



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

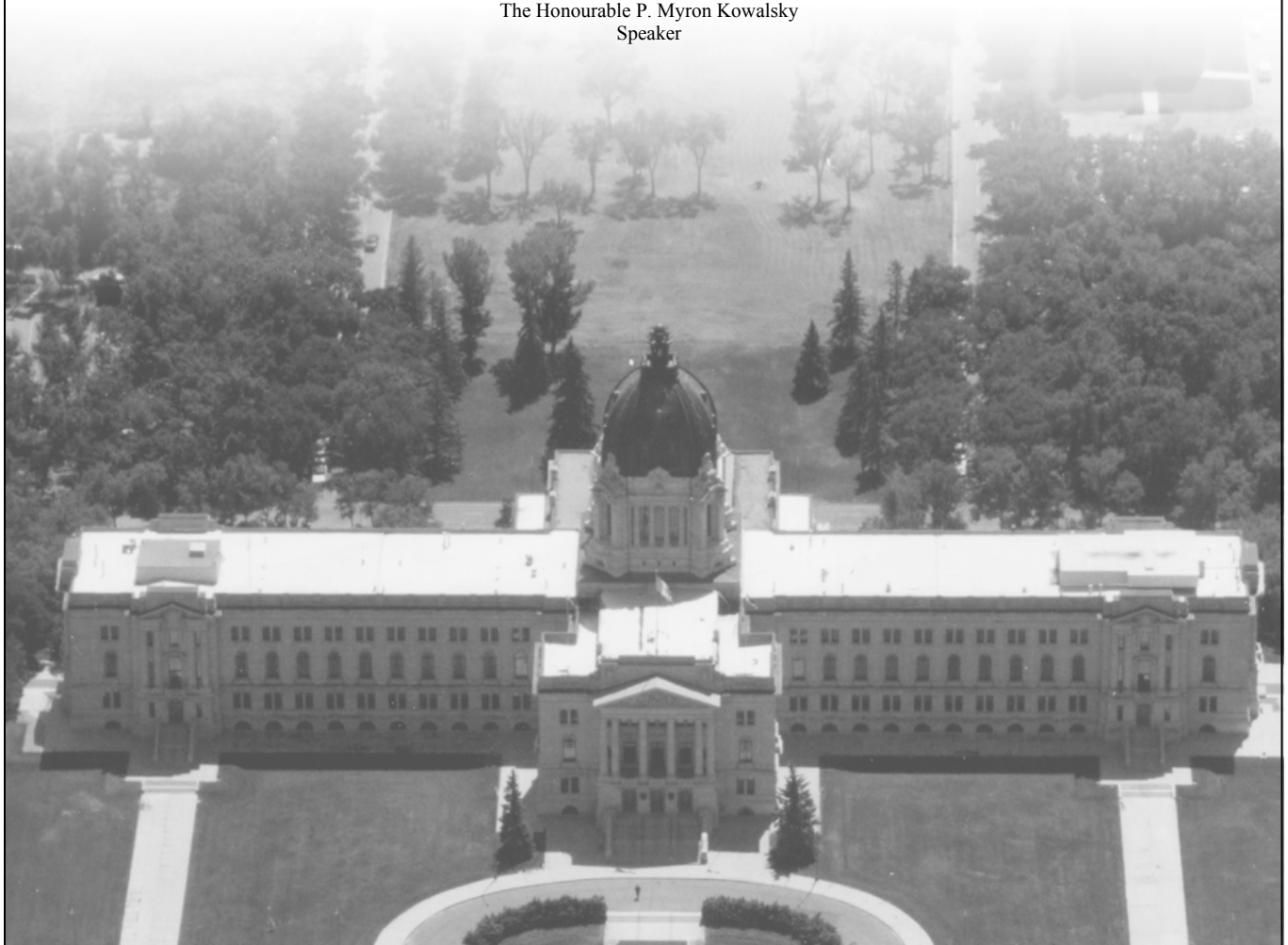
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reputation of Highway 32 is spreading far and wide, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a prayer on behalf of constituents of Cypress Hills and other communities around the province:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, today's petitions are signed by individuals from the community of Leader, Prelate, Kindersley, Coleville, Saskatoon, and points in Alberta. I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I've yet another petition on behalf of the staff, participants, and families of the Wheatland Regional Centre Inc. and other like centres across the province that provide services for individuals with disabilities. Mr. Speaker, the prayer of this petition reads:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, a number of signatures on this petition are from the communities of Rosetown, Beechy, and Brock, Saskatchewan. I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of those people very concerned about the assistance to autism-affected families. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to improve access to resources for families who desperately need help for their autistic children.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by residents of Estevan. I so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Bakken Lackey: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are very concerned about the lack of health care services in rural Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads:

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

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Radville, Trossachs, and Khedive. I so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition on behalf of concerned parents in the constituency of Saskatoon Silver Springs regarding a much needed elementary school in the Arbor Creek area of Saskatoon. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement an allocation of financial resources to build an elementary school in Arbor Creek.

The petitioners today live on Budz, Buckwold, and Overholt Crescent, and Kenderdine Road in northeast Saskatoon. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here that citizens want to terminate the contract of Jim Ferguson:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by residents from the town of Davidson. I so present.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present

another petition to revisit the effects of the TransGas Asquith natural gas storage project. The prayer reads:

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

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

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

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

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned with the consulting contract of former CEO [chief executive officer] Jim Fergusson of the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority in which he receives monthly payments of \$13,000. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

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

Mr. Speaker, signed by good citizens of the city of Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I rise once again to present a petition dealing with the contract of Jim Fergusson in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, I will read from the prayer for relief:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Saskatoon Eastview and Saskatoon Greystone. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the Assembly today and present a petition on behalf of farmers concerned with agriculture in Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the CAIS program

receives adequate provincial funding, the funding formula is changed to ensure equal access to compensation, and to contribute funds to the latest BSE assistance package released by the federal government.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Flaxcombe, Kindersley, Coleville, Brock, Eatonia, Smiley, and Cudworth, Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to rise and present a petition on behalf of citizens of the province who are very concerned with this government's reluctance to implement the SARC's [Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres] human resources plan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly will please consider implementing the recommendations as outlined in SARC's human resources plan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Ituna, Hubbard, and Melville. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk Assistant: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) they are hereby read and received:

Of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan praying that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to improve access to resources for families with autistic children — sessional paper 814.

And addendums to sessional papers nos. 96, 666, 715, 716, 800, and 808.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 91, The Land Surveys Amendment Act, 2005 without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive

consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole of this Bill 91. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 91 — The Land Surveys Amendment Act, 2005

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for the Information Services Corporation that Bill 91, The Land Surveys Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies is recognized.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 99, The Canadian Information Processing Society of Saskatchewan Act without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for the Information Technology Office.

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

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration of Bill 99 in Committee of the Whole. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for the Information Technology Office.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 99 — The Canadian Information Processing Society of Saskatchewan Act

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of the Information Technology Office that Bill No. 99, The Canadian Information Processing Society of Saskatchewan Act be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 117 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: is the Anti-TB League Superannuation Plan indexed to inflation?

Further, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 117 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: is the workers' compensation superannuation plan indexed to inflation?

Further, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 117 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: is the Members of the Legislative Assembly Superannuation Plan indexed to inflation?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 117 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: is the STC superannuation plan indexed to inflation?

Mr. Speaker, I have a number of similar questions along the same line regarding different departments. I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 117 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Community Resources and Employment: how much money has the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan Eastern Region No. II based in Archerwill

received from the government and for what programming?

And I give notice I shall on day no. 17 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Community Resources and Employment: how much money has the Mutual Equity, Trade and Investment Inc. received from the government and for what program?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Learning, the member for Regina South.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased today to introduce to members of the Assembly and yourself a group of eight students who have joined us in your gallery.

These students are from across our province and are representing Saskatchewan at the Interchange on Canadian Studies that is being held in Medicine Hat starting on the 15th.

The Interchange on Canadian Studies is one of the pre-eminent events that goes on in our country to help students debate, discuss, think about current issues that are happening within our Canadian context.

And we are represented this year by a group of eight students from across Saskatchewan. They are — and I'm just going to read their names, if they could just wave as I do so — Layne McDonald from Elrose; we have Catherine Abenstein from Regina; Christina Boobyer from Naicam; Craig Turner from Saskatoon; Linda Xiao from Saskatoon; Curtis Bellegarde from Regina; Chris Sanchez from Strasbourg; and I don't know how Strasbourg got two, but this year they've got two, Amanda Willcox from Strasbourg.

So I want to thank these students very much for their interest in this program and their agreement to represent our province at this interchange. The students are going to be taking a look at a number of issues around environment and the economy. They will be talking about the BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy] crisis in the agricultural industry. And they'll be talking also about how to deal with issues that affect young people in terms of the environment.

So I want to invite all members to join with me in welcoming this group of students here and thanking them for representing our province.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to rise and join the minister in welcoming the students on the Interchange on Canadian Studies here this morning.

Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of introducing Christina yesterday and speaking with her and part of her class from Naicam. And I know that all of the students are very

enthusiastically going to represent our province in this interchange in Alberta. And I understand they're even going to have dinner with Premier Ralph Klein as part of this whole program. So bon appétit and enjoy your interchange. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

[10:15]

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to welcome a group of students from the Montreal Lake Cree Nation. They are eight grade 12 graduates. They are role models and they are a smart looking bunch of students that are here visiting with us today, Mr. Speaker.

And they're accompanied by two teachers, and maybe they could wave as I mention their names: Larry Bear, Joanne Gaudry.

And these are the students, Mr. Speaker: Leonard Bird, Percy Bird, Jacqueline Halkett, Donald Bird, Randy Henderson, Kris Bird, Ervin Henderson, Keewatin Bird.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like everyone to welcome them to the House.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Saskatoon Greystone.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce to you and all members of the Assembly two young people who are in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very fortunate to have Cathy Ulmer working for me, and maybe Cathy could just give a little wave. She's joined my office in the beginning of May. She's attending university at the University of Saskatchewan, and she has an excellent academic record and is involved in many student organizations. And I feel very fortunate to have her working in my office.

And she's joined by Josee Steeves who is working in Executive Council for the summer, and I'm looking forward to having an opportunity to visit with Josee in the days ahead.

And I'd like to invite all members to join me in welcoming these two young people to our Assembly this morning.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Mr. Borgerson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members in the

House 38 grade 8 students from Red Wing School who have come to visit today. They're seated in the west gallery.

I've had a wonderful visit with the Red Wing students at their school just recently, and was received very warmly with them. And I found out in fact that they are incredible singers, Mr. Speaker, but I won't ask them to sing today. We had a great visit earlier on this morning.

And they are accompanied by the principal, Mr. Robert Paul, and by teachers Holly Abrey-Hare and Chris Elchuk. They're also accompanied — and I wonder if Mr. Paul could give a wave and Ms. Abrey-Hare and Chris Elchuk. Thank you. And parents, just give a wave: Jim Bowers, Holly Brotzel, Edna Dmyterko, Terry Hoover, Candace Johnson, Roman Mamczasz, Rob Reimer, and Mary-Ann Sherwood.

I must take this opportunity as well — and I'm afraid it sort of gives away my age — to acknowledge two past students who are the teachers accompanying the Montreal Lake First Nation students, Joanne Gaudry and Larry Bear.

So I'd like all members to welcome the Red Wing students and chaperones to this Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you two people who are sitting in your gallery. And I'll ask them to acknowledge the Assembly when I mention their names.

The first person is Dr. Murray Knuttila, who is a professor at the University of Regina. He's also Chair of the Regina Qu'Appelle Regional Health Authority. Sitting together with him today is Benjamin Santamaria Ochoa who is from Mexico originally. He's an accomplished writer, journalist, poet, actor, teacher, and long-standing activist for the human rights of children.

He's a recent convention refugee in Canada. He fled Mexico in the summer of 2002 after his lawyer was shot to death by assailants who left a note behind which threatened all those involved with her on human rights issues.

He's published a number of books. In 1997 he was appointed the first Ombudsman for the children of Mexico, and he's had the pleasure of meeting together with our Ombudsman here in Saskatchewan during this week.

He is presently a writer-in-exile through PEN Canada and he's serving as a scholar-at-risk at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia since July 19, 2004. Before that he was at George Brown College in Toronto and Trent University, also in Ontario.

I ask all members to welcome him here to Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Meadow Lake.

Loon Lake Graduating Class Chooses to be Smoke Free

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Ernie Studer School in Loon Lake in my constituency has their graduation tonight, and there's something very special about this class. I'm pleased to stand in the Assembly today to congratulate the entire 2005 graduating class of Ernie Studer School for choosing to be smoke free, Mr. Speaker.

I would also note, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Saskatoon Sutherland — and also who was a member of the all-party Special Committee on Tobacco Control — is a former graduate of Loon Lake, Ernie Studer School. Mr. Speaker, this is a province where youth smoking rates are a concern, so I think it's very clear that this class has set an excellent example for other young people in Saskatchewan to follow.

They made a commitment to help one another either quit smoking or refrain from starting. And over the last year they have supported each other in order to ensure they were able to achieve their goal of being a graduating class of non-smokers, Mr. Speaker.

The Tobacco Control Act that has been in place here in Saskatchewan since January is all about reducing exposure to second-hand smoke, denormalizing tobacco use by making it the exception rather than the rule, Mr. Speaker, and to help keep young people from smoking.

Mr. Speaker, I'm extremely proud of these students who have taken this step, leading the way to help ensure a healthy future for themselves and for those around them. And I ask all members to join me in congratulating the graduating class of Ernie Studer School for their commitment to each other and for making an extremely positive difference in their community.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Fundraising Events in Eastend and Maple Creek

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, small town Saskatchewan faces numerous challenges in the provision of services to its residents, especially in the maintenance of its recreational facilities. However, Mr. Speaker, rural people regularly show unrelenting fervour in their efforts to improve their beleaguered communities. This past month two communities in my constituency have demonstrated this conviction by organizing innovative and very successful fundraising initiatives.

On April 9 an NHL [National Hockey League] alumni hockey game was held in the town of Maple Creek, which garnered a profit of \$55,000 for the new rink complex. This marked the first time that a three-on-three celebrity tournament of this calibre had been held in Maple Creek. The event also included

an auction and celebrity dinner. And even a three-hour power outage couldn't quell the small-town spirit as the dinner quickly became a candlelit event.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Connie Burton, whose name might be familiar to you, who spearheaded this initiative, and all of those on the planning committee for their tireless dedication to this successful project.

On April 30 the town of Eastend played host to an extreme pro bull riding event. A sold-out crowd of 650 people, a number greater than the town itself, filled the grandstands to watch 29 professional bull riders from across Canada, the US [United States], and Australia.

When all was said and done the event raised more than \$15,000 for the Eastend rink complex. The local organizing committee, under the leadership of Val Bidaux, deserves full credit for its success.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to invite all members to join with me in offering our belated congratulations to these two communities.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Recognition of Centenarians in Saskatchewan Rivers Constituency

Mr. Borgerson: — Mr. Speaker, today I would like to honour three more centenarians from Sask Rivers constituency.

Matrona Petruk was born in Kiev and immigrated to Canada with her husband Tom in 1929. They homesteaded north of White Fox, then closer to Smeaton where they raised a family. Tom passed away some 30 years ago, but Matrona continues to live in the family farm home. Mr. Speaker, when Matrona came into Smeaton to receive her award, she was already looking forward to another spring of gardening and flowers.

Elsa Ostlund came from Minnesota in 1932 with her husband Walter and two children. They homesteaded southwest of Choceland and farmed there until 1975. After Walter's passing, Elsa eventually moved into the North Haven Care Home in Smeaton. Mr. Speaker, Elsa used to spin raw wool using a cream separator, and she would knit that wool into heavy mitts and socks that according to her family will last well into this next millennium.

My final centenarian is Palmer Hanson. Palmer's family homesteaded just north of Spruce Home. In the 1920s, Palmer hauled freight to La Ronge and Stanley Mission, cut and hauled cordwood, and cleared the right-of-way from Spruce Home to the national park. He helped build schools in the area, was a gymnastics instructor, looked after the local cemetery, ran a machine business, and was a certified seed grower for over 20 years. Mr. Speaker, Palmer Hanson is the great-uncle of Cyndal Halcro who's among the Red Wing students today.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Helen Swedberg, Josephine Olenchuk, Laura Matz, Matrona Petruk, Elsa Ostlund, and

Palmer Hanson.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

World Lupus Day 2005

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak about the second annual World Lupus Day that took place on May 10. More than 5 million people around the world are affected by this puzzling disease. It is up to us to increase awareness and understanding of lupus.

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease in which the immune system attacks the body's own healthy cells, causing tissue damage and organ failure. Lupus can strike any tissue or any organ in the body including the skin, muscles, joints, lungs, heart, kidneys, and the brain. More than 50,000 Canadians are affected by lupus. Lupus strikes men, women, and children of all ages, but primarily women of child-bearing age.

The symptoms of lupus vary drastically from person to person and can mimic other illnesses, making it hard to diagnose. Common symptoms of lupus include skin rashes, joint pain, extreme fatigue, fever, chest pain, and seizures. Early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of lupus help to slow the debilitating effects of the disease. Effective treatment can minimize symptoms, reduce inflammation, and improve overall quality of life. We can make a difference in the lives of people living with lupus by helping to increase awareness and understanding of the disease.

I commend Betty Bellamy in the constituency of Saskatoon Silver Springs who works diligently with the Saskatchewan branch of the Lupus Society in educating people of all ages about the disease of lupus.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and all my colleagues in the Assembly to recognize World Lupus Day 2005.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Elphinstone.

Aboriginal Playwrights Festival

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, last weekend I had the pleasure of attending the third annual Aboriginal Youth Playwrights Festival here in Regina. The evening was culmination of an intensive eight-week process linking professional theatre artists with emerging young playwrights. Together they explored the writers' story ideas, developing them into one-act plays. On the final evening the plays are staged, script in hand, by local actors.

Mr. Speaker, it was a great evening filled with the power, the emotions, and comedy that can only come from live theatre. There was *The Journey* by Andrew Kinniewess. There was *Three Two One* by Heather Dawn Abbey. And the grand finale, the pièce de résistance was Simon Moccasin's hotly anticipated

work, *The Bingo King*.

Mr. Speaker, the festival was produced through Common Weal community arts and their youth theatre initiative. The readings were staged wonderfully by members of the Red Feather Spirit Lodge society. I want to acknowledge everyone involved with the festival, in particular Ian Black, southern artistic coordinator of Common Weal, Ben Henderson, Pam Bustin, Mark Dieter, and Errol Kinistino, who lent a hand with direction and who helped the playwrights give voice to their stories.

I also want to give notice, Mr. Speaker, that many of these same talents will be on display again during the Cathedral Village Arts Festival in the coming weeks.

To close, Mr. Speaker, to the Aboriginal playwrights festival I say this: bon travail, good work, and Egosi, Egosi — thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Raymore Centennial Art Project

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in the House today to talk about a project going on in Raymore. The Raymore School has been awarded \$806 from the Saskatchewan Arts Board for a centennial art project to be completed by the students.

Local quilter and teacher Eva Dionne is spearheading an endeavour to bring together the efforts of the grade 4 and 11 classes with local artists and senior citizens to produce a centennial quilt which will be a lasting display for the town of Raymore.

Local senior citizens have been visiting the grade 4 class to talk to the students and relate their stories of the past. The seniors also have brought in photos and various artifacts to add to these stories. Each child was then asked to draw a picture related to one story.

After that the pictures were given to the grade 11 class who are currently reproducing the pictures as artwork on blocks of fabric. Local artist Edie Marshall was brought in to help the students with aspects such as colour theory and technique. When the fabric blocks are completed, then local community members will help sew the blocks together into a quilt.

This project is an excellent way to bring the students together with local seniors and artists to encourage their interest in the arts.

I would like all members to help me congratulate Eva Dionne, the students, and the community of Raymore for their excellent project.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for

Athabasca.

Aboriginal Head Start Anniversary

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the most gratifying moments in any MLA's [Member of the Legislative Assembly] life is when you witness community pride at its finest. I attended such an event in the community of Buffalo Narrows where we gathered last Friday to celebrate a 10-year Aboriginal Head Start anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, this was indeed a celebration. Bev Norton and her board and staff with the Head Start program put on a community show that featured the Churchill River Reeler dance group, messages of congratulations, balloons, cultural pride, and the list goes on. I couldn't help but feel a great sense of community and pride as I watched Manny Campbell lead a group of young Dene powwow dancers from the Buffalo River Band.

Mr. Speaker, this was followed by a presentation by the dance group from Buffalo Narrows who jiggged themselves right into the hearts of the entire audience. It was a sight to see. I also want to mention, Mr. Speaker, Toni Lemaige of La Loche who rounded out the evening's activities with a closing song.

Mr. Speaker, absolutely everyone enjoyed themselves, and if we continue to have events like this event throughout the entire North, there's no question in my mind that problems in our community will begin to take care of themselves. Mr. Speaker, pride, recognition of our children, and hope are the catalysts that will help us build better communities together.

Mr. Speaker, during the event, I lost a jiggging match to an older lady by the name of Germaine Pederson, but I gained an incredible amount of respect and admiration for the entire people of the region and of Buffalo Narrows and all that they accomplished that evening. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Waiting Times for Surgery

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last spring we raised concerns of Regina and area men waiting for urology procedures. The wait for these procedures in Regina and area are the longest anywhere in this province and in this nation because of a shortage of urologists. But the situation doesn't appear to be getting any better.

Rick Roland of Regina who is here today to tell the government his story . . . And this is his story. On April 5, 2005, his doctor found a tumour in his bladder and ordered emergency, urgent surgery. Almost six weeks later, he is still waiting for a surgery date. The quality care coordinator told him he may have to wait in till June for this surgery.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain why it takes over

eight weeks for urgent surgery in this province.

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I understand what the member opposite says is that this patient has taken the appropriate steps of working with their doctor, their specialists, with the quality care coordinator, and the people involved with the surgery registry and making sure that these cases are dealt with as quickly as possible. I don't have full details about that particular kind of surgery here in the House today. But I know that the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority is working very diligently to recruit more urologists for Regina because we do have a shortage right now.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Roland retired in March after serving 41 years in the fire service. His last posting was a fire marshal for the city of Regina. He is married, has a daughter and two grandchildren. He has worked his whole life and is looking forward to his retirement years with his family and friends.

But now he faces uncertainty not knowing when he'll receive this surgery. Mr. Roland is worried that this tumour may be cancerous and wants it caught now because we all know that early detection is only good with early intervention.

Mr. Speaker, if Mr. Roland cannot receive the service here in Regina, will the minister guarantee him service either in Saskatoon or outside this province so this can be addressed as soon as possible?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the services provided in the province are those provided by the surgeons who work and they will make appropriate recommendations. It is possible to refer patients to Saskatoon, and if that's appropriate in this case, that will be done.

I do feel empathy for people who are caught in this time of unknowing around surgery. But I would point out that we have been recruiting more urologists for Regina, and there's a urologist that's supposed to start within the next couple of months. But I do recommend that appropriate steps be taken to see if there is a referral available to Saskatoon. And if the specialists think that that's not soon enough, then they could go to Calgary or Edmonton or somewhere else.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the minister talked about the Saskatchewan Surgical Care Network. Well the goal of this network is to perform 95 per cent of cancer or suspected cancer surgeries within 3 weeks. That's their goal. Mr. Roland right now has waited twice that time — over 6 weeks for surgery that should have been done in 3 weeks.

But Mr. Roland isn't alone. When you check the Surgical Care Network website, you'll find that 49 per cent of patients waiting for urology procedures in Regina wait longer than 6 weeks, Mr. Speaker. That is absolutely unacceptable.

And it gives no consolation or no hope for people on these waiting lists when the minister says, I think we might be getting another urologist in two or three months. That does nothing to allay their fears or deal with the issue immediately. This issue didn't come to light just this week or last week; this has been an issue for years in this Regina Qu'Appelle health district. What is the minister doing to address this obvious shortfall in the Regina Qu'Appelle health district?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to answer that question very specifically. In this budget this year — and I ask that member to vote for this budget when it comes up over the next few days — we've allocated \$8.9 million to reduce wait times for surgery. And one of the things that we've done in Regina is actually had the purchase of a robotic arm which will assist the surgeon to do these kinds of surgeries much faster than otherwise.

We have one surgeon who is coming in the summer, a second urologist who is coming also this summer. Mr. Speaker, we continue to work to provide the services that people need across this province and we provide many, many services across the province. But there are problems in certain areas at certain times and this is one that we have identified and we're working to correct.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Nursing Resources

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the government has spent millions and millions of dollars on its website to track waiting lists in this province. What Mr. Roland needs is not a website. He needs a urologist and nurses to do the procedures, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Roland needs day surgery. That means that there's very limited time in the hospital. He checks in, has the procedure, and checks out. His case is marked urgent yet he faces an unacceptable wait.

Mr. Speaker, the minister can spend millions on studies and millions on websites, but why doesn't he put that into front-line care workers that we need in this province — urologists and nurses? When will he do that?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the member opposite raised some questions about nurses and about the numbers. And I would like to say that I have now some

information that would speak directly to his particular issue.

And the number of paid full-time equivalent SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] people working in our health system in 2002-2003 — so the end of March 31, 2003 — was 5,219. That number at the end of March 2005 is 5,695, an increase of 9.1 per cent. As far as the regular paid hours go, the increase in paid hours has gone up 3.67 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, we have been doing a number of things right across the board to find more staff to deal with problems within our health care system including training, recruiting, all of those other things. We will keep working at this and we'll keep making sure that Saskatchewan residents get good health care.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I asked the questions yesterday and didn't receive an answer. It was interesting to hear the minister attempt to answer it today. The question I asked yesterday is the fact that there is 11,500 nurses in this province — 11,500 includes RNs [registered nurse], RPNs [registered practical nurse], and LPNs [licensed practical nurse].

Now it's interesting. When we talk about the issue around nurses, he tends to leave out LPNs. Doesn't he class those in the category of nurses when we talk about nurses? Because he said that there's a 1 per cent vacancy rate in this province, which would mean when you look at the total number of nurses that would mean there is a vacancy rate of only 100 vacancies in the province. But his own numbers last year said 203. He failed to answer that question. How come there is a drop from 203 vacancies last year to 100 this year, counting all the nursing professionals including LPNs?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I think we have a good record on this side of the House of including all health workers as health workers — not like the opposite where they've named a few that shouldn't be included.

Mr. Speaker, the specific question about 100 fewer positions open: well the fact is we've hired 100 more nurses. That's the simple answer.

Now I have a report as of today. It's dated this morning. And this lists how many nurses' positions are open today. And, Mr. Speaker, there are not very many open nursing positions in Saskatchewan today. And that becomes a challenge. But I can pass this over to the member opposite. And this is something that we can continue to work at because there are parts of the province that require nurses and we should get the people there.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think what everybody needs to remember is that we have a plan as a government to improve health care for the people. Those people over there have been trying to figure out how to cut money out of health care.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. Because we have listened to what SUN has had to say — the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses — and the SRNA [Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association]. And neither one of those organizations will agree with this minister. So either SUN is completely wrong or this minister is completely wrong because SUN is not saying that there have been a whole pile more nurses hired full-time because if there had been a number of more nurses hired full time, we wouldn't hear the issues of overtime. We wouldn't hear the issues of increased WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] claims. We wouldn't hear the issues of poor morale and poor working conditions. That's what front-line workers are saying in this province.

Unlike what the minister is saying that they've hired a whole bunch more nurses to deal with the problem, they haven't. The answer to the questions that I've been asking him is they've axed full-time positions. Will he agree with that, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we will allow the SUN operation to work with the employers and the bargaining agents to deal with the contract. And we'll continue to allow for some of those issues to be dealt with there.

What we will do is consistently look at how we're providing the services, doing the appropriate planning, setting out the budgets, and getting the money to make sure that we provide those services. And I ask that member opposite and everybody across to support 7.1 per cent increase in health care because that makes a difference for the people across this province.

It's extremely important that we continue to be very diligent and careful about how we move forward and what our plans are for this province. Our goal is to provide a stable, long-term health care system that we all can afford.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Children's Hospital in Saskatchewan

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week the Children's Health Foundation of Saskatchewan expressed frustration with this NDP [New Democratic Party] government. They have not come forward with support for a Saskatchewan children's hospital.

That prompted the Minister of Health to express new-found zeal for idea no. 9 in the Saskatchewan Party's 100 ideas book. That would be the book so contemptuously dismissed as a pamphlet by the Premier, but the one he used this week for two of his government's announcements.

Mr. Speaker, talk is cheap. Is the minister actually going to do something to make the children's hospital a reality in this province?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that I've been in discussions with the people in Saskatoon who are promoting a children's hospital for a couple of years because we continue to work at this. I met with Ms. Brynn Boback-Lane this morning downtown in Regina, and we talked more about how this can go forward as a co-operative effort, taking into account all of the different services that are provided in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, we are very committed to providing good pediatric services in Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw, P.A. [Prince Albert], right across the province, centred around a children's hospital within a hospital in Saskatoon. And that is a very good idea based on what they do have in Edmonton.

We continue to work there. We will provide the resources as needed, as the planning goes forward as we are doing now.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:45]

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister was asked if there was a timeline for support of the children's hospital in Saskatoon. And he gave his usual answer, the answer to every question asked this session. The answer about all the challenges that he faces.

Mr. Speaker, the hard-working men and women in Saskatoon, in Regina, and across this province, who have raised money for this project, deserve the truth. Is he actually going to do something in support of the children's hospital in Saskatoon or is he going to just keep talking about the challenges that he faces.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the simple answer to that question is yes. And we will continue to work and build with the people in Saskatoon who are providing the service for children there and across the province. They are planning to work together with the people here in Regina and other, other centres.

Mr. Speaker, what we see this morning is a very interesting little reaction that we see on a regular basis. When those people opposite set out their plan, their latest plan, it was just to go around and gather all of the information that they could around the projects that were already on the go in the province and then say this is our plan.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that kind of a plan doesn't show any vision. It doesn't show anything other than we're gathering together information. Mr. Speaker, you need to sit down and think and talk with people as to what you're going to do before you lay

out your plan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, the Children's Health Foundation has been operating in this province for six years for trying to get a hospital in this province. When asked yesterday this minister . . . if there was a firm commitment for a Saskatoon children's hospital for Saskatchewan . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please, members. Order please. Order. Order. The member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, when asked yesterday if this was a firm commitment for a children's hospital, here's what the minister had to say, where it slows down a bit is where Saskatoon Health District has been doing a very careful review. So this is the firm commitment that the minister is contingent . . . some kind of firm . . . some kind of health district or review.

There appears to be no time frame. It seems to be contingent on a review. What the Children's Health Foundation and the opposition are asking the minister to do is to show some leadership at the provincial level and to establish a provincial children's hospital.

So I ask the minister, will he commit today unequivocally to a provincial children's hospital in Saskatoon for the children and families across this province?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, that statement was made again this week and has been made in conversations with the groups as we move forward. And the specific quote that the member didn't say everything that I said related to the fact that in Saskatoon they're examining how they provide all their services and where they should be located — whether they should be in St. Paul's, City Hospital, University Hospital. And that is a much bigger process and where the children's hospital within a hospital fits is there.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that member specifically was very involved with the Conservative Party before and now he's back with the Conservative Party. And, Mr. Speaker, he has a consistent long-term record of being part of that group which virtually wrecked our province. And, Mr. Speaker, we in this side are going to continue in a very, very careful way to make sure that we make decisions that we can afford and that will provide the services for children in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Legislation for Treatment of Drug Addicted Youth

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on April 27 . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, on April 27 in this Assembly the Minister of Community Resources and Employment said there is no question that families were sending a clear message they want a stronger ability to intervene when children are experiencing addiction problems. On May 6 she said she wanted to speak to the Children's Advocate. On May 9 she indicated she wanted to speak to Aboriginal representatives.

Mr. Speaker, has this been done? And is she anywhere closer to finding a way to give the parents the tools they need to help their children?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Community Resources and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes my staff are setting those meetings up as we speak. And I would have to say that I remind the member opposite that the colleague that she brought here from Alberta is part of the government who decided to wait a year to properly implement that legislation. So I'm not sure exactly why she is in such a rush to do this.

But I will tell you that if a child's addicted and if they're still connected with their family and if they choose treatment, the health region certainly responds to that. If a child is in need of protection, our department has committed to respond to that. So I think we are going as far as our current laws allow us and I think we're having success — the 24-hour HealthLine, the expanded treatment centres, Mr. Speaker, we have taken considerable action on this matter. But I think there's some important discussions that need to take place first.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, that's my point exactly. We've gone as far as the current laws will allow us. We have to change the laws. The minister's been saying that she wants the same thing as I do. She wants to give parents the tools they need to help addicted children. But it doesn't look like she's putting anything new forward.

Mr. Speaker, this morning on CBC National they interviewed the member from Saskatoon Northwest about his family's experience with crystal meth. CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] then stated that the Saskatchewan legislature had a similar Bill to the Alberta Bill before our House. Mr. Speaker, will this NDP government confirm nationally that our children in Saskatchewan are as important as Alberta children? And will they confirm that Saskatchewan parents are as capable as Alberta parents by passing this Bill? Or will she at least commit to using this Bill as a basis for discussion this summer on the important issue of addictions in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Community Resources and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to illustrate a few facts here. In some of the cases the member is raising opposite, these children are over the age of 25. These are not children who would even come under this Bill. So let's be factual about who we're talking about here. I don't know if she's recommending that we expand close custody compulsory treatment to people over the age of 18. When it comes to children under the age of 18 in need of protection, we are prepared to apprehend and get them to treatment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Support for Agriculture

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our farmers are literally pouring millions of dollars into the ground right now planting this spring's crop. The problem is, Mr. Speaker, they don't have millions of dollars. Now the Premier's been in Ottawa for the full week. He's still down there today I understand. And yet I found out that all he's talking about — and is very important to Saskatchewan — but is an equalization deal and an energy accord. But neglects to bring the . . . highlight the problem that we have with farmers in Saskatchewan today. Will the Agriculture minister stand in his place today and tell us why the Premier is not bringing up the problems and the shortfall of cash in the agriculture industry that we have today?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we should remember that when the Premier goes to Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, to have a conversation with Ottawa, and you just need to pick up a newspaper, Mr. Speaker, or turn on a television set or listen to a radio over the last six months, Mr. Speaker, and what will you see? You will see that Canadians today, not only people in Saskatchewan, are better off because of the health care accord, of which, Mr. Speaker, our Premier led the charge on the health care accord, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — And you can take a look, Mr. Minister, and see what the new equalization deal is for not only Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but for Canada. And what do you see, Mr. Speaker? A new equalization deal for Canada of which our province benefits as well.

And our Premier, Mr. Speaker, has led the charge on child care. He's led the charge, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to municipalities because Saskatchewan people are a priority, including farmers. And when we ask for 60/40 changes, Mr. Speaker, we want to see, Mr. Speaker, the new Conservative Party opposite us supporting us in those kinds of changes, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is kind of turning into an NDP trend of neglecting agriculture in Saskatchewan. Let's look at Jack Layton when he made his deal to prop up the federal Liberals never once mentioned agriculture in Saskatchewan. And in fact for that matter I don't think he even mentioned Saskatchewan in his deal. So the federal NDP have totally ignored Saskatchewan.

Now we have the Deputy Premier, who spent most of the week bashing federal MPs [Member of Parliament] who he may have to deal with later in the . . . whoever turns out to be government, and once again the Premier is not highlighting the problems we have in agriculture.

And this, Mr. Speaker, is at a time when the Prime Minister can't find enough people in Canada to give money to. Everybody's getting money except Saskatchewan NDP and our Premier hasn't come back with one red cent, hasn't come back with an equalization agreement, hasn't come back with an energy accord, and again has done nothing to help farmers in Saskatchewan. When will they make agriculture a priority in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, we'll take our record on agriculture any time and place it up against the new Saskatchewan Conservative Party, Mr. Speaker. Any time of the day we'll put it up against those men and women, Mr. Speaker. Because when we needed more money for transportation, Mr. Speaker, we got more money for transportation for Saskatchewan farmers and Canadian farmers, Mr. Speaker. When we needed more money for BSE, Mr. Speaker, that Minister of Agriculture and this Premier went to Ottawa and got more money, Mr. Speaker, for BSE, Mr. Speaker. And when we needed more money for crop insurance programs, Mr. Speaker, this government and this Premier and that minister got additional money, Mr. Speaker. And what I hear today, Mr. Speaker, is the member from Saltcoats-Melville standing up and supporting his Conservative friends, Mr. Speaker.

Of course he'll support his Conservative friends because they're exactly of the same colour, Mr. Speaker. They're Conservatives in Ottawa, they're Conservatives in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this is the same family. And the Leader of the Opposition also stood up just recently, Mr. Speaker, in November and says — when he was asked by the media from Regina, who are you — he said, Mr. Speaker, I'm a right-wing party. That leader from Swift Current believes he's a right-wing party . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please, now.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Deputy House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I ask leave to go to government orders.

The Speaker: — The government Deputy House Leader has requested leave to proceed to government orders. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. Order please.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to be able to stand up and speak to the water rights and Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please. Order please. Order please. The member for Melville-Saltcoats.

[11:00]

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Bill has some very interesting aspects, in fact may be a very contentious Bill that I think we're going to have many, many questions to be answered in this Bill.

Just for an example, Mr. Speaker, one of the sections speaks about the powers of SaskWater— this new Bill that's coming in — water rights and Saskatchewan Watershed Authority. And I might read that into the record, Mr. Speaker:

Subject to subsection (2), for the purposes of conducting an inspection, any officer or employee . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please. There seem to be two or three debates going on at once here. And I would ask members if they have . . . Either wait their turn for the debate, or if there are really pressing matters perhaps they could arrange to meet elsewhere. The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, there's a number of contentious issues within this Bill, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to have very many, many questions on it. One of the clauses that I find somewhat interesting, Mr. Speaker, and I'll read into the record is:

Subject to subsection (2), for the purposes of conducting an inspection, any . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please. I find that even though I've asked members once, I will ask only one more time that members pay their respect to the member that is speaking. The member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm with you this morning. Mr. Speaker, just carrying on from where I was before on this clause that I think is just one of the many clauses that we're going to have problems with or certainly need an explanation of what it's doing in this Bill. But it says:

. . . for the purposes of conducting an inspection, any officer or employee of the corporation authorized by it for the purpose may, at any reasonable time, without warrant, do any of the following [And this is where it gets interesting, Mr. Speaker]:

(a) enter and inspect any place or premises where wells are drilled or being drilled;

(b) enter any place or premises containing any records or property that are required to be kept pursuant to this Act or . . . regulations or that relate to the drilling of wells and inspect those records or that property;

(c) make a copy of any records . . .

Sounds a little bit familiar, Mr. Speaker, to maybe some of the labour Bills that we've saw being debated very strenuously in this House this week. But it says:

. . . to be kept pursuant to this Act or . . . regulations or that relate to the drilling of wells and inspect those records or . . . property;

(c) make a copy of . . . [those] records described in clause (b) or, if the officer or employee is unable to make . . . satisfactory copy, after giving a receipt remove and retain the records for any period the officer or employee considers reasonable . . .

Sounds very close to what we've debated all week, Mr. Speaker, where this government can go in and seize anything it likes out of a businesses, a residence, or wherever, and seize that property, unlike any other province in the country, Mr. Speaker. They go on to say they require the well driller or owner of the well to provide the officer or employee with all reasonable assistance to make possible any tests that he or she considers necessary.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think as usual we have a problem when it comes to this government having the authority or putting forth the authority to a member of one of the Crowns at SaskWater, SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource

Management] — any one of those departments — to be able to go into a personal residence or a personal business and seize records from that business. I think there's a problem with that when we have to resort to that in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, on my side of the province, we have had many problems over the past number of years with drainage. And a lot of those problems I believe have been caused by the direction and the abilities or non-abilities of people within SaskWater, SERM, and whatever.

And we've even saw the case where the RM of Churchbridge was taken to court by this government — by SaskWater, by SERM — to prevent them from doing something that was making improvements on their land that really in essence were helping the agriculture industry on our side of the province where the drainage was to be drained into the Assiniboia River, so it really wasn't going to hurt other farmers in the same area. And what did we do? We took one of our local municipalities to court.

So as I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're going to have many concerns on this Bill. We were just going through this Bill. It's just in the last few days been put forward. We will be going through this Bill from one end to the other. We will be checking with stakeholders, and there's many stakeholders in the province that are interested in what's in this Bill, concerned with what's in this Bill and especially on my side of the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So at this time I would like to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, this Bill will be going to committee today. We have some significant issues with this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to provide our police officers and our police forces with some tools to fight organized crime. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this Bill is one of the worst pieces of legislative drafting that I've seen since I've been elected.

There is no stated purpose in this Bill, and the Bill provides wide, sweeping powers to the police and to the courts to allow for the seizure of property and to allow businesses to be shut down. Mr. Speaker, the problems with this Bill is that there is

no direction, no things that the court is to consider as they go on. I've raised these matters with the minister and the minister feels, leave it to the courts to decide. The problem with that is it is yet another one of the examples of this government throwing up their hands and saying, trust us.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we don't trust them. The people of Saskatchewan don't trust them. And for us to go forward with that Bill in this draft or in this form is highly troubling.

The Bill is prefaced on applications being brought — and a series of different methods — by police officers in the province to allow for business licences to be taken away, other licences to be taken away, and businesses to be closed down. Mr. Speaker, this government should be more supportive of businesses in a broader force. And they should try and provide the specifics that are necessary so that criminal activity can be ferreted out and stopped rather than using a broad-brush approach saying, we'll leave it to police officers; we'll leave it to the courts.

The troubling aspect of this Bill is that it is not brought in the name of the Crown or in the name of the Attorney General who is the person that is primarily responsible for justice in this province. We have effectively, by passing this Bill, sloughed it off and saying, we'll leave it to police officers to decide whether this is going on; we're not going to be assuming any responsibility for this. There's a horrific potential for abuse with this Bill.

And having said that, Mr. Speaker, we want to be supportive of things that will reduce or eliminate organized crime in this province. This is not the type of legislative drafting that is going to lead to that end. The analogy that I would use, Mr. Speaker, is this is using a chainsaw as a fly swatter. You're not going to get what you got as your target, and what you will do is cause an incredible amount of damage elsewhere. Unfortunately it's something that this government is not willing to address, to look at, or deal with it.

The real problem that we have in this province is street crimes, street gangs. We need this government to live up to its commitment that was made in the 1999 election for 200 new police officers. I can imagine no better way to fight crime than having front-line police officers on the street.

We usually hear from the government — the members opposite, from this NDP government — that they want to fill things over their mandate, that they regard election promises as sort of being open-ended. They will fill them during their mandate.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this was a promise that was made in the 1999 election. They had an entire term that they didn't fill it, and now this minister is playing games with the figures that are there. We have 81 out of 200 filled. He's announced another 18. He talks about another 40-some. But none of those have been filled yet. And he keeps announcing, re-announcing. What we're seeing is announcements and pronouncements and no follow through and no money to support the real initiatives that have to take place.

If this minister was serious about fighting crime in this province, he would deal with the youth crimes and the youth

criminals that are on the street, as part of these street crimes, and he should do it earlier on and take initiatives that would try and help or reduce crime at an earlier stage before it becomes crime. How about a renewed commitment to community schools, School^{PLUS}? How about doing something more constructive for fetal alcohol syndrome?

And how about passing the Bill that deals with crystal meth instead of going around saying, well Alberta's a year off on the thing. Well Alberta's passed their Bill. They got a specific date. They got specific targets they're going to deal with it. And what we're hearing from the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, is they're still looking. They're still talking and they've announced things. And once again, announcements and pronouncements and no follow through on it.

Mr. Speaker, it's high time that we got something other than announcements and pronouncements and we saw cash committed to where it needs to go. Let's try and deal with the problems before we're focusing on them as corrections and safety and dealing with them before they become justice problems. Let's deal with them when they're an education or a social issue, when the children are three, four, five, and ten years old.

The organized crime ... the crime suppression Act is a band-aid, and there's unfortunately the wrong kind of teeth in it. Mr. Speaker, I'm hopeful that the minister will sit down and have a look at the drafting that's here and be able to come up with some positive direction that will give the courts the right tools to deal with this and focus on the things that they are to consider. And that's if a business is being used for a criminal purpose, if there is a criminal element in that business that's supposed be there, give the courts the positive direction they need. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill 109, The Criminal Enterprise Suppression 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: — 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. 109, The Criminal Enterprise Suppression Act, be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill 109 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. 100

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 100 — The Police Amendment Act, 2005** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, this Bill provides a number of different amendments that deal with complaints against police officers. And, Mr. Speaker, I fear that what we've got is some window dressing that may satisfy some visible concerns and may lack the necessary consultation or depth to do what it's intended to do. I always worry when something comes forward with the idea that it's going to address a whole scope of wide range of problems that exist. I believe that we have not done necessary and sufficient consultation. We've got, I think, a lack of consultation and somewhat of a lack of direction with this Bill.

We will, as a result of this Bill, have a new police complaints panel or police commission with five members on it, with one Aboriginal . . . or one First Nations, one Métis person and one lawyer and two other individuals on that. I'm wondering whether that addresses the concerns of First Nations people, whether that's necessarily the direction that should take from there. But I'm also more worried about whether this adequately addresses the concerns that come from police officers.

The concerns, Mr. Speaker, that we heard during the last year or so from police officers was that the process was often not well defined. The officers who were under investigation may not know, necessarily know that they are under investigation and were not given a suitable opportunity to rebut or answer the allegations that were made. There was issues with representation, and I'm not sure that this Bill goes far enough to address the concerns that are there.

We rely on police officers as our front-line support system to provide public safety in our communities. These people work hard. They put their lives at significant risk to ensure that safety. Their decisions that they make on a split second are later on put under a microscope and analyzed very carefully, and there's incredible public scrutiny under the decisions that they often make during a crisis. Those decisions have to be made as well as can be done. And when those decisions are put under scrutiny, when they're put under a microscope with the magnificent benefit of hindsight, we have to ensure that that process is open, transparent, fair, and treats the officers with dignity, with respect, and gives them the appropriate method of answering the complaints.

Some of the things that should take place and I'm not sure are adequately addressed in this Bill — unless there is an issue of ongoing allegations and there has to be a . . . [inaudible] . . . specifics of the complaint have to be provided to the officer in a timely manner. Once the complaint has been made there has to

be a very prescribed and very tight timeline because what it does, Mr. Speaker, is as soon as the complaint is made it puts the officer's ability to function in the public or wherever the officer is functioning — undercover or wherever else — it puts that in question. And it puts a cloud over the officer's life. It can have a very profound effect on the officer's personal life and his professional ability to function.

[11:15]

There has to be prescribed timelines. I don't see anything in this Bill that indicates around the background information that there was any consultation as to what an appropriate timeline might be.

There has to be some very real impartiality in how this process takes place. It may be that that panel has inherent conflicts, so there has to be methods. And there should be something prescribed in the statute that where it's appropriate, somebody from outside, possibly outside the province — certainly outside the municipality or jurisdiction — to complete the investigation, complete the review, and to make a determination. And I don't see, I don't see provisions in there.

Mr. Speaker, another complaint that we have heard from police officers is that there's not always a right to have appropriate representation. Police officers generally in this province are represented by a professional association. Not all police officers have the same professional association; some don't have one at all. And there's issues about whether officers in other jurisdictions or other areas are done. And I don't believe there's been suitable consultation or input from whether the professional association should be able to appear as a party to the proceedings or whether it should appear in its own right or only in a representative capacity.

This type of Bill should have had some kind of public hearings, some kind of better consultation with all the affected members in the community, not just the police officers and the Aboriginal community, but municipalities that are the employer, and other citizens as well.

Mr. Speaker, what we're hoping for when this Bill goes to committee is that people that are affected will contact members of the legislature and will have the opportunity to have broader, more open input. And I'm hopeful that the Justice minister will be receptive of some of the comments that no doubt all members will be receiving over the next few months, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill 100, The Police 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: — 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. 100, The Police 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 100, The Police Amendment Act, 2005 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. 119

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 119 — The Election Amendment Act, 2005** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, this Bill is a result of a lot of hard work from an all-party committee. It includes provisions that should depoliticize the appointment of returning officers and should depoliticize some issues within the electoral system as it existed. It also recognizes certain rulings of the Supreme Court as to who is entitled to vote and gives significant updates to our existing elections Act and, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this Bill going to committee for further discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 119, The Election 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: — 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. 119, The Election 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 119 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 119 stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Bill No. 120

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen that **Bill No. 120 — The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2005** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 120, The Fuel Tax Amendment Act. Well, Mr. Speaker, just to point out a few things. This Bill, basically the intent is to lower the fuel tax on aviation fuel and reduce the tax from 3.5 cents per litre to 1.5 cents per litre. Mr. Speaker, that is a good thing.

But I would like to point out to the members that the fuel tax comparison between Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta and other areas, on gasoline, Saskatchewan is charging 15 cents; Manitoba is charging 11.5 cents; Alberta is charging 9 cents. Then on to diesel, Mr. Speaker: Saskatchewan is charging 15 cents; Manitoba, 11.5 cents; and Alberta is 9 cents. Railway fuel tax: Saskatchewan is charging 15 cents; Manitoba's 11.5 cents; and in Alberta they're only charging 1.5 cents on railway fuel.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's obvious there's a big problem and a concern concerning the differences in what the tax rate is. As we know this government likes to keep the taxes very high. Unfortunately that is really a deterrent to investment in this province. When you look at the railway fuel tax, well it's obvious that any business . . . And I'm sure the railways look at this situation and say, well we'll fuel up when we're heading west in Manitoba before we enter Saskatchewan. And when they're leaving Alberta heading east they'll fuel up in Alberta at every chance when they're only paying 1.5 cents per litre tax in Alberta.

And so this is something this government just doesn't understand or doesn't get that when you have higher taxes, that it costs jobs. It costs business. It costs a potential of investment which in the end of the day attracts more tax revenue into the province so we have more money for education, health, and other things that the people of Saskatchewan need.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that this government, they move very slowly when it comes to tax reductions which they've done on the aviation fuel. But they haven't translated that into reductions in other areas like the gasoline and diesel tax and especially the railway fuel tax, Mr. Speaker.

It's interesting when you look at the railway fuel tax. You know, what are the railways getting for that huge expenditure in tax revenue to the Saskatchewan government? And you know, do we see better crossings? Do we see safer crossing? Do we see more lighted crossings? I think that's questions that have to

be answered.

And this is the reason, Mr. Speaker, that we are speaking to the stakeholders in the province. We will be discussing these matters further. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, we would like this Bill to go to Committee of the Whole so we can ask more questions and hopefully get some answers to these very fundamental questions concerning the differences between the tax rate between Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta. And again try to get an understanding of what the government's thinking is and why they keep the taxes so high which we all know is a deterrent to investment in this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned we would like this Bill to go to committee where we can ask more questions. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 120, The Fuel Tax 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 Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 120, The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2005 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill 120 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 125

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen that **Bill No. 125 — The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2005** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome this opportunity to address the NDP's latest attempt to kill the private sector investment in Saskatchewan, the corporate capital tax amendment Act.

Of course this legislation doesn't actually have anything to do with the corporate capital tax at all. It simply adds another tax on the sales of a significant part of the oil and gas industry in Saskatchewan. In fact if you believe the NDP's budget estimates, something most people don't do any more given the NDP's habit of keeping two sets of books — the budget documents that are released to the public and the real budget numbers that are kept behind closed doors in the NDP's cabinet offices — but if you actually believe the NDP's numbers, this legislation will slap a tax of \$20 million on the oil and gas industry this year and \$40 million next year.

So while the Minister of Finance told the Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan on budget day that the NDP's budget contained and I quote, "no tax increases," that simply was not accurate, Mr. Speaker. In fact the NDP's budget increased taxes in the oil and gas industry by at least \$60 million over the next two years.

And even the name of this legislation is inaccurate and misleading, Mr. Speaker. The NDP calls the legislation the corporate capital tax amendment Act. But the NDP's tax increase has nothing to do with the corporate capital tax. The legislation slaps what the NDP calls a resource surcharge, a tax on the sales of resource companies and now resource-based income trusts. And the minister perpetuated this misinformation when he moved second reading of the legislation on May 9 when he said that the corporate capital tax will raise \$373 million this year.

Mr. Speaker, the minister is well aware, or at least he should be, that the corporate capital tax is charged against taxable capital of general and resource corporations at a rate of point six per cent. According to the information from his own department, from the Department of Finance provided to the official opposition by the minister himself, the NDP expects the corporate capital tax on general corporations to raise \$94.2 million in this fiscal year. Saskatchewan Finance estimates the corporate capital tax on resource corporations will collect another \$60 million this year and the NDP expects to collect another \$12.5 million, Mr. Speaker, in corporate capital tax from banks and credit unions.

So the corporate capital tax actually generates a total of \$176.2 million. The member from Battlefords will be interested to hear this I'm sure, not the \$373.7 million that was actually inaccurately reported to the legislature by the Minister of Finance on May 9.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation before the House today, as I said earlier, does not increase or does not decrease the corporate capital tax despite its misleading name that has been given to it by this NDP government. In fact it has nothing to do with the corporate capital tax at all. What the legislation does is expand the NDP's tax on the oil and gas sale of resources to include sales of resources and income trusts. In other words, the legislation increases the sales tax the NDP government charges on the sales of oil and gas industry by \$60 million over the next two years.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP's oil and gas sales tax, or the resource surcharge as the NDP government calls it, is a tax on the resource industry sales and is estimated to rake in \$197.5

million in provincial revenue in '05-06 according to the Department of Finance.

But, Mr. Speaker, increasing the sales tax on oil and gas companies in Saskatchewan is a major disincentive to new investments in Saskatchewan's energy industry. It's kind of like cutting off one of the legs of the golden goose that lays the golden egg. Because last year the oil and gas industry generated 1 out of every \$5 in own source revenue for this NDP government.

And thanks to the oil and gas prices that are expected by everyone except this NDP government to stay strong through the rest of the year, the oil and gas industry will likely generate at least 1 in \$5 of the NDP government's own source revenue in this year as well.

[11:30]

Mr. Speaker, I say to strong oil and gas price because . . . I say thank you to strong oil and gas prices because thanks to things like the NDP's decision to increase taxes on the oil and gas industry through the legislation we are debating today, the industry is actually — and the member from Moose Jaw I'm sure would like to hear this — the industry is actually planning to drill fewer wells in Saskatchewan this year and next year, fewer wells in light of 50-plus dollar oil. Shame, Mr. Speaker.

In fact the NDP's own budget documents say as much. According to the Department of Finance — page 40 of the budget summary if you're following along, and I hope that the ministers opposite are — the oil and gas industry will drill 1,700 new wells this year, down, down 10 per cent from last year and then slip to 1,600 new wells next year, a further 6 per cent decrease in drilling activity, Mr. Speaker. And that was before the NDP decided to increase their oil and gas sales tax by \$60 million in this year's budget. . . [inaudible interjection] . . . What were they thinking indeed, Mr. Speaker? What were they thinking?

Now very strong oil and gas prices will likely ensure that the province oil and gas revenues stay strong this year in spite of the NDP's high-tax approach. But it doesn't change the fact even before this piece of destructive legislation was introduced, even before the NDP decided to increase its sales tax on oil and gas — Mr. Speaker, the resource surcharge, \$60 million over the next two years — this government was already imposing the most aggressive corporate tax structure in North America. And now the NDP's plan is to introduce another \$60 million in resource surcharges over the next two years which will make a bad situation even worse, Mr. Speaker, a bad situation even worse.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party strongly opposes the legislation before the House today because it simply increases the NDP's sales tax on oil and gas activity and is therefore yet another barrier to new investment in this province.

Mr. Speaker, a few days ago I had the opportunity to make a presentation to the provincial business tax review committee in Yorkton. And I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance and his government for moving forward with this independent review of Saskatchewan's oppressive business tax regime. It's

certainly long overdue. And hopefully Professor Vicq will finally convince the Premier and this NDP government that what they have been doing is indeed not working. I see that members opposite agree.

Well let's have a look at the NDP's brutal record. On most economic measures . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well at least I hope they agree. I hope they agree. I'm not sure if they do, but I sincerely hope that they do. I think we've made the case, and I think they should agree. Yes, I think they do.

On most economic measures, Saskatchewan has ranked at or near the bottom in comparison to other provinces in Canada for the last two decades. It's a well-known fact. And even the Minister of Industry and Resources has said, you can't argue with the facts.

Well, Mr. Speaker, here indeed are the facts. No province except Newfoundland has a worse population record over the last 15 years, Mr. Speaker. Those are the facts. Those are the facts — as sad as they are — those are the facts. That's why changes are needed. That's why changes are needed in the tax regime, and that's why changes are needed in this political regime that we have next door.

Mr. Speaker, another fact. Saskatchewan has the worst job creation record in Canada over the past five years. Nobody takes any glee in that. Even the member chirping in the back from North Battleford, I'm sure he doesn't take any glee in the fact that we have the worst job creation record in North America.

It is a fact, Mr. Speaker. I'm not proud of it, but it just emphasizes the changes that are needed in the provincial tax structure but more important, changes in the government, Mr. Speaker. And those changes will come. Those changes will come, Mr. Speaker. They'll come very shortly but not too soon.

Mr. Speaker, another fact. Only Newfoundland loses more of its young people to other provinces than Saskatchewan. How long is this going to continue, Mr. Speaker? When are changes going to happen?

I hope that the changes are led by the Minister of Finance when he introduces changes that'll be necessary. Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has built a well-earned reputation as an anti-business province thanks mostly in part . . . mostly to the last 60 years of CCF-NDP [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation-New Democratic Party] government policies that have either chased the private sector away or kept them from coming in at all. That's what we're seeing right now. It's keeping them from coming in here at all.

But there is some good news, Mr. Speaker. There is some light at the end of the NDP tunnel. And I'm sure the member from Regina Rosemont will know exactly what I am talking about when we talk about lights at the end of the tunnel.

Last fall Saskatchewan Party leader Brad Wall released a paper entitled *The Promise of Saskatchewan: A New Vision for Saskatchewan's Economy*. It was well . . .

The Speaker: — I would just remind member, use of titles is

the parliamentary process when referring to another member rather than names. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The paper was well received by . . . The paper authored by my leader was well received across Saskatchewan as providing a solid framework for where Saskatchewan needs to go if we are to compete and succeed in the global economy of the new century. I was proud, Mr. Speaker, to table that paper as part of the Saskatchewan Party submission to the independent business tax review committee, and I am confident the committee will find its recommendations useful in preparing their final report.

Our proposal recommends significant changes designed to build a Saskatchewan advantage when it comes to competing with the rest of Canada and the world for jobs and investment. Our proposal recommends reductions in the small-business tax, the corporate income tax, and, Mr. Speaker, also reductions in the corporate capital tax. And while the Saskatchewan Party is not recommending any change in the application of the resource surcharge or the rate of the surcharge, we are recommending that the NDP government reverse its decision to expand the resource surcharge on resource sales and income trusts.

Mr. Speaker, I've talked to tax lawyers across this province recently and they say this is a bad idea; this is bad legislation. All the income trusts have to do, with a stroke of a pen, is no longer be Saskatchewan income trusts but be Alberta income trusts and carry on the work that they have done here. No longer can this government build walls around this province and expect capital to stay in this province. It no longer happens this way. So indeed, Mr. Speaker, I agree with tax lawyers across this province that this is bad legislation.

The Saskatchewan Party opposes this resource sales tax because it'll create yet another barrier to new private sector investment in Saskatchewan. We need to create a competitive tax environment to encourage new investment and growth, and I would hope members opposite would at least agree with me on that point. We need a competitive environment to ensure that we have investment and growth happening in this province. That means, Mr. Speaker, tax reductions, not tax increases as the NDP is proposing with this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the minister and his government to read the Saskatchewan Party's progress proposals for creating a positive climate that will stimulate new business development, drive job creation, and, Mr. Speaker, certainly create economic growth in our province. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this Bill going to committee and having a vigorous debate at that level.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill 125, The Corporation Capital Tax 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 Finance.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 125, The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2005, be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill 125 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 121

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wartman that **Bill No. 121 — The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 2005** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll only take a few minutes today because I think we are in agreement with the changes that are being made in this Bill. I believe these amendments further define the obligation of producers and lenders and the government in dealing with these loan guarantees.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know — and I believe the minister and myself agree on this — that the feeder co-ops or feeder associations are a very important part of our agriculture industry out there, especially the cattle sector. And the minister spoke when he introduced the Bill, Mr. Speaker, about the proposed amendments will allow feeder and breeder associations to enter into agreement with the minister to proceed with debt collection after a guaranteed payout has been made to the lender while working in partnership with the government in recovery of government's loss. And I think that's fair, Mr. Speaker.

He also talked about the existing legislation. An association loses the right to recover money from a member after the guarantee has been called. As well the proposed amendments will provide increased safety for member funds. And that's important, Mr. Speaker, because we've seen what's happened in a few occasions in the past where some of these funds became at risk and have hurt the whole membership of those associations.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we will have questions in committee, at this time I would like to refer this Bill to committee.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Agriculture and Food that Bill No. 121, The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 2005, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly 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 Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — I move that Bill 121, The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 2005, be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture and Food that Bill 121 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 123

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Forbes that **Bill No. 123 — The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2005** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure today to stand and speak about Bill No. 123, The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act.

Mr. Speaker, the reason I'm pleased to stand today regarding this Act is because most of the land that we're dealing with in this Act is directly involved with my constituency. And therefore I'm pleased to speak on its behalf.

When I look at the Bill, I notice that the last part of the Bill deals with a small portion of land around Iroquois Lake that needs to be subdivided. And we have no problem with that because I believe it's only six acres.

When I look at the part of the Bill where it takes 320 acres of WHPA [The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act], which is wildlife protection Act, out of the Act, and it's used to settle TLE [treaty land entitlement] agreements . . . And, Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Wildlife Federation and a long-time member of

the Wildlife Federation, to many members in the Wildlife Federation organization, members work very, very hard to put this land into critical habitat wildlife land because somewhere in the province there needs to be land set aside for the preservation of wildlife and environment. And that's the whole reason for this land going into this area.

In the last two or three years, there has been a total of 92,000 acres taken out of WHPA, The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act, and turned over to satisfy TLE agreements. Now, Mr. Speaker, this causes red flags to most people in Saskatchewan, especially those regarding the Wildlife Federation and hunters in the province. So, Mr. Speaker, when this happened, naturally Wildlife Federation members from my area and of my organization phoned and said, what's happening?

To date we have little information regarding this Bill as where this is going. And for all intents and purposes, Mr. Speaker, it all may be good. But when the minister brings over and hands us just a map of the area with no details to it, what's happening?

So, Mr. Speaker, my critic asked me to speak on this behalf because we need more time to get more information from the minister in regards to this Bill as what's happening with this 320 acres that's going to be taken out of wildlife protection Act and put in to satisfy TLE agreements.

[11:45]

Mr. Speaker, too, the sports enthusiasts, the hunting enthusiasts of this province, they look at this as what's happening and why it's happening. Because once this land comes out of protection habitat land where hunting can take place and is turned in to satisfy TLE agreements, there is no hunting availability. So all this land, this 92,000 acres that was once in wildlife protection Act is now gone. So it causes great concern.

Again I want to stress the fact that there's 320 acres of this same land that possibly will come to the same problem that we're having with the rest of the 92 acres. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think we need time for the minister to come up with some details on this, to see why it's being done, and maybe there's good reason for it. But until that time happens, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook that the debate on second reading of Bill No. 123, The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2005 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Bill No. 124

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Sonntag that **Bill No. 124 — The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment 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, this Bill deals with people who have been injured in catastrophic . . . who have sustained catastrophic injuries as a result of automobile accidents. In the main part, Mr. Speaker, it deals with those that have been injured since the advent of no-fault insurance, but this Bill has gone beyond that as well and also deals with some of those who were injured prior to no-fault insurance, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is some good effects in this Bill and there are also some questions that need to be asked in relationship to this Bill and to how it works, Mr. Speaker.

One of the clauses in this Bill, clause 8 states in section 115 that, "This section does not apply to students." And it's talking, Mr. Speaker, about compensation for loss of employment income, Mr. Speaker, that someone who has suffered a catastrophic injury would normally receive. And that they would normally receive the average of the average industrial wage in the province of Saskatchewan. So I think there needs . . . the minister needs to be prepared to answer a question related to that as to why students do not qualify. Because, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of elementary school students across this province who have paper routes, who cut lawns for their neighbours, all for which they receive compensation. Especially those with the paper routes, Mr. Speaker — they receive a regular remuneration from the paper owners for whom they are delivering the papers, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of areas where elementary school students do work for compensation, Mr. Speaker.

High school students, Mr. Speaker, also do many, many jobs for which they receive compensation. Some of them even are regular part-time employees working perhaps three or four evenings a week in restaurants or stores or whatever it may be, Mr. Speaker, farm employment, as the case may be.

Post-secondary students, Mr. Speaker, many of them hold down full-time jobs and remain students studying in university, studying in SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], studying in whatever post-secondary educational institution they wish to pursue their careers in, Mr. Speaker. They're all students but they're all receiving compensation. So why would they be excluded, Mr. Speaker, from this particular section of the Act?

I think that's a very important question that the minister is going to need to provide answers for. Because if they are injured, Mr. Speaker, catastrophically and unable to carry on any kind of livelihood, but they would have had that opportunity prior to their injury, Mr. Speaker, why do they not receive compensation? Because that's what this no-fault insurance is about and that's what the compensation for lost income is about, Mr. Speaker. And so those students deserve to have a hearing and those students deserve to have a recognition for their lost earnings as well, Mr. Speaker.

One of the other sections of this Act, Mr. Speaker, deals with injuries that occurred pre-1995. And that, I think, Mr. Speaker, is a very worthwhile expansion of this — that those people who were catastrophically injured prior to 1995 and receiving no

supplementary income, receiving no loss income protection, certainly deserve it as well, Mr. Speaker. I guess the question has to be for the minister: how broad was this interpreted? Was it very narrowly defined if someone had signed off on their insurance claim in 1990, received a lump sum payment, are they entitled to receive this additional compensation now, Mr. Speaker? So I think there are some questions to be answered. I don't believe the numbers involved here are very great. But we need to be able to get answers to that on how broadly this is being defined, Mr. Speaker, and just how this is going to be interpreted.

For those that were post-1995 and pre-2002, Mr. Speaker, I think the questions there that need to be asked and answered by the minister are related to why did this occur. Why were those that were injured from '95 to 2002 not receiving the proper compensation? What happened that denied them the full amount that they were entitled to, that this legislation had to be brought forward and changed to provide that for them?

One of the areas, Mr. Speaker, that is of concern to me in relationship to the income replacement, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that it talks about the average industrial wage but does not provide that full amount . . .

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

Mr. Dearborn: — With leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Kindersley has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce, seated in your gallery, my family — my lovely wife, April, seated with our two sons, Blake and Spencer. And they're here just to see where daddy works today. And I'd ask all members to welcome them and hopefully nothing unbeknownst will happen to the building in our short visit.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 124 — The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2005 (continued)

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the concerns I have about income replacement is that while it's based on the average industrial wage, Mr. Speaker, the claimant

does not receive the full amount of that benefit, Mr. Speaker. They receive a percentage of that benefit based on UIC [Unemployment Insurance Commission] being deducted from it, based on CPP [Canada Pension Plan] being deducted from it, based on taxes being deducted from it, Mr. Speaker.

But unfortunately those three deductions — UI [Unemployment Insurance], CPP, and the taxes — are not provided to the agency for which those would normally be applied. So CPP does not receive any funding from SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] under this no-fault insurance, Mr. Speaker. Rather it's being deducted from the claimant's income but not being remunerated to CPP.

So that means, at the end of the day, there is no record of those calculations being passed on. There is no tax credit being accrued by that client. So, Mr. Speaker, while they have an income, they do not have any additional deductions that they can apply against the taxes that may have been paid. So if a person has additional medical expenses, they cannot apply those expenses to recover to get a refund on some of those taxes. If they have additional transportation costs that could be deducted, they have no taxes paid to be able to get a refund. If they are a student, Mr. Speaker, they cannot use their tuitions to apply against the taxes that were paid so that they could get a refund, Mr. Speaker.

So there needs to be some adjustments and some corrections available for the income provisions within the no-fault insurance that a person receives, so that they can capture all that they're entitled to, Mr. Speaker. And it's a one-size-fits-all situation so it doesn't seem to matter whether . . . what your personal circumstances are as far as taxes and UI and CPP may be concerned, Mr. Speaker.

So I think there are a number of issues on this particular Bill that the minister needs to be able to answer in committee. Therefore this . . . we will allow this to move ahead so that those kind of questions and answers can be provided.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Government Insurance that Bill 124, The Automobile Accident Insurance 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 Responsible for SGI.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 124, The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2005 be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for SGI that Bill 124 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.

Clerk Assistant (Committees): — Committee of Finance.

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Health Vote 32

Subvote (HE01)

The Deputy Chair: — The business before the committee is estimates for Health. Could the minister introduce his officials please.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you. It's my pleasure to have with me John Wright, the deputy minister; and Mike Shaw, the associate deputy minister; Bert Linklater, who is the executive director of the regional accountability branch; and Max Hendricks, who is the executive director, finance and administration branch.

The Deputy Chair: — The first item of business is Central Management and Services (HE01). I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have a number of questions again in a number of different areas and so I'll probably been moving through them fairly rapidly. But I'll try and . . . you know anywhere from the mental health facility in Saskatoon, proposed, to the ambulance contracts, to just out-of-province treatment. So it's going to bounce around a little bit and it probably won't get too terribly in-depth on any one issue because of the timelines that we're looking at.

The first one is the mental health facility in Saskatoon that has been talked about and announced a number of times. I think it's been in the planning stages for about seven years. Currently the Hantelman Building is certainly unsuitable for the programs and patients that are having to access it. I believe it was announced just recently again. I guess I'd like to know the status and, you know, a timeline. When are they looking at moving into a new facility or construction of a new facility? Could you give me a timeline on what to expect in that area?

[12:00]

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you for that question. The plan is to do a refurbishment of the existing building and an add-on. And the net result will be 54 adult beds or beds in general, and then 12 youth beds. And the plan is that we have money now budgeted for this year and next year. So we're hoping to get it done over the next year and a half, two years.

Mr. McMorris: — So it will be refurbishing the Hantelman Building and adding on, and that construction will be starting in the next fiscal year. If the money's been set aside, can we be assured that that construction will be starting this fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The planning is going on right now. And as soon as that's complete, then we would be letting tenders, and they would start construction. We've actually planned that we would be able to spend some money around construction in this fiscal year.

Mr. McMorris: — Just one last question regarding this facility, I'm not real familiar with it. So you're saying 54 beds and 10 youth . . . 12 youth beds. What is the capacity of the existing facility?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — What's happening . . . And if you haven't ever visited this building, it was originally built as a residence for medical students. And so it's quite interesting as a building, but it's not very good as a mental health facility because of where the rooms are and that kind of thing.

So the plan is to build an add-on where you would have better patient rooms and more appropriate treatment and then use the old space as office and meeting space. And so the . . . it's not about expanding the number dramatically, but it is about making sure that they're much better quality rooms.

Mr. McMorris: — Yes I think my question, and the reason I ask that question was, I certainly have heard that it was unsuitable for the work that was being done there. I guess my only concern was with an add-on and refurbishing, is that it had at least the existing space if not more space and not that it was being . . . not that there'd be less capacity in that facility.

Just one other question not regarding that, another area was when we talked on May 2 at our second last round of estimates. And when I started out, we had quite a long discussion. At that time, there was some issues in Alberta between . . . Dosanjh was out there and Klein was talking, and we were talking a little bit in this province of delivery of some of these services and what is done privately, contracted through the health district.

I would be very interested in this. It doesn't have to happen today. It can happen whenever. I would like to get the answer whenever. But if you have a list of different services that are delivered by a private delivery service . . . we've talked about some. I mean, chiropractic is one and ambulance service is another and, you know, there are a number. I'd be very interested because those are just what come to mind. I'd be very interested in a list from the Department of Health of different services that are provided privately, if I could.

Okay. Moving on then to the ambulance contract around the province, and we had a number of questions regarding that the last go-round, and I was reading *Hansard* again on May 2 and

what some of your answers were which then of course caused me to think of more questions.

First of all could you give me sort of an update of what's going on in Yorkton right now with the ambulance strike that they're experiencing?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — My sense is that they're are trying to resolve it out there. It is a contract between the RHA [regional health authority] and a third party, so it's not one that fits with the overall provincial bargaining, which is usually the questions that I get.

Mr. McMorris: — Further to the ambulance contracts and not just specifically, but how is it determined to the 12 health regions what is set? Is it just a global amount that goes to the health regions? Is it broke down by line item as to what goes to the health regions?

I guess what I'm trying to get at is . . . of the 12 health regions, they are granted so much money from that global budget. They determine how much is for ambulance. How is that determined? Is it just a lump sum that's given to the health regions? Or does the department determine line by line . . . I mean ambulance service in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health District will require this amount of money. The Saskatoon Health Region will require this amount of money. How is that determined?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I think the simple answer is that it is a form of global budgeting. But what happens is that the regional health authority will present a budget where they set out what they think they need to expend in each area, and then that's reviewed and discussed with the officials in the department. If they agree, well then everything's fine. But if they don't agree and they've maybe put too much emphasis in one area, well then there's some adjustment.

And so it's that form. But it's based on past years' actual cost, too.

Mr. McMorris: — Yes I was going through *Hansard* from May 2, and you had mentioned that, that it was on the past history of that health region. But what it seems to me . . . And you also mentioned a number of times that the conflict — or not the conflict — but the negotiation is between the health region and the private service provider, the ambulance service provider, for example in the Yorkton area. But the argument could be said that there is not enough money from the Department of Health to the regional health authority that can then supply the ambulance service that is needed in the Yorkton area.

Yes, I realize that the final contract is negotiated between the health region and the ambulance service provider. But the health region is only going off of so many dollars. And I guess that's my question . . . how does the department determine how much money goes to the health region? There seems to be a bit of a block there. The health region is saying this is how much money we get from the Department of Health, so this is how much we can supply to the ambulance provider. And the ambulance provider is saying we need more from Sask Health to the health regions so that it can address this problem.

So I guess my question is, how do they determine, from the Department of Health to the health region, how much should be allotted?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think we can start from the Sask Health, Health Department perspective . . . is that the job is to fairly allocate funds around what's needed. The historical allocations that went to each of the regions were based on numbers of kilometres and numbers of patients. And so that is always a base in the background.

And then there were adjustments made around the resources that did go into this particular area over the last number of years to deal with some of the wage issues. And the operators that were private operators got a share of that overall money that we put towards emergency medical services workers in a fair way across the province. And that's where the challenge comes, when many operators seem to be able to function with it and a few don't.

Mr. McMorris: — Well I guess that becomes a question because I certainly have heard it from operators . . . is that they don't seem to have any idea. And perhaps that would be an education process that the department could go through with some of the private operators, how the department determines how much will go to the health region and then in turn what they have to negotiate with when they enter into their contract negotiations. I mean, the health region has so much money, but most of the operators don't have any idea of how the Department of Health determines how much will go to that health region.

You talked about number of kilometres and patients and that's historical. But for example in the situation where, you know, a health region may want people on 24 hours a day when they didn't before . . . and that all enters into then the service provider having to go to the health region saying, you know, we need more money because we've got people 24 hours a day. And the department is saying well if over the last number of years that hasn't been the issue, so we're only allowing this much money.

And so I think, where there's a bit of an issue with communication is that the private providers don't have any idea of how the department determines how the money is given to the health regions.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think this is kind of a curious question as it related to your previous one about what's the role of private operators in health systems in general because basically this is a negotiation between the private operator and the regional health authorities. So the private operator is accountable to the regional health authority to provide the service. And in turn, the regional health authorities are accountable to the overall provincial system to make sure that they're providing the service that is there in their area. And so they get a global amount of money to do that.

When we're looking from, you know, year to year on budgets, in this year as you know on an overall basis for health, a 7.1 per cent increase, well there's some higher increases in some areas like cancer agency. Other areas there's lower increases. But in a global sense, that's how much the increase is.

What happens here is that if there are special needs or special changes in services or there's a new facility or there's new business that requires some other things, then those are the things that are included in the budget planning for each year, and that would be recognized as the global budget is developed.

Mr. McMorris: — I'll move on to a different area. Regarding the smoking ban and the whole issue that our province is facing right now with the legislation that was passed and eliminating smoking in all public places . . . but I guess not quite all public places, public places that I guess this government has jurisdiction over. But I would like a statement from the minister because, I tell you, in rural Saskatchewan . . . and an elected member from a constituency that has a number of small-town bars, when I go into those bars on business, I am faced with this continually.

And so I would like to know, have a statement from the minister first of all, where is it all playing out? Because I mean we continually hear it's an uneven playing field, you know, and there's just a whole lot of issues around it. I'd like to hear a statement from the minister on where he's at with having a total provincial ban on smoking in public. Or are we anywhere close to that?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The goal clearly is to have a smoke-free Saskatchewan, and a smoke-free Canada for that matter, and so some of these issues we raise at a national level. It would be extremely helpful for example if Alberta was more in line with what's happening in Manitoba and BC because that would eliminate some of the concerns.

But I think that what I would have to say is that we've made a decision around those areas where we have jurisdiction and we're going forward. We're strongly encouraging First Nations to recognize that they're part of a bigger community where also we know that some of the municipalities that have service agreements, they are examining how those apply to the different facilities that are located on the urban reserves. And we know that discussions in communities where urban reserves are being contemplated they are getting very clear legal advice as to how to proceed to make sure that this challenge — I'll use that word again, because it is — is part of Saskatchewan life.

[12:15]

But I think overall we've had very high compliance with the legislation and I think people are pleased that we're taking that direction. But they recognize that there are many people that require help and guidance and assistance to eliminate smoking from their lives.

Mr. McMorris: — Well I certainly agree with the legislation that was passed. I supported it. I had no problem supporting it even though I did run into some concern as I was doing my business around the constituency. But what I ran into more often than anything else was the whole . . . after the Bill was proclaimed and there wasn't going to be enforcement, and then there was enforcement.

And talking to some of the owners, you really put them . . . The minister put them in a tough position because what they found is they were reading the papers and hearing well there's not

going to be any enforcement for six months or whatever the time frame was, and then there was going to be enforcement. Perhaps that person that came in that wanted a smoke in the fellow's bar said, well you don't have to enforce it; that's the way . . . we've read that in the paper. And then the bar owner was saying yes, I do have to enforce it. And they were really put in a tough spot that way because of, you know, the whole enforcement part but then the bigger picture on the two-tier, where we can smoke in some facilities in our province — on-reserve, you know, casinos — but you can't in others.

And I guess the concern that we're hearing now is that instead of moving forward on this process we're having some slippage. In Yorkton for example, which had been a smoke-free facility, now they're allowing smoking in there. And so we're not going forward, we're slipping back which is causing great concern for a number of local owners and local establishments.

You know, I think they can say that, you know, this is going to hit their business hard. And they realize that and they think they can maybe work their way through it, not real happy about it. But there is nothing more frustrating than to look across the street and see somebody that is allowed to have smoking in their facility. And it's a double standard. So I think, you know, the way it was handled for that first couple of months after really caused a lot of grief for a number of owners. And I guess I'd call for the minister's response on that.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — We live within the country of Canada. We have a constitution which sets out powers and responsibilities that has served us well for many, many years. We make adjustments now and again like we did in 1982 with the Charter. And we continue to see what we can do as a country.

What we've been able to prepare and do is based on what the constitution says. And it's clearly identified that there are some issues when there are jurisdictions that are given certain rights by the federal government. The federal government knows that. As we all know, this isn't exactly the week that this is the most important problem on their mind.

Mr. McMorris: — A couple more questions in this area regarding . . . I remember sitting in the committee room downstairs, in committee room no. 8 I believe it was, when they were asking questions in the lead up to this piece of legislation. And some of the comments made by yourself, Mr. Minister, really, truly led us to believe that the homework had been done on this and that there was going to be no problems going forward. And although I don't think those comments really one way or the other would have changed the way I voted on this piece of legislation, but I do know there are other members in this House that really felt that it was going to be a level playing field, and that they voted on the piece of legislation with that information that you had given them.

We see today that, you know, whether there was some homework done — but it was the incorrect homework, which I'm certainly used to — but whether there was some homework done and it didn't come through, or whether the homework just hadn't been done. Because it did influence the way people voted.

So I would be interested to know just, you know, from the

minister's point of view what changed. Either we misinterpreted what the minister said in the committee room or something has changed from that point. And I'd just be interested in knowing what the minister had to say.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well based on the information that I had at the time, and based on the discussions that I'd had with First Nations chiefs and others who were working on this file, what I presented was what I assumed at that point. I was extremely disappointed in the fall when there was an about-face on these things, especially as it relates to Yorkton, but about, just in general across the province. And so there's ability to, I think, be quite upset with what happened over those numbers of months. I think the better task that we have is, well how do we move forward to make sure that in all areas where we don't have the jurisdiction that we traditionally had thought, that we would make sure that things work for the people in Saskatchewan. And that's the mode we're in.

Mr. McMorris: — Prior to the legislation, the minister was asked if there'd be any extra cost for enforcing this piece of legislation. Now that the minister has . . . You've included some additional monies in this year's budget for public health officers. Is that money going towards public health officers and their mandate will be to enforce the smoking legislation? Is that correct?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — There's a sum of \$300,000 that goes for the public health inspectors' work. And it, I think most of that would be related to this additional task that they have. And so that's the budget that we have now. We'll keep monitoring it. We've only been four and a half months into this new legislation and I'm sure we'll learn more as we proceed.

Mr. McMorris: — So there is an additional cost now since the legislation has passed. I mean you had said that there'd be no additional cost with this legislation. You felt that the number of inspectors would be sufficient that we had prior. But now you're saying that we've got to hire more inspectors to enforce the legislation. So there is an increase in cost. I can see the minister shaking no, so I'll let him answer that first of all.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The amount of money that we've included, the 300,000 this year, is to cover overtime and additional education to train people. It's a one-time cost this year. We don't anticipate that it'll be there next year.

Mr. McMorris: — So there have been no new inspectors hired. If you had X amount, and I don't even know how many . . . Maybe that's one where we could start is, how many public health inspectors did we have last year compared to this year? Is the 300,000 just simply for training these officers?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The specific question that I think you asked here related to this 300,000. We do also have some other money where we are hiring some additional public health inspectors. But that relates to some longer term concerns around the numbers across the province, and we continue to recruit public health inspectors as they are needed. But many of the compensation issues were resolved with the . . . or not resolved, but substantially resolved with the last contract.

Mr. McMorris: — So I started out by asking if there . . .

started out by stating your statement that there would be no additional costs. But there will be additional costs. There will be . . . And, you know, I may agree with those, probably agree with those. But there will — I'm just trying to get in black and white — there will be additional costs because we're hiring more officers and having to train officers in a different way. You said that there's an extra amount of money, and we'll be hiring new officers that will be going forward. And maybe they'll be inspecting restaurants. I don't know. But we're hiring more officers, and I would believe that some of it is because of the piece of legislation.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I beg to disagree with you. You put words into my mouth because what I did say was . . . what I said was there's \$300,000 which is allocated to deal with education and the extra overtime that would be required in this initial year as we look at the tobacco enforcement. So that's one issue. That's a one-time expenditure; we don't expect to see it next year.

There is on top of that around \$200,000 which is going to look at hiring some new public health inspectors. It hasn't been allocated yet because we haven't passed the budget. We will be discussing with the regional health authorities . . . But there are some pressures. Frankly one of the pressures relates to water inspection in northern Saskatchewan, and so that's where the additional officers are being hired.

Mr. McMorris: — So my question would be that if we're hiring additional officers for water inspection for, say one example, in the North, the inspectors that were perhaps doing that before, are they being moved over and their main, sole purpose now is to enforce the tobacco legislation, or is it just a whole new hiring of officers because this is a new area that wasn't being inspected before?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well the answer is that with our new water strategy and basically looking and dealing with all of the new water systems in the North, there's a broader expanse of what's there. There are a number of other public health inspector concerns in the North, and so that's one of the things we work at. There are some other issues across the province.

But we are not hiring people in one place so we can divert people over to the tobacco inspection role because this is . . . I mean we'll continue to monitor this, but at this point we see that the compliance is substantially compliance by citizens. And, you know, owners of facilities know that citizens get really concerned when this particular law is breached.

Mr. McMorris: — And I would agree that certainly not only citizens but what's even more frustrating again is the owners of facilities that know down the road, you know, bar A is allowing smoking and bar B and C don't, and it affects their traffic. It affects the traffic through their facility because people go down the road. Because I mean for people that are . . . want to smoke in a licensed facility, they'll find out where that is, and they are attracted there.

But just one last time. The minister said last year that there would be no additional costs, and we can safely say that there is an additional cost of about \$300,000.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — We've allocated \$300,000 unless . . . if there will be some additional costs. We think that there may be. But there may not be because we haven't had the full year yet.

Now I would be interested to go back . . . And we didn't anticipate that there would be additional costs over the long term around this because we didn't think that it was going to be a major compliance issue. I think that's still my position. That's what I said last year. That's what I say this year. But we have in this particular budget made sure we made an allocation in case we needed it.

Mr. McMorris: — Okay. We'll leave that one alone. I think I've kind of got it. You've put \$300,000 aside in case there are some problems with compliance — extra overtime. So my statement was, will it cost any more? You're saying, well we don't know for sure, but we put money aside just in case.

And I would say that that money will be quite easily spent in this next fiscal year because I think most of us from rural Saskatchewan could have told you there'll be a huge compliance problem throughout the province. Especially when you have a double standard the way we have in our province, there's going to be a huge compliance problem. And I would probably submit to you that \$300,000 won't even touch the overtime that's going to be needed unless health officers' regular shifts are from midnight to 3 o'clock in the morning inspecting these bars because that's certainly going to be, you know, an area that has to be investigated.

We know for a fact . . . I know for a fact that there are facilities that haven't complied and there are other facilities that have. And the facilities that have complied are questioning themselves, why are we complying. Because I think if he can, down the road I should too. It's affecting my traffic. It's affecting my traffic.

[12:30]

And we know as a . . . you knew as a government that it would affect their traffic and that's why the money was set aside for the shortfall of the VLTs [video lottery terminal]. And I mean the government has felt that shortfall. But you have to realize that the local bar owners are feeling the shortfall of lack of revenue through VLTs, lack of sales of alcohol.

I mean I would be very interested to follow the numbers in the next year of the government-owned liquor board stores and see the increase in revenue for them because it's taken away from small-town bars. They're just not going to the bars and they're, you know, they'll buy whatever they need and go home and smoke at home and have their drink. So I think you'll see that that \$300,000 is short. And I would say in the next year or two you'll be looking at putting quite a bit more money into this, this tobacco Act.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I think we need to bring this conversation back to why we passed this legislation. Tobacco kills. I mean we know that. We know that this is one of the best public health laws that can be passed in any province, any state, any country. And we're seeing that right around the world. And I don't apologize for a minute for the fact that we've gone ahead with this.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Minister, I couldn't agree with you more. Let's go back to that fact. I agree with you. But what I'm trying to get from you is the cost. You have said one thing one year and we know that it's going to be different and that's all I'm asking you.

I'm not debating or denying that the legislation was probably the right thing to do, but I think it's very important that you know the impact. But more importantly that I can get a straight answer as what you said last year and what's in the budget this year. If you didn't think it was going to cost the department anything last year but now you've changed your mind and said yes it is going to cost for enforcement, that's all I was looking for is simply that.

I just want to move on . . . If you want to answer, go ahead.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well I think you answered your own question in that previously you indicated that last summer I did not anticipate that the First Nations would not comply with the law. So that's a new piece of information that we had in the fall. And some of the issues around compliance, you relate directly to that particular issue. And therefore that was something that was not there last summer.

Mr. McMorris: — We'll move on to out-of-province and out-of-country treatment because I think we could probably keep going on this tobacco thing for far too long.

If a person has a rare disease or condition that there doesn't seem to be any expertise in the province or perhaps even in Canada, could you walk me through the steps of what a patient has to do to seek out-of-province or country treatment for something that they cannot receive treatment here in the province? If you could walk me through the step, because we certainly have people come to our office who said they can't get the timely treatment. I think we saw of a case here in the legislature earlier today where a person was waiting twice the targeted time frame for some . . . from a procedure and I think they would like to know.

You know we have 12 health regions, but there doesn't seem to be the real smooth transfer. If we can't do it here in three weeks, perhaps we could've had it done in Saskatoon in three weeks. What's the communication lines? What's the process that a person has to do? I'm talking interprovincially and internationally, but also provincially there's some issues with transfers.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Within Saskatchewan if somebody who has gone to see a surgeon or an internal medicine specialist in Regina and there's a concern about some of the length of time, there can be a referral quite easily to another centre in Saskatchewan. And that would be a discussion between the patient and their doctor.

When there's a referral out of the province, that will . . . that's information that would usually be discussed with the department. But if in the fact the service is provided in another province under the Canada Health Act, if it's a hospital service, we would cover those services. It's when they go outside of the country that we require some review by the GP [general practitioner], specialist, and then a Canadian specialist, that that

particular service is not available in Canada in a timely way.

Mr. McMorris: — Could the minister explain then, who makes the decisions as to whether or not Sask Health will cover an out-of-country treatment? And what is the criteria or what is the decision based on?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The process for approval is that there is a recommendation from the medical specialist that goes to the executive director of the medical services branch, who is sitting beside me, and he makes the decision.

Mr. McMorris: — What is the time frame then for a request to the turnaround time so that they know for sure that they can go out of province and it will be covered?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Depending on the situation these kinds of decisions can be made within a few hours.

Mr. McMorris: — One last question in this area. Is there an appeal process? For example if the person doesn't get the nod — they say no, this is not, doesn't fit in the criteria — is there any place for that person to go then to appeal?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — What would typically happen in this situation if there was a refusal that there would be other things offered. And a common discussion goes between going to a US [United States] specialist versus going to Toronto or Vancouver or Edmonton. And so that alternate information would be provided. Sometimes there isn't sufficient information in the request and that would go back to the physicians involved to get that information.

Mr. McMorris: — I guess the question . . . The reason why I was kind of going down this line of questioning and I certainly wasn't the health care critic at that time, but remember the situation with the young girl, the Wipf girl, who needed to go down to the Mayo Clinic and it was kind of a long process? It certainly wasn't a turnaround in a couple of hours. And I'm just . . . so that's why we're asking that question. It was certainly, you know, I guess whether the process was sped up when she appeared here or not but it just seemed like it was an issue, one that certainly eventually was covered but at the time there was just some real concern around the whole process.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I think that in some situations you would end up working with the specialist in Saskatchewan and when it's children it's quite often that person in Saskatoon. They would work then with specialists in Calgary or Edmonton and try to assess, well what is possible within Canada. That may take a few days.

When conditions are chronic or longer-term ones that require a full, long course of particular treatment then they really do take care to look at that. I think that in the number of some of the challenging ones, eventually all of the specialists agree that this is the right place for a particular person and then that happens.

Mr. McMorris: — I just have a couple of questions regarding home care and long-term care and long-term care assessment. My first question . . . And certainly I think there . . . I don't know, I can't speak for all the MLAs on this side but I know it's an issue that comes to our office an awful lot. We have, you

know, parents that have been living in their home maybe longer than what they should and how do they get them into long-term care. And there always seems to be a lot of headaches around that.

I've got one situation right now where the person is in a health facility and the long-term . . . the SWADD [System Wide Admission and Discharge Department] team wants to move him back home. He doesn't feel he can go home. The family doesn't feel he can go home. Usually it's the other way around. It's that the family thinks the person needs to go into the long-term care and the parent doesn't.

So are there uniform criterion assessments, first of all with home care for the needs of home care service across each health care region? Because that's the other thing we hear is there's a discrepancy from region to region. Is there some sort of criteria that kind of covers the whole province as opposed to criteria for one region which may vary with the criteria from another region?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The assessment process for home care and for long-term care is pretty consistent across the province. It's something that was developed a few decades ago and continues to be improved as we go along. But there is a fair consistency.

I think where the challenges arise though is that in certain communities and certain parts of the province, they have a different array of available services. And to give you an example that in Weyburn they have sort of assisted living, seniors kind of housing, and then they would have some of the personal care homes, quite some choice, and then the long-term care. And so the possible choices are a little greater.

Well we know in Regina and Saskatoon, there's pressure on personal care homes and long-term care homes, assisted living kinds of places and so that's . . . ends up that there aren't as many options in the local community.

And so what I think if people are willing to go where the spaces are available, then there are some more options. But that's not very helpful either when family and friends want to be there.

So what we're working at is making sure we build new facilities and are part of encouraging the development of facilities in places where its needed. We're also watching very carefully in other areas that maybe they don't need quite as much service and we should then take those resources and move them into a neighbouring place.

Mr. McMorris: — So it would be very possible then that a person in one health region may be eligible for long-term care, but in another region because of capacity is not eligible. Or do they . . . How does that work?

You know, we've certainly heard of cases where they are accepted in one region and in the next region they say no, we don't feel that that person needs long-term care. And so you wonder if it isn't an issue of capacity.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I'll repeat once again that the assessments across the province are relatively consistent and then you look at what are the options. Now if a person says I'm willing to go

anywhere in the province, well then there may be some other level of facility that will be there.

But practically, most people want to stay in their home areas and so sometimes the pressures build at different points. And that's exactly why we are going ahead with a number of projects.

It also relates to some of the facilities aren't as modern as, for example the facility in Melfort which is, you know, quite incredible.

Mr. McMorris: — Must have a very strong MLA from that area.

One last question regarding long-term care is the whole issue, I mean with gauging whether the person is eligible, it's such a subjective process. Because I mean I've had people come in and talk to me in my office about their parent, and they will say when they're asked those questions, they'll answer every one of the questions. And then they'll go home and they don't know whether they've got the burner on or not. You know, they don't want to be put into that facility and they can answer every question that is asked. They do a great job of tricking and then the assessor leaves and the child goes and checks on their mother and father a couple of days later and there is no way that that person should be living on their own.

The other example though is that . . . I have two examples that I'm dealing with currently. One's in my constituency, one's out. And I mentioned this, where there's an older gentleman. He's 94 years old. He's having trouble walking. He can barely walk and he went into the health care centre, which has a long-term facility right on the health care centre. They want to keep him in that facility. He wants to be left in that facility. He doesn't want to go home because he can't get around. He lives on his own. But the people in that facility are saying no, you can't stay here. You have to leave. And they're again making an assessment that when he gets home, he'll be able to function properly, where the child that I was talking to says there's no way that he can function on his own at home.

So is there, I mean, I guess, I saw the minister saying, you know, that he doesn't . . . Maybe it's not as subjective as what I think it is, but it just seems to be, often on the — and I don't mean to use . . . it's not whim — but on the impression of one or two assessors, and, you know, that can be very tricky I would think.

[12:45]

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The assessment that's done is using a common tool. And you basically have nurses or social workers who have this job as assessor, and they're very used to working with people. And part of the question always when you're doing assessments and using professional judgment, is to make sure that they have, that sufficient information is there. And so some of the kinds of things that you've raised here relate to the fact that the assessor maybe needs more information about what's happened for that particular family.

If there's a concern about an assessment, that can be appealed to the manager of that particular area, or it can be raised with the

quality care coordinators which are located in each regional health authority.

Mr. McMorris: — One last question/statement is, at the time that the assessment is being done, are the children allowed to be there to follow that assessment? Because you were just saying that sometimes the assessor needs more information. In other words they may not be getting all the information from the senior that is either not wanting to go in or not wanting to get out. So are the children allowed in when that assessment is taking place?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I think the normal situation would be that the family members would be there unless the individual client didn't want them there. But I think practically, the professionals who work in this field work with the family and with the patient, or the client, and they try to make sure that they've got the right fit for service for that person.

Mr. McMorris: — I think that pretty much does it for the questions that I have for today anyway. I'll turn it over to my colleague from Canora-Pelly. But I'd like to thank the minister and his officials for the answers that he provided and look forward to that list that I asked that can come in the future. I appreciate it. Thank you.

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair of Committees. And, Mr. Minister, I'll try to be as quick as I can regarding three issues and they're from three different communities, Mr. Minister; Kamsack, Preeceville, and Yorkton. And I'll begin with the issue that is confronting the municipality, the town of Kamsack. I think the minister is aware that Kamsack and surrounding municipalities operate one of, I believe, very few personal care homes in the province of Saskatchewan that is totally operated by a municipality or municipal shareholders.

And the question, Mr. Minister, is over the last number of years, the Eaglestone Lodge, the board of directors that operates Eaglestone Lodge, has been in a deficit situation. And the question, the first question that I'm asking, Mr. Minister, is are there any dollars that could be provided through health departments for funding of a personal care lodge that is owned by a municipality and other municipal shareholders?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — The answer is no.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, I anticipated that answer. Mr. Minister, as we confront delivering health care services in the province of Saskatchewan, is there any lobby from the Department of Health then of the Department of Government Relations to look at a funding system where there can be credit given or there can be some way that a municipality can access taxpayer dollars through the provincial government, through Government Relations?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — My understanding is that these operations are usually set up as non-profit, but they are basically designed to cover their own expenses which is why a municipality or somebody else may get involved with them. And so, at this stage I know of no intention of doing that.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, if that's true then, could you clarify whether or not individuals living within the Eaglestone Lodge, and there . . . was my understanding there are 42 beds of which 55 residents are within this home.

Mr. Minister, your government announced, through DCRE [Department of Community Resources and Employment], announced a program of rental supplements. Would residents who are living within Eaglestone Lodge, do you know whether or not they would qualify?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I do not know. I think that would be a question that you should raise with the Minister of Community Resources

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. There's a problem though, is that the minister's office responsible for that program suggests that this is a health-related facility because these are level 1 and 2 patients. And the question . . . And the dilemma that is facing these residents is that the criteria around rental supplement, even though it's a rental of a space, is that because Eaglestone Lodge provides food, a meal, they are not eligible — those residents themselves. And this is the problem that these individuals are facing.

So, Mr. Minister, what happened in Eaglestone Lodge this spring, because the board of directors needs to operate as you've indicated, a facility at at least the break-even point, they've had to increase the rates. And they increased the rates by \$100 per person.

The situation that is confronting two cases is that their combined pension — old age security, Canada pension — does not meet the amount of money that is being asked for; not only the fee for being a resident of a facility — renting space is the term I'm using — they don't have the money. They have no additional assets. They have no additional sources of income. And yet the rental supplement suddenly becomes not available. Secondly we're finding that through social services there isn't the ability to access additional funds.

So, Mr. Minister, I guess I'm looking for guidance. Can you tell me where I can turn to on behalf of these people who have been confronted by a situation where they have to provide X number of dollars? Their pensions, all of the resources available to them does not meet that. Yet the rental supplement announced by the Minister Responsible for DCRE, they are not eligible or they don't seem to be eligible. Social services doesn't seem to want to assist. Where do these people go?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — One of the challenges here, these are private operations whether it's owned by the municipality or some of the privately owned personal care homes in the province. And when the rates go up and it's not affordable to a person, well then they end up having to look for another place to live. And so it would be the same for anybody else where your living accommodation costs went up. And so that's an issue.

Now if there are income . . . If they are in a situation where they qualify for social assistance, then there are programs that will help families — couples in that particular case. But this is not

an area where Health puts any money into the personal care homes at all.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, a few questions about the Preeceville facility. You announced in the — or the Minister of Finance announced in budget that there was approval to proceed with additional health care facilities, and Preeceville was mentioned again.

Mr. Minister, I asked you questions last year when we went through the last phase. And could you clarify for the record exactly what the community of Preeceville and the surrounding districts, what will they be doing regarding the construction of their facility that you've indicated has been approved. What will Sunrise Regional Authority be expected to do, and what timeline is in fact in place for this fiscal year?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Basically the money is in place in the budget. The community is working well with the consultants there. They're just about finished the functional plan which will then allow . . . which is step 8 and they'll be able to go into step 9, which is the design of the documents. Once those design documents are done, they can go to tender and start the construction.

We have the bulk of our money available for expenditure in this year, which is between now and next March. So my sense is everything is moving along.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Minister, you make reference to steps 8, steps 9, steps 10. Would your officials have a chart that they could supply to me? Not necessarily today, anytime, sent directly to me, that would identify the steps and would indicate where Preeceville is on the chart?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — In previous estimates this fall . . . that's why I referred to the steps, I read them all into the record. So if you want to look on the *Hansard*, you can see them there. But we'll provide you a copy as well.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, as we proceed down the highway to Yorkton, my third spot, you've indicated in the budget as well that there are six satellite dialysis machines operating in six different communities. One of those communities is Yorkton. And, Mr. Minister, there are a number of people in my constituency who require dialysis treatment and in fact a number of them do not receive treatment in Yorkton. They travel by bus through Regina and spend a considerable amount of money and time receiving treatments.

Mr. Minister, would you be able to, or would your officials be able to supply a record that would show for the last two years — 2003 and 2004 if that's how you keep those records, on either a calendar year or your fiscal year — it's whatever fits the situation — would you be able to indicate how many days per week the satellite machine is operating in the regional hospital at Yorkton, how many hours per week, the full amount of time that the satellite machine or the satellite dialysis machine at Yorkton is operating in each of the last two years?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — In Yorkton it's a six-day operation, so that it's . . . You usually I think need two treatments a week, so they

do it in a six-day basis. In the budget this year, we have money to expand the operation of the dialysis. And right now the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority and the pathologist there are discussing with Yorkton how to expand the hours so that they can use the facility there for more hours.

And I'm anticipating maybe another question is how decisions are made around expansion of services. We plot every single patient who requires renal dialysis in Saskatchewan and where they have to go. And there's a committee, a province-wide committee, that then makes recommendations as to whether you should expand in Yorkton or in Tisdale or wherever you would go. And if there's a number of patients that show up in a particular area, then we have to make adjustments.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Yes, I was heading in that direction because you indicate or your government indicates that they will increase dialysis treatments by 8,000 procedures. And that's a significant increase.

So I'm wondering then, could you outline . . . When your officials put together the numbers for Yorkton over the last two years, would you be able to indicate how Yorkton is fitting into this? You've indicated that there is tracking that goes on of all of the people that are . . . I'll refer to it as east central Saskatchewan or within the Sunrise Region; that's who's being served by that regional facility. Would you be able to then give me an indication of what plans your government is looking at in actually enhancing the services in Yorkton?

[13:00]

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — It is possible for me to give a very good estimate, but I think the better way would be to provide that to you. But basically the plan was to increase the renal dialysis across the province but specifically to enhance what's happening in east central.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and to the minister and your officials. Mr. Minister, I'm aware that we have some time frames today. And in order to accommodate those, I'm going to ask a couple of specific questions. And then I'm going to ask some questions on crystal meth that I will just put on record. And hopefully the minister's office can get back to me in a timely manner and give me those answers so that we can accommodate your schedule and my questions. So I'd appreciate that.

I'm going to start by asking about a specific case that I gave you the information on yesterday, a lady in my constituency who was looking . . . whose family member was looking for an MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] after being diagnosed with an illness. And the treatment that would be required in our constituency would take about two weeks, but it could be done quicker in another health region. And I had asked if this could be accommodated. Have you had the opportunity to look at that case?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I had received the information yesterday, and then my staff will be looking at that. And I think the issue is around a CT [computerized tomography] scan as opposed to an

MRI, yes.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Pardon me, it is a CT scan. And I'm wondering if that's something that can be looked at fairly quickly.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Yes, we always look at these very quickly. And I know they were looking at it yesterday so . . .

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would imagine then by the beginning of the week, you'd be able to give me some indication of what's happening.

Mr. Minister, Foam Lake primary care centre, this is an issue that is of great concern to the residents and the community of Foam Lake area with the hospital downsizing. In the last round of closures, they were concerned that they weren't receiving the care that they needed in that area.

And I know that the minister had indicated that this would be one area where primary care would be looked at. And it would be sort of a pilot project. And I know that they would be reassuring to the people in that area to hear the minister say that this is an issue that is a priority for this government, that he would be talking to the Sunrise Health District and letting them know that this is of special interest to the Department of Health and that they could be assured that they were going to receive the health care that they needed in that area.

So could you just give me a brief outline of what your department is doing for this area.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Well my understanding is that this is one that the officials are actively working on to get the primary care facility in place at Foam Lake and so that it's one that everybody has a common goal. And they're just trying to get all of the things organized. What I would say is, last year at March 31, we had 34 primary health care units in the province. Nipawin came on board just now so that we actually have 35 today. Our goal by the end of next March is to have 57, and one of those is clearly Foam Lake. And we're hoping that it'll be in place, you know, this summer or early in the fall.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And I'm sure I'll take those . . . your word to the people of the Foam Lake area, and I know they're going to be very appreciative of the fact that they can be looking forward to something by summer.

Mr. Minister, the questions that I have on crystal meth are dealing somewhat with the strategy, and some are the issues that we have talked about in the last while. And I know that the crystal meth strategy must be falling under your department because addictions is now under mental health. So it's an area that I'm sure that the minister is responsible for.

Earlier on we talked about the issue of meth, and the minister had indicated that six years ago he had attended a conference and was aware of the issue. And for many people in Saskatchewan, it was something that we weren't aware of until the last couple of years. So I'm wondering if you can tell me what exactly the minister and his office learned about six years ago and what they did to educate, inform, and warn people about the issue.

I looked back in *Hansard* and saw that on April 6, and when I asked a question about where the money was going to for youth stabilization strategy, the minister indicated that in the budget there was money committed to expand the mental health unit, the Hantelman Building in Saskatoon, and in that project they'd be working to have some very specific youth treatment spaces. But last week on May 9, I asked about those beds. And the minister had indicated that in this year's budget, money was available to build particular bed. So that's what they're doing. But the challenge is, where do we put them? So my question is, are there actually going to be beds in that centre or not?

Also in crystal meth strategy on page 17, there was a statement that Sask Health:

. . . recently contracted an individual to provide dedicated support to the network to lead development and implementation of new provincial and community initiatives.

Can you give us an idea of what is the length of the contract, the terms? Who is the person that was hired, the background, the qualifications? And how do communities access this person?

On page 18 it says in 2004 municipal police services and public awareness campaign. I'm wanting the minister to discuss with us the fact that many police services don't have the resources they need and if the department is making money and resources, for example posters and information, available to police services?

And also on that page, it indicated that Moose Jaw area drug strategy coalition was formed, but members of that coalition said they need funding. Is the department going to have money available for organizations like this?

On page 15 it says the La Ronge alcohol and drug services has adopted a longer-term detoxifying protocol for crystal meth patients. Can you tell me who developed these protocols, and will they be used by other treatment providers in the province?

And my last question is, on page 13, The Mental Health Services Act can be applied, forcing a person to enter treatment for addictions. Can you tell me how many times this Act has been used over the past year and over the past five years?

So, Mr. Minister, knowing that you have a time frame this afternoon, I'm just taking for granted that you'll answer these questions for me. Thank you.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you for that method, and I will provide the answers to you. I would just say about the 1998 conference you asked about, I attended with Mr. Vic Toews who is the federal Conservative Justice critic and the Attorney General of North Dakota, in Winnipeg. And we had experts come from California to explain this is something that you guys don't even know about but is eventually going to come this way. And so that's the specific answer to that question.

The Chair: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, you've announced a new facility for the community of Moosomin.

And, Mr. Minister, you've said hold onto your seat; something's coming shortly. And I think we're still waiting.

And the reason I'm asking the question right now is I understand most recently the health district has asked the community to work with them to reduce the facility by I believe some 800-plus square metres. And it's . . . The reason they're asking for that is because the dollars that you basically have put in place, what they've been working at . . . as this gets put off further and further, the costs continue to escalate.

Mr. Minister, when will sod-turning take place? When will a tender be let for the construction on this facility, so it doesn't continue to lose the effect that it's hopefully going to provide the services to the area?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — On this particular project, you are correct that they are working to get the right building for the community, using the resources that are there. It's our hope that they will actually move into the construction phase this fall. And if it doesn't start in the fall, it will be first thing in the spring. But the goal is to have it starting this fall.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, I hope it isn't just a hope because of . . . waiting till the fall because I think you understand the complexity of the materials. And as the materials escalate, what it does . . . unless you're prepared to put more money into the project. So we're looking forward to a real initiative and move forward because the community has been working hard to raise their share of the funds.

Another area I'd like to address briefly . . . and I'd like to actually do it in more detail, but I know we're in a brief process. I chatted with you, and I want to thank you, Mr. Minister, for giving me the opportunity to sit down and talk about dialysis and certainly a proposal from the Broadview community.

And, Mr. Minister, just to mention, recently a unit was put into the community of Moose Jaw, and I believe the story at that time indicated to address the needs of 12 individuals who are receiving dialysis or they had dialysis needs.

The last I understood, for the Broadview area people coming from that broad area, there's over 17 individuals. And, Mr. Minister, from our discussion you are aware of the fact that First Nations communities all along the area have offered their support, been involved. And when we look at the broad picture of dialysis . . . and I think you can appreciate the costs that individuals face as they go to larger centres. Certainly it's not just the matter of receiving the service, but it's the travel. It's the cost of meals. And people with . . . as diabetics certainly have to have meals at a fairly . . . a time that's appropriate. And they can't be waiting two or three extra hours, say over the noon or breakfast or whatever.

And I would to know, Mr. Minister, if your department is giving any thought to regional centres, say like in an area like Broadview. And what I'm going to do this morning as well is present you with another list of petitions that have come from the community and surrounding area in support of this project, and asking, Mr. Minister, as you look at the need for dialysis, recognizing the First Nations community and the needs the First Nations community faces, the support for this project. Will your

department consider communities like the centre in Broadview to, as you expand, to meet the needs of dialysis in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you for that comment. And as we discussed before, this is something where you have to look at what the nephrologists say is safe, the staffing that you have available. And what is happening right now is the dialysis, renal dialysis committee for the whole province is looking at another three- to five-year plan because the things that we have done over the last while have been part of their last plan. And they're gathering more information.

The information that comes from Broadview will obviously be included in that, and then their goal will be to set out a plan that we could then look at as we move forward with budgets over the next few years.

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I would ask that we rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The Deputy Chair: — The Deputy House Leader has asked to report progress. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: — Carried.

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

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

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again? I recognize the government . . .

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — Next sitting. I recognize the Deputy House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I move the House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — It being now past 1 p.m., this House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday. Have a pleasant weekend.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:14.]

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