quarters of an hour or an hour to get to a polling station. And I believe with the powers given to local governments in Bill 105, the Act to amend The Local Government Election Act, that in fact huge distances may be involved in voters accessing polling stations to cast their ballot, and thus we could see a weakening of the democratic process at the municipal level and at the school board level. So that causes me a great deal of concern. These are the concerns that have been expressed in the petitions that I have presented.

[16:00]

I have with me a petition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I have not yet presented, and of course I can't at this time during the day. But I will mention that the people that I represent in Rosetown-Elrose are concerned that forced amalgamation will not achieve any cost savings and therefore will not result in any reduction in property tax.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all the projections that we're seeing in west central Saskatchewan and the new expanded school division that is being created in the riding that I represent, we see that the provincial government is intending to withdraw \$4 million of funding from that school district in comparison to what was put into the school districts that the one larger one will replace.

Mr. Speaker, what are parents and what are school trustees supposed to do with the withdrawal of \$4 million of provincial funding for education? They have very, very difficult choices to make, Mr. Deputy Speaker, painful choices to make. They have to either close schools and reduce programs or they have to hike property taxes — property taxes that are already far too high in comparison to the property taxes paid in other parts of Canada — because the provincial NDP government has been negligent in funding education in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners who have been contacting me are also concerned that the voluntary amalgamation process was working, and more school boards were in discussions when the NDP moved to force amalgamation. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all know that it's easier to do something we want to do than to do something we're forced to do.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the previous Education minister in the previous government prior to the last election called for voluntary amalgamations of school boards. And school boards took them seriously. School boards in fact were amalgamating, and they were amalgamating at pretty much the rate that the minister had asked them to. And there was a reduction of approximately 25 per cent of the school districts in Saskatchewan.

But now we have a new and, might I suggest, an arrogant and incompetent minister of Education who said, that's not good enough; I'm going to draw my own map and the people of Saskatchewan are going to have to live with it. And a lot of the work, hard work that was done by the people of Saskatchewan on a voluntary basis is now being undone by this minister, who cares not for the education of children and cares not about the burden placed on property tax payers in the new school districts.

My petitioners also say that affected school boards do not see a benefit for students, because services will not be increased. We have no commitment from the minister of Education to improve the quality of education in Saskatchewan as a result of this new structure that he's put in place. And in fact there is a real concern, with less local input at the school board level, that the quality of education will be diminished and will be of less quality than it has been in the past.

And then also these petitioners say that forced amalgamation is a smokescreen for the real issue, which is how K to 12 education is funded by having the highest rate of education funding through property tax in Canada. And therein, Mr. Deputy Speaker, lies the crux of the matter. The NDP has neglected its responsibility to fund education.

Through the 1990s when the Romanow government was facing fiscal challenges, they in fact reduced funding to education, reduced it drastically. But parents and school boards were not prepared to see the quality of education compromised and they came to the plate by raising property taxes to maintain the quality of education. Because parents and the ratepayers recognize the importance, the critical importance and responsibility of educating our youth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there have been some small increases of the funding of education in the last few budgets, but it certainly has not compensated for the massive cuts and the massive load for funding education that has been placed on property over the last number of years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's some concern also about the rush in putting these new school boards in place. And the reason why we are looking at Bill 105 is because it in fact contains the rules as to how the new school boards will be elected. And the minister has arbitrarily decided that he wants these new school boards functioning fully by January 1, 2006, which is only months away. And yet we currently have school boards that are not yet elected.

These school boards are still trying to attract potential school board members who aren't sure what their responsibilities and roles will be, will not . . . they're not sure of how the new system is going to work. And yet the minister is driving this timetable hard and is not relenting in the slightest in his desire to be heavy-handed and impose a new system upon the people of Saskatchewan before they're ready to embrace it and before they can properly analyze it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've discussed this new system of school boards and the elections with a number of my constituents. I can tell you that the voters are concerned, the ratepayers are concerned. I can tell you that teachers are concerned.

I was able to attend an MLA evening for teachers sponsored by the Saskatchewan federation of teachers, the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation], the Teachers' Federation. And the teachers there were very concerned about additional travel that would be required for the sporting events that they are coaches for and manage. They were concerned about teachers institutes and personal development days when they would have to travel larger distances and yet be expected to be back in the classroom at the, you know, assigned hour to teach students. They recognize that they may not be able to deliver education with the same quality that they have in the past with the new demands that are being placed on them. And they expressed those concerns to me when I was with them in their evening that they spent with MLAs.

These are real concerns. And we're not just talking about \$1 million or \$2 million. We're not talking about whether the boundary goes . . . includes this municipality or that municipality, or whether this town or that town will be in the new school district. What we're really talking about is far more important. We're talking about our children; talking about the quality of education they receive. We're talking about the quality of life that they have as students and the distance they have to travel to schools; whether or not their parents and the parents of their fellow students will have meaningful input into the education system that they are in.

These are real concerns. And these are concerns that the Minister of Education has avoided or neglected or pushed off to the side, and that's particularly unfortunate that he would be so callous and uncaring about such an important matter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is essential that careful consideration be given to Bill 105. The Saskatchewan School Boards Association has asked that we look very carefully at this, and we will have to do that. We've been doing that through this second reading process. This Bill will go to committee, and then will have to be looked at and scrutinized very closely.

The things around the new map for school boards, the new proposals, have not had adequate scrutiny by the people of Saskatchewan, and there are real concerns that have not been addressed.

Nevertheless, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is important that the committee be allowed to look at Bill No. 105. And therefore, with the concerns I've expressed, I would recommend that at this point the Bill proceed on to committee. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the committee is a motion by the minister, that Bill No. 105, The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

referred? I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that Bill 105, The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2005 be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 105, The Local Government Election Amendment Act, be now 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 Deputy Speaker:** — That's carried. The Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

### Bill No. 106

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 106 — The Municipalities Act** be now read a second time.]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to stand today and speak to Bill 106, The Municipalities Act.

This Bill that was just brought in is the second time around. As you know, this Bill was brought in late last fall, I believe it was in November, and it was pulled at the start of this session because of problems within the Bill. And I know we, as the opposition, we took heart on this Bill and said that when the Bill was introduced in November there needed to be some consultation. And we were wondering in that time if all organizations in the province of Saskatchewan were consulted.

We know for a fact SUMA was involved great . . . [inaudible] . . . with this and were probably the biggest pushes behind it. But we had questions regarding SARM. Now we contacted some of the SARM members back in November and they pushed back against it. Some of the reasons that they pushed back was the fact that all municipal leaders from SARM had not a chance to sit down together and discuss this Bill.

And this Bill was well in excess of 200 pages. And when you bring a Bill of this magnitude into the Legislative Assembly and want to have it passed within a week, 10 days, it puts a lot of pressure and everybody has to be on the same side. Last fall SARM was not on the same side. Not because the Bill was totally against SARM but the fact that some of the things that were in the Bill they had a disagreement with, and some of the things that weren't in the Bill, they wanted implemented.

And so this time around the minister has introduced the Bill, and he is quoted saying that there's amendments to this Bill. I have not had a chance to read the whole Bill, but I've read a lot of it. And there are amendments to the Bill. And I really believe that most parties in the province of Saskatchewan are in

agreement with the Bill as it is presented today.

I do have some problems with . . . a couple issues with the Bill, Bill No. 106, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And maybe my comments should be referred to COW [Committee of the Whole], but I would like to bring it to the minister's attention because in estimates I raised one of the issues, and today I'll raise another issue. And at the start of the Bill it states:

“An Act [representing] . . . Rural Municipalities, Towns, Villages and Resort Villages and making consequential amendments to other Acts”.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my capacity as critic for Northern Affairs, I'm just wondering where the northern municipalities fits into this Bill, or are they under or still under the jurisdiction of the northern municipality Act? If they are under the administration of the northern municipality Act, then I'm wondering if the northern municipality Act is okay in its state or if there's problems within that part of the Act that should have been addressed in this Bill. Or did simply the makers of this Bill, the government, forget about Northern Affairs or northern communities?

Whatever it may be, some of the leaders from the northern villages and northern municipalities feel that they are somewhat left out, and this Bill does not address any of those issues. So I guess maybe in Committee of the Whole I can address to the minister why they're not addressed. And maybe we do have Bill of northern municipality Act as being the perfect Bill for them. I would highly doubt that.

Another part of this Bill that I have some concerns with . . . and in fact was when the Minister for Municipal Affairs decided that there should be some meetings. And there was four meetings that took place in February. February 9 there was one in Weyburn, February 10 in Aberdeen, February 10 in Wilkie, and February 12 in Humboldt.

[16:15]

I attended the meeting in Wilkie, and I was surprised to see so many people at this meeting. At lot of the people that were there were SARM, municipal leaders. There was reeves. There was councillors. And they all had questions regarding the legislation.

And a lot of them spoke regarding the legislation in a positive way, but there were still a number of them that had problems with the Act. They made their request, and I remember the minister saying that he will take the request to task. And hopefully the requests of the people at that meeting that day, those recommendations, were implemented into the amendments here. And I'm hoping that's what happened.

I also heard that the other meetings were subsequent the same as the one in Wilkie. People had great concerns. And also at that meeting . . . that meeting was held just before the SARM convention in the springtime in Saskatoon, which I also attended. And on talking to leaders there, they said that this was the first time that SARM actually got a hold of the Bill and could actually sit down as a group of municipal leaders and deal with all of it as a body in whole.

There were a number of leaders from SARM that were in consultation with SUMA and the government in putting forth the former Bill. But this was the first time that all members from SARM got together to discuss this. And maybe there wasn't a lot of changes that needed to be done, but evident was that when this Bill was introduced this spring, the minister decided to pull it, take it back to the drawing board, and redo it to include the amendments that municipal leaders from SARM, rural municipalities, needed to have put in place. And I hope this was done, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of days ago I was asking questions of the minister regarding municipal problems, and it was in regards to the forest fringe issues. And I've been dealing with this for some time. I remember some of the comments that the minister had stated at that time, that if I would take the time to read part of the municipal Act, that I would be able to answer some of the concerns of the people from the forest fringe area that represent their issues. And so I took it upon myself to read it and under division 2, tax roll, it says:

#### Contents and correction of tax roll

264(1) The tax role must show all of the following for each taxable property:

- (a) a description sufficient to identify the location of the property;
- (b) the name and mailing address of the taxpayer;
- (c) the taxable assessment as determined in accordance with section 197;
- (d) the name, tax rate and amount of that each tax imposed with respect to the property;
- (e) [the amount] the total amount of . . . taxes imposed with respect to the property;
- (f) [and] the amount of tax arrears, if any;

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you go back to the first one, where it says, "a description sufficient to identify the location of the property." Well, Mr. Speaker, this is where I have a problem with this for the simple reason the land in question SARM does not have jurisdiction over. SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management] has jurisdiction over.

So I read this and I say, the description sufficiently to identify the location of the property. They are identifying property they have no control over. They are given the power to the municipalities the right to tax that said property. How can you tax something you have no jurisdiction over? And I've read this. I've read this, and I've asked questions many, many times regarding this.

And I go on further where the Act states that the municipality has the right to not tax that property if they so desire. Now when you're dealing with forest fringe, there is only 7 out of 28 municipalities that enforce this right that was given to them back in 1995. Today, by reading this, the Act states that the governing body, the RM [rural municipality] has a right to

delete that from their tax role or impose it. But what gives them the right to tax that when they have no jurisdiction over it?

Members of the forest fringe have been asking this and requesting that they go back over this. And I understand where the minister comes from by saying, if the member would read it he would understand that now they're given the right to reverse that decision. If all seven of the RMs go that route and reverse that decision, that's great. That's what should happen. It should not be imposed in the first place. How can you tax something you don't have jurisdiction over?

The farm group, the forest fringe association farm group are saying we are allowed through SERM, Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, through SERM the ability to graze cattle on that property for 145 days maximum. In years like the last previous two years when it's been dry, it may be only 90 days. It may be 100 days, but it may be 145. They are still taxed on that property, and they have no jurisdiction over it. They can put a fence up to keep the cattle there, but they can't lock the gate because it's public access property.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, if they have no jurisdiction over it, why is the RM allowed to tax it? I've been saying this over and over and over. In fact talking to SERM people, COs [conservation officer] and stuff, they said at one time that they were asked through SARM to be the tax collectors.

Well SERM does not have the power to collect taxes. SERM does not have the power to impose taxes. They have the power to impose permits and monies associated with permits. The biggest problem with this, Mr. Speaker, is this is not lease land. This is permit land — permit land from year to year to year.

Every year the body from the forestry association have to go in and apply to the permit through SERM to utilize that land for the maximum of 145 days. But once the RMs that are taxing this now, are taxing them at a full year, but they're only using it for 145 days.

And I say to the members opposite, how would you like to be taxed on a full year, when you only use it for a portion of time? That's why I've said on many occasions, if you feel that the forestry association and producers need to be taxed on this, tax them for 145 days. But if you're going to do that, then tax all organizations or users of that said permit land.

A couple that come to mind is wood people, people that cut wood, or logging. Are they taxed? No, they're not. What about outfitters? They use that land a year-round basis. Are they taxed? No, they're not. So I say to the minister, why are you still giving the power to RMs to tax this land? Well the minister stands in his place, and he says, we've also given them the power to cancel it.

Well you know, Mr. Speaker, when you have a chicken house and it's full of chickens, and you put the fox in the chicken house and tell him not to eat chickens, I wonder what's going to happen?

You know something, Mr. Speaker? The minister is saying that now we can undo a wrong simply by giving the power to the

RM administrator and council to say, well we won't tax them. But if you were an administrator and an RM with this issue, one of the 28, why wouldn't you take advantage of this? The government allows you to. It is a freebie, a freebie. You can tax this portion of land. You have no jurisdiction whatsoever to. In fact, Mr. Speaker, you don't even have to provide any services. The simple fact is, you can't. You don't have jurisdiction to the land. So why are they imposing a tax? The problem with this, Mr. Speaker, it's not only that they have to play municipal tax. Municipal tax, as everybody knows, is on the portion of tax — \$1. But education tax is \$2 for every \$1 spent.

So now, Mr. Speaker, you have the forest fringe grazing association people, patrons, paying education tax, and they're also paying municipal tax. Then they're also paying permits through SERM. They are taxed and taxed and taxed. And yet the only one that has jurisdiction to that land is SERM.

So when I look at this and I read this under the tax roll, this does state that the municipal council have a right to say no. And hopefully the 7 out of 28 that are charging will say no. But why will they? This should go back to the drawing board. There should be an amendment to this and remove this from the Act before it was implemented. And I've asked minister after minister to do this. Same old . . . they say one thing and do another. Nothing's being done.

Mr. Speaker, that also brings me to another point I want to make in regarding this forest fringe association. And I brought it to the minister's attention in estimates, and I want to bring it up again today, that there is a potential lawsuit that's pending in the RM of Preeceville. And it addresses this very, very issue, where the RM is taking a forest fringe grazer to task because he hasn't paid his taxes. Now the patron is paying taxes on that land. The RM is not providing the service. And you know the forest grazing association is saying, maybe this is what is needed; maybe it has to go to court so that the laws of the land will look at this and understand it better, and then come back to the government and said what they did wrong.

Because I don't believe that this government is listening to this people. I remember a former minister of Municipal Affairs said to me when I was questioning him about this, and he said, well look, member, it's only a handful of people; don't worry about it. Well, Mr. Speaker, those handful of people are still citizens of Saskatchewan. They're taxpayers in the province of Saskatchewan. They pay taxes. And they're not cheap. They don't mind paying their fair share of taxes. The same with most people in this province. But when you are paying tax on something that is wrong, it gets under your skin.

So I say to the minister that I hope this court case does come to light. We will then find out what rights the RM have to be allowed to tax this property when they have no jurisdiction over.

Mr. Speaker, this Act as long as it may be — and it will take some time to read — I believe overall has a lot of good things in it. But there are some wrongs in it, and I believe that it's going to take time for us to contact the municipal leaders to see if it passes their recommendations, especially SARM and the leaders of SARM, to see if it meets all their requirements as far as the amendments to the Act.

And to such time, Mr. Speaker, I know there's some other members from my . . . colleagues that would like to speak to it, and therefore I will adjourn debate.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook that debate on second reading of Bill 106, The Municipalities Act be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion's carried.

### Bill No. 107

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 107 — The Municipalities Consequential Amendment Act, 2005/Loi de 2005 sur les modifications corrélatives découlant de la loi intitulée The Municipalities Act** be now read a second time.]

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise and speak on Bill 107, the municipalities consequential. And Mr. Speaker, this Bill I believe hinges on the backs of The Municipalities Act, Bill 106.

I believe this Bill, when I read it, is basically general housekeeping legislation. What they're trying to do is replace the outdated language relating to certain municipal positions and titles.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill tries to make changes to several bilingual Acts like The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act of 1997. And it also makes changes to The Education Act of 1995. I can't see a whole lot of problems with this Bill, Mr. Speaker, as it hinges on 106. But before we can go ahead and proceed with this Bill, Bill 107, I believe that we have to make sure that everything in Bill 106 is up to where it's supposed to be and all members of the province are consulted and understand this Bill. And therefore I move to adjourn debate on 107.

[16:30]

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook that debate on second reading of Bill 107, The Municipalities Consequential Amendment Act, 2005 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

### Bill No. 86

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Higgins that **Bill No. 86 — The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2004 (No. 2)** be now read a second time.]



**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to get up and have a few comments on this particular labour Bill.

It's always curious when the NDP bring a labour Bill forward, because they have a bad history of not consulting with businesses when they do it. They have . . . I don't know why that they seem to have a problem with businesses over the number of years that they've been in. They're starting back in their old party, CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation], or I'm not even sure what that even stood for back then, then they amalgamated and made a new NDP Party and basically amalgamated with business from what I understand. I mean amalgamated with labour from what I understand to . . . and they've been fighting, seems like, business ever since I can remember.

In fact ever since I've been in the House, I can't remember when a member on that opposite side, the opposite side of the House has gotten up and talked about business, saying how we need business, how this province needs business, how can we work with businesses to grow this province. And I've heard that very little from that side of the House over the number of years that I've been there, Mr. Speaker.

You know this . . . You can go back to, I guess, when they tried to nationalize the potash. They did nationalize the potash. And they wonder why that they don't work with businesses very well at that end of it. And I know that there was . . . they tried to nationalize the old business, starting with in the '70s. And also if you go back to even 1947 with CCF, whatever that stands for, came into power and basically chased the old companies out because of the nationalization that was going on. They nationalized a number of businesses through that period of time.

So they've always, ever since I can remember about this party, they've been at odds with business, you know. And then they wonder why this province isn't growing the way it should be. They wonder why business is fearful of them and doesn't come here and wants to work with them. I don't understand why this government can't sit down and work with business. On a particular labour Bill like this, why can't . . . sit down with business and sit down with labour and work something out that will work for both parties — work for both labour and work for both businesses.

But no, they just seem to go on one side, favouring all the time at that end. And that is the trouble they've gone into. That's what they got into, the trouble they got into with their most available hours legislation that they, all of a sudden, just proclaimed without consulting with the people, with the business and . . . [inaudible] . . . not even consulting them that much with labour, doing something for labour that they feel that the labour wants.

And maybe some union leaders want it, but not the people that work in the businesses. The majority of them didn't want most available hours. I had people in my constituency that didn't want it, that would . . . affected them for various reasons and that did not want it, Mr. Speaker, you know.

And I've been told in my constituency time and time again from people in the labour end of it that actually work, that are working people, say that, you know, this government, even though they talk about labour, they seem to just listen to the labour union bosses and whatever they want. They don't want to work with the people, with the people that are actually doing the work, Mr. Speaker.

On this particular Bill, at this end of it, some of the things it talks about is whistle-blower legislation, which is good. But then they move into another area in the whistle-blowers where a third party or anonymous can make complaints against business. And that has people worried. Because you get, at that end of it, you can bring a frivolous . . . something frivolous against a business. That can be a business down the street that maybe a neighbour doesn't like, can start bringing anonymous complaints against this business constantly and then they have to be investigated at that end of it.

And we know that can happen, because there is a movement out there that people, just some people just don't like businesses. One of them is the hog operations out there, mega hog operations. There are many people that don't like it. So with this piece of legislation, they could just start bringing one complaint after another, making anonymous not . . . so that not making any of the complaints valid. But as long as they make a complaint that can't be traced back to them, they can just make it constantly, causing that particular business, you know, a bit of hardship in having to address that concern, a different end of it. And that has businesses worried about it.

And that's something this government didn't do. It didn't sit down with the businesses. Didn't even sit down, I don't think even with labour, the labour movement, the actual people that work in there and ask how can we work together to build this province.

Because I mean, both people, both end of it, whether it's the people that work in their labour or for the businesses, they both work there, Mr. Speaker. All they want is a fair and reasonable place to work. The employers, you know, want that and the employees want that. But they also want to work together because, I mean, just about every employee that works for a business, I mean, they enjoy working there. They enjoy their bosses. They enjoy the management. And the bosses, you know, management, they enjoy working with them. Most of the people I've talked to, I'd say 95 per cent of the people that work for a living enjoy what . . . because you have to enjoy what you do, you know, Mr. Speaker.

But this government doesn't seem to maybe take that in consideration, that employers and employees work very well together, you know. So why not sit down with the union leaders and upper management and try to work out something that is compatible, that both can be happy with?

I don't think . . . With this particular piece of legislation, there's still a lot of unanswered questions on it. There's a lot of concerns on it. It's been on the order paper since fall, on it. And you go back, and there has been . . . From what I understand, that the business wasn't consulted with it at this end of it, at that end of it. There was no consultation even though the Premier had promised that he would consult with business before he

brought in, forced any labour legislation.

And also, there's another Bill on the order paper, 87, that same thing, that there was basically no consulting with the people that it affects at that end of it, you know. And yet, you know, this government it talks about labour, constantly talks about labour.

But then I can remember on SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], I can remember on that committee how this government got around the own union preference Act by starting, by saying with Con-Force that they had a partnership, a 51 per cent partnership, so they wouldn't have to union, wouldn't have to use unionized workers building the potato sheds on there. Now is that a party that is in favour of unions, you know? They say one thing, and they're doing another.

I look back in that history there of that, and we found out that basically that Con-Force, I think had about, if I remember right, a couple of hundred dollars invested in it when the government was trying to say at one time they had 51 per cent. And that's why we couldn't use the union preference tendering Act and that they didn't fall under that because it was 51 per cent private business owned. And it came out in later years that no, it wasn't; that government was running the whole show at that end of it, Mr. Speaker, you know.

So this party, this government, you know, has a habit, a really bad habit, of saying one thing and doing another. So with this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, that's why I think it should be still left in adjourned debate, because there's a lot of unanswered questions out there that need to be addressed.

I think this government has to sit down and work with business at this particular end of it, and I know that other MLAs later on are going to want to address this Bill. So right now I'd like to adjourn debate on Bill 86.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Arm River-Watrous that debate on second reading of Bill 86, The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2004 (No. 2) be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

### Bill No. 87

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Higgins that **Bill No. 87 — The Trade Union Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.]

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Cannington.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 87 is an interesting piece of legislation, let's say. It certainly will have an impact on the operations of trade union, employer relationships in this province. Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that it'll have a good impact, but it will certainly have an impact on how the relationship will be in the

future between employer, employees, and the Labour Relations Board, Mr. Speaker.

There's a lot in this piece of legislation that people across the province are questioning. And I think they question it with validity, Mr. Speaker, as to how this Act is actually going to impact on the operations of businesses, how it's going to impact the operations of unions, and what it's going to mean in the life of the employees that work for any business, Mr. Speaker, that operates under a union environment or, Mr. Speaker, that might operate under a union environment but that isn't presently. Or, Mr. Speaker, how it's going to impact on the lives of employees that are working in a union workplace today but want to withdraw from a union workplace through decertification.

And we've certainly seen lots of places, Mr. Speaker, that have had union drives and have certified the workplaces as a union shop, which is the rights of the employees, Mr. Speaker, to do so. They have the right in Canada to bargain collectively if they so wish. But conversely, Mr. Speaker, those that are employed in a workplace that is unionized and wish to decertify also have that right, Mr. Speaker — also have that right.

And yet in this particular piece of legislation, it brings into question the ease at which you can certify and the ease at which you can decertify. And I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that there's a huge difference in the ease of one versus the other, that it's not equal in either direction. And I think that causes some difficulty for some workplaces and some employees, Mr. Speaker. And I think we need to explore that further.

This Bill also talks and deals with how the Labour Relations Board actually operates — what their operating authorities are, what their powers to operate are, and how they can exercise those powers, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things that we see in this particular Act is a change that allows the chairman of the board to make regulations prescribing the rules and procedures for matters before the board. Well, Mr. Speaker, normally in the province of Saskatchewan regulations are done by ministers and by departments that are answerable to this legislature. And the fact is, under the new rules of the legislature, all regulations are reviewable by the standing committees of this Assembly.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, the Labour Relations Board does not come before this Assembly. They do not report to this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. So how do the standing committees of this legislature that are responsible for labour, for the Labour department, how do they review the regulations as outlined by this Act when they're being made by the chairman of the Labour Relations Board who does not report to this legislature, Mr. Speaker?

I think there's a flaw in the government's argument there, and in the authorities that they're asking this legislature to grant to the Labour Relations Board; that they are somehow making a move, Mr. Speaker, to circumvent the authority of this legislature — the authority to review regulations as implemented by the Labour Relations Board because the Labour Relations Board does not report to this legislature. It does not report to any one of the standing committees of this legislature, Mr. Speaker. So this House will not have an

opportunity to review the rules and regulations as imposed by the chairman of the Labour Relations Board.

And that is a serious flaw, Mr. Speaker, in this piece of legislation that needs to be corrected and needs to be changed through an amendment to not allow the chairman to make amendments on his own, or her own as the case may be. But rather those regulations that the government may wish to make need to be made by the minister who in turn then reports to this legislature and reports to the standing committees, Mr. Speaker, where they can be questioned and where the validity of that regulation can be dealt with and debated, and whether it serves a needed public policy, Mr. Speaker, because that is now part of the rules.

[16:45]

That is now part of the operations of the standing committees that they can review the regulations to determine their value in public policy. That cannot happen, Mr. Speaker, under the current situation where the person making the regulations does not appear before the standing committees, Mr. Speaker. So I think that's a serious flaw that needs to be looked at.

Now in a number of pieces of legislation, Mr. Speaker, the government has given themselves the authority to make regulation. It's the minister, or the minister's agents, but the minister reports back to the legislature. It doesn't do that here, Mr. Speaker. It says:

The [chairman] . . . of the board may make regulations prescribing the rules and procedures for matters before the board . . .

Further on:

. . . including preliminary procedures, and prescribing forms that are consistent with this Act and any other regulations made pursuant to this Act.

So there can be other regulations as well, Mr. Speaker, that can be made in relationship to this Act. And it goes on to explain where those regulations can come from.

The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations interpreting, defining, enlarging . . . restricting how the provisions of the *Canada Labour Code* mentioned in section [19] . . . apply for the purposes of this Act.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Lieutenant Governor in Council, as represented by the Minister of Labour, is responsible and accountable to this legislature, but the chairman of the Labour Relations Board is not accountable to this legislature. And that's a serious flaw, Mr. Speaker, in this piece of legislation that needs to be corrected by this government before this legislation becomes law. Before its proclamation, I believe that the government needs to correct that situation to ensure that the person responsible for making the regulations is answerable to this legislature, and therefore that person should be the minister, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, some of the powers that are being given to the board under the title of provisional powers of the board, is that

the board can review any matters that are before it. And that is appropriate, Mr. Speaker, that they deal with things that come before the board.

But in determining that power, the government is giving them the power to . . . and I'll read, it's section 18(b):

. . . the power to determine the form in which and the time within which any party . . . [or] proceeding before the board must file or present any thing, document or information and to refuse to accept any thing, document or information that is not filed or presented in that form or by that time . . .

Well, Mr. Speaker, while this is an Act and not the regulations, it gives the chairman of the board, and the board itself, considerable power in adjusting the items that are requested and the time frames for presentation, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's critical — time frames for implementation — because further on in the Act, it describes who can present things to the board and when they can present items to the board, applications to the board.

So if there is a very narrow window of opportunity for presentation, Mr. Speaker — and we all know how slowly the wheels of government can sometimes grind — someone makes an application to the board with a limited time window of availability. If there's an error — you know, it's not dotted properly, it's not crossed properly — by the time that item of an application could be looked at, the time frame may have expired because of the narrow frame of that time frame, Mr. Speaker, meaning that another section of this Act now becomes applicable, where the applicant can no longer apply for redress on the initial application. Because of a minor error, they have to wait a minimum of another year, a minimum of another year because some part of the form may not have been filled out properly, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's an abuse of power. I think there needs to be some leeway in there for minor issues, minor irritants — such as the member from Meadow Lake, Mr. Speaker — and that we can deal with things in an appropriate manner.

Mr. Speaker, this Act goes on further to talk about some of the other issues that are of concern to people across the province, Mr. Speaker. It talks about how the board should gain access to information. It talks about being able to investigate, to be able to enter into premises for the means of examining documents, for observing the carrying on of business.

And it talks in particular, Mr. Speaker, about what is required from an employer and it talks about what is required from a trade union that is making an application. Either one — the employer making the application or the trade union making the application and the relationship based on that application, Mr. Speaker, and how the Labour Relations Board will deal with them. And it says, Mr. Speaker, that the board will have:

(e) the power to require any person, trade union or employer to post and keep posted in a place determined by the board, or to send by any means that the board determines, any notice that the board considers necessary to bring to the attention of any employee . . .

Now that in itself in relationship to the boards . . . the application before the board, I think is appropriate, Mr. Speaker, that all the employees, whether you be the owner, whether you be the president, whether you be an employee on the union shop floor, that everyone has the opportunity to be aware of what is going on, so that the labour board can communicate with all of the employees, either as a employer or an employee.

But I think it's also important, Mr. Speaker, that both the other two parties involved in this, the trade union and the business, also have an opportunity to communicate with the employees, Mr. Speaker, and I don't see that being dealt with here. I see the board's concerns being dealt with as far as their communications, but I don't see the opportunity for the employer or the trade union's communications being dealt with here, Mr. Speaker.

Further on, Mr. Speaker, under clause (f):

(f) the power to enter any premises of an employer where work is being or has been done by employees, or in which the employer carries on a business, whether or not the premises are those of the employer, and to inspect and view any work, material, machinery, appliances, articles, records or documents [or] . . . question any [purpose] . . .

Well that's pretty broad, Mr. Speaker, because it's not unusual for outside of the workplace, for work to be carried out from the employer's point of view, Mr. Speaker. The employer may have other management employees over to their home for supper or just even for a meeting, Mr. Speaker, in which they're carrying out business, business of that organization. So that opens up, Mr. Speaker, that the board can then go into that home and search for all of the things that are mentioned here — any work, material, machinery, appliances, articles, records, or documents, or question any person.

So if the employees — yours, the manager, the president, whatever they might be, spouse — happens to be there, they can question them even though they aren't related to the business, Mr. Speaker. They can go into their home and question their spouses. I believe that's wrong, Mr. Speaker. Not even the police, Mr. Speaker, in investigation of a crime have that ability. If they wish to enter into a person's home they have to get a warrant. If they want to question a person then they have to inform them of their rights, Mr. Speaker, so that they can be protected as well.

And none of that is being provided under the Labour Relations Board with this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. But let's take a look now at the other side, because this doesn't affect just employers. It also affects the trade unions. Here is what the Act says about the powers of the board in relationship to the trade unions:

. . . the power to enter any premises of a trade union and to inspect and view any work, material, articles, records or documents and question any person . . .

Well just quickly reading through that, Mr. Speaker, you think it's the same thing because it deals with the same items. But, Mr. Speaker, nowhere in here does it say that the Labour

Relations Board can go anyplace other than where the trade union is at. So if the head of the trade union discusses business with other members of the trade union in his home, the Labour Relations Board does not have the right to investigate that home or look for materials and records and documents, etc., at that home.

So I guess you have to ask: why is it acceptable to invade the home of one group of this discussion and not the other? If one's home should be sacrosanct, then the home on the other side should be sacrosanct as well, Mr. Speaker. And if the Labour Relations Board wants to carry on an investigation in a home, then they should have to get a warrant. They should have to go before a judge. Whether it's the employer's home or the trade unionist's, they should have to go before a judge and explain to the judge why they believe it's necessary that they have this warrant to search someone's home.

You can't do it for drugs, Mr. Speaker, you just can't walk in and search someone's home. You can't do it under the liberal government's Firearms Act even though they wanted to that initially, Mr. Speaker. So why can you do that under the Labour Relations Act? It doesn't make any sense, Mr. Speaker.

This is clearly a violation of people's human rights in Canada. It's clearly a violation of what Pierre Trudeau brought forward in 1982, supported, Mr. Speaker, by Allan Blakeney, designed and built and agreed to by another premier in this province, Roy Romanow, when he sat around the kitchen table, Mr. Speaker, with the Attorney General of Ontario, Roy McMurtry, and, Mr. Speaker, the federal Minister of Justice at that time, Jean Chrétien. So why is this NDP government today trying to abrogate the rights and privileges that each Canadian citizen holds dearly with this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker?

**An Hon. Member:** — Tell us why they would do that.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, my colleague says, why would they want to do that. That's a very good question. I can't get into the minds of the members opposite to understand how they think. But they somehow believe that there is some sort of a nefarious happening going on that businesses need, or businesses should have that threat hanging over their head, that the Labour Relations Board can come swooping into your business, take all of your records, come into your home and violate your privacy, with impunity, Mr. Speaker, because they further on go to say that members of the Labour Relations Board should be treated as if they were . . . I'll read it:

The members of the board shall have the same privileges and immunities as a judge of the Court of Queen's Bench.

Well, Mr. Speaker, they're not appointed to the Court of Queen's Bench. They're on the Labour Relations Board which . . . The Court of Queen's Bench requires different rules and regulations and conduct from judges than does the Labour Relations Board, Mr. Speaker. They don't have to meet the same strict requirements that a judge has to. And yet they're being given the same immunity as a judge receives, Mr. Speaker, even though they don't have to meet the same qualifications and the same review in receiving an appointment.

Mr. Speaker, a Court of Queen's Bench judge is appointed with a recommendation by the Law Society. Who makes that recommendation, Mr. Speaker, for an appointment to the Labour Relations Board? There is no professional society that makes that, that judges the applicants. Or the people who may be qualified to become a judge, there is a group for that. But there is no professional society that judges the qualifications to become a member of the Labour Relations Board, Mr. Speaker.

[17:00]

So the criteria is completely different, and yet this government wants to give them the same immunities as members of the court would receive, Mr. Speaker. And clearly that, again, is not an acceptable practice, Mr. Speaker. If they want to have the immunities and the privileges of a judge, then they should go through the same kind of rigorous process of selection that a judge goes through, Mr. Speaker. Their impartiality should be ensured just like a judge.

And the fact is, Mr. Speaker, I was just reading today one of the other Acts that are before the House, dealing with Executive Council and the Legislative Assembly, on who and who cannot be a member of this Assembly, who can and cannot participate in partisan politics. And judges are one of those that are excluded. No place in there, in this Act does it say that the members of the Labour Relations Board can't participate in partisan politics, Mr. Speaker, so the criteria is completely different. Therefore they should not receive those immunities, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if the government wants to insist that the Labour Relations Board has the power to enter into any premises where they consider that business may have been carried out or that there may be work, or materials, machinery, appliances, articles, records, documents, and to question any person on the employer's side, then those very same things need to apply on the trade union side as well.

We in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, believe that there is a need for fairness. And clearly these two sections of the Act, 18(f) and 18(g), are not equally weighted, Mr. Speaker. There is no fairness when they are different. Either one of them needs to be changed, Mr. Speaker. Either businesses have the same rights and the same protections that the trade unions have, or the trade unions have to face the same impositions that the businesses, the employers face, Mr. Speaker. You can't have both of them being unfair.

Another sector, Mr. Speaker, that deserves and needs some consideration in this particular Act, needs to be reviewed, is the section dealing with new first contracts where the board . . . I'll read this section:

If the board has made an order pursuant to clause 5(b), the trade union and the employer, or their authorized representatives, must meet and commence bargaining collectively within 20 days after the order is made, unless the parties agree otherwise.

And this is for a first contract, Mr. Speaker, where the board has determined on certification of a new workplace. So they have to meet within 20 days to commence collective bargaining.

Well 20 days at the beginning, you know, there's probably still some animosities there, but 20 days is maybe not too bad. But it should say 20 working days, Mr. Speaker, rather than 20 days because you could end up with that period being over a couple of statutory holidays — three of them if you're looking at Christmastime — where there isn't a lot of work that happens in that particular period of time, Mr. Speaker.

And so there will be some difficulties there in completing this within 20 days if you're simply looking at the calendar and marking off 1 to 20, Mr. Speaker. It should be 20 working days. So that takes into account time that people may not be at their place of work because of statutory holidays, weekends, or whatever the case may be, Mr. Speaker.

But the real, the real crutch though, Mr. Speaker, on this comes in at the tail end where under this Act the union and the employers have to have completed their first contract within 90 days, Mr. Speaker — within 90 days. So really it gives them 70 calendar days in which to do their negotiation. So they're starting with a clean slate, a blank piece of paper, and now they have to go through and define every position. They have to go through and define the criteria for every position. They have to go through and determine the qualifications, how you would move up or down the ladder, Mr. Speaker. You have to determine all of the salary scales. You have to determine which positions are in scope, which positions are out of scope, Mr. Speaker. There is a lot of work to do.

And I don't believe . . . And if you talk to most people, including union members, they will tell you that the first contract rarely, if ever, happens within 90 days because there is too much to do to get there. And fact is, if you look at most first contracts, Mr. Speaker, you're probably approaching closer to a year than you are to 90 days.

So I think the government is rushing this in attempting to force it in 90 days, but then perhaps that's the government's desire to be able to use the Labour Relations Board to impose a first contract on a new workplace, a contract that's not negotiated between the employees and the employer but rather one that's been imposed by the government. And we've seen how successful that has worked, Mr. Speaker. We've seen how successful the government's 0, 1, and 1 mandate is on salary negotiations with its very own workers that have been . . . these contracts have been in place for many, many years, Mr. Speaker.

And yet when the other night in questioning the Minister of Health, he was asked how long have the health negotiations been going on with the union's representative in that sector, these contracts have been going on, in some cases, negotiations for over a year, Mr. Speaker, and these contracts are already in place. They're not trying to establish all the ground rules; that's already there. And yet it's taken the government over a year to negotiate an existing contract, Mr. Speaker, and yet they expect a new union dealing with a new workplace to complete their negotiations within 90 days of which 70 days of that is the real negotiation because there's 20 days set aside for the first meeting, Mr. Speaker.

Clearly the government either is being unrealistic in putting forward 90 days, or they have some other motive, Mr. Speaker,

for doing this — that they want to simply impose on that workplace the contract, whatever it might be.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that again we see the government interfering in the negotiations within the workplace with fair . . . interfering in fair bargaining practices, Mr. Speaker, simply to impose their own will for whatever political purpose they may have, Mr. Speaker, on those employees and on that workplace. So, Mr. Speaker, there is a considerable amount of difficulty with this particular Act that I think the government needs to have some sober second thought on before they proceed with it.

So you have to wonder though, Mr. Speaker, exactly what it is that this whole Act is supposed to be doing, Mr. Speaker. They're giving the Labour Relations Board powers that the police do not have. They're trying to make the members of the Labour Relations Board . . . give them immunity and privilege that Queen's Bench judges have. They're trying to impose on the workplace, on the employees and the employers, a contract with an unrealistic time frame in it for negotiations. So why is this, Mr. Speaker? What are they trying to do? I guess we need to go back to the very beginning. What is the government trying to fix with this legislation? What was the problem that precipitated these changes, Mr. Speaker?

The government has not explained that at all. The questions have been asked. The Minister of Labour has not answered the question: what is broken that you're trying to fix, Mr. Speaker? And we get nothing for answers. We get words, but they don't add up to an understandable meaning, Mr. Speaker. The minister simply continues to skirt the issue and refuses to answer as to why they are carrying on in the manner that they're doing.

Mr. Speaker, there are a good number of reasons why this particular piece of legislation needs to be given more time for the government to give consideration to either withdrawing it or making the changes that are necessary in bringing a piece of legislation like this forward. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Cannington that debate on second reading of Bill 87, The Trade Union Amendment Act, 2004 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

### Bill No. 88

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Higgins that **Bill No. 88 — The Health Labour Relations Reorganization Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.]

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to speak to Bill No. 88, An Act to amend The Health Labour

Relations Reorganization Act. As we know, Mr. Speaker, the Dorsey report came in, and the government brought in a Bill in 1996 to bring together many or all of the health care workers under the same bargaining units. And this amendment really speaks to two components.

This Bill is giving the Labour Relations Board the power to make an order on multi-employer bargaining units. As an example, Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, SUN, represents members across the province who work in different health authorities. And the other part of the Bill that it does . . . it extends the Dorsey recommendations for another year which prevents members, who have been put in unions by Dorsey when the health regions were rejigged the first time around, from applying to the Labour Relations Board as The Trade Union Act gives them the right to, to choose the union that they wish to represent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's some unions that have been very upset with this, and the medical technologists and technicians have been lobbying the government for the past nine years to have the right to choose their own union. And, Mr. Speaker, they've been very vocal about their concerns, and I'd just like to read parts of a letter to the editor that the president of the Saskatchewan Association of Medical Technicians and Technologists Inc. has to say. And the president writes:

I am writing [to respond] to concerns raised by [the] SAMTT members to statements made by the Saskatchewan Labour Minister Deb Higgins.

In the Provincial Legislature on March 31, 2005, the Honourable Ms. Higgins defended a proposed bill which ensures further segregation, discrimination and oppression of the Health Care Workers in Saskatchewan.

He goes on to say:

On three occasions Ms. Higgins stated "The Trade Union Act does not allow for decisions to be made in multi-employer bargaining units by the Labour Relations Board." However, contrary to her statement, the recommendation of the Dorsey Commission which states "Two province-wide, multi-employer standard bargaining units [with] specific occupations will be the only exceptions to the 30 primary all-employee units" was put into effect by The Health Labour Reorganization in 1996. There are currently five Unions in Saskatchewan for Health Care Workers: CUPE, SEIU . . . SGEU, which cover multi-employer standard bargaining units for the Health Service Providers; [and] HSAS which covers multi-employer bargaining units for Licensed Providers, and SUN which covers multi-employer bargaining units for Nurses.

And the letter goes on, Mr. Speaker:

Under the Trade Union Acts in all provinces and territories: "Employees [and he quotes, employees] have the right to organize in, and to form, join or assist trade unions and to bargain collectively through a trade Union of their own choosing." However, under the Health Labour Relations Reorganization Act, Saskatchewan Health Care

Workers are not presently allowed these rights enjoyed by other Canadian workers. Health Care Workers in Saskatchewan deserve the right not to be segregated, oppressed, or discriminated against in the name of Health Care Reorganization. If the Trade Union Act does not allow for decisions to be made in multi-employer bargaining units [for] the Labour Relations Board, as stated by the Honourable Ms. Higgins, then amendments should be made to the Labour Act.

And he goes on to say:

Any solution to Health Care Labour issues must start with a mutual respect towards all parties involved which includes the rights and freedoms allowed workers under the law. The NDP should keep this in mind when they are representing the public.

And the president signs off. Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. The history of the NDP government, they brought in the Dorsey report. They forced amalgamation of the health care regions, initially to 32 districts, and now we know the regions are down to 13. But even this government not only didn't trust the people of Saskatchewan to be able to work within the initial health care regions, but this government didn't trust their traditional friends in the union movement when they forced various health care professionals into five bargaining units.

And to this day, they have not allowed these various unions within these bargaining units to choose their own union or their bargaining unit that they would like to belong to. And every year the government brings in an amendment to the original 1996 Bill, which continues this practice of not allowing, as in this case, the medical technicians and technologists to, under The Trade Union Act, to choose their own bargaining unit.

And it makes you wonder why that this NDP government, Mr. Speaker, seems like they don't seem to trust anyone in Saskatchewan. They force the changes in the health districts. As we've seen, they've tried to force amalgamation of RMs, and they had to back down on that. They have now forced the amalgamation of school boards, Mr. Speaker, and it's just a repetition of not trusting people in Saskatchewan, not trusting business, not trusting even their so-called labour friends into deciding which bargaining unit that they would like to represent.

And it's interesting that the government has not respected the wishes of the people of Saskatchewan, and they don't respect the wishes of the rank and file of this particular union and, I might add, many other members that belong to unions. As we see, this government not only doesn't trust the people of Saskatchewan. They don't trust the businesses, and they don't trust the rank and file union members.

But when we look at what the government does, as an example in SPUDCO, when they pretended to have a private partner with 51 per cent of the SPUDCO operation to get around their own labour laws — and it's interesting again, they stab the people that are traditionally their friends in the back every time — and we find out later the minister of the day had to apologize. He not only kept the truth from the legislature and the people of Saskatchewan, but even his own caucus and

cabinet were not aware of what was going on. And it's interesting, the mindset of the member and of this government when it comes to these types of labour issues.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what is this union to do? Well the government continues to bring in an amendment to the original Bill in 1996. And again and again, year after year, this union and other unions come and they lobby hard to really regain their right, which is allowed to other people in Saskatchewan under The Trade Union Act. And year after year, this government does not allow them their basic rights which is given to workers across Canada, in other provinces across Canada, which the labour movement across Canada takes for granted; that they're able to choose their own bargaining unit and work things out with their employer on the basis of their own bargaining unit that they would wish to belong to.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the government continues to really run away from this particular union, from the rank-and-file members of this union and the other members of the labour movement because, for what reason, we can only guess. We can only guess why. But I suggest that this government doesn't trust these people. This government seems to be paranoid about allowing other people in Saskatchewan society to make their own way. And this government seems to feel that they have to have control of every item in the society.

And if the NDP government doesn't get its way, well they bring in laws to change things so that they control, they continue to keep control, power in their hands, and quite frankly to the detriment of the province. But the NDP keep gathering more control and power over the lives of people rather than letting the people of Saskatchewan having the freedom to choose their own bargaining unit and the right to bargain freely as every other union in the country does, and as in every other province. So it's very interesting that this government continues to do that.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting circumstances that we find ourselves in. It's very interesting to see the SAMTT [Saskatchewan Association of Medical Technicians and Technologists Inc.] members continuing to have concerns about this Bill. And one wonders how long will it be before this NDP government begins to trust the rank-and-file members of this union to determine their own future in their own way, like every other union does in the province, and quite frankly, in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, so we will continue to . . . other members of my party would like to speak to this Bill. And we will continue to consult with the people of Saskatchewan and the rank-and-file union members of this province. And we will continue to put pressure on this government to really take a second look and begin to trust the people of Saskatchewan, because at the end of the day, the people of Saskatchewan know better than the NDP government. So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move to adjourn debate.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Biggar that debate on second reading of Bill No. 88, The Health Labour . . . Order, members. That Bill No. 88, The Health Labour Relations Reorganization Amendment Act, 2004 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Bill No. 95**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Forbes that **Bill No. 95 — The Ecological Reserves Amendment Act, 2005** be now read a second time.]

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to talk regarding the ecological reserve Act, Bill 95. And before starting, I had the pleasure of reading the comments made by the member from Cypress Hills. And in regards to this Bill, I think he put it the best that I've ever heard. And I would just like to quote in his comments regarding this Bill to reinforce to the Assembly what is happening in the Great Sand Hills. And the member says, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, nobody has offered more protection to the delicate nature of the Sand Hills than the very individuals who are operating leases in that area, who are running cattle in that area . . . who are very protective, personally . . . [for] the fragile, ecological balance that exists in that particular area of southwest Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Cypress knows this area like the back of his hand and he speaks very well of it. His concerns, and concerns of many of the people from the Great Sand Hills, is the fact that this Bill triples the size of the area that was protected before, tripling the size of that, Mr. Speaker, and unless the government has good reason to do this, then I have questions regarding it.

I also read the report from the Minister from Environment and in his second reading of this Bill, he states and I quote:

The Great Sand Hills ecological reserve covers 36,585 hectares or 141.25 square miles. That's about 18 per cent of the Great Sand Hills. The amendments would allow for activities such as exercising treaty rights, ranching and hunting to continue in the Great Sand Hills representative areas . . . However, [however, Mr. Speaker] activities such as gas development would not be allowed.

Now let me repeat that again, Mr. Speaker. The amendments would allow for activities such as exercising treaty rights, ranching, and hunting to continue, but not gas development.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Wildlife Federation — and a long-time member of the Wildlife Federation and kind of an environment activist — I remember asking questions of this government regarding critical habitat wildlife land, protected land. And we all know what happened last year when I started asking question in estimates regarding this land, and found out that this government, the NDP government was selling off that land, turning that land into land to satisfy treaty rights.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this critical habitat wildlife land that we

have in place was put in place by a lot of individuals — biologists, Wildlife Federation membership, members. Members from the government sat down and decided what land in the province of Saskatchewan should be set aside for wildlife or environment, and they took a lot of time and did a lot of homework to preserve that land. And out of the blue the government comes along and it says with a stroke of the pen, we will use this critical, very, very critical land to satisfy treaty land entitlements.

And here we are, Mr. Speaker, right back to the same thing. We have land that is somewhat protected in the Great Sand Hills, and the minister states that the amendments that would allow activities of this land to exercise treaty rights, hunting, and ranching.

Mr. Speaker, where are we going with this? In the comments made by the member from Cypress Hills, he states that the ranchers of that land are probably the best and most critical environmentalists of that land. They know the land inside and out. And now with this amendment or this Act we are going to have another body who . . . Are they better users of the land?

Mr. Speaker, the Wildlife Federation raised questions regarding this critical habitat wildlife land and I brought them to the legislature. And at that point in time the minister said that they would be replacing the land that they took out of the critical habitat wildlife protection Act, replacing it with land, but they were going to leave the land in question as it is, under protection.

Now we have some more land, and is this going into that same parcel of critical habitat wildlife land? If it is, why are we allowing it for hunting? I don't follow the minister's reasoning in protecting this land unless he is going to give it sole protection. And I don't believe he's doing that with recommendations regarding this amendment Act.

So I believe, Mr. Minister, you have to go back to your drawing board and explain why . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. I do believe that the member ought to make all of his remarks to the Chair.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. I know I should be doing that but the minister over there, I was trying to get his attention.

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. There ought not to be . . . Order, order. There ought not to be any debate on a ruling of the Speaker. I recognize the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not do that again.

Mr. Speaker, in regards to this Act, I'm wondering what the Wildlife Federation is going to say when they read this. I believe they will have concerns regarding this. Not only them, but other officials, other people in the province of Saskatchewan, especially people from the Southwest, will have problems with this.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, the Great Sand Hills is very, very



critical land and I believe that there should be an environmental assessment of this land. The assessment should be conducted in an environmental impact assessment which sets forth the basics for a comprehensive implementation plan for long-term management of the Great Sand Hills.

I also believe that the involvement of land users and those with an interest in this environmental impact assessment process should be contacted. I don't believe that all the users of that land have been contacted and I believe they have issues with that.

There is also, Mr. Speaker, the zoning outside of this additional existing protected land, this extra land put into the Act. What is going to be the zoning bylaws of that said land and what is going to be the existing protections regarding that land?

Also, Mr. Speaker, in that said land there should be conservationists that will look at the wildlife of that land. They should conduct surveys for rare and endangered species, they should establish standards that include the use of appropriate native plants, and also assess the need to increase and decrease hunting opportunities, ensure that the steps are taken to manage the risk of wildfires.

In regards to increasing or decreasing hunting opportunities, Mr. Speaker, when we go back to the comments made by the minister in regarding this land set aside for treaty rights, I'm just wondering if this will put a huge impact on the hunting of that said land. I'm wondering if this said land will then become an outfitting business, which then will put a huge amount of pressure on the resources of that said land.

So there again, Mr. Speaker, I also think that the minister needs to conduct some worthy studies of this to see what impact that will make on that land. It also will make an impact on the government as far as selling hunting licences to that land.

Mr. Speaker, we also need to conserve the air and the water resources. We also need to understand the groundwater resources contained within the Great Sand Hills. We need to conserve and develop and implement a water management strategy, and we need to understand the impacts of all forms of airborne pollution.

Mr. Speaker, there's lots that needs to be understood about this Act regarding the Great Sand Hills and we need to do it before this Bill is passed. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, at this time I know that there are many colleagues of mine that would like to speak regarding this Bill, and I would like to hear from organizations in and around the province regarding this Bill; and therefore I move to adjourn debate.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook that debate on second reading of Bill 95, The Ecological Reserves Amendment Act, 2005 be now adjourned.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

## Bill No. 98

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Forbes that **Bill No. 98 — The Prairie and Forest Fires Amendment Act, 2005** be now read a second time.]

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Batoche.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with pleasure I rise to speak on Bill No. 98, The Prairie and Forest Fires Amendment Act.

I recognize the intent of this Bill, but I'm concerned that there will be no reduction in funding. And then also, I've got a concern with the let it burn policy. And I quote from *Hansard* the other day where the Environment minister says:

The new policy also allows fire, wherever possible, to play a more natural role in the ecology of our northern forest.

How will you control the fire, is my question. When a fire runs along treetops, how do you stop that fire when it reaches a populated area?

Controlling fires is as an exacting an art as picking lottery ticket numbers. I've seen the damage done by a well-intending farmer burning stubble. Letting a forest fire burn could have the same effect only on a much, much larger scale. Our main concern is first for human life and letting a fire run is a very, very risky venture. Adequate funding must be in place, and adequate equipment and trained personnel must be in place. There can be no compromise on that.

When the province was born in 1905, Big River saw mill was the largest saw mill in the entire British Empire. So we have tremendous potential. I would like to see Saskatchewan forestry again become forestry leaders in Canada. The forestry centre in P.A. [Prince Albert] says we have that potential to rival British Columbia.

I believe we should be harvesting forests, not letting them burn. Saskatchewan forests reach maturity at approximately 80 years of age. We should be harvesting them at that time. Young forests are not such a risk to burning as old forests. When forests get old, they die. In the majority of cases, this death is by fire. So fire is the great renewer of the forest. The problem is that it's very, very uncontrollable and so very dangerous. Caution must be taken to be sure the proper steps are taken to protect our people and to advance our forest industry that it might achieve maximum potential.

If the minister will assure us that there will be adequate funding if a wildfire takes place, I will take this Bill out to the people who work in the forest and seek their approval. In order to do this at this time, I would ask to adjourn debate.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Batoche that debate on Bill No. . . . second reading of Bill No. 98, The Prairie and Forest Fires Amendment Act, 2005, be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Bill No. 99**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Thomson that **Bill No. 99 — The Canadian Information Processing Society of Saskatchewan Act** be now read a second time.]

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Cypress Hills.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The official opposition has had the privilege of talking to a number of people who are very much in support of Bill No. 99, An Act respecting the Canadian Information Processing Society of Saskatchewan. We've had correspondence from the president of the Saskatchewan branch, and I have met personally with one of the vice-presidents and had a lengthy and substantial . . . substantive discussion with him about this particular piece of legislation. And as a consequence, I understand that by and large the organization is very supportive of this legislation and would like to see it move forward in the near future.

The Canadian Information Processing Society goes by the acronym CIPS, C-I-P-S, and it's used fairly frequently in the information processing arena. People are quite aware of what it stands for. And as well there's another acronym that has become very important and it's really part of what forms the initial intent and the substantive intent of this particular Bill. It's the designation ISP, which stands for information systems professional. Now, Mr. Speaker, this designation has been around for some time and it's been used with more or less legality in various jurisdictions.

The Canadian Information Processing Society is a Canada-wide organization. And there's been a provincial chapter of CIPS that has been in operation here in Saskatchewan since about 2000, I believe. The provincial branch has approximately 250 active members of which 150 hold the designation ISP.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the ISP designation held by those individuals was actually obtained from other jurisdictions where the designation has already been made legal. And so, Mr. Speaker, there seemed to be a growing interest in having that designation recognized officially in Saskatchewan for use by professionals within the information processing arena.

Mr. Speaker, to obtain the ISP designation that is being sought here, an individual needs to prove the following two or three items. And I've put their charter and their obligations into my own vernacular and I hope that I will adequately express the requirements of the designation — the ISP designation.

But if you plan to become an ISP designated professional in the information arena, you want to prove the following: you want to prove that you personally possess the appropriate body of knowledge by holding a post-secondary degree or a technical school diploma. And failing having those particular educational standards, if you have the experience and the knowledge, there are exam equivalencies that are available to those who wish to

challenge the standards to achieve that designation. So you can, based on your experience and your knowledge of the industry, become an ISP, assuming that you can challenge and meet the requirements necessary without having had the formal academic credentials.

Secondly, you want to prove that you as an individual have achieved a minimum of two years of appropriate work experience in the areas of information processing. And there's a variety of areas, most of which are more technical than I personally comprehend. But nevertheless there's a variety of areas of expertise that you can gain your experience within, but they aren't all identical.

And thirdly, you want to prove the following: that you are willing and prepared to abide by a code of ethical conduct when you apply for your ISP [information service professional] and operate under it. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if I've got the code of ethics that the organization holds up as the standard for its members, but I have seen it. And it's a very lengthy document and is the kind of document that challenges the people who are aspiring to be ISP designates to a very high standard of behaviour.

And I think that it's important for a number of reasons to have that code of ethics, that high bar of standards in place because anybody who holds that designation is going to be recognized by the general public as somebody who has a certain level of experience, expertise, education, and the highest ethical standards. And having established that as part of the professional designation, I think, gives creditability to the ISP designation and to the individuals who hold it.

Mr. Speaker, this particular designation, ISP — information systems professional — is currently recognized in several Canadian provinces and recognizes or indicates a level of professional capability that other individuals who operate in that world of information processing may not actually have.

Mr. Speaker, it was one of the concerns, or one of the issues I raised with an individual who was talking to me about the need for this particular piece of legislation and the opportunities having this legislation would present for those professionals. I asked him point blank, if this is a requirement of the industry, what do you do about the young people who come out of school with all kinds of whiz kid knowledge — if I can use that terminology — all kinds of capability, all sorts of intelligence when it comes to dealing with information processing, but haven't achieved the educational standards or the professional standards that one might require? Does that mean that those people will be put out of business?

I don't want to see anything come into place, Mr. Speaker, that would squelch the enthusiasm of the younger generation or the entrepreneurial spirit of that generation or the capabilities that often come with this new technology at a very young age.

[17:45]

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you've experienced this; I know many of our colleagues have. When we've gone to trade shows in the community of Regina we've seen information processing capability being promoted by extraordinarily young

entrepreneurs, and most of whom have learned their trade, learned their business, learned their capability because they so readily adapt to the new technology. And many of them just come by it naturally. Many of them are, I would almost suggest, superhumanly endowed with an ability in terms of computer use and capability.

But the purpose of this particular designation is not to run those young people, those whiz kids, out of business. The purpose of this designation is to establish a standard of professionalism that they too can aspire to achieve.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the ISP designation will really provide a level of confidence or assurance to people in our society who will be purchasing services and products from those people who are in the information processing area. They will have confidence of their capability and their expertise.

The ISP designation, Mr. Speaker, further, is a professional designation. It gives recognition to an achieved level of expertise. It's not a licence to practise as it might be in some other professions. It's really a recognition of the professional attainment of the individual who has had the opportunity to prove their merit and their capability and achieve the ISP designation.

It's believed that there are potentially upwards of 1,200 people in the province of Saskatchewan, people who are working in this particular industry, who would benefit from the ISP designation were it available in the province of Saskatchewan. And I think that that by itself, Mr. Speaker, is an indication of how much growth there is in this particular industry, how much potential there is, and how much critical mass there is in the area of information technology in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, participation in the Saskatchewan branch of the Canadian Information Processing Society is voluntary. The membership in CIPS Saskatchewan is completely unobliged. They do this voluntarily, and the organization collects membership dues from the people who want to be part of this organization. And those dues of course are a means of supporting the activities of the organization in its state, its more or less unorganized state now but in the future as it becomes more organized.

The Saskatchewan branch of CIPS is really quite anxious to have this legislation put in place. They want to see this legislation progress through the provincial legislature as soon as possible, so that they will be able to announce the recognition of the ISP designation at a large informatics conference that is slated for the city of Regina at the end of this month. I believe the dates are May 29 to 31.

And I hope, Mr. Speaker, that this legislature will be able to obligate . . . I'm sorry, oblige rather, the organization with the movement of this legislation through the legislature in a timely fashion to meet their purposes for the announcement of this designation at the conference.

I brought a brochure, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure if you're interested or if any of the other members of the House are interested, but it seems to me that this particular conference

being held in Regina is an indication of the seriousness with which the local provincial branch actually takes their responsibility. They want to participate in this organization at a full participatory level and having this conference here indicates the seriousness with which they take that responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, there are some questions though that I have as part of this legislation that I think need to be attended to. We would like to raise them now just briefly before we conclude our comments on this particular Bill.

But there were some interesting anomalies as we were looking through the legislation. One of them was simply the length of the Bill. The Bill is, as I recall, about 18 pages in length. Now let me just have a look, Mr. Speaker, if I can do that. Yes, approximately 18 pages in length. Now I guess that raises the question, if there are several other jurisdictions in the country that recognize this professional designation already, what does their legislation say and how detailed and lengthy is it?

Well we did a check, Mr. Speaker, and found that the province of Ontario has legislation recognizing the ISP designation. Their legislation is less than five pages long, Mr. Speaker. The province of Nova Scotia has a similar Act recognizing the ISP designation. Unfortunately it's only similar, I suppose, in the fact that it achieves the professionalism that the people in that province wanted. But the Act there is seven pages. We have a copy of the Act that came out of New Brunswick and, Mr. Speaker, this Act is in French and English, and it totals four pages. The Saskatchewan Act is roughly 18 pages long.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that raises the question why is it necessary to have an Act doing exactly what is achieved and necessary for professional recognition of these people in other jurisdictions, why is it necessary for the Saskatchewan Act to be 18 pages long? It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that while this government is helping achieve a purpose that the information professionals want to achieve in the province of Saskatchewan, they've gone overboard a little bit in the requirements and standards that they're establishing for this particular organization.

There is a question that rose as I was looking through the Bill, Mr. Speaker, and one of the things that jumped out at me is the government's deliberate effort to at least keep tabs on this organization in a rather unusual way. And that is that the government has ascribed to itself the authority to insist that some member be appointed to the board of the Saskatchewan branch of the CIPS to sit on the board.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the relevance of that type of position might be in this case. But nevertheless, while I found that particular requirement interesting, I found it even more so when it says under section 8(6) that the government's appointee to this particular organization must be . . . Well maybe I'll read it verbatim:

The member of the executive appointed pursuant to this section [that would be the government appointee] shall be a member of the discipline committee.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that that's at all relevant or necessary in this day and age. I don't know what the government is trying to achieve in this particular part of the legislation when they

insist on having an appointee on the board of directors and, furthermore, that that appointee must be on the discipline committee of this organization. I find that quite unusual and quite unnecessary, Mr. Speaker. Unless there's a good justification for that particular element in this Bill, I'd really suggest that the government drop that kind of influence and oversight on this particular organization.

As part of our research on this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, and when we found this one unusual example of government oversight that we felt was excessive or unnecessarily onerous, we asked about the similar provisions that might exist in other pieces of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the interesting thing that came out of this particular search is that the government has ascribed to itself the same level of participation in almost every organization that has come to the government for recognition at this level. And so, Mr. Speaker, we have the very unusual set of circumstances where the government has allowed for itself a position on the board of directors of such worrisome organizations as the music teachers' association of Saskatchewan. Now I'm just going to use that as an example. There are many, many others.

But it appears to me, Mr. Speaker, that what we've got here is a piece of legislation that is a template-based Bill that imposes the same limitations and restrictions on any organization that comes to the government seeking its support for legal recognition.

And I'm not so sure, Mr. Speaker, that I could justifiably say that that kind of oversight is necessary in these kinds of circumstances. There may be legitimate circumstances in the public interest where the government might want to play a role of appointees . . . or being able to make appointments to certain boards and agencies. And that's done with some commonality, especially as it relates to the Law Society or the medical profession or some of those serious, highly regarded professions. But when you have an organization coming together, looking to advance its own interests, training its members, regulating its members, I'm really not sure that the government has a legitimate role on the board of that organization.

Mr. Speaker, I said earlier that the Saskatchewan branch of the Canadian Information Processing Society was anxious to see this legislation move forward. We too are anxious that their request be obliged. And so I think the balance of the questions that we want to raise ought to be done so in committee. And I move that this legislation move to that realm. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion moved by the Minister of Learning that Bill No. 99, The Canadian Information Processing Society of Saskatchewan Act, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? Is it the pleasure of the Assembly . . . 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 (Committees):** — Second reading of this Bill.

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill referred? The Chair recognizes the Government Deputy House Leader.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you. I move that Bill 99, The Canadian Information Processing Society of Saskatchewan Act, be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Government Deputy House Leader that Bill No. 99 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. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. The Chair recognizes the Government Deputy House Leader.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that the House adjourn.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Government Deputy 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. This House now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:58.]

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