



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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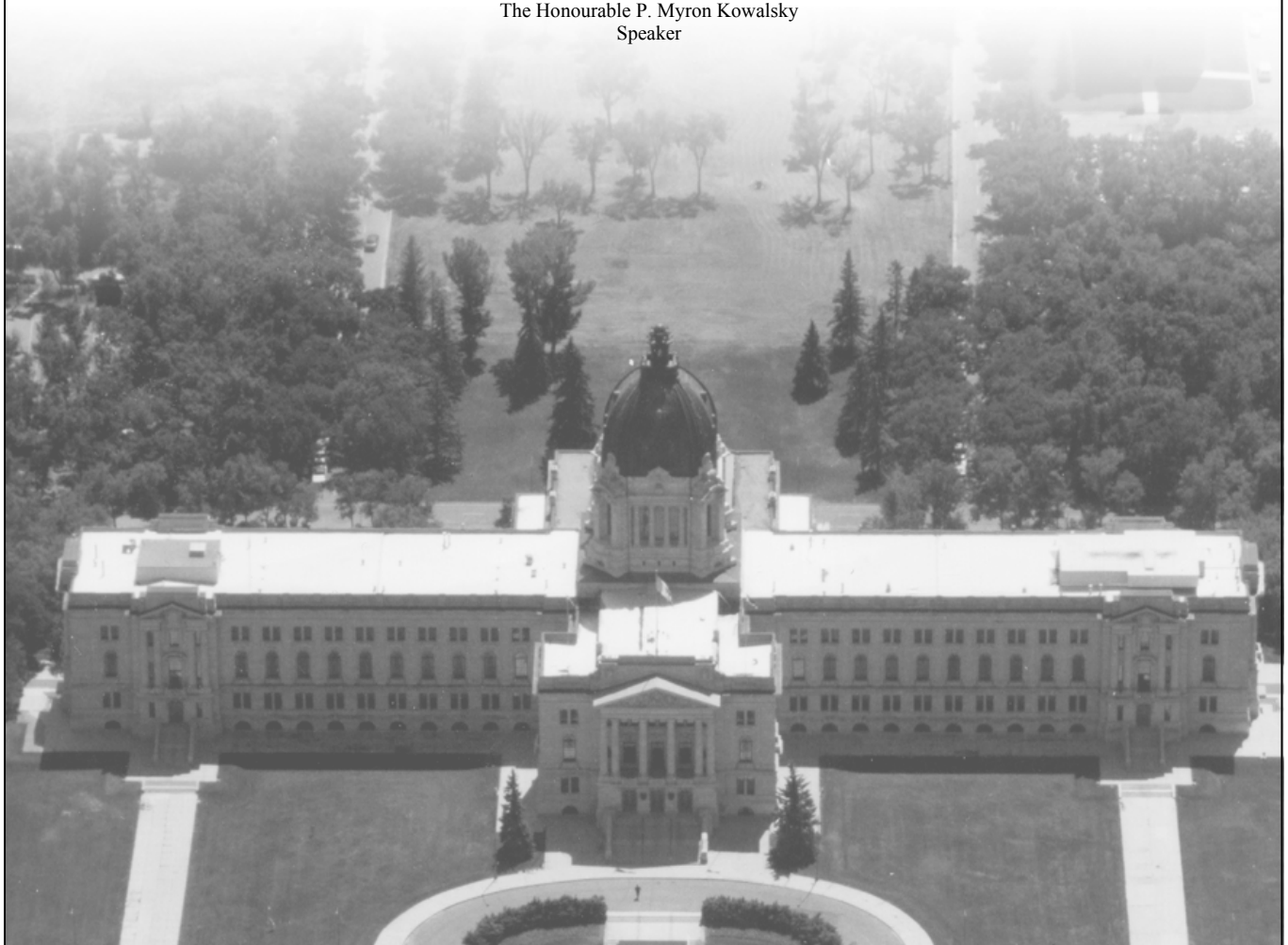
**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
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The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky  
Speaker



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EVENING SITTING

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund  
Learning  
Vote 5

Subvote (LR01)

**The Deputy Chair:** — The business before the committee is estimates for the Department of Learning. And I recognize the Minister of Learning.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chair. Just before we recessed for dinner tonight the member for Melfort had asked me about the situation with School<sup>PLUS</sup> and where we were at in that process. He identified that we had allocated \$2 million in this budget for School<sup>PLUS</sup>. And as I understand the question, it was pertaining to whether we would see additional allocations either in other budgets reflecting School<sup>PLUS</sup> or in this one flowing in to deal with questions of youth, justice, social work, health issues.

One of the challenges we have with School<sup>PLUS</sup> is that it is not at this point very clearly defined as to what the program is, the expectations are, or how it should be dealt with. And I can perhaps just share with members a few of the observations I have at this point on how we might move this forward.

It is I think fair to say that members of the teaching profession are concerned that School<sup>PLUS</sup> will essentially end up with them becoming the de facto agency for all child and youth services in the province. And this is a concern that we frankly in the department share, that this is not our objective through School<sup>PLUS</sup> to have the ministry of Education or Learning become the repository for all the issues related to children and youth.

So what we are trying to sort through is how we make the schools more of a contact point for those service delivery agencies but at the same point not absolve other agencies of their responsibility to look after issues affecting children and youth. And this is part of what we are trying to work through.

Ray Boughen, in his report had recommended each department identify an amount that they contribute to School<sup>PLUS</sup> or essentially the services for children and youth. We have not yet been able to articulate how that works.

So part of this has been us trying to sort through in a more broad sense across government how we identify what issues should be delivered at school-based locations, and to what extent we have the school system adopt it.

I have noticed recently that some school divisions have started now advertising for — I think there's an advertisement in one of the papers — for a School<sup>PLUS</sup> social worker. While this is certainly within the options available to school boards, to start moving into that direction, I worry a little bit that what we are starting to see is the schools deciding or school boards deciding that School<sup>PLUS</sup> now means that they are responsible for all

these services.

Over the next year, I really think we are going to have to spend some time working through what the program design looks like, what the expectations are, and what it means. From my view, what it should mean is that School<sup>PLUS</sup> is our invitation to other agencies to use our facilities, to work with us in partnership, to build a collaborative environment that deals with children and youth, but that allows schools and teachers to go back to their primary focus which is education and teaching. And what we need to do is to make sure that that balance is appropriately struck.

So I appreciate that that's a bit of a lengthy and perhaps somewhat nebulous answer but this is perhaps the best way just to frame where we're at today on School<sup>PLUS</sup> and some of the issues we need to work through.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you very much, Minister. I think that the concept that Schools<sup>PLUS</sup> is sort of the collector agency if you like for these various services, but you know I think that the word, the phrase you used I think was an invitation to participate from the other departments. The worry of course is, is that the learning profession, the teachers in the schools are going to somehow be left with these expectations building that these programs are going to be all integrated and assimilated and championed out of the school and the appropriate financial and human resources aren't going to be there.

And as a result teachers who are feeling very often under a great deal of pressure to provide much more than the basic core curriculum, that are being asked to provide so many more services, are feeling very, very pressured and harried. And this is not one of the positives about recruitment and retention in the profession. I mean we can add on increments into the grid to compensate for some of the extra pressure but then there's the issue of pressure and tension and all these expectations that get harder and harder to meet.

And I think, Minister, that certainly if we're going to move forward with the concept of School<sup>PLUS</sup>, we're going to have to worry very hard, if we're coming from a perspective of learning, to make sure that the invitation to participate is accepted and it isn't just something that's left dangling and we get caught with it. Because I think that's a worry.

The concept, the principle — I think what I'm hearing from the teaching profession is very positive but they're worried about being left holding with less than the desirable amount of resources from other departments to make this happen.

The other thing is, Minister, I think that again one of the realities of the new world is that in many instances, primarily in high school, you have single mothers going back for upgrading in order to improve their averages or broaden their courses so they can go into other professions.

And the issue of child care is becoming increasingly something that, in my experience, is fairly new to the learning milieu. Do you see this as well as being something that has to be dealt with inter-agency wide in order to provide the kind of support that's needed for single moms so that they can actually take advantage

of improving their educational credentials so that they can go on to advancement in careers?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — I share a lot of the member's assessment of the risks that we run on this. The other observation I would have is that there seem to be two differing views about School<sup>PLUS</sup>. One is a view that I've heard from some teachers who are saying we are now doing all of this related to School<sup>PLUS</sup> and we're not being compensated for it.

That's not the case. Teachers are not supposed to be delivering School<sup>PLUS</sup>. They are not supposed to become social workers, nurses, public health workers, corrections officers. Nor should we be compensating them for that.

What we need to do is to get teachers back to teaching. And we need to figure out how it is we draw in these other agencies.

I was at a community school about three weeks ago now and had an opportunity to talk with the principal and some of their staff members about what they were doing there.

What I thought was very interesting is that they had hired into that school . . . a community coordinator is what they called the position. And the person was specifically there to try and deal with those linkages between the school and the outside agencies, between the school and the social workers that were dealing with members of the community, between the school and the justice agencies. And that was to largely free up the work that teachers had otherwise been feeling was defaulting to them that they were either doing or not able to do because they were obviously working on teaching. And what we need to make sure that we're doing is really understanding where that balance lies.

I agree that we need to make sure that schools, because the student population is different than it was 20 years ago or 30 years ago or 40 years ago, we need to make sure the wide range of services that we all want are available to them.

What we've got to figure out is at what point is that the responsibility of the school, the school system, the Department of Learning. And to what extent is it we need to simply better coordinate what's happening with DCRE [Department of Community Resources and Employment], what's happening with Corrections and Public Safety, what's happening with Health.

This is one of the big things that I think we have got to have the new school divisions really look at is what those relationships are. One of the benefits of the new divisions is that they will be relatively close in terms of size and geographic configuration to the health boards which should provide them with some opportunity to better coordinate those services, even functions like speech language pathologists, which the school system has basically taken on as a responsibility they think they need to provide in terms of services. Frankly it's a discussion I think we should have again with the health system about who should be paying for this and where those are best located, because it's not always a service that needs to be provided only in the schools.

We have an opportunity to devise a system . . . If we were to

think about School<sup>PLUS</sup> not as a co-location of services but really as a seamless delivery of services. And what we've got to figure out is who does what in each of those. So I appreciate the advice and the perspective that the member is offering. It's actually fairly close to what I, myself, have seen over the last several months as we're working our way through this.

Dr. Tymchak's report was a very good piece of work and I think a very visionary piece of work. And the difficulty we always run into when we have those kind of fundamental restructuring issues that really speak to the core of what the services are is how do we operationalize them. And right now what we are trying to do is to struggle with that, to figure out how do we operationalize it, how do we move it past pilot program into a province-wide rollout without taking on all of the inherent responsibilities that still lie with other ministries.

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would like to take this opportunity to thank your officials and yourself for answering my questions. And to the Deputy Speaker I would like to cede the floor to the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

**The Chair:** — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Minister, I listened earlier this afternoon when the member from Melfort asked you about the legal action that has been recently launched by a number of communities, both urban and rural, and by a number of individuals, and in fact three boards of education, those being the Melville-Deer Park Board of Education, the Eston-Elrose Board of Education, and the Rosetown Board of Education.

And you seemed to . . . at least I took from your answer that you don't think this is a huge issue. You seemed to write it off. However, one of the plaintiffs has indicated that prior to this action being filed that he received a call . . . or the solicitor for this group of people received a call from an official from the Department of Justice who was very concerned about this legal action. In fact that official asked for particular details of the action. In fact made the comment that this action could perhaps derail the upcoming elections for the amalgamated school divisions.

In light of that phone call that would indicate to me that perhaps this issue is a little more serious than you will let it on to be. And I guess my question to you is, if in fact this legal action has the effect of derailing your plans, have you got a back up plan?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Let me first of all say that my understanding as to how this works is that the Justice officials will have been in contact with the plaintiffs to determine some of the scope of what they were looking at before they filed their statement on Friday. And I understand that that is likely what the member's referring to.

That really doesn't change any perspective that I have on this. We have looked at this. Justice is prepared to defend the approach and I believe that the courts will find in favour of the province. I'm not at this point looking at any other course of action other than the one that we've established. And while the statement of claim certainly articulates fairly clearly a list of

perceived grievances and concerns I don't believe, nor has the legal advice that we're working under, shown that there is any cause in law to believe that this would be found in their favour.

**Mr. Hart:** — So what you're saying, Minister, is that the advice you're receiving from the Department of Justice is that they don't feel that this case has much merit and then therefore you aren't making any contingency plans in case your plan for the fourth amalgamation of school divisions gets derailed by the courts. Is that what you're saying, Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — We are confident that the defence that we'll mount will be successful and that the process will proceed as I've outlined it.

**Mr. Hart:** — Minister, your plan on another issue — your proposal as we saw in the budget — you have I believe it's \$54 million allocated this year and in the next fiscal year for property tax relief. Could you provide a breakdown of how, by property categories I guess — residential, commercial, agricultural properties — how will those monies be divided?

[19:15]

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The way that we have structured the Act, and it is of course before the Assembly, is to essentially provide an 8 per cent reduction across the board with a cap on industrial, commercial, and multi-unit properties in terms of the rebate available there.

So the percentage that would go to each of the categories is roughly equal to the percentage that they pay in existing tax.

That will obviously vary from board to board as some have significantly more agricultural lands, some have significantly more residential, some have more commercial. But across the province, the percentage — although I don't have it here — would roughly reflect what the overall payment is, although commercial, industrial will be slightly under-represented as we have capped some of those payments. But that simply advantages the . . . allows to have a slightly higher percentage for residential and agricultural land.

**Mr. Hart:** — So you don't have any figures available tonight to give us a breakdown in actual dollars as to how many dollars will be allocated to residential property owners as far as property tax relief, or for agricultural property owners, or for commercial property owners. You've got \$54 million and . . . but you don't know exactly how that's going to be split up amongst the various classes of property owners.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — I don't have the specifics here tonight, but I can certainly provide that. This is a matter that's fairly easily identified. I'm not sure that we'll be able to provide it on a board-by-board basis but I can provide it globally across the province.

**Mr. Hart:** — Well that was my question. I'm not asking on a board-by-board basis; I'm asking for the global numbers.

If memory serves me, I seem to recall the Premier making a comment at the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention where he thought at that time that

perhaps 12 or \$13 million or somewhere in that neighbourhood. And as I said I'm just, you know, I'm trying to recall his numbers and I was hoping that you'd be able to confirm those numbers.

But assuming that my memory is correct, was somewhere in 12 or \$13 million would be going to agricultural property. And as we all know it's the agricultural property owners in this province who are paying an unduly large portion of property tax that goes for education purposes. In many municipalities at least two-thirds of the property tax bill goes to education.

Now if my numbers are correct — and I saw one of your officials nodding so I must be somewhere in the ballpark — I guess I look back to a program that your government had in place two or three years ago whereby we had \$25 million per year for two years that went directly to agricultural property tax relief. So under your current program, the people who are paying them the largest percentage of their total property tax bill that's going to education, they are going to actually receive probably 10 million or \$12 million less under this current program than what they did two years ago. Is that correct, Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The quick figuring we've done would show that 13 million in each of the next two years is about right for agricultural. And the debate that we had in the panel, in the working group with SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], and the school boards, was really about how we spend the 55 million. And SARM was very much of the view, and I think has publicly said so, that they believe the money should be . . . the reduction should apply only to residential and agricultural land. SUMA took the position that it should apply to all property classes. And at the end of the debate what we concluded is that it should apply to all property classes.

The result of that is by adding in the industrial, commercial class and resort properties and others, you end up diluting the amount of money that would otherwise have been available to residential and agricultural land. That was the consequence of adding in the commercial and industrial sector, the rationale for that being that everyone who pays property tax should get a benefit.

This was an issue of significant debate and a significant divide between SUMA and SARM. As we reflected on it, it was the decision of the government that all those who pay property taxes should see some rebate. And as a result we made that decision to support SUMA's recommendation.

**Mr. Hart:** — Well, Minister, I guess it's no wonder that people who own agricultural property are very skeptical of your current solution to high property taxes because they have seen how these short-term solutions really have no long-lasting effect. The owners of agricultural property have experience with your government's previous program. There was some property tax relief for a couple of years, then they were right back to paying the full shot. And again, as I said, in many instances they're paying at least . . . At least two-thirds of their property tax bill goes towards education tax.

Now we see another two-year program with no, absolutely no plan for a long . . . or no indication that your government has a long-term solution to this problem or have even started working on a long-term solution. And so therefore, Minister, as I said, they're very skeptical as to . . . that you have anything beyond a two-year plan.

You had indicated through news releases and I believe in this House that . . . and you've just mentioned that SUMA was involved and SARM were involved in how this \$110 million has been allocated. So you brought them together for that. And my question is, have you brought them together along with the School Boards Association to sit down and try and find a long-term solution to this dilemma that we find ourselves in?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well the question that the member is asking about long-term property tax relief is one that we need to grapple with. I want to say this though about the comparison of the program as it's structured today as we have the legislation before the House and the program as it was structured when it was a rebate.

One of the consequences of the previous program is that the payments went to the individual property tax payer as opposed to going to the school boards. The consequence of that was that school boards continued to escalate their mill rates during that time period.

This current program is designed to make the payment on behalf of the property tax payer to the school board. This should, should help to mitigate any upward migration in mill rate because what we are essentially doing is putting the pressure on the school boards to hold the line on the mill rates and for us to move in with more provincial money. That's what we're seeing with this program.

And so what we should see out of this is if school boards hold the line on their mill rate increases, on the property tax increases, we should see the provincial share of education this year rise from 42 per cent to 47 per cent. And that's been largely what our objective was in terms of structuring the program with this kind of a payment.

**Mr. Hart:** — Minister, I must admit I fail to follow your logic. I mean it doesn't matter where the school boards are getting their revenue from. Whether it's from property owners or part of that comes from your government, that really has nothing to do with their needs and their needs to adjust mill rates whether they be up or down.

I can tell you probably what's a better . . . what probably is impacting more so on perhaps holding the mill rates, at least in certain areas of the province, is reassessment. Reassessment is doing that in at least . . . for one of the school divisions in my constituency. I just talked to their administrator and that's exactly what they told me. In fact their revenue needs are greater than they were last year but they were able to slightly reduce their mill rates because their assessment rose by 8 per cent. The provincial average for all school divisions, the assessments have risen 9 per cent. That's what will keep . . . at least hold the mill rates. It has nothing to do with your rebate because whether the school divisions get the money from the property tax or property owners or in part through a grant

system has nothing to do with what their needs are.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well I'm not sure what the question is in there that the member has. It's an interesting debate and that's fine. We can have that and if the experience he identifies is true on the east side of the province where reassessment is seeing land values go up, it's not true on the west side; we're going down.

What we're saying is that overall as the provincial money moves in, there should be less need for school boards to take money from the property tax base, regardless of what that mill rate is set at. That should be the overall purpose. I mean obviously if we're adding \$55 million worth of provincial money into school boards, there should be a need to take \$55 million less from the property tax base. That seems to be pretty straightforward.

The question of how that works from school division to school division, east side to west side, is something that will need to be worked out. Some boards are still proceeding to increase mill rates to deal with other expenditure costs. That's something we need to look at but what I think is beneficial is that the 55 million is allowing that to be mitigated and we're not seeing as large a set of increases as we might otherwise.

**Mr. Hart:** — Well, Minister, I guess we'll agree to disagree on this. I have one further question.

I understand, and I'm not totally familiar with the way your department handles grants for capital purposes to school divisions. I have been told that they're called a B-1 grant and my question to you is, is the approval of these grants occurring in the same time frame as they normally do in other fiscal years or are they being delayed? And if so, what is the reason for those approvals being delayed?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The process for determining who accesses capital has remained the same. I don't think that's changed for a number of years.

The only change that we made this year was to advance and accelerate the funding for this year. And so what the member may be identifying is that there will be a number of months now until we get into the next funding cycle. But this year we actually accelerated the funding to move the block grants up.

So it may be perceived by some that there is now, I don't know, a larger lag time or whatever we may say until the next application process or until the next funding process. But the criteria remain the same. All we've done is accelerated the funding this year.

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I've been listening to you describe the system that will be in place in financing education in our school divisions for this year and the previous year. And I listened to you say that the \$55 million will help school boards not have to increase taxes.

Are you suggesting that there is \$55 million more to the boards

of education? Or in fact is the reality that \$55 million break will be given to all taxpayers based on the assessments that you just described and as a result of that tax break to those individuals, the boards will receive the 55 million now, not directly from the taxpayers but from the Government of Saskatchewan?

So how can you imply that boards of education now will have to hold their mill rates and not increase taxes when in fact we know that the price of fuel has skyrocketed, cost of transportation is higher, there is a 2.2 per cent increase in cost of living, there are going to be huge increases at the division level, and the foundation grant, according to your estimates, has not increased?

So where do you expect boards of education to find that new money to operate? Are you suggesting then that if they are not to increase mill rates, that they must: number one, delete program; number two, eliminate staff; or number three, close schools? Could you explain and clarify for the people of Saskatchewan where indeed the extra money will come from to meet the increased costs for school divisions in this province?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — I don't understand what the concern is the member's identified. There's no cost of living attached to a school board. I mean the amount of money that's being passed on . . . The member identifies gas costs is fine; that's an issue. He identifies increases in terms of salary; we've identified previously that that's being funded through the contract. The member identifies that there are other pressures. Well these are normal pressures.

What we've seen a number of boards respond by doing is saying they're passing on the full 8 per cent reduction. That's what the member is, that's what the member is asking about. There's still 55 million being transferred from the provincial treasury this year over to the school boards.

[19:30]

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Well, Mr. Minister, a board of education receives its money from two sources: the Government of Saskatchewan or taxpayers. Now you're saying that in the case of taxpayers, you're going to take over \$55 million of that revenue the taxpayers would have normally provided. You are now saying that the government will provide that \$55 million and it will not come out of the taxpayers as it normally would have.

You know, when you talk about increased costs, Mr. Minister, you know, when you start to look at the purchasing of supplies, go into any school system and ask what changes have occurred in the prices of materials, in the prices of driver training fees, in the prices of all kinds of product and the fact that we have power increases, telephone increases, all of those other costs that are met by the board of education.

Never mind the support staff. Now that there is a 2, 2, and 2 contract in place for teachers, I'd suggest that support staffs are going to be looking for some sort of compensation that will be equivalent or nearly equivalent.

There will be increased costs to school divisions. And if you're suggesting that boards of education should not change their mill

rate and their assessment does not change, how do you expect them to produce a balanced budget?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well boards will do what boards are required to do in order to deal with it. And this is one of the issues.

The other things that the member . . . surely the member must recognize is the fact that there are 3,500 fewer students in the system. That must by necessity drive down some of the costs within the system because we don't reduce the overall grant provided despite the fact that we see reducing student numbers. That provides more money on a per pupil basis to fund the system. So there is additional money there on a per pupil basis to deal with this.

I mean obviously if you have 3,500 fewer students — we've had 25,000 fewer students in the last decade alone — that surely must mean that there is able to internally manage some of the cost pressures that are identified, which is why we see boards being able to hold the mill rate.

Boards decide to raise their mill rates, that's within their right to do so. What we're trying to do is shift the balance over onto the provincial coffer. And this year what I said is if the boards held the line, the number would move from 42 to 47. If they don't, then it'll shift a little bit upward.

But I don't otherwise understand what the member's concern is, is that boards will obviously set their budgets as they feel appropriate. They'll determine the program that they think is appropriate. They'll take advantage of the additional monies provided through the declining student numbers as they see appropriate to redirect into instructional costs or otherwise. And they will have the 55 million that we are providing to them to be able to pass on to reduce the cost to taxpayers.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Minister, when a school division of significant size — 1,200, 1,300 students, 900 students — loses 80 students across the entire school division that does not mean that proportionately the cost of providing education to the remaining students is going to drop by the equivalent. You can ask any of your officials that are with you who have been in a school system and have been directors of education. They'll clearly tell you that when you see that kind of change and a particular school of 150 students now has enrolment drop of five it doesn't mean any savings at all. And as costs increase to provide education, in fact costs will go up.

So don't use the example that because the province has suddenly lost 3,000 students that there should be that kind of savings because it's not true. That's number one.

Number two. If you're suggesting by your comments a short while ago that boards of education across this province should not increase mill rate because the Government of Saskatchewan is now providing \$55 million, the reality is you are providing the \$55 million to the taxpayers. The normal 55 million that would have come from the taxpayers is not coming from the taxpayers any longer. It is now coming from the Government of Saskatchewan.

So I think the point that you must clarify for trustees in this

province and boards of education and taxpayers is that the \$55 million will have absolutely no bearing — none whatsoever — on the cost of education within the school system, and secondly, the mill rate that those boards will decide upon.

And you're right, boards of education will do what they have to do because of the fact that there is no additional monies being provided. There might be in some instances where a school division has lost a significant number of students and can adjust their teaching staff component by reducing teaching staff. If that's true there may be a savings, I'll agree with you. But don't look at it in a broad sense and suddenly say that the government is now adding \$55 million to the pool of money and therefore boards of education should be able to hold the line on the additional cost that they are being confronted with in all aspects of delivering education, because you are wrong.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well the member makes an eloquent if somewhat angry argument as to why boards should be raising taxes. That's not a perspective that I have. The member uses some unparliamentary language from his seat and that's fine if he's embarking on that.

He presents an argument that is saying that what we are doing is asking the 55 million be provided to reduce taxes to individual property tax payers. This is correct; that is what we are asking to be done. That is not going to mean that all boards are able to hold the line. The boards that we are seeing bringing in their budgets now for the most part are, I think, doing an exceptional job in terms of managing the costs that they're looking at. We are not seeing dramatic increases, although we are seeing some increases in the mill rates, and that's the decision the boards are going to need to make. The member makes an interesting argument but it's not one that I personally subscribe to.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I apologize for that comment. I should have said that you . . . your comments may be misinterpreted by boards of education by you suggesting that there is an additional \$55 million that is somehow now added to the pool. That is not true. The money is in direct comparison to the \$55 million the taxpayers will receive in the way of a reduction in their taxes, and I think you agree with that, Mr. Minister.

Now therefore a board of education who is now left with balancing its budget, if it doesn't do anything, if the assessment does not change and the mill rate does not change and the fact that now \$55 million that would have come directly from the taxpayers is now coming from the government, they still have to produce a balanced budget. And if their costs have gone up a significant amount based on the fact that they have a large bus fleet and there is cost of gas or there is a SaskPower increase or a SaskEnergy increase or there is maintenance projects or there are supplies that are being bought across that entire division and their costs rise by a significant amount of dollars, the only way that that school board can balance is to increase its mill rate. Is that not true, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — I don't disagree with much of what the member opposite has said. What we are seeing in this year with the experience of now having the budgets brought in is that mill rates across the province, the average mill rate has now declined. It has actually dropped in the province largely, as has

been identified, because of reassessment. And what boards are doing is, I think, a very good job of managing with the resources they have and, for the most part, seem to be passing on almost entirely the 8 per cent reduction. This is what we would expect to be seen but this is a decision individual boards need to make.

The argument isn't . . . I don't completely understand what the member's argument is. Yes, we are adding \$55 million worth of provincial funds to replace \$55 million from the property tax base. That's what the objective of the program is, is to try and increase the provincial share. And as a result taxpayers will see whatever amount that the boards pass on. But we suggest that it should be about 8 per cent.

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

**Mr. Kerpan:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I know our time is running short and I just actually just have a couple of quick questions. And one of them, I know the situation . . . I know the minister is certainly well aware of that being the problem that arose at the Davidson School Division when money was paid to an administrator who had retired and then had been rehired on a contract, and then a gratuity of some 120-some thousand dollars was paid to that same person.

And I know I've seen the minister's comments on it and, by the way, I'm not being critical of the minister for your comments. It might have been the best and proper way to handle that situation. But I also want to say that that's a situation I'm very familiar with and I can say that there was a huge amount of concern from the ratepayers in the Davidson School Division over the issue. And it was more of a question of fairness rather than anything else where some people would see that this, being a very unfair package paid out to one person and then others perhaps not getting that same kind of fairness. I'm talking about teachers and bus drivers and janitorial service and other employees of that division.

My question though arises out of that situation in that, is there no mechanism in the department that would allow for the government, the minister, the minister's office, the minister's bureaucrats, to become involved in a situation like that and to try to alleviate that great amount of pressure that arose because of that situation? And as I say, I repeat again, I know that that was a huge concern and I know the member for Arm River-Watrous was certainly involved in that situation as well.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well I share much of the sentiment that the member opposite has expressed. This was obviously an issue that people were concerned about and for very much the reasons the member identified — not only the unfairness of, or the perceived unfairness of it, but also the process that was handled.

The Education Act does not provide any ability for the minister to intervene in individual decisions made by individual boards. The employees of boards are exactly that — they are employees of the boards. Our role is largely one of providing advice and direction, support, and certainly there is a degree of moral suasion that we can exercise on this. In this particular case we became aware of the situation after it had already been exercised. So in that regard there is very little that we could do



to either correct or to intervene on this. That being said, I do want to just address the other comment raised by the member, which was my comments on it.

I take the approach as a legislator, as a minister of the Crown, that part of what we need to have is an honest dialogue with Saskatchewan people. There is no day that goes by that I don't end up with advice that says we should simply not comment on these issues. I have rafts and reams of correspondence that come in with draft responses back saying I can't comment on this because this is the issue of an individual board.

In situations like this where we end up with a peculiar situation that has been addressed — that the reporters were concerned was going to become an issue across other boards — I felt it was important to offer some comment without being specifically critical of the board that made the decision. I appreciate that the member may have preferred that I had said nothing, but I think, like most taxpayers and citizens, there was concern that we had about how this is done. And indeed we would have provided that advice privately if we'd known about it in advance.

So I appreciate what the member opposite is saying. I regret that we were not able to . . . that there are not powers within The Education Act for the minister to intervene in those kind of situations, but if there is a safeguard to make sure individual boards have the authority to run their own affairs. And that goes as well for school closures and the rest of that.

**Mr. Kerpan:** — Thank you for that answer. By the way I just want to clarify, I was not being critical of your remarks in the media on that issue — not at all, in the least bit. In fact I was glad to see that you had commented. I was aware obviously as well that that was not within the jurisdiction of your department or your own ministry. So I do understand that your hands were sort of tied on that issue.

My bigger concern though is that are there any mechanical things or safeguards that are going to be put in place for . . . once the amalgamations take place?

Let me back up just a second. We all know that divisions . . . there will be school divisions who will become a part of a bigger division who have money in the bank. That's a given. The question is how are those monies going to be distributed, and who will be responsible for making sure that things like the issue at Davidson do not happen wholesale right throughout the province, where we might see school divisions trying to spend huge amounts of money for no other reason than they will lose control of it once they become part of a bigger division.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well this has been a concern of ours as well, as to how do we handle that transition so it's seamless, and so that we don't end up with a set of individuals who feel that they are being unfairly treated or may be unfairly treated by a new board, seeking some kind of redress in advance for what may well be a severance simply because of the number of positions that would be available.

[19:45]

One of the initiatives that we've been working with the

restructuring coordinating committee on has been to try and establish a set of directives that boards can follow in terms of making sure that this is seamlessly dealt with. And I think over the last . . . Although it's anecdotal, I would say over the last six months we have seen a lower level of anxiety about this.

There seems to be a better understanding as to what the process is going to be that boards will be using to select, as to what the confidence is within LEADS [League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents] and SASBO [Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials] about how their members will be treated. And I think a better understanding now that the boundaries are seen as to what the options are likely within regions.

But the human resource issues that the member identifies are going to be critical to managing the restructuring. We are going to need to make sure that boards are able to get the right people in the right places at the start. And they seem to be aware of that. And I sense a great deal of collaboration and co-operation among the senior members of the partner organizations to try and deal with this in a seamless way that we don't end up with these kind of hiccups like we've seen in Davidson.

**The Chair:** — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the minister is well aware that there is three regions in the Saskatoon (East) School Division that have gone through a number of the initial stages of forming a separate Catholic school division. And I know a number of parents have emailed me as well as the minister with different questions and concerns about that process. So I'm sure that he's watching it closely before he gives his final approval.

However a question that came to me that I've been given two different answers for, so I'm just looking for clarification. One of the concerns, and rightfully so on both sides of the scenario, is where the property tax dollars flow or how they flow into which school division. So the question was, is there any set regulation on the question that will be asked on the tax notices once the separate Catholic school divisions are completed, like once they are actually in existence?

One source told me that the question had to be, which faith do you support, Catholic or other? And someone else told me that it could say which division do you support, Catholic or other? So I'm just looking for clarification on that. What are the restrictions or guidelines that that must follow for the tax notices?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — This has been a very complicated process and it has a number of interesting dynamics to it within the communities, and we don't need to necessarily go into those tonight. But I think we're all well aware that there are a number of concerns about the impact on some of those local rural schools and whether it's going to end up simply strengthening city schools; beyond that, the implications of the minority faith provisions of the constitution.

The specific question the member has asked is about the form the taxpayers will fill in. They will have the ability to declare that they are Catholic school supporters. If they are, their

property tax and the provincial resources that go with it transfer with . . . to that system. If they are not, they default to the public system. And so in that way there is a prescribed form, and that is essentially what the declaration is — are they a Catholic minority faith school supporter or are they a public school supporter?

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Okay. Just to follow up on that and clarify it. If you had a Catholic family who wanted to send their child or are going to send their child to the public school, and their tax notice comes and it . . . will it say, which faith do you support, because they support the Catholic faith? Or will it say, which school division do you support, in which case they could then fill out the public school division, and their property tax dollars would follow their child? And that's sort of the scenario that's causing the most concern.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — This is an issue of much debate in terms of how this works. In the case of — let's pick a community — let's say Clavet and you have a Catholic family living in the community that is currently sending their child to the public school and wants to continue to do that. They can continue to do that on the condition that they do not declare on the form that they are Catholic school supporters. If they declare on the form that they are Catholic school supporters, their property tax will go to the Catholic system.

The question of where the student goes, the student can still go to the public system if the public system accepts them and they can work out the tuition arrangement for the funding, is usually what will happen. But this is going to be complicated. It is one of the real difficulties that we have with this section of the Saskatchewan Act and how it manifests itself and there is a lot of debate about where money goes and how you provide that kind of support. But if a Catholic family wants their child to continue to go to the school in the local community regardless of denominational faith, or in this case it being the public system, they would simply not declare. If they declare, then the tax money moves into the new Catholic division and what they would need to do then is work out how to keep the student in the local school. This is going to be a challenge because I understand that a number of parents are now in that situation.

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you. I guess I need further clarification because you're right — it is very, very complicated. So we'll go back to the Catholic family that wish to send their child to the public school. Now if the municipal government issues the tax notice and the question is, which faith do you support, and they answer the question honestly, they're going to say that they support the Catholic faith. If the question states, which school division do you support, they can answer honestly and say, we support the public school division. Can either question be asked without being challenged? Is it quite acceptable to word the question, which school division do you support? In which case those families that fall into that type of scenario could honestly answer that they support the public school division and their tax dollars would be directed. Would that question be challenged? Does it have to say, which faith do you support?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The clearest answer is no, that they cannot be asked which system they want. They are asked if they are of the minority faith. And this is one of the issues that falls

under the way that the constitution is constructed and the Saskatchewan Act is constructed. And this is an issue that we have a great deal of discussion between the Catholic section and the public section as to what happens with students and families who want to go to particular schools and whether or not the question of the Catholic minority faith system is to provide a system of choice or whether it provides a constitutional access only for Catholic students to go to Catholic schools. This is not, unfortunately, a simple issue to resolve and there are a number of different views on it.

There is a very significant discussion going on right now within the school association, within the School Boards Association, between the urban public boards and the Catholic section about how this should be interpreted. And there is no agreement on this. So the way it's currently constructed is that the form says that they declare their support for the faith, in which case then it flows to the Catholic system.

I do understand though in these cases — and this is one of the issues that really was a problem here — is that a lot of these parents live in these communities and want the schools to remain in these communities, and obviously if you see a large number of students or that money now flowing into a different division that that potentially puts at risk the viability of those schools. And that is a very difficult decision that these parents are going to face. So I don't envy their position. And unfortunately because of the way that the Acts are constructed, we don't have a lot of ability — frankly we have no ability — to intervene and make that an easier situation for them.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. I'd like to start this evening . . . First of all if I may have leave to introduce a guest in the gallery. In the Speaker's gallery, there is a gentleman that I have met from La Ronge, Gary Tinker, and I think he was known to many members here as the individual who made the trek from La Ronge to Regina on crutches about 10 years ago to underline the need for additional support for people with disabilities. It was a long trek for someone that uses two crutches to get around in his world. I have a lot of admiration for Gary and I thank him for being here this evening.

Mr. Minister, one of the things that we were discussing this evening is the mill rate and the grant dollars. And I'm sure that the minister is well aware of the Lakeview School Division and the concern that they've had. In the last year they amalgamated and now of course with the changes in The Education Act they'll be going to be amalgamating again.

But the school division actually lost grant dollars. And I'm going to just give you a highlight of what the school division wrote in the local paper. They said as a result of the 2005 provincial reassessment the Lakeview School Division went up by \$91 million. That meant that the school division was going to be losing \$1.144 million in provincial grant. That represented 14.98 per cent decrease in grant compared to the 2004 level. In addition to losing that \$1.44 million in grants, the education board was faced with an increase in utility rates, an increase in gasoline and diesel, plant and instructional costs, and non-instructional and salary costs.

The most significant cuts that the board looked at when they reviewed their own budget, they decided that they could cut 5.6 professional staff, that was the teachers; 5.85 support staff, the level of support staffing hours; point two five assistant director of education position; \$75,000 in technology; two bus routes; 10 per cent in decentralized school budgets; 33 per cent in grants to local boards; \$84,000 in maintenance; and no bus replacements. They effectively cut \$644,982.

But at the same time they had to increase their budget and the cost to their people and their constituency — to farmers basically — and I was made aware of this because of a couple of phone calls I had one evening to my home, farmers that were saying that their school taxes went up considerably. Now I was concerned about this and I spoke to your colleague, the Minister of Government Relations, and asked him about the assessment increase and how it was determined. And the Minister of Government Relations said, let's not forget that everyone wants assessment increases. This is a good thing for the province. It means that the value of our land and our businesses are increasing so assessment increases are a positive sign of a very productive and strong economy.

My concern, Mr. Minister, and my farmers' concern is that this reassessment means an extra \$170 per quarter for education tax. Now I don't think that anybody in this room is going to believe that the land values in this province, when the economy is in tough shape, it means that they can afford an extra \$170 per quarter of education tax.

So my question to the Minister of Learning is: does he agree with the Minister of Government Relations that this increase in assessment is of benefit to the farmers in our province?

[20:00]

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — One of the difficulties with the way that the education system is funded is that it is heavily reliant on property taxes. And I think we all recognize that that is a fact.

The other difficulty that we have seen is that with the change in the way that assessment works, and the way taxes are now configured on top of that, is that as we go through these re-evaluations there are big swings in taxes. I accept what the member has identified as being \$170 per quarter. Is that what she identifies? That may well be what the real impact is there. Yes, increase for taxpayers.

The problem in the farm sector is — and frankly it's the same in the residential sector where you have no ability to pass on that cost — is that there is no direct relationship between the value of your asset and the revenue you . . . or income you get from it. And that really is a problem that we have within the system. As property tax is reassessed as we go through the valuation exercises, we end up with these difficulties. And what the member has identified is, for the individual farmers, a very real problem.

The question for the school board is somewhat different in that what they would see is the grant replaced by the property tax level, or by what they raise from the property tax. And this is one of the issues that we are trying to address through the foundation operating grant review, is that because it works as an

equalization formula, as opposed to some per pupil or per capital funding formula, it has this . . . it has a close relationship to what the ability to raise money on land is.

The member has identified a structural, systemic problem with the system that we have today.

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Minister, I guess I can tell you that it's not just myself that's identified it. It's the taxpayers, specifically the farmers in the area that are having a very tough time right now. And they're not blaming the school boards who are trying very, very hard to make sure that they keep the increases at a minimum. But at the same time, the reality is they can't take this issue that is a concern to the bank. They have to pay for it somehow.

So my concern is that there are a great number of farmers in the area of Lakeview School Division that are going to be suffering. And at the same time they are expecting that their students will have the same educational opportunities as children right across the province.

But I guess this issue is something that won't be solved tonight. So I'm going to ask, can you tell me how many school divisions are getting less money this year than last year in their foundation operating grant?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — We'd have to generate that. I didn't bring that. We didn't bring that detail tonight but we can generate that for the member.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Can you identify for me, and because it was an issue that I was very involved in for a number of years, how many schools are getting . . . are part of the Schools<sup>PLUS</sup> program at this time?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Forty-one of the existing school divisions are participating in the School<sup>PLUS</sup> program. So across the number of schools . . . I don't know that we track it by that. We look at how many divisions are participating instead. So about, about half are participating at this point in the School<sup>PLUS</sup> programming.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I know that you are aware that the opposition is in favour of the Schools<sup>PLUS</sup> program. We're just concerned about the actual costing of or paying for the cost of it. And I know you've spoken to my colleague from Melfort about the cost which should be carried by some of the other departments.

Mr. Minister, one of the other issues that's important to many of us is the issue of addictions and the education about, about drugs — crystal meth and other drugs. But I had learned about a week ago that your government is actually working on an education program. Is your addictions and drug information going to be given out to the schools before the end of this school year?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Yes. In fact we have put some resources on the Web now but our intention is to make sure that a package of information, printed information is available for teachers and others for use, particularly in things like home school newsletters, newsletters to parents, those kind of things,

so they can deal with this issue. Parents are still, I think all of us agree, in the best position to identify those children who are at risk and those who have difficulties.

So yes, our intention is to have the package of information available to schools before the end of the school year. I would anticipate in a couple of weeks. We're just waiting for printing.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I had the opportunity to look at the Alberta curriculum and the information that was available in various grades. It's actually a written part of the school curriculum and it's something that I thought was very well done. And I'm hoping that your department has looked at it and we won't have to re-invent the wheel or spend additional funding because there has been an enormous amount of work done.

Mr. Minister, another issue that's important is the mandatory treaty education. And I know that it is available in some of your schools at this time if your . . . if the teachers have taken some of the courses or the classes through the Office of the Treaty Commissioner. Can you give us . . . can you tell me whether this is something that your department is looking at at this time?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Let me address the two issues that the member has identified. First of all, in the curriculum related to addictions and healthy lifestyles for students, we're not considering, we're not contemplating any change to our curriculum. Saskatchewan's curriculum is among the best in the country in terms of dealing with drug and alcohol education. We have a number of active student groups across the province who deal specifically with alcohol issues, and we're confident that the curriculum that's in place is strong enough to deal with these issues as they arise.

That being said, what we are doing is providing specific information to teachers they can share with parents and their students related to issues like crystal meth, which is a concern all members in this House share.

On the issue of treaty education, one of the things that we have been very pleased to do is to fund much of this program. In terms of developing the program, we've contributed I think nearly a quarter, a little more than a quarter million — let me just see here — almost half a million dollars over the last three years to make sure that the program is up and running. We've been very pleased to do that. What we are trying to now gauge is the effectiveness of the program in terms of the results it's achieving within the classroom.

One of the pieces I would however caution the member, and I know that the Sask Party has taken the position that they want mandatory education . . . want this made mandatory. There are a number of requests that we get to add mandatory pieces into the education system, and we need to be mindful of what the local boards are doing and what local classrooms are doing. We certainly encourage and would like to see proliferated the treaties in the classroom, and I want to congratulate my predecessor, the member for Saskatoon Eastview, for the innovative work that she did with the Treaty Commissioner in bringing this about. It was really because of her leadership that we ended up with this being brought into the classrooms, and I think that that speaks to our vision, hopefully our shared vision

on how this should be dealt with. But simply saying that something should be mandatory is more difficult to implement because it often means we're shifting something else out and we need to be conscious of what that impact is.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and I'm sure that we'll take into advisement your caution about mandatory education but I'm hopeful at the same time that your department will understand that the lack of information and knowledge by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the province is adding to some of the frustrations that we have. And I think that the only way we can overcome some of the problems is by education. So it is our contention that the best way to do it is by starting with our children.

Mr. Minister, also in your discussion about the drug education, I believe that we do have a fine education system but we can always get better and if somebody is doing something that works well then I think it's something that we . . . should be looked at.

But, Mr. Minister, the other question that I have is with the growing number of Aboriginal students in our province and the number of schools that are on-reserve. Can you tell me how your department is working with reserve schools and especially how you're documenting the number of graduations and the number of young people that are attending schools and specifically the dropout rates?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — We have implemented a student tracking system to deal with both on- and off-reserve schools so that we have a better understanding of the student population, where they are, what they're achieving in terms of results; and that is being put into place.

I want to return to the issue about the treaties in the classroom and indicate for the member's information that 94 per cent of the provincial schools and 99 per cent of the band schools have received the treaty resource kit and I'm advised that a minimum of one staff member per school has received in-service training. So this is a positive but we have not mandated it as such.

It is my personal view and one that is I think fairly widely shared that we need to teach the treaties not as being something separate or apart from who we are as a nation, and in the fact that the treaties really do form an additional part of the constitutional framework of this country and should be respected and taught as such. And so this has been very good work.

I have recently met with the Treaty Commissioner to encourage him to continue the work that he was doing there and for us to seek out how we can further support him in that.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I think one of the things that many people in Saskatchewan don't know that it is not just First Nations people that are part of the treaties. We are all part of the treaties. We are a signatory to them and such that gives us the rights that we have in our country. And that is the type of information that maybe is not well known especially throughout the non-Aboriginal population. And I think that it is . . . any information that we can share is more than, is positive.

Mr. Minister, can you indicate to me what the graduation rate is in First Nations reserves schools, if the rate is increasing or decreasing the last few years?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Within the Saskatchewan schools, and we don't have information for on-reserve schools, but within those schools that are under the Department of Learning's purview, when we look at the longer term — within seven years of starting the program — we have a completion rate of 84 per cent.

But we need to be careful in terms of interpreting that. That is talking about completion rate over a fairly long time period and should not be interpreted to mean that we have a seamless approach from 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Often the study is interrupted and what we are seeing is a large number of students that leave the system but come back in to do adult upgrading or come back into the system after some interruption.

So this is one of those pieces where we get into having to define the terms a little bit. We certainly believe that it is better that students are able to complete year after year after year on a normal progression without seeing the interruption. Regrettably we're still seeing a large interruption.

The question the member asks, are the rates increasing? Yes, they are increasing in terms of completion but we need to do more work to quantify what that is, what the on-reserve qualification or completion rate is.

**Ms. Draude:** — My final question for the minister is I'm happy to hear that you have a tracking system, that there'll be a student number. When will that be in place? Will it be in place for this fall?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — October of '06.

[20:15]

**The Chair:** — I recognize the member from Batoche.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you. Mr. Minister, I've got a question here for you on the divisions. I've got a map here of . . . I'm not sure what the division, school division. It's with Wakaw, Wynyard, and that area in it. And the RM [rural municipality] of Invergordon is in subdivision 2 but the children from the RM of Invergordon are attending in subdivision 1 — Wakaw. So now when the election comes the parents are concerned that they can't vote for their member on the school board because that's not part of their division. So they're living in 2 but their children are attending in 1 and they can't vote for the member that's going to be representing 1. So is there going to be some correction made in this matter?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The subdivision boundaries are really simply electoral divisions. The trustees that will be returned will represent the entire division. And so in that regard there needn't be a direct correlation between what the attachment area for local schools are and where the citizens vote. The divisions will represent all the schools within the area.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Yes they'll represent, but the parents are concerned that they can't vote for the one that's representing the

school where their kids are attending.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well that may be the case that they are not having a trustee that is representing the area . . . that would represent the area they live in, not necessarily where the school is. But this is an electoral system that we're dealing with. There's not a need for there to be a direct correlation between the trustee who represents the area that taxes are paid in and the area where the students represent.

What we are working on currently through the panel on local accountability that we have underway now headed by Craig Melvin is to figure out how we deal with connection of parents to the schools that their children go to. And that would address I think more of the concern that the member has outlined in terms of how do we have that direct . . . a connection back to the school.

So it's the local accountability piece that will speak more to the parents that you've identified as opposed to how the representative . . . where the representative comes from to deal with that.

As we've gone through the restructuring, there will be a number of schools within a subdivision and so trustees will represent a number of those areas as opposed to representing one specific school which has been in many cases the tradition in many of these areas.

**The Chair:** — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, last night I had the opportunity to attend the board meeting for a separate school division that serves part of my constituency. And as a consequence of our discussion there, it appeared that there were some concerns that that particular division has as it relates to the impact of amalgamation on their operations.

One of the questions that comes as a result of the anticipated amalgamation and the much larger school districts that will be formed as a result of amalgamation is how that size, that sheer size will impact on the existing separate school divisions. The analogy of the mouse sleeping next to the elephant comes to mind in their estimation. And they're kind of concerned that existing arrangements that the separate divisions might have with existing public school divisions will be abrogated or somehow possibly shortchanged.

Can the minister give us an indication of how the department plans to work in that area of concern for these boards? Is there a mechanism in place? Is there a support system or an agency in the department that will work with the separate system to try and maintain the very good co-operative arrangements that they have currently with public school boards?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — We are aware of some of these concerns from some of the divisions. The process of amalgamation is also happening within the Catholic divisions and so they too are strengthening in terms of their size and resources they have available.

In a number of areas though they will still need to work closely together to simply deal with geographic issues in terms of what

the catchment areas are for local schools and particularly the high schools in terms of working out how the shared services are. I anticipate that good old common sense will prevail in many of these cases and that we'll continue to see that relationship which developed between public and Catholic systems continue into the future.

While I have lots of faith that that is going to be the case, we also are obviously putting some human resources into that to make sure that we are facilitating that so that that is in fact the outcome. But we are aware of this and are continuing to work, and will continue to work with them on that.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Minister, I just had a little bit of interruption when you were speaking. Did you indicate that you are planning to put resources into a mechanism that will facilitate these ongoing shared services?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — We're going to help facilitate the process. It won't be new financial resources to encourage it. It will be a case of us working with the new divisions to make sure that that relationship or a relationship is able to be worked to the benefit of students in the area. This is about making sure that we have high-quality services, educational services and high-quality schools for our kids. And I anticipate the boards are going to respond in that as that being their core mission as opposed to worried about building fiefdoms.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Minister, I know that in many jurisdictions the working relationship has been very solid between the public and the Catholic school boards and they work to a mutual benefit quite often. I know there have always been a few bumps or the likelihood of a few bumps along the way has been realized. But nevertheless I think the working relationship has been generally pretty good, especially in some of the smaller communities.

I think the concern really is not based on the track record or the history of that relationship. It is probably driven primarily by what they see as a very disparate relationship in terms of size, just sheer size.

And as the public school boundaries, the divisions get much, much larger, some of those good working relationships may not be quite as easily carried forward because good working relationships often depend on personalities involved. And if that personality changes or there is a new mandate or a different direction, some of those difficulties that we readily encounter might be realized in this particular arrangement as well.

So while I would share with the minister the optimism or the hope that those arrangements that have existed previously will continue to exist, I think the concern is that the Catholic school districts or divisions might be completely overwhelmed just by the size of the public system.

I guess the other question that came out of our discussions was that given the fact that many of the Catholic school divisions will be extremely small, as we've already discussed, they're wondering if the minister or his department have given consideration to addressing some of the inequities that might arise. You know we're going to have considerably smaller assessments available to the public school . . . I'm sorry, the

Catholic school divisions as opposed to the public divisions and that might impact shared services. It might impact capital projects, transportation delivery, those types of arrangements that have worked reasonably well in the past. So is the department contemplating providing services to the divisions and a solution to resolving those kind of inequities?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — This is one of the sensitivities that we are mindful of as we're looking at the foundation operating grant reform system. The grant today compensates for that smaller assessment now. I think we need to be clear that the assessment for Catholic divisions will not decline as a result of the restructuring; it may because of revaluation but it's not because of restructuring.

The question around shared services, and if we think about the Holy Trinity Division in particular, which today is in three different divisions and even after restructuring will still be in two different divisions, there are certain considerations we will need to make as to how that's going to work. I am encouraged by the fact that the Catholic system is continuing with amalgamation. I think that that's a wise move on their part in terms of dealing with making sure they've got a broad range of services available within the Catholic, the Catholic system, particularly outside of Saskatoon and Regina.

We are just going to have to work through how this deals . . . how we deal with these funding issues as we look at foundation operating grant reform. And this is one of those considerations we are going to have to be mindful of.

The second issue though that the member has raised is about the shared services arrangements that are in place. Where there are contractual obligations, the new boards will have a responsibility . . . the new public boards that are restructured will have a responsibility to maintain those. And that is part of what we'll need to get . . . will need to be worked through. But there are, there are a number of issues. Every board has a slightly different set of arrangements and it's going to take some time to work through. That's why we have allowed these new public boards a four-year term to deal with that, and why I anticipate that we're going to continue to need to work in the next 18 months to 2 years to really make sure that we have a truly seamless functioning.

I don't know what to say on the fear that Holy Trinity and I guess one other board, Catholic board, has expressed to me about the possibility of the public boards now — because they are becoming so much larger and having more resources — being able to go it alone. Which is essentially the argument that Holy Trinity makes, that the new boards in those areas won't need to co-operate with the Catholic board because they'll have the resources available to offer their own services. In many ways I'm pleased to hear that those kind of resources are going to be available, that the new boards in those areas won't need to co-operate with the Catholic board because they'll have the resources available to offer their own services. In many ways I'm pleased to hear that those kind of resources are going to be available, that the public boards will be able to offer it themselves.

What I trust they'll do is to continue to work to make sure students — whether they're in the Catholic system or the public

system in those locales, within those catchment areas of those schools — are able to provide that service. So we are able to find still efficiency and that broad range of services that students today are experiencing and that parents are expecting to continue into the future.

**The Chair:** — This concludes the estimates for Learning. I would invite the minister to move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank my officials for coming out this afternoon and tonight. And I would move that we rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

**The Chair:** — It has been moved by the minister that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — That is carried.

[20:30]

**The Speaker:** — The Chair of committees is recognized.

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

**The Speaker:** — When shall the committee sit again? The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

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

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 102

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 102 — The Mandatory Testing and Disclosure (Bodily Substances) Act** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we're prepared to have this Bill go to committee this evening.

We recognize that this Bill serves a very useful purpose. This Bill . . . we're pleased to recognize that the NDP [New Democratic Party] had read our policy platform and taken this idea right out of it. And of the various things that they've done this session, Mr. Speaker, adopting this one is certainly one of the, one of the better and more credible things that they have done.

And we had prepared a draft private member's Bill that we

were going to be introducing, and obviously we used the same precedent because the private member's Bill that we were going to introduce was virtually identical to this. So it's going to be very difficult, Mr. Speaker, for us to offer any serious opposition to this when we're in fact very supportive of this.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill offers a reasonable balance, in balancing the rights of a person who may have bit or spat upon a law enforcement official or an ambulance worker, a health care worker. It gives them some reasonable protection in allowing samples to be taken. But the important thing, Mr. Speaker, is that it ensures that samples can be obtained from people that do those type of things. It provides for notice requirements to be given to them, and provides a timeline and a specific process. There is also a provision in the Bill to allow the timelines in the notice provision to be waived or bridged if there is a likelihood that the person may leave the jurisdiction of the court.

The applications are brought in the Court of Queen's Bench which will ensure a reasonable balance.

A comment I wish to make, Mr. Speaker, on this Bill is dealing with the costs of the application. Under the statute the costs are to be borne by the applicant. It is our understanding and our expectation that in most cases the employer of the affected police officer or health care worker would actually bear those costs and we'll be watching with some interest to ensure that that actually in fact happens, and if it does not happen we may well be looking for a legislative amendment to make sure that that happens.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is one that we are pleased to be supporting because it is one small way that MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] can recognize the hard work and commitment of health care workers and the fact that health care workers, police officers, and emergency technicians put their lives and their safety at risk for the rest of the population on a daily basis and we're pleased to be supportive of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, and it is our hope and expectation that this Bill can be proclaimed into force this session.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have no objection to this going to committee.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill 102, The Mandatory Testing and Disclosure (Bodily Substances) Act be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried. Why is the member for Saskatoon Southeast on his feet?

**Mr. Morgan:** — Leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Could we just finish the process on this and I'll ask the member to make his introductions in a moment. To which committee . . . Pardon me.

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

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 102, The Mandatory Testing and Disclosure (Bodily Substances) Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill 102 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

And the Chair recognizes the member from Saskatoon Southeast for introductions.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the member for Meewasin has risen and introduced guests, in particular has on occasion introduced my spouse and has made certain comments about her ability to choose spouses and the life that she leads.

Today, Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce the member from Meewasin's spouse, Cheryl Hand, who I see in your gallery. And, Mr. Speaker, I note that it is their 25th wedding anniversary, and I would like to ask all members and yourself to join with me in wishing them all the best for another 25 years, and we'd like to welcome her to this legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member from Saskatoon Meewasin on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — To ask leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — I rise, Mr. Speaker, technically to join my colleague in introducing my wife, but mostly to thank him for his kind invitation of her to this House which she certainly deserved; I'm not sure I did.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 109

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 109 — The Criminal Enterprise Suppression Act** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Kerpan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pleased to rise tonight and say a few words on Bill 109 which is The Criminal Enterprise Suppression Act. Mr. Speaker, there is obviously some very good and solid points in this Bill that come to my immediate attention having been involved in either the corrections end of Justice or the correctional facilities end for all the time that I have been an elected member both in this House and both federally. Obviously some of these Bills that my colleague from Saskatoon Southeast will be speaking about tonight are near and dear to my heart as well.

One of the things that I have noticed in my work in corrections, both in the province and in the country, is the growing numbers of gangs, both in Saskatchewan and in the country of Canada. And of great concern are the number of gangs and the seeming lack of ability by governments, maybe of all stripes and of all jurisdictions, in order to control them.

Part of this legislation is geared towards suppressing gang activity which in itself is an admirable goal and one that we can never rest or take rest in because we do know for instance that Saskatchewan has the highest number, per capita number of youths involved in gangs — 1.34 youths per 1,000 people — which is not something that we ought to be proud of in Saskatchewan. According to the Criminal Intelligence Service of Saskatchewan, we have 1,315 youth gang members within Saskatchewan. One is too many, Mr. Speaker, and we could never rest, we could never stop until we do everything within our power to alleviate that problem. According to that same group, there are about 12 known gangs in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns that we have with this Bill and something that we're going to want to talk to some of the stakeholders about — we'll want to talk to police chiefs; we're going to want to talk to the police associations; we're going to talk to Crown prosecutors and lawyers and also victims of crime about this Bill — is that we see the concern possibly being that people who may have . . . business owners for instance that may have a lack of opportunity to actually defend themselves from this Bill.

Under the abilities of this Bill, it gives the court, at the request of a police chief, the right to withhold provincial tax, a liquor licence, the ability to store liquor in a place of business, those kinds of things, if an owner or a manager is found to be involved in organized crime. And, Mr. Speaker, that's all well and good if that person is in fact proven to be a part of organized crime. Then well that should be that we ought to take any and all steps in order to make sure and ensure that that person is no longer in business.

I know other Bills that have passed through this House — profits of organized crime, profits of crime Bills — both in



Saskatchewan and in the federal government have been very good and well received, I might add, by most people, regardless of which end of the law you're on, whether you're a Crown prosecutor or a lawyer that would be acting on behalf of someone who is charged with these types of crimes.

I just want to spend a couple of minutes, Mr. Speaker, talking about organized crimes in correctional facilities. I had the opportunity over the last good number of years as an elected member to visit many and various correctional facilities, both provincially run, state run, and federal facilities, and that is a concern. I can tell you wherever you go, you'll ask people what are their biggest concerns within the walls, the physical walls of a facility, and they'll tell you on many cases that it is gang-related activities that are a major, major, major problem.

On a trip that I made to Alberta to some of their provincial correctional facilities a year and a half ago, Mr. Speaker, something of interest that I noticed and I asked the people who were running the facility, I asked them how they dealt with gangs within their walls. And they said that they had gone to great lengths to alleviate that system, and they found that one of the most simple solutions was the most effective solution. And what they did is they took and they dressed every inmate in the same clothing. In this particular case they were coveralls, and I think they were a blue coverall. And by just eliminating the accessibility to wear gang-related colours and clothing, they eliminated some of the problems that come from gang-related activities in Alberta.

And I notice the Minister for Corrections and Public Safety and I have talked about this in the past when I was the critic for Corrections and Public Safety. And I know that those are some of the things that hopefully that that department will be looking at in the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just say then that, you know, we want to spend a little bit more time talking to the stakeholders because we're obviously a little bit concerned obviously as well that some of the things that the government has failed to do when it comes to justice-related activities are obviously a concern to us, and we want to talk about those as well, such things as your promise for the last two elections — three elections I guess now — to hire an additional 200 police officers.

Mr. Speaker, I know that they will stand up on a given day and say that they've hired so many. And they have; I understand that. But the problem comes where they're going to have to backfill a huge hole left by retiring members of the force.

So those are things that we would like to ask the government and to discuss before we move this Bill on to the next stage and so, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time at this stage, I'd like to move that we adjourn Bill 109.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Carrot River Valley that debate on second reading of Bill 109 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. 110

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 110 — The Seizure of Criminal Property Act** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, tonight we're going to be having a number of Bills go to committee. This will be among those Bills. Of the Bills that are going to committee tonight, Mr. Speaker, this is the one that we have the most concern and reservations on. We wish it to go to committee, so we can have further discussion and seek input as it goes along.

This Bill allows for the forfeiture of property on the application of a police chief. It is a marked shift from the approach where applications of this nature and tools are given to the Crown rather than to a police chief. We recognize, Mr. Speaker, that the purpose of this is to enable communities to take a greater role in policing and public safety. Having said that, there is always a concern when we shift away from the fundamental role of the Crown as being primarily responsible for law enforcement and safety. We'll be looking to see, as this Bill is proclaimed into force, how it is going to work.

[20:45]

Another concern, Mr. Speaker, that we have with this Bill is that it allows for goods to be seized, and there is a different onus of proof. Primarily in criminal law for years, we have had requirement that things be proved beyond a reasonable doubt. In this particular Bill, it changes the onus of proof to requiring only a proof on the balance of probabilities — a significantly lesser burden of proof than we do for convicting someone. So we naturally have some concerns about how civil liberties are going to be affected.

We also have concerns with other parties that may have an interest in goods or land that are seized and how their rights are going to be affected. There is notice provisions and protection provisions in this piece of legislation, and we will be looking to see how those are applied and would certainly welcome comments in that regard.

The crux of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is section 7(1), and that is the section that we look at to determine the force and effect of this Bill. And I'll read that section:

... if the court finds that the property is proceeds of unlawful activity or an instrument of unlawful activity,

it can be seized or otherwise dealt with. So we look to see what will happen with that. It creates some additional difficulty because it blends civil and criminal law, and it may well be that this Bill does not stand up to a court challenge for the constitutional argument that it is outside of the jurisdiction of the province to enact pieces of criminal legislation.

We have concerns about what will happen with the proceeds of

crime. We feel that there should be an expectation that forfeited property be used either to fight crime or for the victims of crime, and this Bill does not necessarily address how that is going to happen.

We feel it's of some significant importance to make a public statement that proceeds of crime be used primarily to support and to return victims of crime back to the position they were before the crime had taken place.

We appreciate that there needs to be a balance between what police might need for resources to continue their fight against organized crime. We'll be watching to see whether the government will enact formulas or enact methodology that's there.

We of course have concerns about gang participation and growing problems with gang participations. We have extremely young people involved in urban gangs . . . and the young people involved in gangs. We have the highest per capita number of youths involved in gangs — 1.34 per 1,000 people. According to Canadian intelligence service of Saskatchewan, we have 1,315 youth gang members, which is second only to Ontario which has 12 times the population.

We have some adult oriented gangs, and they include the Native Syndicate, Indian Posse, Redd Alert, Saskatchewan Warriors, Crazy Cree, Mixed Blood, Tribal Warriors, and West Side Soldiers. And there's younger, junior versions of those gangs as well. And, Mr. Speaker, it is our goal to have the police given every possible tool and resource that's necessary to deal with that.

One of the problems that we do have, Mr. Speaker, is the lack of commitment on the part of the NDP to live up to their 1999 election promise for 200 new police officers. We think that if you're going to have a Seizure of Criminal Property Act and a piece of legislation of this type, it's absolutely essential that there be sufficient resources for that.

Mr. Speaker, we have raised on many occasions in this house the NDP practice of saying one thing and doing another. They often use as an excuse that they intend to do something over their mandate. This is something that goes back to the 1999 mandate, not the 2003 mandate. So it's abundantly clear that this is an election promise from the 1999 election that was not filled. I certainly don't wish to go back through the debate that we've had over the actual number of officers that were provided by the department. But no matter whose numbers you use, the promise remains unfulfilled, and we're still lacking many police officers as required.

The best that we have seen from this government is a small token gesture of 18 positions, which is a long way from the 200 that's there. If they continue on at this rate it's going to be a 10 year process to have a 1999 election promise fulfilled, which is unfortunately a classic and rather offensive way of saying one thing and doing another.

Mr. Speaker, we want to be certain that we recognize the need to be proactive in addressing organized crime. We want to make sure that we limit the ability of organized crime to carry on and prosper in Saskatchewan. We want to take every step to address

youth gang activity.

In his second reading remarks, the minister said:

. . . all efforts should be made to assist our police services in their quest . . . [for] safer Saskatchewan communities.

We think a good way to answer that would be by having the department live up to the minister's commitment for 200 new police officers, and we want to see how that comes to pass.

Mr. Speaker, those are the concerns that we have with this Bill. Our most significant concern is the lack of commitment and the lack of funding to ensure that the police officers are put on the street and that the police have the resources to actually use the benefits that this Act may bring.

Mr. Speaker, we have no objection to this Bill going to committee at this time.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill 110, The Seizure of Criminal Property Act, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — I move that Bill 110, The Seizure of Criminal Property Act, be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 110 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried, therefore this Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

### Bill No. 108

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 108 — The Business Corporations Amendment Act, 2005** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, this Act is mainly a housekeeping Bill. We support it going to committee this evening. This Bill deals with amendments that are needed and are necessary to bring our provincial legislation in line with changes to the federal business corporations Act.

This Act alters and deals with residency requirements for directors of a corporation. It deals with the requirement that the directors have to be Canadians. It makes this Bill consistent with the federal legislation in this regard. It also deals with national security rules that have now been adopted by the Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission.

We support the consistency between our legislation and the federal business corporations Act, and deals with a number of issues that are there, that we are largely supportive and are pleased that the government is lifting restrictions or relaxing restrictions in making the Bills consistent with federal legislation. And we are concerned that the government does everything they can to be supportive of business in a general sense.

We deal often, Mr. Speaker, about a number of other issues that affect the viability and the ongoing ability of businesses to carry on in this province. So we're pleased that The Business Corporations Amendment Act does not have any of the things that we were dealing with before like the job-killing monster on available hours and the royalty schedule which they changed for oil revenues. They addressed this by referring to reducing royalties as dealing with an issue of revenue leakage which is certainly something that most taxpayers and business people in the province find somewhat offensive.

Another example, Mr. Speaker, is Bill 87. One day the minister says it includes seizure. The next day the minister says that it does not. Mr. Speaker, this is a troubling way for a business corporation amendment Act to deal with things. We're glad that this portion of it is going there.

But I point out that we still have many difficulties with other business issues in this province and certainly want to see to it that there are as few impediments to businesses in this province. And we encourage the NDP government to try and come forward with other Bills and other pieces of legislation that would be more proactive and more supportive of creating jobs and creating business opportunities within the province rather than driving business away as unfortunately has been the past practice for most of this government's mandate.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill can go to committee.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill 108, The Business Corporations Amendment Act, 2005, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — I move that Bill No. 108, The Business Corporations Amendment Act, 2005 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill 108 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

### Bill No. 113

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on **Bill No. 113 — The Non-profit Corporations Amendment Act, 2005/Loi de 2005 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les sociétés sans but lucratif** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, this once again is another housekeeping Bill which we will be consenting to going to committee this evening. It is a companion piece of legislation to The Business Corporations Amendment Act. It also deals with Canadian residency requirements and clarifies certain rules on the election of directors and probably takes some steps to ensure that people don't become directors of non-profit corporations without knowing that they've become directors. There's been issues in the past with directors' liability and it's probably a step in the right direction that there be a greater notice provision to ensure that people are aware that they've been elected as a director.

Mr. Speaker, there are significant liabilities and responsibilities that go with being a director. Those include ensuring that payroll remittances are filed, that other various government filings are completed on behalf of the corporation. In the event that those things do not happen, there is a personal liability on the part of the director and this Bill goes a ways to ensuring that those people may not have been volunteered without their knowledge.

We think it's important, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill be reflective of the fact that our province's charities and public organizations are very . . . very much need the support and hard work of volunteers. And this Bill addresses the need for those people to have some protection and some knowledge without totally removing the responsibility that goes with them. We think it's of some benefit to recognize the hard work and support that volunteers give our various charities and we're pleased that this Bill does that.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill can go to committee and we support that.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill 113, The Non-profit Corporations Amendment Act, 2005, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — I move that Bill No. 113, The Non-profit Corporations Amendment Act, 2005 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister of human services that Bill No. 113 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

[21:00]

### Bill No. 112

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 112 — The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2005** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to speak to this Bill this evening. This is another Bill that can go to committee.

The purpose of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is to allow for a civil section within the Provincial Court. It will allow judges to be . . . develop better expertise, better timing in dealing with civil matters and then . . . as separate from criminal matters, and will probably give some benefit to scheduling and to ensuring that there is a quick flow of matters through the courts.

The basis of this Bill and its companion piece of legislation is some amendments to The Small Claims Act, the small claims process where the Provincial Court civil procedure will be to ensure and to maintain that that process becomes user-friendly and a process that people can use without the requirement and the expense of hiring a lawyer to look after their matters as they go to court.

Mr. Speaker, we have developed a system in our province of a Small Claims Court that has been very effective for regular citizens that don't need to or want to go through the process of hiring a lawyer. The process is largely shepherded through by the court clerks, who should be commended. Their practice is to schedule an appointment with the applicant plaintiff. They prepare and draft the documents on their behalf and upon payment of the appropriate fee, which is a reasonable fee, issue the documents and give them to the plaintiff so that the plaintiff can arrange for service of the documents.

The process after that is a mediation process and on to trial. So the process has in fact worked well in the past. And this Bill will ensure further streamlining and a better availability of judges.

The concerns that we have, Mr. Speaker, are with the monetary limit currently in Small Claims Court. We note that there is legislation that's been passed to raise that limit. And our concern would be when things will come into force to raise the limit and make things more affordable on a larger scale.

Another thing the province should consider is clarifying the role of corporations that appear before Small Claims Court, either as a plaintiff or a defendant, and at what point those people can appear through an agent and at what point they are required to appear through a solicitor. It may well be appropriate, Mr. Speaker, for a further amendment or another piece of legislation to specifically allow or enable corporations to be represented by an officer or a designated employee. The practice right now through the province, Mr. Speaker, is somewhat haphazard and could certainly use some clarification and cleanup and streamlining. In any event, Mr. Speaker, we're pleased that this Bill can now go to committee.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill 112, The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

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

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — I move that Bill 112, The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2005 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill 112 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

### Bill No. 111

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 111 — The Small Claims Amendment Act, 2005/Loi de 2005 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les petites créances** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, this is the last Bill that I will be speaking to this evening. Some of my colleagues may regard that as merciful.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is a result of a Small Claims Court review committee that made certain recommendations with the purpose of trying to improve the efficiency and access to Small Claims Court.

Mr. Speaker, one of the processes that has been highly effective in Small Claims Court has been pre-trial conferences or management meetings. And the purpose of this Bill will enshrine that in legislation and will ensure that a case management meeting between the parties and a judge takes place.

Prior towards a trial, the judge will at that process attempt to settle a case before the trial actually takes place, and the judge will have additional powers at that pre-trial meeting that if a settlement cannot be reached the judge could make orders that would manage the dispute. He could require additional disclosure of evidence, additional parties being added, could require specific pleadings or directions to be filed by the parties. He can also deal with the disposal of trial exhibits that usually are required to be held until the expiry date of an appeal.

These changes, Mr. Speaker, are ones that are designed to make the court more accessible, more friendly, and more efficient for a non-lawyer to use these claims.

There is also provisions in the legislation that enable the courts to strike out frivolous or vexatious claims as well as some provisions that allow for the payment of non-lawyer and non-legal costs, so that if somebody had a claim that was unsuccessful, they may well be ordered to pay the other party's lost wages to appear in court. So there's some incentives to either settle matters or to ensure that your claim is valid before you go forward with it.

I note, Mr. Speaker, and I'm pleased to report to the Assembly that most of these recommendations came as a result of the review committee and certainly not as the result of any hard work or due diligence on the part of the NDP, and I want to make sure that it's the committee that receives the credit for these things rather than the government. I will, however, concede the government did authorize the committee to go ahead, and I'm pleased that they did.

And I'm very pleased that they came back in the form of a Bill that we are able to support, and would like to at this time, Mr. Speaker, commend the staff and judges that work in Small Claims Court dealing with these matters. Sometimes these claims would, on the outside to a lay person, appear to be relatively minor and trivial, but I can assure you that for the person that's involved in this type of litigation, it's sometimes the most difficult or emotionally wrenching things that they go through. So it's imperative that the process be made with some compassion and just treatment and dignity for the people that are using it, and would like to commend all of those people.

Mr. Speaker, this matter can certainly go to committee at this time.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill 111, The Small Claims Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — I move that Bill No. 111, The Small Claims Amendment Act, 2005 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill 111 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

### Bill No. 118

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Forbes that **Bill No. 118 — The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act, 2005** be now read a second time.]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to speak to Bill No. 118, an Act respecting Water Rights and the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, and making consequential amendments to certain Acts.

Mr. Speaker, the government has just introduced this Bill very

recently, and it's a very lengthy Bill. It has, I believe, 13 parts to it and it's very encompassing. And this is going to take a lot of studying, and we certainly are going to want to take this back to the stakeholders in the province and get their opinion about the changes that this Bill is going to make.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about water rights, the first thing that comes to my mind is in the springtime when there is this flooding. And it's in various parts of the province, but it's certainly a greater issue in the eastern portion of the province where there's flooding every year, and there's been many problems and concerns in that area about landowners digging dikes, draining water off their land. Other people have problems when their water is drained.

So it's really a touchy situation where it's really pitting neighbour against neighbour, farmer against farmer, and quite frankly farmer and neighbour against the government or the government against them when they take legal action against individuals concerning the drainage of flooded areas. Now these are generally areas that are seeded every year, and so naturally the landowner or the farmer wants to drain these areas, so they can put a crop in. So it's certainly a very large economic factor for farms that have these concerns, but also it has to respect the rights of people downstream, you might say, from the flooded area that this water must run through.

And so we're certainly going to take a long look at this Bill and just see where it goes and what changes that it is proposing.

Mr. Speaker, when I personally think of the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, I only have to think back to the problems in the Asquith-Grandora area concerning the construction of caverns, the salt caverns in that area to store natural gas. And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, my constituents in the Grandora-Asquith area, when you say Saskatchewan Watershed Authority it's basically a dirty word to them because they feel that they have been mistreated by the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority. They feel that they have been very heavy-handed and not respecting their rights.

We talk about water rights. Well is there any rights for landowners in this province that have wells that are producing clean water and then through the actions of a government Crown corporation by producing these caverns they lose their water totally or it's a very poor quality of water? And I've spoken many times about this and asked many questions concerning this situation in the Grandora-Asquith area, and quite frankly the people in that area are not happy with the result.

We understand there is more action taking place to help mitigate the poor wells, but the people in that area certainly don't feel that the Watershed Authority, the Government of Saskatchewan, and TransGas are doing their bit in order to mitigate their problems. It's one thing we all agree that we . . . Saskatoon needs those storage caverns for the storage of natural gas. But on the other hand, the local landowners, the small holdings, and farmers in the Grandora-Asquith area also have rights, also have a very . . . not only a health issue but a basic economic issue concerning the water that they are wishing to produce for their own families and for their businesses and for their livestock.

So, Mr. Speaker, certainly as I mentioned before, there is many, many areas in here that need to be looked at, and we will certainly be asking the stakeholders in this province what they think of this Bill. And we will, as I said earlier, we have just received this Bill and haven't had the time to do due diligence on this Bill and get a grasp on the changes and the effects these changes to the Bill will have on property owners and also on the powers of the government over the water that the people in the province of Saskatchewan rely on. So at this time 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 118, The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act, 2005 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. 96

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Higgins that **Bill No. 96 — The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 96 is a fairly complex and large Bill, but thankfully I've got an hour and 15 minutes to do it in, Mr. Speaker. So I think I may have time to express my views on this particular piece of legislation before the House wraps up for the day.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill deals with the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and the Executive Council of Saskatchewan and makes consequential amendments to other Acts. Basically, Mr. Speaker, what it deals with is the entire operation of the Legislative Assembly itself, how people are hired, how MLAs are entitled to compensation, and actually, Mr. Speaker, who is entitled to run to become a member of this legislature, Mr. Speaker. So it's a fairly comprehensive and fairly broad Bill. It also deals with setting out the guidelines for the Board of Internal Economy and how it operates as sort of the managing body for the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Mentioning, Mr. Speaker, who may or may not be eligible to seek a nomination to become a member of this legislature I think is worth noting, Mr. Speaker. In particular it deals with the ineligibility of people who work for the Crown — either for a department or for a Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker. Somebody who reads this, Mr. Speaker, quickly and without studying it and understanding the terminology I think would have some difficulty with this particular clause because it says that to even seek to be nominated, Mr. Speaker, you can no longer hold a position with the Crown, either as a department employee or as an employee of a Crown corporation.

And on first blush, people that are familiar with the political process think of nomination as being the nominating meeting for a particular party so that when you go to seek the

nomination to represent your party of choice, at that point of the nomination day you would have to cease being an employee of the Crown. That's the interpretation most people would place on this, Mr. Speaker, at first blush. However that's not the case.

And I think it needs to be clarified, Mr. Speaker, that the nomination that this legislation is talking about is the nomination day during the writ period for the last day in which anyone could become a candidate during that election. So it's not a party nomination; rather it's the nomination that you put your name forward during the election writ to represent either a political party or as an independent member seeking the election as an independent person.

So it's roughly three weeks, Mr. Speaker, prior to the time that had been the case previously. Previously this requirement came into play the day of election day — that once you were elected, you could no longer be an employee of the Crown in any way, shape, or form, Mr. Speaker. Now it's moved ahead from that point approximately three weeks to the nomination day during the writ period, the nomination day when you have to turn your papers in with the signature of your party leader or, if you're an independent, pay your \$100 and have your name placed on the ballot for that particular election. That's the day that it refers to now.

But on first blush I think that people could be a bit confused and a bit concerned about that, Mr. Speaker, so I think it needs to be clarified. And I guess the question will have to be asked to the minister when this eventually gets to committee as to what the reasoning was that the minister, that the government moved it from election day to nomination day. So, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the areas that needs to be clarified.

And it goes on with some other qualifications as to who can or cannot be an elected member, Mr. Speaker.

There is a couple of other areas as well that I think are worth noting, Mr. Speaker, on this particular Bill. One of the areas is division 3 that deals with the committee that could be put in place to review salaries, indemnities, and allowances for members. This piece of legislation as previously . . . well certainly sets it out in a manner that's clear and understandable, that the Lieutenant Governor in Council can appoint a review committee, Mr. Speaker, to review the salaries and indemnities and allowances of members of this Legislative Assembly.

But there doesn't need to be an additional motion put forward before the legislature or an additional piece of legislation passed that allows for the establishment of a review committee, Mr. Speaker. It's done by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and no more than five people, none of which can be a member of the Assembly, can be appointed to this committee, Mr. Speaker. The committee would do its deliberations and make a report back to the legislature.

And it says here, Mr. Speaker, that the legislature can then do one of two things with the report that is received from a review committee. The legislature can either approve the report, or it can reject the report, Mr. Speaker. There is no provision in here to allow for any amendments or any changes to the report by this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. The report of the review committee can be dealt with in either accepting it or rejecting it

and that's all. You either take the whole thing, or you take none of it, Mr. Speaker. You're not allowed then to pick and choose.

So the members of this Assembly could not pick and choose which parts of the report they wanted to take and implement. We either take it all, or we take none of it. And I think that's appropriate, Mr. Speaker, because this review committee, if and when one is established, is to be an independent review process outside of this Assembly, outside of the purview of the members of this Assembly. And I think it's appropriate then, Mr. Speaker, that the legislature would either accept or reject as the case may be, but not tinker with, Mr. Speaker.

I have to admit though that there is a point further on down the road once a report was accepted, Mr. Speaker, and implemented, then the Board of Internal Economy can come into play and make changes, Mr. Speaker. I would think that if a review committee came back with a full set of recommendations for the salaries and indemnities of members of this legislature, that there would be very little if any need then for the Board of Internal Economy at some future date to interfere with that process.

We have seen the results of that. We had a process in place, Mr. Speaker, from 1995, the McDowell Commission, that set out the proper procedures for members of this legislature, and then the government interfered with it two years ago, Mr. Speaker, in their mandate of 0, 1, and 1. And that has now reached us to the conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that it's time to have another review process, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier talked of another review process be called in the near future. The Leader of the Official Opposition has also called for that, Mr. Speaker. So I believe that it's time, Mr. Speaker, that there could be another review process put in place in the near future. And we certainly need to be looking at that, Mr. Speaker.

I know that there are other members that are very interested in this debate. One other item that I do need to mention though, Mr. Speaker, is that this legislation continues to hold to the fact that if a vacancy occurs, that the vacancy needs to be filled with a new . . . a by-election needs to be called within six months. But that, Mr. Speaker, that by-election only needs to be called though within the first 40 months of a parliament, of a legislature, Mr. Speaker, even though we could go on for another 50 per cent longer than that. We could go on to 60 months.

And I think it would be appropriate . . . We've argued this, Mr. Speaker, in the House previously. The government has decided not to change this. But I think it would be appropriate if the six-month rule had no exclusions in it, Mr. Speaker. That once a seat has been vacant for six months, there is a by-election, Mr. Speaker. I think that would be appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, I think these are questions and concerns that can be raised in Committee of the Whole, Mr. Speaker. Therefore I believe this Bill can move ahead.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Labour that Bill No. 96, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005 be now

read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 96, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005 be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 96 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.

Why is the member for Regina Dewdney on his feet?

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like leave to introduce guests.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Regina Dewdney has asked leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. Member for Regina Dewdney.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly an individual that I know has been introduced earlier tonight, the wife of a good friend of mine, the member from Saskatoon Meewasin. But, Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Meewasin in my introduction asked me to pass on a message to his wife on this very special day, her 25th wedding anniversary. He wanted all members of the Assembly to know, and his wife, that he loves her very, very much.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

##### SECOND READINGS

###### Bill No. 97

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Higgins that **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** be now read a second time.]

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Labour that Bill No. 97, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Consequential Amendment Act, 2005 be read now a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 97, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act Consequential Amendment Act, 2005 be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance, the Government House Leader that Bill No. 97 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 No. 97 stands referred to the Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

#### Bill No. 116

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 116 — The Osteopathic Practice Repeal Act** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. It's a pleasure to speak to Bill No. 116, The Osteopathic Practice Repeal Act. Mr. Speaker, our information says the repeal is an Act that governs the practice of osteopaths in the province, and the Health Minister has told the media it is outdated, and we no longer need any osteopathic doctors.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. During a scrum, after the minister introduced the Bill, he was asked to define what an osteopathic practice or doctor was, and well the Minister of Health didn't know. So I'd just like to give some information to the Minister of Health about what an osteopath is.

It's a therapist who manipulates the skeleton and muscles, the treatment of injuries to bones and muscles using pressure and



movement; a system of health care that focuses on treatment of the physical body, joints, muscles, and connective tissue using hands-on pressure, stretching, and manipulation; considered a complementary medicine or treatment. Applications include treating muscular contraction after periods of immobility, increasing range of motion, breaking down scar tissue after trauma. Considered an official health practice in France, training institutes there, Mr. Speaker, train many osteopath doctors which are practicing around the world.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, the reason for the repeal is because the minister said the Act is obsolete. And currently there are no osteopathic practitioners in the province. There have not been for many years.

And should a Canadian trained osteopath wish to practice in the province, he or she would not be able to because the current Act requires licensing in accordance with an education program approved by the American Association of Osteopaths. Osteopathic training in the US [United States of America] is now broader in scope.

According to the minister, the repeal of this Bill would not prevent an osteopath from establishing a 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 professional.

And, Mr. Speaker, if someone that has been going to see a chiropractor for many years, some of these techniques and professions after a fair length of time become quite generally accepted. And that's the situation with chiropractic treatment and many other types of procedures that help people with muscle and bone problems and/or skeletal problems. And not that I'm that familiar with osteopathic treatment, but I understand it's complementary to massage therapy and chiropractic treatments.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a number of questions that we'd like to ask the minister in the future. So at this time, Mr. Speaker, we'd like this Bill to go to committee.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 116, The Osteopathic Practice Repeal Act be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 116, The Osteopathic Practice Repeal Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill 116 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

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

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 21:32.]



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Minister of Crown Management Board  
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Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation  
Provincial Secretary

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