



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

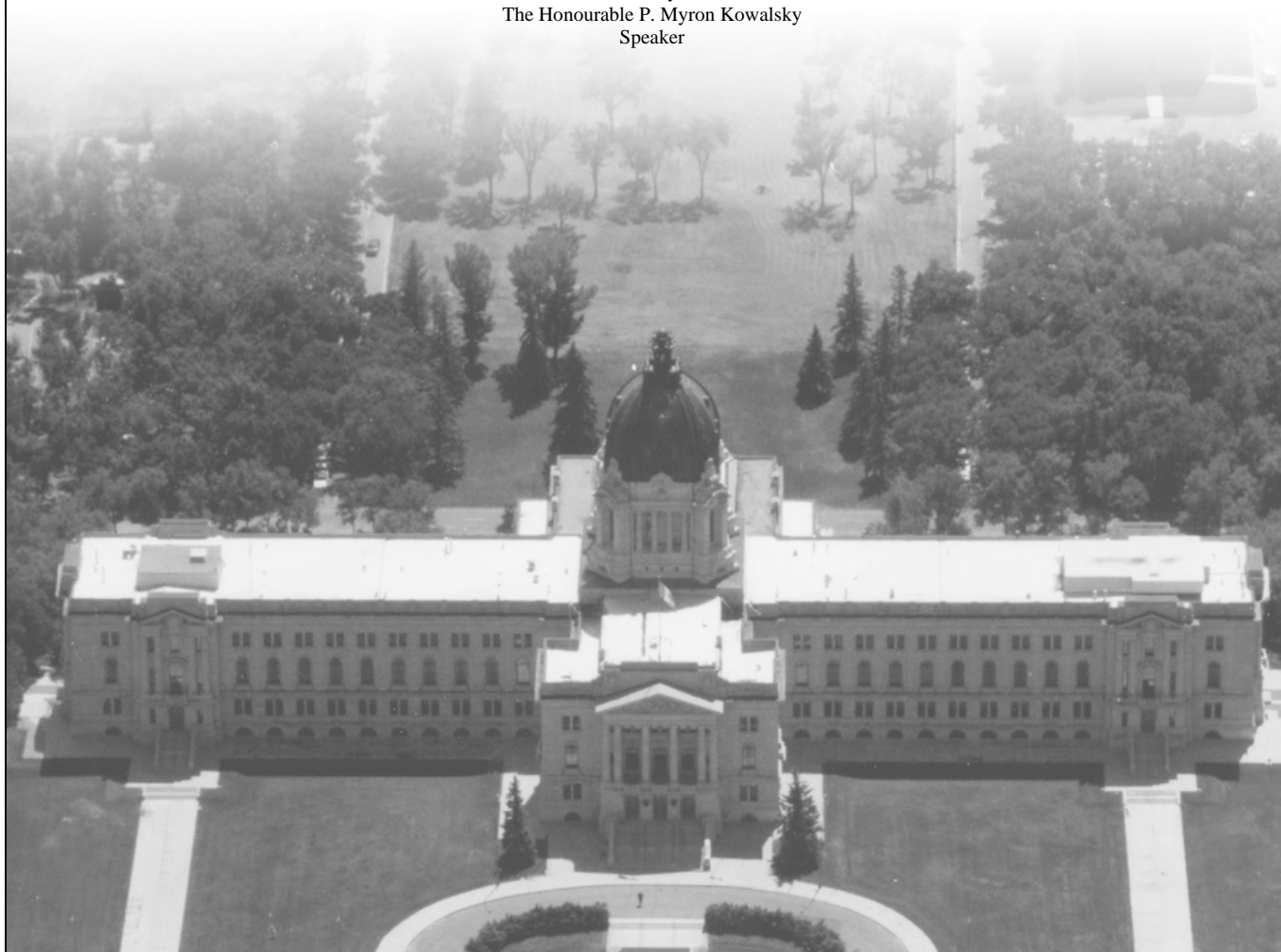
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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
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Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Bakken Lackey, Brenda	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
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Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
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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
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Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
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Krawetz, Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
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McMorris, Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
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Morgan, Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, Hon. John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
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Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wakefield, Milton	SP	Lloydminster
Wall, Brad	SP	Swift Current
Wartman, Hon. Mark	NDP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Having recovered my voice, I am prepared to resume presenting highways petitions for the constituents of Cypress Hills. Mr. Speaker, this petition regards Highway 321 from the Alberta border through the community of Burstall over to the small community of Liebenthal. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 321 in order to address safety and economic concerns.

Mr. Speaker, these three pages of petitions are signed almost exclusively by residents of the community of Burstall, with notable exceptions from Medicine Hat, Red Deer, and Calgary. I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to rise today on behalf of people who are concerned about Revoy's Marina at Barrier Lake.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to take the necessary action to develop a long-term lease to Revoy's Marina to include a turnabout for access to the marina, a place for boat trailers to be stored, and seven seasonal camping spots to maintain safety at this area.

People that have signed the petition are from Tisdale, Archerwill, and Spalding and Rose Valley. I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition today with citizens who are concerned with the safety of Highway No. 5. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade and widen Highway No. 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Watson, Colonsay, Bruno, Saskatoon, Meadow Lake, and Peterson. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here to improve cellular service in rural Saskatchewan.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all the necessary actions to install the technical equipment necessary to ensure the residents along Highway 19 in the Outlook area in Saskatchewan are provided with reliable cellular phone coverage.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by good citizens from Elbow, Loreburn, Strongfield, and Beechy. I so present.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present another petition from the citizens of Biggar that are concerned over possible reductions of the health care services. The prayer reads:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Springwater and Biggar and district. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 18 and 22.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the rest of the members I'd like to introduce 22 grade 7 and 8 students from the great community of Avonlea, the home of the provincial and league champion senior hockey team last year. Their teacher is Christy Kuffner and chaperone is Larry Mack.

Mr. Speaker, I think you'll recognize some of these students. You and I had the opportunity to attend the school, and they did a mock session back in October and did a very, very good job. Quite often when we recognize these students in the Chamber, we often say that some of our jobs could be at jeopardy because they did such a good job at debating different Bills and asking questions. But I did take particular note to one fellow that was a Sergeant-At-Arms actually, and I think he would make a great Sergeant-At-Arms in the future. But they all did a great job, and I look forward to visiting with them after question period. So

I'd like everybody to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think we all know that Agribition is now under way at our Regina exhibition centre, and there's a lot of international guests starting to come in.

And we have some of those guests with us this morning. I would like to . . . Or this afternoon, pardon me. I'd like to introduce to you and to members of the House some of our neighbours from North Dakota who are here visiting Agribition and looking at some of the great livestock that we have here. And as I introduce them, they're just going to wave and let us know who they are.

But there are Wes Pepple, Kathy Pepple, Nathan Pepple, Aaron Pepple. It's not all family, Mr. Speaker; there are others there as well. Chet Hill. Bus driver is Ron Zarr. And Casey Metcalf, Amber Myren, Veronica Hugelen, Cody Horab, Joey Skaare, Bryce Parisen, Daniel Johnsrud, Chase Evanson, Dustin Arnstad, John Arnstad, Max Courneya, Jason Thompson, Royce Jones, and Jason Jones.

Mr. Speaker, it's really a great time to have people gather from around the country and really get a look at the great livestock that we have here in Saskatchewan and across Canada. And also we're hoping for more possibility of animals coming up to be shown from the south as the border opens up. And we welcome our guests from North Dakota to the legislature. I ask others to join in welcoming them as well.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the Ag minister in welcoming our young visitors up from North Dakota to see Agribition and see all the things that go on there, and I'm sure they're going to enjoy that very much. And we appreciate the back and forth between North Dakota and Saskatchewan. And now that the borders it looks like are going to open up completely for cattle, we also appreciate that very much. So we welcome these young visitors here today. Hope they have a great, great time.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current, the Leader of the Opposition.

Huskies Win Mitchell Bowl

Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know in Saskatchewan we talk a lot about football and lately the talk hasn't been a lot of fun, frankly. That all changed, though,

Saturday afternoon at Griffiths Stadium at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] campus. I had the great pleasure, along with about 5,100 other diehard fans and the member for Silver Springs, to watch the U of S Huskies defeat the Laval Rouge et Or to win the Mitchell Bowl and advance to the national championship Vanier Cup against the Laurier Golden Hawks.

You know, there was a lot of talk before the game, Mr. Speaker, about Laval's million-dollar program and two consecutive Vanier Cups. There were questions too. For example, could a team like the Huskies, many of whose players were seeding while the Laval team was at a spring training camp in Florida, could the Huskies win? Could they beat Laval? Well, Mr. Speaker, that question asked and answered. The score was closer than the game. Congratulations to the defence, the offence, special teams, and to the fans who pointed out that the number one team in the country may have been overrated, Mr. Speaker.

The heart and soul of the Huskies are Saskatchewan kids from the cities and notably 22 young men from six-man and nine-man teams in rural Saskatchewan — Delisle, Foam Lake, Vanscoy, Eston, Hague, Blaine Lake, Wilcox, Wilkie, and Loreburn, to name a few.

And today we also celebrate and commemorate and acknowledge the U of S head coach, Brian Towriss, perhaps the best coach in the CIS [Canadian Interuniversity Sport]. Congratulations to coach BT, to my very good friend since about grade 6, defensive coordinator Ed Carleton, all the volunteer coaches, support staff, and the families of the players, the players themselves. Good luck, Dogs. Bring that cup home where it belongs.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Agribition 2005

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, today marks the beginning of Agribition, one of the pre-eminent agricultural shows in North America. Historically, Mr. Speaker, our province has been recognized as a leader and innovator in agriculture, and we continue to place great pride and interest in this important sector of our economy.

Saskatchewan's agricultural industry has faced many challenges over the last number of years, but it continues to expand and diversify and play a key role in the present and future of this province.

Mr. Speaker, Agribition is not just one of the premiere agricultural shows in the world; it is also one of the largest events hosted in Saskatchewan each year. Approximately 145,000 visitors from across Canada and the United States and from 40 countries around the world will meet here for the show, including the delegation from North Dakota, Mr. Speaker.

Each year Agribition showcases a number of the exciting opportunities in Saskatchewan's agriculture industry, from the

agribusiness and trade showcase to the career expo to the seed and forage connections showcase. In addition to being a thriving international marketplace, the show is also a vital forum for exchanging information and ideas.

I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in congratulating the organizers and participants of Agribition for ensuring the continued success of this world-class agricultural event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the member for Regina Elphinstone in commending the organizers and the people that put Agribition on in Regina, today being the opening of Agribition. And the Agribition is one of the largest farm shows in Canada, one of the two largest in North America, Mr. Speaker, and one of the largest in the world.

This year nearly 150,000 people from Canada, the US [United States], and more than 40 foreign countries pack into the city of Regina to visit the show. All of these visitors will spend approximately \$20 million in the city of Regina, bringing a huge boost to the local economy of the Queen City.

This year's show will showcase over 4,000 head of livestock for show and sale. As well, the trade show has been expanded by an additional 50,000 square feet to accommodate additional trade booths. And also, Mr. Speaker, this year's visitors will also have the opportunity to attend the Canadian Cowboys' Association Finals Rodeo and watch Canada's best cowboys in action.

Mr. Speaker, a \$20 million injection into Regina's economy will surely be appreciated by the city of Regina and Regina businesses. Mr. Speaker, Agribition shows to the world the productivity of Canadian farmers and highlights the strength and resilience of our agriculture industry.

I would like to urge all members to make the trip to Agribition and visit with the people who make Agribition the best agriculture show in the world.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

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

Prevention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, as part of Addictions Awareness Week, a new campaign is being launched to help raise awareness and prevent fetal alcohol spectrum disorder or FASD. As part of the government's cognitive disability strategy, the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority funded the Saskatchewan Prevention Institute to develop a new FASD public awareness campaign,

including a television commercial, posters, and messaging on liquor store bags and till tapes.

Mr. Speaker, the campaign messages are based on polling the Prevention Institute commissioned earlier this year. The pollings show that although 97 per cent of respondents believe that using alcohol during pregnancy could lead to lifelong disabilities in children, 25 per cent still thought there was a safe amount of alcohol that can be consumed during pregnancy.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the Prevention Institute developed a campaign focused around the message that there is no safe time, kind, or amount of alcohol during pregnancy. The Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority supports this message, Mr. Speaker, and is pleased to promote it.

The Prevention Institute's campaign will continue until June when a second survey will help measure the success of the campaign in getting the message out.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] to join me in supporting this important initiative to help create awareness and prevent FASD in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Model United Nations Held in Saskatoon

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our provincial legislature was not the only forum for debate and political discourse last week. It was my privilege to attend the opening ceremonies of the 31st annual Saskatoon Model United Nations held at Walter Murray Collegiate this past Saturday. Two hundred high school students representing both public and separate schools in Saskatoon joined students from Regina to Hudson Bay in participating in this two-day event. Another 25 grade 8 students from Saskatoon played the role of Pages, Mr. Speaker.

The students debated two resolutions. A resolution promoting equality for all women and children around the globe was passed. One promoting equalization of financial resources was defeated.

Evan Hardy Collegiate instructor and Saskatoon Silver Springs constituent Marshall Whelan is an 18-year veteran of model UN [United Nations] and a staff adviser to the event. Each year he works tirelessly with a 16-student organizing committee that is responsible for formulating the resolutions and acting as liaisons with school delegates. Working behind the scenes each year is retired teacher Leo Seipp.

I am told, Mr. Speaker, much like politics, model UN gets in your blood. Jason Yee started as a grade 8 Page and moved on to participating as a delegate and then mentoring current students. David Burgess, a Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] candidate in education, has gone on to work with the United Nations in Geneva.

It was great to be joined by public school board trustee, Ray Morrison, in watching the lively debate, polished speeches, and general enthusiasm of the young people as they came together to take a stab at solving the world's problems. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating all participants of the Model United Nations in Saskatoon.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Corner Gas Wins Gemini Awards

Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, congratulations are again in order for CTV's [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] hit television series, *Corner Gas*. Shot here in Saskatchewan, on location in Rouleau and at the Canada-Saskatchewan Sound Stage, the show has not only put the fictional small town of Dog River on the map but is also making sure that the world is getting some of what it needs — a little more Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in 2004-05 the success of *Corner Gas* has been marked by an International Emmy Award nomination, five Gemini Award nominations, three Canadian Comedy Award wins, a Directors Guild of Canada Award, and a Canadian Screenwriting Award, and four 2005 Leo Awards.

Now in addition to that very impressive list of accomplishments, *Corner Gas* can boast two more Gemini Awards. This past weekend the *Corner Gas* website took home the Gemini award for the best interactive category, and *Corner Gas* also won the Gemini for best comedy or series.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the entire cast and crew of *Corner Gas*, in particular Brent Butt, Mark Farrell, Paul Mather, David Storey, and Virginia Thompson, for all their hard work and creativity in bringing *Corner Gas* and some of the best of Saskatchewan to the world.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Wynyard Citizen Remembered

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday the community of Wynyard laid to rest one of its leading citizens, John Peter Brooks — or Jack as everyone knew him.

Jack Brooks devoted his life to his family, his community, his province, and his country. He was involved in many community organizations and to mention a few, Mr. Speaker, he was manager of the Wynyard public housing authority, treasurer of the Anglican Church for many years, served a number of years on Wynyard Town Council, and was voted Citizen of the Year back in 1979. He was involved in the Legion, being a veteran, and held many positions within the Legion. Mr. Speaker, he has also served 17 years on the Shamrock Board of Education, 12 of those years as its Chair. He was also a member of the order of Masons. And also, Mr. Speaker, he was keenly interested in

politics and was one of three members of the Saskatchewan Party executive for Last Mountain-Touchwood back in 1999.

And I can say without reservation, Mr. Speaker, Jack is the reason why I'm here today. But even though he was extremely busy within the community and with his family, he always found time to offer a ride to someone who needed to go to a doctor's appointment and didn't have a ride, Mr. Speaker.

And I would just quote the last sentence of his obituary: "Jack had a rare zest for life and he made a difference."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Building Support for a Saskatchewan Energy Accord

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago the Premier confirmed that the federal government would not be agreeing to an energy accord for the province of Saskatchewan, something that not only the government but the Saskatchewan Party believes is necessary and deserved on behalf of the people of this province. And the Premier at the time, you will remember, Mr. Speaker, said that made him hopping mad, and he was going to ramp things up, and he was going to deal with the federal government.

And so what did he do about a week later? Well he launched an advertising campaign. He decided that more ads to Saskatchewan people, not to the target market down east but to Saskatchewan people, was the way to go, in addition to a website and some window stickers.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that from headlines in Ottawa on the weekend, "Federal finance minister rejects home province's claim to more energy cash," that the ad campaign isn't working. What else will this government do to make the case for Saskatchewan in Ottawa?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that the federal Finance minister is becoming engaged in this debate. Perhaps we're being somewhat successful in getting under his skin, that he's prompted to respond. I believe we are having an impact.

We took the position that we would undertake to inform Saskatchewan people of the nature of the debate, the issues in the debate. That's the direction that we set out. That is the direction that we will continue to take, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the

Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, no one's paying attention to this government. The federal government isn't paying attention to this Premier. The federal Finance minister most assuredly isn't paying attention to this provincial Finance minister.

As long ago as February of this year, we were asking this government to ramp things up a little bit, to get a little louder, to make the case. Their response happened seven months later and their response is a website and window stickers. And by the way, Mr. Speaker, we checked the cabinet windows; we don't see that even the ministers have put up any of the very excellent window stickers that the Premier has come up with. We checked the Premier's car. We can't find a window sticker in the Premier's car.

The point is, the market, the audience, the target for the message from Saskatchewan is the federal government, is the Prime Minister and the Finance minister. What does this government have in mind? What plans does it have to make the case for a Saskatchewan energy accord to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that we set out a week or so ago to let Saskatchewan people know about the issue, about how it is that the equalization program does not work for the people of Saskatchewan, that there is no progress on a Saskatchewan energy accord.

We think it's important for Saskatchewan people to understand what those issues are and be in a position to ask their politicians, including their federal politicians, Mr. Speaker. We believe that a well-informed public is a powerful public.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the case has already been made for the people of the province. The government is again preaching to the choir. They think we should have a better deal. They think an energy accord for Saskatchewan, in light of what happened in Atlantic Canada, is the right thing. Who remains unconvinced, Mr. Speaker, is the Prime Minister and the federal Minister of Finance in addition to other federal Liberals. That's who remains unconvinced.

What has this government done to change that, other than the website and the window-sticker campaign that the Minister of Finance himself is too embarrassed to even put up in his own window, Mr. Speaker? What have they done? Has this minister talked directly to his counterpart, the federal minister, and will he answer this question: has our Premier yet spoken directly to the Prime Minister about this issue, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, it's not surprising that the opposition has — well how can I put this judiciously — a lack of attention to anything, that they don't seem to be able to stick with one matter for any length of time.

We set out to inform Saskatchewan people, to let Saskatchewan people know what the issues are from Saskatchewan people's point of view, why it matters to Saskatchewan people. That is the strategy that we put forward. That is the strategy that we will maintain into the future, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, here's the basic question that the minister just failed to answer. Has he contacted the federal Minister of Finance to make the case for Saskatchewan? Has the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan yet spoken to the Prime Minister on this issue?

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what telephone calls are being made outside of this Chamber at this point today or tomorrow. But I can tell the House that we've set on a path to let Saskatchewan people know what the issues are here. We certainly invite the opposition to join with us to let Saskatchewan people know how it is that Saskatchewan people are not being treated fairly, equitably with the rest of the country. Will they join us in that to let Saskatchewan people know so that they in turn can put some pressure in the appropriate places? Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Theft from the Department of Community Resources and Employment

Ms. Bakken Lackey: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Resources and Employment. It's been almost a year since the NDP [New Democratic Party] admitted that over \$1 million had been stolen from the Department of Community Resources and Employment. Mr. Speaker, the minister said at that time that the money that was stolen was supposed to go to the poorest of the poor. And the Premier said that this was not tolerable in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: what specific steps has the government taken to recover this money?

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

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This matter was turned over to the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. They are still conducting their investigation,

and so we will not be in a position to take further steps until they've decided what charges to lay. But in the meantime I would say that we have worked very closely with the auditor to increase both regulations, training, and monitoring in such a way that an incident like this can't happen again.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken Lackey: — Mr. Speaker, by the government's own admission over \$1 million was stolen from the poorest of the poor. To the minister again: what is the government doing to recover this money?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the minister.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, most people elected in this Chamber would understand that when an investigation goes into the hands of the RCMP that it is in fact in the hands of the RCMP and that we can't take further action on requesting what we would like to see as an outcome from any case that may ultimately be held until that step has been taken.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken Lackey: — Mr. Speaker, it's unacceptable that the minister and this government has done nothing to try and recover these funds. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: what is the current status of DCRE [Department of Community Resources and Employment] employee named Grant Matheson?

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

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Again, Mr. Speaker, it is a common practice for the members opposite to play fast and loose with what protections are provided by this House in raising questions. I have no similar protection in speaking specifically to individual's cases, and I will deal with this in the court process and with the auditor as is appropriate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

[14:00]

Ms. Bakken Lackey: — Mr. Speaker, it is on public record who is employed by the Government of Saskatchewan. The question was, is Grant Matheson still employed with the Government of Saskatchewan? Grant Matheson is the husband of Evelyn Hynes; that's the same Evelyn Hynes who was fired back in January for misappropriating over \$1 million.

At time the deputy minister said that Evelyn Hynes' husband, who worked in the same department, was on leave. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why was Grant Matheson placed on

leave? Was he suspended at the same time as his wife? If so, why?

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

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the RCMP are being very thorough in checking whether there are any other individuals connected to this matter. They will determine that in the course of their investigation. And when other individuals are identified in that way, then they would be dealt with appropriately.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken Lackey: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the time that the deputy minister said that Grant Matheson was on leave, she also indicated that no one else was being investigated in the department. So, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: did Grant Matheson work in the same branch of the department as his wife, Evelyn Hynes? Did he have any supervisory responsibilities over his wife? And would he have been responsible for approving any of her payments to phony welfare clients? And was Evelyn Hynes' husband implicated in her scheme to misappropriate funds?

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

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, I do find this totally incredible that someone should suggest that someone's spouse should be penalized for the not-yet-charged crimes of their spouse, and I think that that speaks for itself. Mr. Speaker, if there were more people implicated, certainly the investigation would turn that up. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken Lackey: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, well I find it incredible that people that work for the civil service and are paid for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, that questions cannot be asked and answered by the minister. If the minister says that Grant Matheson is not involved, that he has not been implicated and has no involvement with this fraudulent scheme, then why was her husband, Grant Matheson, put on leave at the same time as Evelyn Hynes was fired?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows very well that I can't speak to personnel matters. What I can speak to is that appropriate actions were taken to deal with the internal circumstances working in close co-operation with the auditor, with the RCMP.

And I think that the member should have some respect for the

fact that very qualified and diligent people are having due process when it comes to justice matters.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken Lackey: — Mr. Speaker, the minister can talk about lack of respect. Well the lack of respect in this case is for the hard-earned tax dollars of the people of Saskatchewan that have been swindled by over \$1 million in this department, as well as two other departments of this government have been implicated in losing millions of taxpayers' dollars, and it's time that there was some accountability.

Mr. Speaker, it would appear that Grant Matheson was placed on leave at the same time as his wife was fired. But according to the 2004-2005 Public Accounts, he collected the same \$75,000 salary last year as the year before which would suggest that he is on leave with pay.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why was Grant Matheson placed on leave? Is he still on leave? Is he still getting paid? And also to the minister: is Grant Matheson or is he not still employed by the Government of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, I invite the member opposite, if they have information that would suggest that the handling of this matter is inappropriate or illegal, that as a responsible citizen of the province they would bring that forward to the appropriate authorities.

And I can assure you that all the processes that have been handled on this are exactly as they should be according to the law and according to the correct procedures.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken Lackey: — Mr. Speaker, the question is simple. And again to the minister: is Grant Matheson, Evelyn Hynes's husband, is he or is he not still employed by the Government of Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, again I have said in this House before that I won't speak to personnel matters where individuals are named. I've been around here long enough to know that ministers who do so are asked to leave the Chamber and exit their positions. And I know the member opposite would dearly love to see that because she can't stand the fact that I competently and responsibly manage my affairs within the department.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — I make no attempt to do other than provide full disclosure and ensure that the department has the correct procedures in place, working very closely with the Provincial Auditor and with the RCMP.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken Lackey: — Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about incompetence. The Provincial Auditor, since 1996, has spoken to the issue in the Department of Community Resources and Employment where they were not adhering to their own policies and procedures to ensure that dollars were going to people that should be receiving welfare.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister, we recently did a land titles search on Evelyn Hynes. It turns out that her and her husband own a beautiful \$350,000 house in one of the richest neighbourhoods in Saskatoon. Meanwhile she is accused of stealing over \$1 million from the poorest of the poor in this province, and her husband appears to be getting paid to do nothing.

Mr. Speaker, I know from this land title that the government has not registered any sort of action against this house to recover stolen money. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why has no action been taken to recover \$1 million?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, I do find highly offensive the innuendo that comes from that side of the House day after day that public servants are just all lying in the weeds waiting to rip people off and take advantage of everyone. The fact of the matter, if that member in her amateur, after-hours job as an RCMP officer wishes to bring any kind of facts to the attention of the RCMP to aid their investigation, I suggest she do so.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken Lackey: — Mr. Speaker, this employee was fired by the minister. This minister, Mr. Speaker, is also responsible for other people under the employment of DCRE. The question we have repeatedly asked, is Mr. Matheson still employed? It's a simple question.

Mr. Speaker, by the government's own admission, over \$1 million were stolen from the poorest of the poor, and the Premier said this is not tolerable. Yet they seem to be doing absolutely nothing to recover this money. They have not registered any action against Evelyn Hynes's \$350,000 home, and her husband appears to still be getting paid by the Government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it looks like this government is tolerating these actions. Why is the NDP doing nothing to recover \$1 million of taxpayers' money? Mr. Speaker, to the minister: what are you doing? What actions are you taking to recover this money?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Mr. Speaker, I know that there are lawyers in that caucus opposite who could explain this to the member, but until someone is charged, we cannot take further steps. And so I would just say that if they know of a legal reason why something should not be happening in the department, they should bring that forward. And you know me in this House. If there's something that needs to be done, I'll do it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Wait Time for Surgery and Diagnostic Services for Cancer Treatment

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health on a daily basis continues to brag about a surgical care registry website as a model for other jurisdictions. This is the same website that says that urgent hip surgery should be done in three to six weeks. The reality of the matter is it takes eight months in this province for such an op procedure.

The minister also tells us that cancer treatment is a priority. If it is such a priority, then could the minister please tell us why there is no specific information on his highly touted website? Is it the fact that he is too embarrassed about the extremely long wait for cancer treatment in this province? Is that why it's not covered on the website?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the opportunity to inform the people of Saskatchewan and the member who has been studying this information as to what exactly we do have in our surgical registry which is for the professionals and for the administrators running the system and our surgery website which reports the retroactive information about what has been happening in the province.

Mr. Speaker, it's an ongoing project. The website for the public is providing the information of what's happened over the last six months. The actual registry itself is giving the information as to who is looking prospectively forward for these particular procedures. Mr. Speaker, that registry has provided invaluable information for all of the professionals involved to make sure that we can provide care for citizens across this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. He didn't touch on the issue of why cancer treatment is not covered on the website. I've got a story about a lady from Brock, Saskatchewan, Joan Gunn who had a dreadful experience trying to get cancer treatment.

Mrs. Gunn originally had surgery for colon cancer in 2001. Shortly after that, the doctor that she had through the Saskatoon Cancer Centre left the province. She had no follow-up treatment since 2004.

She was recently travelling in the United States in January, 2005 when she was hospitalized, and there she received an emergency CT [computerized tomography] scan — an immediate, immediate CT scan. Her American physicians were very concerned about the reoccurrence of cancer and recommended immediate attention. They wanted to do a biopsy. But Joan was told by Sask Health that she had better come back to the province of Saskatchewan and get her biopsy and treatment here.

Here is what immediate meant in Saskatchewan. Joan had a four-month wait for a CT scan, a month wait for a biopsy, and three-month wait for cancer treatment. That's eight months for immediate attention here in Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — Would the member please go to the question.

Mr. McMorris: — Is that the minister's view of cancer treatment as priority in this province?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, our task as legislators and my job as the minister is to provide resources to make sure our citizens get good care. And when I hear about situations like this, it raises concerns for me. I don't know about this specific case, but I do know that when I've investigated a number of issues that have arisen here in the legislature rather than in letters that have been sent to me earlier, the facts don't quite match what is been presented initially.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know that we have many, many capable people who are working to make sure that people get good care in this province, and I will continue to support them. I will look at the issues that the member raises opposite, but I will not respond to them directly until I get full information.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — It's a very interesting answer, Mr. Speaker. Joan Gunn did everything that she could do to get early treatment for this situation that she's facing right now. She wrote the minister in July telling him all the facts of her case. She's also phoned the cancer centre many, many times and is told that there is many as 80 people waiting on a list in front of her. In other words, her cancer treatment may take an awful long time.

Joan recently sent me a letter, and she wanted me to tell the

minister what exactly it feels like to wait on a waiting list for up to eight months when you know that you've got a tumour growing inside of you. It's absolutely unacceptable. This is what she had to say when she wrote:

No one should have to wait that long to begin treatment. The stress is unbelievable, and it's also a big risk to my recovery.

Mr. Speaker, the minister knew of this in July. She's been trying to get treatment for this situation since January. It's been eight months; she's finally receiving treatment now. Is that acceptable in Saskatchewan when she could receive immediate treatment in other jurisdictions?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we have many capable professionals working in this particular province, and they deal with the cases that come before them in an appropriate way. I'll continue to support the work of those professionals. If there are problems, as I've said before, I will help identify them and make sure that people get appropriate treatment. I'm glad to hear that this person is now getting the treatment that she needs and, Mr. Speaker, any time issues are identified we'll look at them and make sure that we can improve whatever processes are involved to make sure Saskatchewan residents get good health care.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Joan Gunn goes on to talk about what it's like in the cancer clinic. There are no chairs. There's no room. There's a lack of staff. They need far more staff and far more equipment.

The professionals that we have in this province are doing the best possible job they can under the conditions that minister provides. Those conditions are unacceptable. It's absolutely unacceptable when a person is diagnosed in the United States with a biopsy done immediately, if she wanted, but we won't pay for it. We force them to come back to Saskatchewan and wait up to eight months for treatment, Mr. Speaker.

And it's very interesting that there's no talk of this on a surgical website. There's a reason for that. This is not an anomaly, Mr. Speaker; this is common practice. Is that minister willing to stand in his place today and say he's going to change the wait times for cancer victims in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of the cancer treatment that's provided in this province, and I know that all of

us here in Saskatchewan have been well served by some very capable people providing care across the . . . both of the cancer agencies and in all of the regional services that are provided in conjunction with the cancer agencies.

Mr. Speaker, we are providing extra amounts of money for the cancer agency as new issues arise, whether it's the cost of drugs and whether it's other procedural issues. And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do that. It's our goal to make sure that people in Saskatchewan have access to cancer care and to all care in the most appropriate way possible. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to do that even though the members opposite will fight us at every step in our budgets.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Missing Persons Initiative

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of missing persons is a tragedy for families and communities across our province. The family and friends of these missing persons face daily uncertainty of what has happened to their loved one. We need to take all reasonable steps to find answers for those who have suffered such a loss.

In an effort to address this issue, Mr. Speaker, our government is establishing a missing persons task force, effective immediately. We will be investing almost \$2 million over the next three years on this initiative which will be made up of three distinct components working together to provide a comprehensive approach, Mr. Speaker.

First, we will provide increased resources for policing in our province. Keeping Saskatchewan communities safe is a top priority of our government. Assisting law enforcement to investigate missing persons cases is an important part of this goal. The RCMP will receive funding beginning this year to add six positions. Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that these resources are in addition to the 29 new policing positions that I have asked the RCMP and municipal police services to start recruiting so that they can be in place in 2006-2007.

The second element of our missing persons initiative is the development of a province-wide policy and protocol for the investigation of missing persons that will standardize how all missing persons reports are received and investigated by municipal police services and the RCMP across the province. This policy will be developed in consultation with police services, Aboriginal groups, communities, and local agencies.

The third component of our three-pronged approach to missing persons in our province will strengthen existing partnerships with police, Aboriginal groups, community organizations, and government to support the families and communities of these missing persons.

Mr. Speaker, mothers, fathers, siblings, or spouses should not have to endure the agony of not knowing where their family member is or what has happened to them. I am confident that this initiative will help solve cases of missing persons in our province and that we will be able to provide families with

answers about their missing loved one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the opposition Justice critic, the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to respond to this important initiative which addresses a long-standing problem in our province. As the minister indicates, the Government of Saskatchewan has today announced that it is committing \$2 million over three years to address the problems of missing persons. For the sake of these families, their friends, their loved ones, people who have gone missing, members of this side of the House are glad that the government has finally made this a priority issue.

As the minister outlined, the task force is made up of three components: increased resources for policing; developing a province-wide policy for the investigation of missing persons; and thirdly, strengthening partnerships amongst police, Aboriginal, and community groups.

While I and the members of this side of the House are pleased that the government has finally made this a priority, it is important to note that community-based organizations like Child Find Saskatchewan, who've been in the business of locating missing children in our province for the last 20 years, have not been consulted. To date, Child Find has not received any funding from the provincial government. We know that Child Find has indicated that they would like to take part in this task force, but that would take up to \$100,000 just to begin the work of upgrading their equipment and to begin an educational campaign.

Mr. Speaker, Child Find is not the only such community-based organization that wants to be a part of this process. We know that groups such as Women of the Dawn are eager to contribute to this task force and make a positive contribution to the many missing persons in our province, many of whom are Aboriginal women.

The question on this side of the House is whether that minister and his government have provided sufficient funding for this project to achieve real results. The minister indicated today that this government is only prepared to provide \$2 million in funding over three years. Given that that includes new funding for law enforcement — six RCMP positions — we have real concerns that the remaining money will be too little to allow the dedicated community-based organizations in our province to make a real difference.

Mr. Speaker, as previously mentioned, I am pleased to see in this initiative the announcement of new RCMP officers. The members on this side of the House have consistently pressured the government to fulfill their promise from the 1999 election campaign to provide 200 new police officers. They're still not there, Mr. Speaker, even with this announcement. But for the families of the people of Saskatchewan, the family of these missing persons, additional officers to work on these cases will be welcomed.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative on missing persons is welcome. The question now for the families and loved ones of persons who have gone missing is whether the resources provided will be enough to make a difference. We hope, Mr. Speaker, that it will.

Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers are with the families and those missing persons. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance, the member for Regina Douglas Park.

Tax Brackets and Tax Credits Fully Indexed for 2006 Taxation Year

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, this morning the Government of Saskatchewan made an announcement that impacts Saskatchewan people in a very positive way. Mr. Speaker, the province's income tax brackets and tax credits will be fully indexed to the national rate of inflation for the 2006 taxation year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — The indexation factor is 2.2 per cent for the 2006 tax year which translates into \$17.6 million in savings for Saskatchewan taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, by taking this step we are protecting Saskatchewan people from bracket creep. Bracket creep sees income tax credits decrease and income taxes increase as a result of inflation-based adjustments to personal income.

Indexation benefits all Saskatchewan taxpayers but people that may notice these benefits a little more are low-income families or individuals on a fixed income such as pensioners. For example, a single pensioner receiving \$25,000 in annual pension income will pay about \$32 less in income tax in 2006. Thirty-two dollars may not sound like a lot of money but for those on a tight budget, every little bit helps.

Positive financial circumstances afford us this opportunity to fully index personal income tax, and we will certainly seize these opportunities when they arise. Mr. Speaker, this is the third year in a row the government has fully indexed the personal income tax system to the national rate of inflation since important policy changes were made in 2004 to balance taxpayer protection while managing provincial fiscal pressures.

Again by providing full inflation protection for provincial taxpayers, we are saving them \$17.6 million in the 2006 tax year. We are committed to providing meaningful tax relief to Saskatchewan people.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the opposition Finance critic, the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to congratulate the government and the Finance minister for moving in the right direction on this one. They moved towards permanent indexation but they didn't go far enough, Mr. Speaker. As usual with this NDP government they stopped halfway, even if they're moving in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, as many members in this House will remember the first Vicq commission, the Vicq commission on personal income taxes, recommended that the government fully index on a permanent basis these brackets, the very brackets . . . the bracket creep that the minister talks about.

What did the government decide to do? They chose to ignore the Vicq commission the first time around. I hope that's not foreshadowing what's going to happen when the Vicq commission reports later this week, Mr. Speaker.

The government chooses to do it on a year-by-year basis. I'm not sure why they take this route, Mr. Speaker. The federal government doesn't do it . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . They play politics, my hon. colleague said, and I would suggest that's close to the truth, Mr. Speaker. The federal government doesn't do it, many provinces don't do it, but this government decides to do it. They take the piecemeal approach. Yes, Mr. Speaker, it gives them an opportunity every year to issue a press release and to pat themselves on the back. And, Mr. Speaker, I can see why they do that when things aren't going so well, like they were last week.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at what would be the case if they didn't do this, if they didn't index the brackets. It would be, and the members on that side of the House know very well, it would be a tax increase something similar to what we've seen when the Premier and this Finance minister raised the PST [provincial sales tax] in spite of promising not to do it, Mr. Speaker. It's something like last week when we saw this government, this treasury have 873 million more dollars and not one dime, not one penny for tax relief for Saskatchewan residents.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, this is a move in the right direction, but of course this NDP government stopped halfway. Maybe they're moving in that direction. Maybe it's wishful thinking. Maybe tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, we'll see the indexation of superannuates' pension plans. Maybe tomorrow. Maybe we'll see it. I kind of doubt it, Mr. Speaker.

Since they're moving on the first Vicq commission report, maybe, Mr. Speaker, they'll move on the Boughen Commission report. Maybe tomorrow we'll see them move towards permanent tax relief for Saskatchewan residents. Not likely, Mr. Speaker, not likely.

I suggest that members on this side of the House, just like residents across Saskatchewan, will have to wait for another day, will have to wait another day, another month, another year — and I suggest, Mr. Speaker, for another government — before they receive permanent tax relief.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 24 — The Cost of Credit Disclosure Amendment Act, 2005

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 24, The Cost of Credit Disclosure Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 24, The Cost of Credit Disclosure Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 26 — The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2005

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance].

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 26, The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for SGI that Bill No. 26, The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

[14:30]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Deputy Clerk: — Item no. 1, question no. 435 asked by Mr. D'Autremont.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I stand today on behalf of the government to order questions 429 through 457 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Questions 435 through to questions 457 inclusive have been ordered.

Deputy Clerk: — Item no. 24, question no. 458 asked by Ms. Draude.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, we'll order that one as well.

The Speaker: — Question 458 has been ordered.

Deputy Clerk: — Item no. 25, question no. 459 asked by Ms. Draude.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We'll order that one as well.

The Speaker: — 459 has been ordered.

Deputy Clerk: — Item 26, question no. 460 asked by Ms. Draude.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. We'll order that one as well.

The Speaker: — 460 has been ordered.

Deputy Clerk: — Item 27, question no. 461 asked by Ms. Draude.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We'll order that one as well.

The Speaker: — 461 has been ordered.

Deputy Clerk: — Question no. 462 asked by Ms. Draude.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We'll order questions 462 and 463 as well, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — . . . 463 have been ordered.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 1 — The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act, 2005

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act, 2005.

Mr. Speaker, members of this House will recall that in 2004, this House passed legislation to provide additional powers for police and justice agencies in Saskatchewan in their efforts to foster safer communities and neighbourhoods. This Bill builds on that strong foundation by broadening the grounds for an application under The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act and by creating a new gang colours offence to deter potential crime and violence that may arise from gang colours being worn in drinking establishments.

Mr. Speaker, since February of this year the safer communities and neighbourhoods investigation unit of the Department of Justice has commenced investigations on more than 200 complaints, with approximately 100 of these investigations taking place in Regina, more than 70 in Saskatoon, and 20 in Prince Albert, in addition to those occurring in smaller centres or rural locales. Of these investigations, 57 have resulted in direct actions, including evictions, property closures, warning letters, and informal actions such as mediation.

In the 2005-2006 budget we've added two positions to the investigation unit under this government's new drug initiative, Project Hope. Two additional investigation positions will be added to the SCAN [safer communities and neighbourhoods] investigation unit.

Operating out of Regina and Saskatoon, the safer communities and neighbourhoods investigation unit has been an important new partner with the police and justice agencies in assisting our communities to identify and remove problem properties in their neighbourhoods.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments to The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act represent the next step in this government's ongoing commitment to assist police in combatting gangs and organized crime. In the past several weeks I've been pleased to have proclaimed into force The Mandatory Testing and Disclosure (Bodily Substances) Act, The Criminal Enterprise Suppression Act, and The Seizure of Criminal Property Act as civil legislative initiatives that work with The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act and The Pawned Property (Recording) Act to help to create a hostile environment for organized crime in Saskatchewan.

These civil initiatives will work with the criminal law to assist policing agencies with addressing all aspects of the problems which we are facing with gangs and organized crime.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments today include the creation of a new provincial offence that would prohibit the wearing of gang colours in licensed premises. This new offence is intended to deter potential crimes of violence that may arise from gang colours being worn in drinking establishments and to recognize and to address the intimidation and recruiting aspects of gang

colours in our bars.

Rather than expecting bar owners to address this matter on their own, they now have the force of law to assist them in creating a safe environment for their licensed establishment.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to this new offence, this Bill broadens the specified uses for a property that could form the basis for an application under the Act to close that property. We are expanding liquor-related specified use from the simple sale of alcohol in violation of The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997 to include the use, transfer, and exchange of alcohol in contravention of that Act.

We're also taking two important additional steps to address the violence inherent with gang activity in the community and to strike at gang houses that are disrupting that community. Mr. Speaker, this Bill will add housing and providing support and comfort to a gang or criminal organization as a specified use for a property that could form the basis of an application under the Act.

It will also add the commission or promotion of a criminal organization offence as a specified use for a property that could form the basis for an application under the Act to close that property.

We are told that gangs often use extreme violence, the fencing of stolen property, and even threats to witnesses as a method to consolidate and fund their operations. This Bill will allow applications to be made where the SCAN unit is able to document evidence to show these serious crimes have been occurring. To assist them in this regard, the Bill also creates a presumption that the person is a member of a criminal organization where they have been convicted of a criminal organization offence under the Criminal Code of Canada, to ensure that the offence itself does not have to be re-proven in the course of an application under this Act.

Mr. Speaker, the safer communities and neighbourhoods investigation unit has enjoyed significant progress in the ongoing fight against organized crime and gangs in this province. With this legislation, we are again providing justice and police agencies with additional tools to ensure they are able to move forward in their crime prevention efforts as successfully as possible.

With this Bill, this government continues to invest in what we consider to be one of Saskatchewan's most valuable commodities — the communities and neighbourhoods in which we live and work. Through the direct funding of new positions for the SCAN unit and through legislative initiatives such as those contained in this Bill, we are convinced that we can partner with our communities to improve safety and strengthen Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of this Assembly to join with this government in supporting passage of amendments to The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 1, The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take great pleasure in standing this afternoon and responding to the minister's comments regarding The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act.

And first of all let me say, Mr. Speaker, our party would certainly give the government credit for taking this initiative. But we want to raise some questions in regards to some of the provisions of the Act and ensure that the Act is indeed addressing the concerns that the government has been facing and that the people of Saskatchewan have been facing over the past number of months and years in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, one of the travesties that we see in this province is the ongoing concern we have regarding criminal activity. And some of the most recent statistics continue to show that this province and specifically the communities of Regina and Saskatoon are leading the nation in violent criminal activity. Coming from one of the smaller provinces in the country, Mr. Speaker, it should be disconcerting to think that we unfortunately have that devious acknowledgement of the criminal activity and the concern that people have in regards to the safety in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, there's no question . . . and the minister just earlier this afternoon introduced a piece of legislation or actually made a member's statement, a ministerial statement in regards to expanding police activity in the case of missing persons.

And when you look at criminal activity, you look at violent crime and the innocent people that are involved through no activity of their own other than they happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time when a criminal activity takes place. We know, Mr. Speaker, we see how important it is that we do everything we can to try and protect the lives of individuals and the well-being of individuals who just want to get on with their lives and want to be contributors to, valuable contributors to our society.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, as the minister was indicating this afternoon in the case of missing persons — and we're all aware of the Tamra Keepness file that's been ongoing for a good period of time — and we've noted very recently that Tamra Keepness is not the only person. We've had just in last while, Mr. Speaker, it's been brought to light that there are other individuals who have gone missing for a good period of time.

And as the minister indicated, the minister is now putting in place a police task force to try to deal with this situation, and indeed by implementing this task force, maintaining these cases, and keeping them open, to try and at least, even if it takes time, to ensure that families indeed have an understanding of what has happened to a missing person and that their concerns can be addressed. And, Mr. Speaker, it's hard to comprehend

what a family must go through when all of a sudden a family member is . . . and specifically a young family member, a child, disappears from the home. And to this date, as we've seen in a number of files, the family still has no idea of what has happened in that situation.

Now that case may not be directly linked to violent criminal activity, but I think what we have seen in the province of Saskatchewan . . . the reason I raise it, Mr. Speaker, is the minister talking about more police officers. One of the problems we have and the police association continues to bring it to our attention — I know they're bringing it to the attention of government — is the lack of police officers. And while the government made a commitment in 1999, Mr. Speaker, to put 200 more police officers on the street, and to this date, I believe the minister would argue that in the last few years the government has added about 180 new officers to the police force in this province. The police commission is indicating to us that that's still lagging behind because of the fact since 1999 we have . . . almost six years have elapsed. And in the meantime a number of officers have retired which means you need more than 200 police officers. If it's 200 new actual new officers or for replacing retired officers, that's one thing.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think what this piece of legislation is also telling us . . . that I think and believe the police commission is also indicating that they still have a difficulty. While they are doing everything in their power to try and curb gang activity in the province of Saskatchewan . . . and we know how, what a menacing effect gang activity can have in this province and how intimidating gangs can be to individuals, especially individuals who may have been witness to . . . but the fear to come forward because of the threat of action being taken against an individual should they come forward.

For example, Mr. Speaker, I think members of this Assembly may have been reading just in today's newspaper about a violent shooting that took place in Ontario at a funeral nonetheless. And the police were asking people to come forward. And people are afraid to come forward. Even people who witnessed the shooting that took place this past weekend are afraid to come forward because of repercussions that may face them if they dare to speak out because of gang-related activity.

And that's one of the problems we have in this province as well. And any time you talk about gang-related activity, it's not just the fact that one gang tries to become better than the other gang. I believe when the minister talked about colours, wearing the colours of the gang when you're in a bar and if another gang, group of gang members happen to come in and then the violent activity that may be precipitated, it's a fact that if anyone happens to witness a violent activity where gangs are involved, there's a fear of coming forward and speaking out and being a witness because of the retaliation that may be taken against them.

So, Mr. Speaker, while this piece of legislation I believe is going to move forward and give police more tools in dealing with gang-related activity . . . and we're certainly not opposed to that fact. Because of the implications that individuals who have had violent crime committed against them, whether it's against their persons, whether it's against their property, Mr.

Speaker, it would seem at the end of the day that innocent victims should at least be able to be compensated, if you will, in some form or fashion for what they have had to face up to. And so I believe the minister is not only talking about curbing gang activity by bringing forward an amendment that really defines gang colours so that they're not allowed into permitted premises or I guess bars or these types of places. But also I believe it also broadens the ability of police to confiscate property if it can be shown that that property is being used as a place where there's gang-related violence or activity or even to enhance gang violence and activity.

[14:45]

And I would trust, Mr. Speaker . . . And certainly we'll want to get into this in more detail as we get into debate and committee as to what will be done when property is confiscated and it is proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that this property was directly related to gang activity and that property is sold or there is an economic value comes out of that sale of that property or recovery of stolen goods, whether or not innocent victims will at least be able to receive compensation for their loss because of the gang activity.

Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation, as I've been listening to the minister, is something I believe is certainly important. But I also think, Mr. Speaker, it's not just a matter of broadening the powers of police. It's also a matter of addressing an issue that is brought to my attention — and my colleagues have had this brought to their attention on numerous occasions, and I am certain the government members have — the frustration that police officers have in the field as they investigate crime regardless of how violent that crime is.

When they investigate a break and enter or they investigate a robbery at a convenience store or a gas bar and they've done all the investigation . . . They've done all the work, the research. They've put everything down on paper. They've itemized it, and they get to court. And as a number of officers have said, they've spent all this time. It takes valuable time on their part to bring a person before the bench, and they have to spend time in the courtroom if a file comes up and the frustration they have. It seems like the bench on many occasions . . . Many of these people receive a slap on the wrist rather than being held basically receiving a stiffer penalty or sentence for their activity.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that this piece of legislation go well beyond just giving more powers to the police but in fact backing up police when they've done a thorough job and when they actually have an individual or individuals in custody who have committed a violent crime, that the courts then take the appropriate action so those individuals are appropriately dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to gang activity, one of the areas that concerns us greatly and should concern the government — and we've had corrections officers bring this to our attention — the fact that our correctional centres and our jails have actually become very good recruiting areas for some of these gangs. And that is sad. That is sad, Mr. Speaker, when individuals behind bars are using this opportunity to recruit new gang members, knowing that especially individuals on light

sentences will be out on the streets shortly.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, as we get into further debate, we're going to have to talk to the minister and the department as well and to see what the department is doing in consultation with corrections officers to address this issue, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, while there are some good initiatives coming forward in this piece of legislation, I also believe there are a number of questions that need to be raised before we move forward and eventually pass this piece of legislation. And we look forward to further debate.

In the meantime as we consult with more groups and organizations to get their input on this Bill, I move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Moosomin, the debate on second reading of Bill No. 1 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. 4 — The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2005

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 4, The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2005. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Government Relations, amongst other things, is responsible for the legislative framework that governs how property values are assessed and how property taxes are levied in Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency or SAMA, Mr. Speaker, on the other hand, is responsible for developing and deciding assessment policy, assuring quality assessments, and, for much of the province, undertaking the actual assessment valuations.

Quality assurance, Mr. Speaker, is a fundamental part of ensuring that stable, fair, and equitable assessments are achieved throughout the province. The quality assurance process must yield predictable results and must maintain confidence in the property assessment, property taxation, and related grants systems. Changes had been made that will further enhance this process in the province.

The next province-wide revaluation will occur in 2009. At that time, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan will move from a quote "fair value" to a quote "market value" based property assessment system. This change predominately affects commercial and multi-unit residential property, opening the door to use of the rental income approach to valuing these properties.

The proposed amendments along with simultaneous amendments to the municipal statutes will put in place the

legislative groundwork to allow that to happen. The amendments are being made now to assure SAMA and the other assessment service providers that legislation will be in place to support the final move to the market-value-based property assessment system in 2009. This will set Saskatchewan on par with all other jurisdictions in Canada and the United States in terms of property assessment standards.

Mr. Speaker, as with The Cities Act and The Municipalities Act, the changes being proposed in this Bill have been consulted on extensively both by the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency and by my departmental officials as well. Mr. Speaker, the business community has been calling for introduction of the rental income approach to assessing property, which these changes will enable, for some time. A wide cross-section of municipal, education, and business leaders, and organizations have all had the opportunity to review and comment on these changes as they were being developed. Both the municipal and education sectors acknowledge that the changes are needed and will help Saskatchewan's property assessment system to be more transparent and equitable. The department has also consulted with our colleagues across government, Mr. Speaker, and we've received the same sort of feedback — that is, the changes are necessary.

More specifically, Mr. Speaker, in order to accommodate the change to the market value system, the definition of fair value will be removed from the Act. Also being removed is the requirement for assessment service providers to inform the public when alternate assessment methods are used. Assessment appraisers will be able to use their professional judgment to choose the appropriate method to produce the best values.

In addition to the changes to accommodate the 2009 revaluation, the never-used provisions that allow the phasing in of assessed values resulting from revaluation will be removed. Although the provisions that allow for the phasing in of assessments are being removed, cities can be assured that the ability to phase in changes to the tax rates remains.

There are a few other amendments in the Bill that provide clarification respecting the posting of copies of assessment audit results on SAMA's website and adding explicit authority for SAMA to maintain a central database of property assessments.

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to move second reading of Bill No. 4, The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2005.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 4, The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a pleasure again to stand in this Assembly and speak to the second reading, presented by the minister responsible, to amend the Assessment Management Agency.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think if there is one specific Act in this

province that derives energetic debate across the province, it's when it comes to assessment of property in the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe even in this Assembly we have seen in the past and no doubt we will see in the future that there will be a fairly lively debate when it comes to this topic of assessment.

Specifically, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about assessment, one of the things that really irritates Saskatchewan residents — and it's whether they live in large urbans or whether they live in smaller urbans or in rural Saskatchewan — is what seems to be the unfair method of assessment of property in the province of Saskatchewan. And I believe that's what the minister is endeavouring today through the changes that are coming in this Bill and the following two Bills — The Cities Act, Mr. Speaker, and the municipal Act — is to try and . . . trying to bring some commonality into these Acts in regards to assessment.

But when we talk about moving from a fair value to a market value system, Mr. Speaker, where a number of areas that now are operating under that market value system, I can assure you what we've seen especially in rural Saskatchewan — and I can attest to that on a personal note, Mr. Speaker — a lot of people would love today, when we receive the notice of our assessment and what our value of our property was valued at, would argue that if we could receive that value that SAMA has come up with as far as the market value on our property, we would be pleased and honoured. In fact we would at the drop of a hat move that property, especially in agriculture when we look at where commodities are.

So what we're talking of here is we need, Mr. Speaker — no doubt about it — we need to look at a way in which we can come up with a better assessment. And fair market value I believe is certainly the appropriate way to go. But how do we arrive at fair market value because values in the Southeast are going to be considerably different than they are in the Southwest. Values in the rural are going to be considerably different than they are in the urbans.

And I'm not exactly sure if a lot of people living in beautiful homes in urban Saskatchewan, and they drive through the countryside and there are a lot of . . . In fact most rural people take great delight in their properties. And you drive by properties and you can see — they're close enough to the highway — you can see that that family has taken a lot of . . . take a lot of pride, just the way they manicure the yard and the fairly modern home that may be sitting in that yard.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, there's a substantial difference in the value in the home on that property in a rural . . . or on a farming property than that home if it was sitting in a larger urban centre. And so there are a lot of questions that continue to arise as in regards to assessment and how we arrive at assessment and what would be considered a fair assessment.

Now the minister mentioned that his department and his office has done extensive consultations in regards to these three pieces of legislation that are before us this afternoon. I guess our question, Mr. Speaker, is what types of consultations and whether or not they did the extensive consultations that the minister talks about or if the consultations were more along the lines that the government took when it brought in the Bill

regarding casinos in the province of Saskatchewan. And the consultation at that time were groups that afterwards . . . no, we didn't. The government's wrong. They didn't consult with us in the manner that they are telling us that they consulted with us.

And so we're going to . . . we have some questions there. We're reserving our ability to determine whether the proper consultation was taken. Until we've had the ability to take the time to consult with municipalities, whether they be urban or rural, in the province of Saskatchewan, whether landowners as the minister had indicated or individuals have large rental properties, Mr. Speaker, we certainly want to take the time to review the consultations, to go over the intent of the legislation with the individuals, especially individuals who may be affected by this piece of legislation, to ensure that the changes and the provisions of this Act, The Assessment Management Agency Act, indeed address the concerns that have been ongoing in the province of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that we believe it's appropriate that we follow the minister's example and do proper, appropriate consultation, I at this time move to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Moosomin that debate on second reading of Bill 4 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion's carried.

[15:00]

Bill No. 5 — The Cities Amendment Act, 2005

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 5, The Cities Amendment Act, 2005.

Mr. Speaker, The Cities Act provides a modern legislative framework through which Saskatchewan cities exercise their powers and provide services. Hon. members will recall that the legislature passed The Cities Act in the spring of 2002 session, and the Act came into force on January 1, 2003. Mr. Speaker, all Saskatchewan cities, with the exception of Lloydminster which operates under its separate charter, passed resolutions to come under jurisdiction of the new Act effective January 1, 2003.

The Cities Act, Mr. Speaker, modernizes the relationship between the province and the cities, enables city governments to organize or encourage initiative and creativity, and provides citizens with better, more accountable local government.

The amendments proposed in this draft Bill, Mr. Speaker, address some significant issues. First the Bill follows through

on our commitment to implement legislative changes that would enable cities to more effectively deal with parking ticket issues, including the tickets themselves and enforcement.

Second, Mr. Speaker, the Bill introduces the authority for a council to appoint a youth member to that council.

Third, Mr. Speaker, the Bill responds to the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency — that is SAMA's — technical development committee report with amendments that complete laying the legislative groundwork for the introduction of a market-value-based property assessment system for 2009 for multi-unit residential and commercial properties.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the Bill addresses some problems that have been identified by stakeholders with the process of tax abatement.

The proposed amendments will help to ensure consistency of intent between The Cities Act and other municipal legislation. The proposed amendments do not include any significant broadening of powers or authorities but do support the intention of the legislation to grant cities broad powers, more flexibility, and greater decision-making capacity to deal with matters that are of a local nature.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take just a few moments to highlight the most significant changes that the Bill proposes.

Mr. Speaker, you may recall last spring some serious legal concerns arose in Regina and Saskatoon, in particular, with regards to parking tickets and the enforcement of local parking bylaws. In response to those issues our government announced that changes would be made to the legislation, and we undertook to work with the cities to identify options that would provide the cities with more effective and efficient ways of dealing with local issues in these areas. This process has been successful, Mr. Speaker, and the Bill contains provisions that will provide for expanded flexibility and authority around the whole area of parking and parking enforcement. I'm very proud of my department's consultation record and wish to thank the working committee of municipal stakeholders that helped to draft these provisions.

These amendments go hand in hand with other related changes to The Summary Offences Procedure Act, 1990 that my colleague the Hon. Minister of Justice will be introducing in this House later this day, Mr. Speaker.

This government cares about the contributions of our young people and so do our partners in the municipal sector. We look for ways to involve them in the decision-making process. And as such, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to advise that one of the amendments in the draft Bill will enable a council to appoint a youth member of council for a term, and on such conditions that council may decide, to sit with council and participate in their deliberations.

While a youth member may not be considered a formal or voting member of the council, we do believe that this provision will help to ensure that the views and needs of younger people will be brought to the council in an efficient and effective manner. It is worth noting, Mr. Speaker, that a similar provision

is also being introduced into The Municipalities Act.

Mr. Speaker, a good number of amendments in the Bill concern the property assessment process. And many times people confuse the assessment process with the levying and collection of property taxes. Now, Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that these two areas are related and perhaps that explains some of the confusion. But at the beginning of my remarks on this area of the Bill I want to be sure that everyone in the Assembly and those listening are clear that the amendments proposed are pertinent to the preparation of property assessments and do not relate directly to the property tax itself.

With those introductory remarks then, Mr. Speaker, I move to the actual provisions in the Bill.

In 2009 Saskatchewan will move from its current highly regulated property assessment system to one that is based on a market value approach to determining assessments for multi-unit residential and commercial properties. Why is this change going to be important to property owners, Mr. Speaker? Well the biggest reason for this as an important change is because the new system will ensure that the economic realities of the real estate market can be reflected in a property's assessed value hence providing a more understandable and more transparent system.

Mr. Speaker, the changes being proposed in this Bill have been consulted on extensively both by the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency and by my department officials as well.

A wide cross-section of municipal, education and business leaders and organizations have all had the opportunity to review and comment on these changes as they were being developed. Mr. Speaker, the business community has been calling for the introduction of the rental income approach in assessing properties, which these changes will enable, for some time. Both the municipal and education sector acknowledge that the changes are needed and will help Saskatchewan's property assessment system to be more transparent and equitable. We've also consulted with our colleagues across government, Mr. Speaker, and we've received the same sort of feedback.

Mr. Speaker, the final area of the Bill I'll address today is being brought forward as a consequence of the changes we've been through the past year or so to consolidate school divisions.

The introduction of larger school divisions has affected the process whereby decisions are made on the abatement or cancelling of property taxes. In short, Madam Deputy Speaker, the process needs to be more streamlined and efficient.

Currently the legislation requires that a municipality obtain the consent of every other taxing authority — almost always a school division — and every other municipality that levies taxes on behalf of the other taxing authority before it can cancel or abate any taxes that are levied on behalf of that other taxing authority. As you can well imagine, Madam Deputy Speaker, the greatly increased number of municipalities involved in each school division makes obtaining consent impractical and cumbersome.

Provisions within this Bill will address this issue by removing

the need for consent by each municipality but retaining the requirement for consent and approval by the school division. Madam Deputy Speaker, again we've consulted on this issue and have concluded that there is concurrence with this change.

Therefore, Madam Deputy Speaker, in closing, our cities have much to offer in terms of social, cultural, economic development for Saskatchewan. It is in all our best interests to enable and facilitate their ongoing success and growth. So accordingly, Madam Deputy Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 5, The Cities Amendment Act, 2005.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister of Intergovernmental Affairs that the Bill No. 5, The Cities Amendment Act be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Just a few more comments regarding this piece of legislation because it says, I indicated earlier, it's somewhat similar to the one that was just moved forward a moment ago. But The Cities Act, as the minister has indicated, is dealing significantly with changing from a fair to a market value system. And unfortunately, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have . . . When it comes to market value, there's a concern across this province as to what would be interpreted as fair market value versus what the actual market value might be on our property. And I know that many people have asked this question time and time again. And they're wondering exactly how the SAMA comes up with its formula to assess market value on a piece of property.

So while we believe this piece of legislation, of moving to a market value system, is the appropriate move, there are certainly a number of questions that will continue to arise. And as the minister indicated earlier, Madam Deputy Speaker, there are a number of groups and agencies that will have a very significant interest in this piece of legislation.

And we will certainly want to take the time to consult with them to ensure that we don't have the same problem we had last year when the government came forward with the municipal Act. And at the time the minister wanted to move that forward, but we found out afterwards that there was a number of problems with that piece of legislation which we had indicated would need to be addressed. And of course then the government pulled it when we got into the spring session and came forward with a revised . . . because they realized there were some changes that needed to be made at that time.

When it comes to legislation, Madam Deputy Speaker, there's no doubt that as the voice on . . . and while we are spoken of as an opposition caucus in the Assembly, Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, Madam Deputy Speaker, our responsibility is as well is to listen to the voice of individuals and agencies across this province and bring their concerns forward to the minister.

While they may have been brought forward in consultation through groups, through agencies at different, on numerous occasions, individuals still may not quite understand where the government is going when they make changes to a piece of

legislation. And so it would be appropriate for this opposition to ensure that those questions, those concerns are raised.

Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the things the minister talked about was parking tickets and enforcement and how cities collect from individuals with large or numerous delinquent parking tickets. And it certainly is a concern to cities. It's a concern to any jurisdiction that has parking meters and how they collect delinquent accounts. And we'll certainly want to follow up and ensure that this piece of legislation does not infringe on individual liberties, that holds people accountable for their actions.

One of the concerns that . . . and I just bring this to the minister's attention whether or not the minister's run across a situation like this is. But most recently individuals, as a result of the rain, have been parking on city streets and in specifically Impark parking lots. And they found when they went to use the parking meter, the parking meter wasn't operating.

And I think we want to make sure that where there's a faulty parking meter, that there are appropriate steps that individuals can follow, and that whether it be the city or whether it be an independent parking firm that there are procedures they follow as well in addressing those concerns before they take measures to, if you will, go after individuals with delinquent parking tickets.

However at the same time, we want to make sure that people are accepting the responsibility for their actions as well. And if they've made every attempt to plug a parking meter and have been unsuccessful because of parking meter not functioning properly that there's an avenue that they can follow to pass on that information so that the city or these private operators know that that person if they've come forward, they know that they're not coming forward just because they've got something to complain about, but they've got a legitimate concern. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, there is though a question in that regard that we need to certainly address.

We need to address the issue of school consolidation. The minister is right. And the minister talks about the consolidation to much larger school divisions than what originally had been planned and the impact it's having on rural Saskatchewan and how we're providing education and how the tax dollars are being utilized and the cost implications that these larger school divisions have as they consolidate and as they begin to move forward in the process of the larger school divisions.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, while this piece of legislation, I believe it's moving in the right direction in a number of areas, it's certainly important that we also take the time to review the changes that are being brought forward by the minister and his department to ensure that the interests of the people of Saskatchewan are indeed served properly. And therefore at this time I move to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

[15:15]

Bill No. 6 — The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2005

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. I do rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 6, The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2005. Madam Deputy Speaker, The Municipalities Act was passed by the legislature last spring, and when it comes into force on January 1, 2006, it will provide a modern legislative framework through which Saskatchewan's small urban and rural municipalities will exercise their powers and provide services. Madam Deputy Speaker, this Act is a very significant milestone in the history of the provincial government's relationship with the municipal sector.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you and some members of the Assembly may be wondering why we're back introducing amendments to this Act when it does not come into force until January 1, 2006. When we worked with the municipal sector to develop this legislation, we also committed to being open to fine-tuning it as we approach the date of implementation. We also committed to keeping it current and consistent with other municipal legislation.

Since this Act was approved by the legislature last spring, Madam Deputy Speaker, my department in co-operation with the municipal sector has been working diligently to ensure that the implementation of the new Act is as seamless as possible at the local level. Through this process of discussion and education, we've identified, in conjunction with the municipal sector, a few areas where changes would increase the effectiveness of the Act, and we are proposing amendments to achieve that end.

In addition, Madam Deputy Speaker, as I mentioned during my second reading speech for the amendments to The Cities Act, the amendments proposed in this draft Bill also address some significant new issues.

The proposed amendments in front of us in the Bill, Madam Deputy Speaker, will help to ensure consistency of intent between The Municipalities Act and The Cities Act. The proposed amendments do not include any broadening of powers or authorities beyond what I have described. They do support the intention of the legislation to grant municipalities broad power, more flexibility, and greater decision-making capacity to deal with matters that are of a local nature.

Madam Deputy Speaker, many of the amendments in this Bill are the same as those proposed for The Cities Act. And in the interests of time and not being repetitious, I will only briefly highlight the more significant changes that the Bill proposes and the context of what effects they will have on smaller urban and rural municipalities in the province.

As I indicated with The Cities Act amendments, Madam Deputy Speaker, smaller urban and rural municipalities place a

high value on the contributions of the young people in their communities. Therefore one of the amendments in the Bill before us will enable a council to appoint a youth member for a term and, on such conditions that that council may decide, to sit with council and participate with council in its deliberations. The youth member will not be considered a formal voting member of the council, but we believe that this provision will help to ensure that the views and needs of younger people will be brought to the council in an efficient and effective manner.

Madam Deputy Speaker, a good number of amendments in this Bill directly concern the property assessment process and are similar in wording and intent to those I reviewed earlier in my remarks to The Cities Act and to The Assessment Management Agency Act.

The changes in this regard, Madam Deputy Speaker, may primarily affect property owners in cities but certainly will also be important to some property owners in smaller urban and rural areas.

The new system will ensure that the economic realities of the real estate market can be reflected in such commercial properties' assessed value, hence providing a more understandable and transparent system which is exactly what the people of Saskatchewan have been asking us for.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, as was the case in The Cities Act, under the new system, property assessors will be able to employ any of the three internationally recognized methodologies for determining assessments — the sales comparison approach, the replacement cost approach, and the rental income approach. Some type of properties will continue to be assessed using the formulas, rules, and guidelines established previously by SAMA and set out in its manual. These properties, Madam Deputy Speaker, include agricultural land, heavy industrial property, railways, oil and gas well equipment, and mines.

The provisions in the Bill come into force on either January 1, 2006, or January 1, 2009, for reasons consistent with the revaluation process that takes over again in 2009.

And finally, Madam Deputy Speaker, the draft Bill will introduce the same changes concerning the process whereby decisions are made on the abatement or cancellation of property taxes in small urban and rural municipalities as the amendments proposed for the cities. The changes will simplify the process, ensure that tax abatements and cancellation are dealt with consistently across the province, and at the same time protect school divisions' say in the decision-making process relating to the school tax.

In closing, Madam Deputy Speaker, our government's commitment to smaller urban and rural municipalities remains strong and steadfast, and this Bill confirms that commitment. It is in all our best interests to enable and facilitate their ongoing success and growth.

Accordingly, Madam Deputy Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 6, The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2005.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is

a motion by the minister of Intergovernmental Affairs that Bill No. 6, The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, just to make a few comments regarding the municipalities Act . . . and I'm pleased to hear that, Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister has also recognized, and his government, that even though they've come forward and made some major changes to the legislation, and while it hasn't been proclaimed yet — will be coming into force on January 1, '06, and parts on January 1, '09 — they've also realized and given amply opportunity to introduce other changes if necessary.

And I believe, as I heard a few moments ago, the minister also indicated that there's some minor changes that they've already noticed, and they've been working with municipal governments, whether they be urban or rural, to carefully peruse the legislation as it is today, as it has been presented, and noting where they could maybe strengthen the purpose of the legislation and coming forward with some of those changes.

And I compliment the government for doing that, for recognizing that rather than waiting. Why don't we . . . If we need to make some changes here, let's move forward so that when the legislation actually comes into force — this specific Act comes into force — we've done everything we can to ensure that the purposes of the Act and the intent of the Act are moving in the direction that everyone is hoping to see the Act move.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister mentioned about making provision for youth representative or youth member of council, and that was part of the previous Act as well. I would say to that, Madam Deputy Speaker, that when we look at young people in the province of Saskatchewan today, I believe young people are taking a greater interest in activities of government and how government operates — whether it's their involvement through their school activities, Madam Deputy Speaker, or at higher levels through university and certainly at the municipal level.

Young people are beginning to realize that sooner or later they're going to be a taxpayer in that community, whether they're in the rural part of our province or whether they're in the smaller or larger urbans. And it'll be interesting to chat with the minister and talk to representatives from municipalities and get their views and why they've come forward with this provision as it certainly, as the minister has indicated, I would say opens up the opportunity for a view from a younger person as to what an impact of a decision made at the municipal level may have on young people in that community or municipality, where a significant change in the way a municipality approaches a subject may impact young people.

And so it's a very ingenious idea and we'll look forward to seeing how this will impact councils across the province and how councils will view the legislation or motions or acts that they would move forward with as they look at how they're going to govern their constituents and govern them appropriately.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as we look at the pieces of legislation as I indicated earlier, the two pieces before us, and as the minister has indicated, the changes are much the same in this Act as they were in the previous two Acts. So I will not belabour the issue, Madam Deputy Speaker.

However I believe it's only fair that we take time to do due diligence and in fact proper consultation as well, to get the feeling and the sense of the individuals, the municipalities that will be impacted by the legislation, get their views. And who knows, Madam Deputy Speaker? They may have picked up on something else as well that we can bring to the minister's attention — as is already indicated on some of the changes that have been brought forward — that we might be able to put forward in a positive manner if it will enhance the role and the guidelines of this piece of legislation. So therefore at this time I move to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 3 — The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2005

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice, the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading on The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2005. The summary offences procedure legislation establishes the procedure for administering the charging of offences created by provincial legislation. It also prescribes the court's powers and duties respecting provincial offences and enforcement of fines resulting from conviction.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to this legislation approximately 130,000 tickets are issued each year for contravention of offences under provincial statutes and regulations. The largest number of tickets are issued for offences related to driving. However a broad range of activities can give rise to offences in provincial statutes that are subject to this legislation. Examples are the sale and use of alcohol, environmental management and protection, hunting and fishing, and the use of provincial parks.

The legislation is used on a daily basis by peace officers, court staff, judges, and municipalities. It is amended on a regular basis to respond to requests for additional clarity and to deal with new issues that have arisen.

The most significant changes in the proposed legislation are related to enforcement of municipal bylaws relating to parking. The Saskatchewan city mayors and chiefs of police have requested a system for enforcement of parking offences that will provide for a significant reduction in police resources.

The two key features of the proposed system are allowing a parking summons to be served by mail and providing for a conviction to occur where the person charged with the offence

does not respond to the summons.

This Act adds several new provisions to establish a procedure that a city or municipality may use to enforce parking bylaws. These provisions result from consultation with the cities and are modelled on comparable procedural provisions respecting other offences.

These sections set out the requirements for the document that lays the charge for a parking offence, provide for a service of a summons for a parking offence by mail, and set out specialized court process and fine enforcement options applicable to these offences.

Parking offences are enforced by leaving a ticket on a vehicle. This gives the person with the ticket the opportunity to pay the amount shown on the ticket and avoid prosecution for the parking offence. Municipal legislation will continue to provide the authority for this first step in enforcing parking bylaws.

The parking summons is the second step in enforcement of parking offences. Currently if the person does not pay the amount shown, municipal enforcement officials personally serve a summons on the vehicle owner to appear in court. The amendments allow for the summons to be served by mail. This change is expected to result in major savings in police resources for the municipalities that use this service option.

Currently if the person does not pay the amount shown on a summons for a parking offence, he or she must appear in court to deal with the offence. The cities have told us that a requirement for a court hearing can result in an extensive procedural loop. This occurs when a person charged does not respond to the summons, a warrant to bring the person to court is issued, the person is arrested and promises to appear in court on the trial date but does not. This can occur several times for each summons with the result that individuals can frustrate the system even though significant police resources are being used to bring the person before the court.

The amendments provide that where a person does not respond in any way to a summons, a default conviction can occur. A person convicted by default can apply for a hearing within 30 days of becoming aware of the conviction. This ensures an opportunity for a person charged to have a hearing if circumstances are such the person was not able to respond to the summons due to unusual circumstances.

Other major changes provide for enforcement of parking fines. A city or other municipality will be able to register a lien against a vehicle owned by the person with an outstanding parking fine at the personal property registry. The sections provide for a notice to the person and set out a priority scheme applicable to the lien. These provisions are modelled on similar provisions that have been in Manitoba's provincial offences legislation for several years.

New provisions set out the procedure that must be followed before a person can be incarcerated for an outstanding parking fine. A notice that a warrant of committal may issue must be personally served on the person with outstanding parking fines. The notice must advise the person that he or she may, within 30 days of service, appear in a court to request a hearing respecting

whether a warrant of committal should issue. The provisions set out the information the justice must have before ordering a warrant. Essentially a warrant of committal can only be issued where the vehicle owner has, without reasonable excuse, failed to pay the fine or discharge it through the fine option program.

[15:30]

There are concerns that the use of incarceration for unpaid parking tickets can be unduly harsh and is an inappropriate and expensive way to spend limited resources in the courts and correctional system. Restricting the use of incarceration to cases where people are wilfully ignoring the orders of the court addresses these concerns.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation also provides for other amendments that are in the nature of updating the legislation. Currently the Act provides for a \$400 maximum for the voluntary payment fine amount on tickets for driving offences. The maximum was included when the Act was passed in 1990. It is no longer realistic and should be removed.

The Act provides that a person served with a ticket who wishes to plead guilty may voluntarily pay the specified penalty sum shown on the ticket rather than going to court to respond to the charge.

One of the options for payment chosen by many people is payment by credit card. On occasion persons who have paid by credit card subsequently contact the credit card company to dispute the payment. In these cases the credit card company withdraws the payment. The amendment clarifies that in these situations the conviction continues but the fine remains unpaid.

The Act adopts several sections of the search warrant provisions of the Criminal Code. It's being amended to include the new production order provisions of the Code. Prosecutors have advised that these sections on occasion will be valuable in the context of an investigation to require individuals to provide relevant contracts or other documents.

The term of imprisonment set out in the Act is based upon the amount of the fine. The \$25 per day default time has remained the same since 1990. Currently the Criminal Code determines the days in default by dividing the fine amount by the minimum wage in the province. This approach makes sense and will apply to provincial offences.

An amendment will move from municipal statutes into this Act parts of the provisions in the municipal statutes that set out the rules for distribution of fine revenues for contraventions within the municipalities. A provision will enable regulations to be made so the legislation can be kept up to date when new arrangements are made between the province and municipalities respecting distribution of fine revenues.

Mr. Speaker, through these changes the government is providing municipalities with the ability to streamline their procedures, to reduce the use of costly police resources for parking offences, and to access additional remedies to collect unpaid parking fines.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to

amend The Summary Offences Procedure Act, 1990 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 3, The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is certainly appropriate that we have an opportunity to respond to these second readings because there is a lot of material that was presented to us by the minister. And there is probably good reason for it, but I have some comments and questions that need to go forward.

And I would like to say this is a really good example of a Bill that . . . or an amendment to a Bill that really fits into our system of fall sittings, scheduled fall sittings and spring sittings as well. Here's an opportunity for us to look at the legislative agenda based on this particular amendment that the minister enunciated, The Summary Offences Procedure Act, which is quite extensive in terms of the detail that need to be addressed. So it gives us an opportunity now to be able to debate this, to comment on it, to get consultation, and to determine if it needs to be moved forward or if in fact there needs to be further questions, further consultations. And this is working in a good format for this fall.

In this particular Act that the minister talked about, it certainly has some consequences primarily when it comes to the working in a collegial way with the cities and also with other Acts. And the minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has also referred to some of the things that this minister referred to in the amendments to The Cities Act in particular and The Municipalities Act as well.

Trying to put an orderliness to the application of the summary offences is exactly what's needed in this province. A lot of people have become very concerned about the way a lot of our citizens treat the law and the consequences of the law in this province. And I think it's timely. In fact it's probably high time that people got a feeling from this government that there is going to be some teeth and also some sensibility and rationale behind what is being proposed in these amendments.

There is lots of regulations and lots of parts in the Act regarding driving and lots of different parts of the Act that apply to the environmental custodianship that we should all be taking part in and become very serious about making sure that the right things are done.

With driving offences, as with the parking that the minister spent some time with . . . And maybe it's just a perception that I have as I have been around for a number of years. And I noticed that there is a change in the way that people are treating driving regulations and parking regulations as well. And I just have a feeling that if there is some continuity and more strict compliance with the Act or enforcement of the Act that I think we can turn that around. And I believe that would be very welcome.

In my particular city when the minister refers to some of the driving offences, there is a lot of younger people in my city and in my region. A lot of people are driving and ignoring things like stop signs, red lights, speed limits within both the city municipalities and rural municipalities. And without some kind of consequence, the habit just reinforces itself. And the offenders think that they're immune from any prosecution, and therefore they continue to do that.

I think what the minister has tried to outline is a way to try to bring both the orderliness back into the procurement of offences procedures Act and also make it so that different jurisdictions and municipalities are able to more effectively and expeditiously make the corrections needed.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the concern that I would have with the comments that the minister made about parking particularly . . . I know it's been a concern in cities. And again a lot of people have just assumed that parking isn't really a very significant part of their life. They can park for wherever they want as long as they want, and there is no consequences both for the city and other people that want to drive and park in that same city. And so parking tickets just become almost a throwaway issue. Well something certainly has to be done, and I see where the minister is proposing some positive aspects here.

I guess my concern is that when you . . . Without proper consultation and when you try to make the laws so much more tough than they were before, is that in fact going to give the signal to the people that are ignoring the parking fines now, is that going to give them the signal that well now that they really don't have to ignore them because it's going to cause them more trouble so they think they'll just go away? I guess what I'm saying is that, are people going to respect that and is there going to be the appropriate backup to make sure that the new procedures or amendments are in place? And if it is, that's a good thing.

But then to do that there has to be a calculated amount of manpower and expenses that go to enforcing these new Acts which maybe takes away from other parts of the police's role in terms of security and safety within our communities. That is a concern that we're going to have to get some opinion from different communities about.

If a person continues to ignore the tickets and the different warrants that are coming to him, and now can come by mail as well, I'm pleased to see that there is in fact a recourse that a person does have because that I think will allow the person to recognize that this is a serious offence, becoming more serious, and they in fact will follow through with the recourse and maybe learn from that. I think that's a good thing.

But the stronger that the medicine is for correcting some of this casual attitude toward parking, for instance, may in fact drive a lot of people out of the main downtown cores of the cities that count on limited parking space. And it's rationed by parking meters and therefore enforced by parking tickets. That's an aspect that I'm sure we want to get some consultation from the cities as well. The consultation that this government has indicated they've had, we would also like to have some because quite often we get somewhat of a different story and we want to be able to add our response to these particular amendments as

well.

There is provision for putting liens on vehicles. There is provision for the threat of incarceration if not the reality of incarceration. It gives the judge considerable power if a person ignores the consequences of what they've done. There is considerable repercussions that can happen to the person and I think that's probably the signal that's needed and people will start taking it seriously.

But in order to get more consultation so that we have a better ability to discuss this in a more rational way, I move that we adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

**Bill No. 17 — The Real Estate
Amendment Act, 2005 (No. 2)**

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice, the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Real Estate Amendment Act, 2005 (No. 2).

The Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission is responsible for the regulation of the real estate industry. The commission is mandated to protect consumers and to provide services that enhance and improve the industry and the business of industry members. The commission protects consumers through licensing, which ensures a standard level of competence, and participation in an errors and omissions insurance program, investigating complaints, conducting disciplinary proceedings, and administering the Act, regulations, and bylaws. The superintendent of real estate oversees the activities of the commission.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the real estate industry is an important part of Saskatchewan's economy. Resale housing transactions generate significant economic activity in the province. The amendments I am introducing today are required to ensure that Saskatchewan's real estate legislation remains up to date and to assist the commission in fulfilling its responsibilities under the legislation.

Currently the commission does not have the authority to acquire or own real property. The amendments included in this Bill will allow the commission to acquire, hold, lease, sell, or dispose of property for purposes of carrying out its responsibilities under the Act. The amendments will also allow the commission to borrow money and grant a mortgage, charge other security interests in any property owned by the commission.

[15:45]

While the commission currently has the ability to collect or impose registration fees, fines, penalties, and costs of hearings or investigations, the existing legislation does not expressly provide that these monies are the property of the commission. The amendments will clarify that all fees, fines, costs, and penalties receivable or recoverable pursuant to the Act are the property of the commission.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Bill will also allow the commission to invest its funds in investments in which trustees are authorized to invest pursuant to The Trustee Act, and to sell or otherwise dispose of those investments and reinvest the proceeds in similar investments.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the changes reflected in this Bill have been requested by the Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission. They are consistent with the approach taken in other professions legislation and are consistent with the real estate legislation in other jurisdictions.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of An Act to amend The Real Estate Act.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 17, The Real Estate Amendment Act, 2005 (No. 2), be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. In response to the second reading by the minister, amending The Real Estate Act, there is some concerns that immediately jump to mind and I would like to put those forward so that it can be further thought about, discussed, and maybe further consideration or clarification can result. And I again think that this is exactly why second readings are important and a debate going on to give us a little bit more time.

The name change from Real Estate Commission to Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission of course is just a name change. The real concern that I have is the continuation of the now Saskatchewan Real Estate Commission as an operating corporation. It would appear that with the new powers that are being requested and put into these amendments, that this real estate corporation is starting to become more of a Crown corporation or an operating corporation than what I believe the purpose of a real estate commission should be.

Certainly to have the real estate industry involved in the industry to give suggestions, guidance, directions, and probably putting in some guidelines that need to be addressed to make consistency the key word right across the industry, and certainly professional compliance with the different real estate transactions that go on and as the minister said, consistency with other provinces as well — I think that's the purpose of the Real Estate Commission. To now be able to buy and sell properties, to reinvest properties, it sounds like from my understanding that the Real Estate Commission is moving past what it was intended and I think there is some concern and caution that needs to be put forward here.

And in that vein I would certainly like to get some comments and responses from many different sectors including realtors

that are operating both in this province and in other provinces to make sure that we understand the consequences of what is being proposed here. And we want to make sure that if in fact this moves forward, what controls are in place, what the parameters are, and the conditions and the business case that would provide for this corporation to own, buy, sell, and invest. Who would be the trustees? What conditions are in place to make sure that it's done for the reasons of the real estate and not for reasons of internal Crown corporation control of real estate and the real estate industry?

And for that reason, Madam Deputy Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Lloydminster moves to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 2 — The Film Employment Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2005

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation, the member from Cumberland.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 2, The Film Employment Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2005. This Act, Madam Deputy Speaker, will ensure Saskatchewan's film tax credit program is one of the most competitive in Canada while encouraging the development and support of local film industry workers.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am proud to say that the film industry generated \$80 million in economic impact and created 850 full-time equivalent jobs last year. It is a young and flourishing industry. The average age of workers in the film industry is about 35. That is around 10 years lower than the rest of Saskatchewan's workforce so it's an attractive opportunity for young people.

For every dollar invested in the film industry by the tax credit program, it's estimated six more dollars are spent in the province from other sources.

It is important to note that the environment in which we are now working has changed greatly. First, the industry has expanded significantly in just a few short years since the film employment tax credit was introduced in 1998 and the production studios opened in 2002. As a result, production volumes grew much faster than Saskatchewan's local labour capacity to support them. This has meant that we are importing labour, goods, and services and to some extent subsidizing those imports.

At the same time other provinces like Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario have recently introduced incentives that have affected the industry in our province. To keep Saskatchewan competitive and improve economic benefits to the province, a number of changes to existing provisions are necessary.

The Film Employment Tax Credit Amendment Act will see an increase in the base tax credit to 45 per cent from 35 per cent on eligible salaries. Under this Act the Saskatchewan Communications Network will now be treated the same as other broadcasters regarding broadcast licences and receive tax credits for legitimate licence fees.

The Act also includes a change that will see a 5 per cent additional credit towards eligible salaries where a film employs Saskatchewan residents in 6 out of 10 key positions. Regulations will state that this bonus will be applied to films where the total production costs incurred are \$3 million or greater. This will provide a strong incentive for larger productions to develop and employ Saskatchewan crew members and technicians, contributing to a growth in the capacity of the industry in our province. This means more jobs for our young people.

Because we need to build our local labour capacity, we will develop regulations to put a cap on the use of non-Saskatchewan residents. No more than 25 per cent of wages can be paid to non-residents and still receive the benefit of the tax credit. That makes Saskatchewan's film employment tax credit program one of the most competitive programs in North America.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to move second reading of Bill No. 2, The Film Employment Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2005. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation that Bill No. 2, The Film Employment Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you again, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Film Employment Tax Credit Act is an Act that certainly is going in the right direction. I think we have been on record as indicating putting tax credits in place to try and attract investment in this province is in fact the right thing to do. And I'm very pleased that the minister has recognized that to be competitive you have to continue to keep going in that same direction, and the tax credit now has been increased.

That again is a good model that the government should look at in several different areas of making sure that there is incentives for investment and not regulation for investment in this province. It goes a long ways to putting the confidence in both the people in Saskatchewan to reinvest and also for outside the province to come to this province.

I noticed also that part of the tax credit, as it goes from 35 to 45 per cent of eligible salaries, also includes a provision that will allow another 5 per cent of eligible salaries if the company employs people in what it calls the prescribed positions in that particular film. Certainly it's an incentive to try to draw in the people from Saskatchewan. And I know we have a lot of talented people in Saskatchewan. I know we have a lot of people that want to become more and more involved in that part of the industry, and I think this is a way to do that.

My caution is that we don't want to make the playing field too unlevel for those companies that have come to Saskatchewan, invested in Saskatchewan, and find that this is not competitive any longer if in fact they can't get the number of people involved in what they call the prescribed positions.

Again just in summary, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think the idea of a tax credit or an incentive for bringing investment into Saskatchewan is the right thing. I hope the model is used more and more by the NDP government in attracting investment, and I believe that there is some others that would want to comment on this. I believe that I would like to get, on behalf of our side, some more consultation to find out if in fact there is going to be a significant difference in attracting numbers between the 35 and the 45 per cent and including the extra 5 per cent. I would move that we adjourn debate on this employment tax credit Act.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Lloydminster moves to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 13 — The Archives Amendment Act, 2005

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation, the member from Cumberland.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 13, The Archives Amendment Act, 2005. As you are aware, Madam Deputy Speaker, minor revisions are required to allow for more consistency and clarity. These amendments were drafted by Saskatchewan Archives in consultation with the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation, the Office of Executive Council and Department of Justice.

The first proposed change to existing provisions includes allowing the head of a government institution to delegate another person from that institution to sit on the public records committee. Saskatchewan Archives will now also have the authority to develop agreements to receive and manage cabinet records as well as ministerial records and records of the Office of the Executive Council. Finally public records created and maintained by the Legislative Assembly office or an officer of the Legislative Assembly will be subject to the Act. By ensuring their inclusion in the records scheduling and disposal process, this change will see greater accountability, privacy, and access to these records.

Madam Deputy Speaker, accordingly I move second reading of Bill No. 13, The Archives Amendment Act, 2005. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation that Bill No. 13, The Archives Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. This is primarily from what I see a housekeeping amendment that I think are probably very prudent and I think need to be reviewed very carefully because of the importance of records and records leading to our own particular history. The Archives Amendment Act, as you said, Madam Minister, will bring in the Legislative Assembly services and officers under this new Act and all the conditions and precautions and also the procedures that follow. And I think that's something that we need to have confidence in. If we don't have the appropriate records stored in such a way — accumulated and stored in such a way — and have access to these records, it's very hard then to look back on our past to be able to build for any kind of future. So those records are very important and to have them consistent and accessible.

[16:00]

I guess my question would be, are these records, how extensively are they available? How easy is it for people to be able to access these different records? Are they available hard copy, or are they available only electronically? What backups are in place? All of these things are very, very important questions. And I would like to pursue that a bit further to see just how secure they are, how accessible they are, and under what conditions they can be accessed before the original records are destroyed and if in fact the average person would have difficulty if in fact they are available for them.

All these questions I think are important, and therefore I would move that we adjourn debate on the amendment to The Archives Act.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 11 — The Youth Justice Administration Amendment Act, 2005

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety, the member from Saskatoon Greystone.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of An Act to amend the Youth Justice Administration Act. There is one proposed change here. This change will confer the status of peace officer upon community youth workers in the Department of Corrections and Public Safety. This amendment provides them with another tool to effectively supervise youth in the community.

By way of background, Madam Deputy Speaker, community youth workers have a variety of powers and responsibilities under the federal Youth Criminal Justice Act. These include doing assessments and pre-sentence reports on young offenders who come to court for sentencing, working with youth and families to develop treatment plans, and supervising young offenders who are serving community sentences on the

community portion of custody sentences. In short they are the primary care managers for all young offender dispositions.

Youth workers in most other jurisdictions are designated as peace officers. In Saskatchewan all custody youth workers, corrections officers in adult facilities, and adult probation officers are peace officers. However community youth workers are not. The proposed amendments grant community youth workers with peace officer status.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when a young offender breaches the community portion of a custody sentence, a community youth worker uses their discretion to determine if it is best to continue to work with the youth in the community or alternatively to issue a warrant and return the young offender to custody, bringing the youth back before a youth court judge.

At present community youth workers cannot themselves apprehend young offenders when that is necessary and are limited instead to notifying the police and requesting that the police locate and apprehend the young offender. The current situation sometimes slows down the timeliness of response. The proposed change will overcome this problem.

Conferring the status of peace officer on community youth workers will provide them with the authority to transport youth in custody or to apprehend a young person who is either at large from a facility or not in compliance with the community portion of a custody sentence.

Madam Deputy Speaker, community youth workers are very important people who perform crucial work with young offenders. This Bill will give them the status accorded to their peers and some additional, needed authority to facilitate better case management. This designation will also make them eligible for public recognition and awards and ceremonies dedicated to other peace officers such as the Corrections Exemplary Service Award.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to speak to one other point that deserves clarity and that is that youth workers will not be expected to physically restrain young persons nor will they carry or use firearms or other weapons.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of An Act to amend The Youth Justice Administration Act.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety that Bill No. 11, The Youth Justice Administration Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise today to speak briefly on Bill No. 11, An Act to amend The Youth Justice Administration Act.

First of all I would like to join with the minister in indicating how important we believe people that are working in the youth justice system are to our province, and to the young people who are required of their services. Madam Deputy Speaker, I think in order to give these individuals the kinds of powers they need to more fully complete their challenges and tasks, that this is

worthwhile and legitimate legislation that needs serious consideration.

I note in the Bill there are a number of powers that go with the designation of a police officer which include:

... the power to arrest without warrant any person who has committed an offence or who the youth worker believes, on reasonable grounds, has committed or is about to commit an offence.

I think that's an important feature of this legislation in addition to the designation of these workers as police officers, is that it actually gives a significant tool to these individuals to make sure that they're able to fulfill their requirements and responsibilities under the Act in the youth justice administration, in order to make sure that they can discharge their duties to the young people that they're custodians of.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we on first blush believe this legislation is important and valuable. However we have made contact with some individuals who work in the youth justice system, and we eagerly anticipate their responses and their comments on this legislation. And in order for that to be facilitated, I would move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Melfort moves to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 21 — The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Amendment Act, 2005

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of An Act to amend The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act, 1999.

Madam Deputy Speaker, The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act, 1999 was developed and passed in the spring of 1999 and received Royal Assent on April 1 of that year.

This Act provides important public protection through the establishment and enforcement of technical safety standards related to the manufacture, installation, and operation of complex pressure equipment. This equipment is widely used throughout Saskatchewan for commercial, industrial, and institutional purposes.

Proclamation of the Act has been delayed in order to develop and finalize the supporting regulations. These regulations have been shared and discussed with key stakeholders to ensure that they are practical and effective. It is anticipated that the regulations will come into force in the spring of 2006.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the proposed changes are administrative in nature. As the regulations were being

developed, some errors or omissions in terminology were discovered. And I just want to elaborate on those a little for the benefit of members opposite and interested stakeholders.

In developing the new Act there was no intent to inspect pressure piping systems separate from the boiler and pressure vessels. Furthermore there was no intention to exclude inspector involvement in the fabrication of pressure fittings. The omission of any reference to reviews and refunds also was an oversight when the Act was initially drafted.

And so in effect, Madam Deputy Speaker, the proposed amendments correct these technical errors and support the original intention of the legislation respecting licensing and inspections.

I'll just say a word about the original intention of the legislation. It was to recognize significant changes made within the comprehensive codes and standards of design, manufacture, inspection, and operation of pressure equipment. Reform of the boiler and pressure vessel regulatory regime is necessary in order to address the current and anticipated future needs of industry, government, and the public.

These reforms do not change existing core regulatory program components that are essential for an effective public safety regulatory regime. However it does provide a revitalized framework for the way in which these program components may be administered and enforced through the regulations.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of An Act to amend The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act, 1999. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety that Bill No. 21, The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Amendment Act, 1999 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise and speak briefly on Bill No. 21, An Act to amend The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Act, 1999. Madam Speaker, I think it's important to recognize and to also comment on the fact that the minister has declared today that the regulations in regard to this original Act have not been completed and are due to be completed and proclaimed in the spring of next year. And I think that that is an important comment.

And the minister has also recognized that members of the industry, the technicians and the people that are responsible for these pressure vessels and boilers, also are being consulted in that whole process to make sure that not only is the legislation appropriate, but the regulations flowing out of it are also important.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that the minister alluded to the fact that these vessels are common in large institutions and heating systems and other delivery systems, but they're also quite common in the restaurant and hospitality industry and

some of the cooking equipment and things of that nature. So it's not just the huge institutions that need to be aware of the safety that's required in order to operate these vehicles . . . or these vessels. It's also important to recognize that smaller businesses are also involved with these type of vessels on their premises and that the regulations should be appropriate to the safe operation of these systems and not so intrusive that it gets beyond the realm of reasonableness.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the stated amendments in this piece of legislation are pretty benign. For example under section 19:

. . . **amended by striking out** "the boiler" **and substituting** "a boiler".

So it's very technical in terms of making sure that the wording is appropriate to the legislation and the regulations that are being developed.

And we certainly take the minister at his word and would encourage him to make sure that the regulations are put in place in a timely way. Because very often the detail . . . or the devil's in the detail, and that's the regulations, and so that the industry may be apprised as to what in specific is required.

We also would like to give them an opportunity to comment to the official opposition in this regard and to allow that some time to happen I would move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Melfort moves to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 9 — The University of Regina Amendment Act, 2005

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning, the member from Regina South.

[16:15]

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 9, The University of Regina Amendment Act, 2005.

This Act will reduce the number of government appointed members on the university's board of governors by one and thereby enhance the autonomy of the institution by reducing the number of government appointees on the board to minority representation status.

It recognizes that the University of Regina operates independent of government, and these changes reflect the current practice and reality. With that I am very pleased to move second reading of Bill No. 9, The University of Regina Amendment Act, 2005.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Learning that Bill No. 9, The University of Regina Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a

second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 9, An Act to amend The University of Regina Act.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that this is an important initiative on behalf of the government to not distance themselves from the university completely, but to put an appropriate balance on the board of directors in that the government is no longer or will no longer be appointing the majority of the members of the board to the University of Regina.

It's, I think, a long-standing tradition in universities in Canada and North America and around the world, for that matter, that there is an appropriate distance between the government of the jurisdiction and the universities as centres of academic excellence in their communities. And I think that this is a step that will go some distance to make sure that the community at large actually has majority representation on the board of directors.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, we certainly want to speak to the university specifically about this issue. We have every confidence to believe that they will be very supportive of it. But in order to allow that conversation and dialogue to occur, I would move to adjourn debate at this time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Melfort moves to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 10 — The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2005

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 10, The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2005.

This Act will reduce the number of government appointed members on the university's board of governors by one and thereby will enhance the autonomy of the university by reducing the number of government-represented appointees to minority position.

It recognizes that the University of Saskatchewan operates independent of government and that these changes more reflect the reality of the current situation. As such, I am very pleased to move second reading of Bill No. 10, The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2005.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Learning that Bill No. 10, The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2005 be now read

a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to speak briefly on Bill No. 10, The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act. In doing so, Madam Deputy Speaker, I reiterate the comments that I made in regard to the University of Regina.

And while I have the opportunity, I would like to take this chance to comment and compliment both universities in Saskatchewan on the excellent work that they do and the quality of their service to our communities.

We have three universities in this province and I think that the moves and direction of building greater autonomy for the universities is very important for the academic excellence and the research and achievement of our universities in this province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we're a relatively small province in the jurisdiction of North America and yet our universities have excellent reputations and attract high-quality professors, teachers, staff, and researchers. And I think we in the provincial legislature should take every opportunity we can to congratulate and compliment our universities for the quality service that they provide to our province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we wish to have confirmation from the University of Saskatchewan that they're very supportive of this legislation, which we believe they will and in order for that to happen, I would move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Melfort moves to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 7 — The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 2005 (No. 2)

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture and Food, the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, at the end of my remarks, I will move second reading of The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 2005 (No. 2).

The amendments being introduced today are for part VI of The Farm Financial Stability Act that governs the administration of loan guarantees for production associations. These changes follow consultations with both the lender committee and the producer advisory committee this summer. Both committees agreed with the proposals . . . with the proposed pair of changes to the current legislation.

One amendment to The Farm Financial Stability Act will allow an incremental guarantee to lenders on overdue advances where a production association continues to operate while they deal

with a delinquent member. In addition another amendment will allow a provincial supervisor to obtain a warrant to enter premises where association livestock may be kept, after making reasonable efforts to contact the person in charge of such premises and being unable to do so.

The existing legislation currently has provisions for the government to provide a guarantee to the lender on loans provided to a production association. Such loans are made up of advances taken on behalf of each member. Production associations would like to continue to operate and purchase cattle on behalf of members while they deal with a member with an overdue advance that is delinquent.

Where an association member is in arrears the lender may not allow any further advances to the production association for the balance of the members until the arrears are dealt with. This may result in an inactive association. Experience has shown once the production association becomes inactive there is significantly increased risk of additional defaults and consequently the likelihood of a guarantee claim also increases.

The proposed amendment will allow an agreement to be entered into with the lender where the production association will be allowed to continue to operate and the lender will be provided with an incremental guarantee on an overdue advance. The proposed change would provide an incremental guarantee on the overdue advance or advances once the lender, association, and government agree to the member's repayment proposals and the lender agrees to continue advances on behalf of the other members while leaving the assurance fund intact. However the assurance fund would still be subject to a claim in the event a loss on the extended advances or any other advance occurred at a later date.

This will provide an opportunity for a production association to continue to operate while they work to collect from a delinquent member. This provision will reduce overall risk to the program because it will only be utilized in cases where there is a repayment agreement in place. The incremental guarantee would only be affected should other members also default before the advance with the incremental guarantee was repaid and such defaults exceeded the assurance fund and the original guarantee on the loan.

The second amendment establishes more reasonable criteria to obtain a warrant to assist an association in retrieving cattle from an individual, thus protecting others in the production association. The existing law allows a provincial supervisor to obtain a warrant to assist an association in entering premises where association livestock may be kept after being refused access by a person in charge of the premises.

The person in charge of the premises can easily thwart the obtaining of a warrant by simply avoiding the provincial supervisor. There may also be cases where the person's whereabouts may not be known.

The amendment will require that the provincial supervisor make reasonable efforts to locate the person and to have reasonable and probable grounds to believe the livestock are on the premises before obtaining the warrant. The amendment to allow obtaining a warrant, where the person in charge of the premises

to be entered is not available, will reduce the potential loss to the association. Once the stage of removing cattle by warrant has been reached, some livestock may already be missing or not branded.

These amendments will continue to improve the flexibility of the program in dealing with a different situation in a timely manner. These amendments, Mr. Speaker, will have a positive impact on the program. Therefore I move The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 2005 (No. 2) to be read a second time. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture and Food that Bill No. 7, The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 2005 (No. 2) be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter debate on second reading of this particular Bill.

When you talk about farm financial stability and the farming sector, it unfortunately hasn't been very stable for a number of years in the grain sector and also in the cattle industry with BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy]. It's been very unstable with the producers, so I know a lot of them have used this program throughout there.

And it's one good thing about having a fall session now — getting these Bills out where we can get them out to the producers and see what changes can be made, if they like them all, if that's what they wanted. I know that there has been, just looking at it, there's been a couple of little concerns.

Just one in section 46. It says the minister can make regulations regarding:

the percentage of each loan that may be guaranteed with respect to a commodity, producer association, category of member producers or category of producer associations; and

the maximum amount of each loan that may be guaranteed
...

Now hopefully this won't be used to cut the current level of loan guarantees as many producers are very fond of the loan guarantee program itself, at that end of it. So there is I wouldn't say maybe concern, but there always can be improvement.

It's always nice to get it out to every association so they're fully aware of the changes, even through the winter, so they know when they're doing it. It's right about now is when people are buying cattle to put in programs. This is when most of them are being bought, when a lot of the associations are ramping up to feed throughout the winter, at that end of it. So it's nice that we can get this information out to them and see if it's going to help them in the current year because, well like I say, the cattle industry has been very unstable these last few years.

Right now the price is good, and hopefully the future is good. They're talking about opening . . . animals from 30 years up, even bred animals going across the border which a lot of

producers in my area are very optimistic that this is going to happen. It's going to help the industry a lot.

And it's also going to help grow the cattle industry in this province which needs to be grown hugely. I mean we should be doubling our production here in this province. It should be doubled. It should have been doubled years ago. And any way that we can help them to double that production — which is good — because that basically is what we have to do here in Saskatchewan. We have to kick up . . . The cattle industry is an industry that can grow hugely in this province. It can help this province in the future to grow with that.

But with that, Mr. Speaker, I would — because we would like to send this Bill out and the information out to associations and to producers — I will adjourn debate on this particular Bill.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Arm River that debate on second reading of Bill No. 7 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 22 — The Forestry Professions Act

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Following my remarks I will be moving second reading of The Forestry Professions Act. The intent of this legislation is to protect the interests of the people of Saskatchewan by ensuring that registered forestry professionals meet standards of competence, are ethical, and are publicly accountable.

The Forestry Professions Act will bring into existence the association of Saskatchewan forestry professionals, an organization independent of government and industry responsible for ensuring that its membership maintains the required professional and ethical standards.

The legislation is right to title, meaning that members of the new association will have the exclusive right to use the titles professional forester, professional forest technologist, forester-in-training, and forest technologist-in-training. Those retaining the services of a forester or forest technologist in Saskatchewan will now have the option of hiring a registered professional.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation demonstrates the government's commitment to build a green and prosperous economy by further protecting the environment while enhancing sustainable forest industry opportunities.

[16:30]

Saskatchewan joins seven other provinces that currently have legislation governing forestry professionals. And the province can now become a signator to the mutual recognition agreement.

This will further enhance public confidence that Saskatchewan's forest resources are being managed by professionals whose competence, ethics, and accountability are recognized nationally. It demonstrates that Saskatchewan is a desirable place to practise forestry and that the profession is accorded the same level of respect here as in the rest of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, The Forestry Professions Act was developed in consultation with the Saskatchewan section of the Canadian Institute of Forestry, CIF. The CIF represents forestry professionals from across the country. With the new legislation approximately 150 people practising as foresters and technologists in Saskatchewan will have the opportunity to become registered forestry professionals. Many of these are CIF members and strongly support the new legislation.

As well the new Act is supported by other forest stakeholder groups including the Council of Saskatchewan Forest Industries, the provincial forest policy advisory committee, the Saskatchewan Forestry Association, the Saskatchewan Trappers Association, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, the Saskatchewan nature and tourism association, Ducks Unlimited, Saskatchewan Outfitters Association, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Saskatchewan Research Council.

The legislation now before us will complement and is consistent with the suite of Saskatchewan legislation that currently governs professionals from other disciplines.

Mr. Speaker, I now move the second reading of The Forestry Professions Act, 2005.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Environment that Bill No. 22, The Forestry Professions Act be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into this particular debate. I'll admit I don't know a lot about the forest industry. But going back to the Throne Speech, the way the Premier talked about expanding the forest in this country, it could be in my backyard maybe in another 10 or 15 years, at this end.

Just looking it over, it seems to deal with a lot on regulations which sometimes is good and sometimes can hurt an industry as we all know. Sometimes some industries can be over regulated at that end of it, where the red tape becomes more of a hassle when they are doing stuff at that end of it. So that is a question here, is this being over-regulated? And that's why it's nice, like we'd said before, to send these Bills out to interested parties and to look them.

And also there's some other questions on it. Do other provinces have these same regulations? Are we in tune with the provinces that have big forestry industries, which is BC [British Columbia] and I think Quebec has a fair-sized forest industry. I'm not that sure on . . . but to see if this regulation is consistent with theirs. Or if they've implemented it, how is it working there? Is it working well there at that end of it?

Another one is the cost of . . . Any time you're implementing a

lot of regulations, there's always, there can be a huge cost of it. Are you going to have to hire more bureaucrats at that end to do the administration and run the regulations? Or can the officers of SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management] already presently take that over?

So those are questions that, you know, maybe will be asked in committee. And if I happen to be sitting there, I will be asking them. But if not, I imagine somebody else will . . . but on this particular Bill.

Because I think the idea of any legislation, or should be, of any legislation coming before this House and being brought forward in this government should be, one of the criteria should be, how will help it expand? How can we help business grow and flourish in this province? That should be one of the main criteria they look at when any legislation comes through at that end. Or will it hinder the industry in any way and have we consulted with the industry?

Any way that we can streamline these things . . . Because everybody has the same concerns whether if you're just a citizen or even the people in the forest industry. I mean they manage it very well. They're very good stewardship of the land. They know it's a resource that has to be looked after if they want to maintain their business at that.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will adjourn debate on this particular Bill for now.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Arm River that debate on second reading of Bill No. 22, The Forestry Professions Act be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Bill No. 8 — The Western Development Museum Amendment Act, 2005

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 8, The Western Development Museum Amendment Act, 2005.

This Act, Mr. Speaker, is designed to strengthen the Western Development Museum's board and reduce administrative load for the museum and government resulting from constant board renewal.

Mr. Speaker, let me elaborate on the proposed changes to the existing provisions. Currently each member of the board holds office for a term of one year and until his or her successor is appointed. A three-year term would allow for more rigorous governance and for the staggering of terms to ensure board continuity. To aid in the retention of strong board members, the current cap on board member appointment of four consecutive years is being removed.

Mr. Speaker, accordingly I move second reading of Bill No. 8, The Western Development Museum Amendment Act, 2005. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation that Bill No. 8, The Western Development Museum Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt . . . Is the Assembly ready for the question. No? I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to also enter on the debate on the second reading on this particular Bill, the Western Development Museum.

I think everybody knows that. I think just about everybody has toured it. I know as a kid, we went there with a school group, and I'm pretty sure that everybody, every school group has toured it at that particular time there.

It's a good, it's a good showpiece for Saskatchewan history. It did very, very well at that end of preserving Saskatchewan history and also showing the students and people what life was in rural Saskatchewan. I know they have the threshing bees there and different shows and that.

And at parades this year, Mr. Speaker, that they . . . I've seen that they have . . . and I can't remember the exact name of it. It's a musical . . . I call it a kaleidoscope. It's a steam driven one that they take out to many parades. In fact it's been to . . . I was in a parade in Bladworth not that long ago, and I've seen it, I know, up at other towns there. And people are very, very impressed with that and very impressed with the museum at that end of it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, dealing with this particular Bill, now I've talked enough I guess about the Western Development Museum because I do enjoy going there, and it is a very, very good museum.

The only concern and the only concern I will raise on it, I feel that this Bill deals with appointment of changing . . . the appointments on board members which is all right. There's nothing wrong as long as they, the appointments, don't become political.

I don't know if the government is making appointments. I hope that if they are . . . I'm not sure who will be doing the appointments, who the criteria goes to, Mr. Speaker. But I hope that when they're being selected, they're being selected on the basis of their knowledge and expertise, that their love for preserving the history of rural Saskatchewan, I hope that's why they're picked.

Because there are many, many people out there that have done a lot of volunteer work for the Western Development Museum and also museums throughout the country. Every town probably has a museum, even Bladworth. We have a little museum there that's looked after. And in my town, many of my towns in my constituency have small little museums that are very interesting to go through. So the only concern I have with this and I would like some more information to make sure that any of the appointees on this board are not political, Mr. Speaker.

So with that until I find some more information on it, I would like to adjourn debate on The Western Development Act.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Arm River-Watrous that debate on second reading of Bill No. 8 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Seeing the progress that we've made today and seeing the clock, I would now move that the House recess until 7 p.m.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader moved that the House do recess until 7 p.m. tonight. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This House stands recessed until 7 p.m. today.

[The Assembly recessed until 19:00.]

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Premier

Hon. Graham Addley
Minister of Healthy Living Services

Hon. Pat Atkinson
Minister of Crown Management Board
Minister Responsible for Public Service
Commission
Minister Responsible for Immigration

Hon. Joan Beatty
Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation
Provincial Secretary

Hon. Buckley Belanger
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