



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

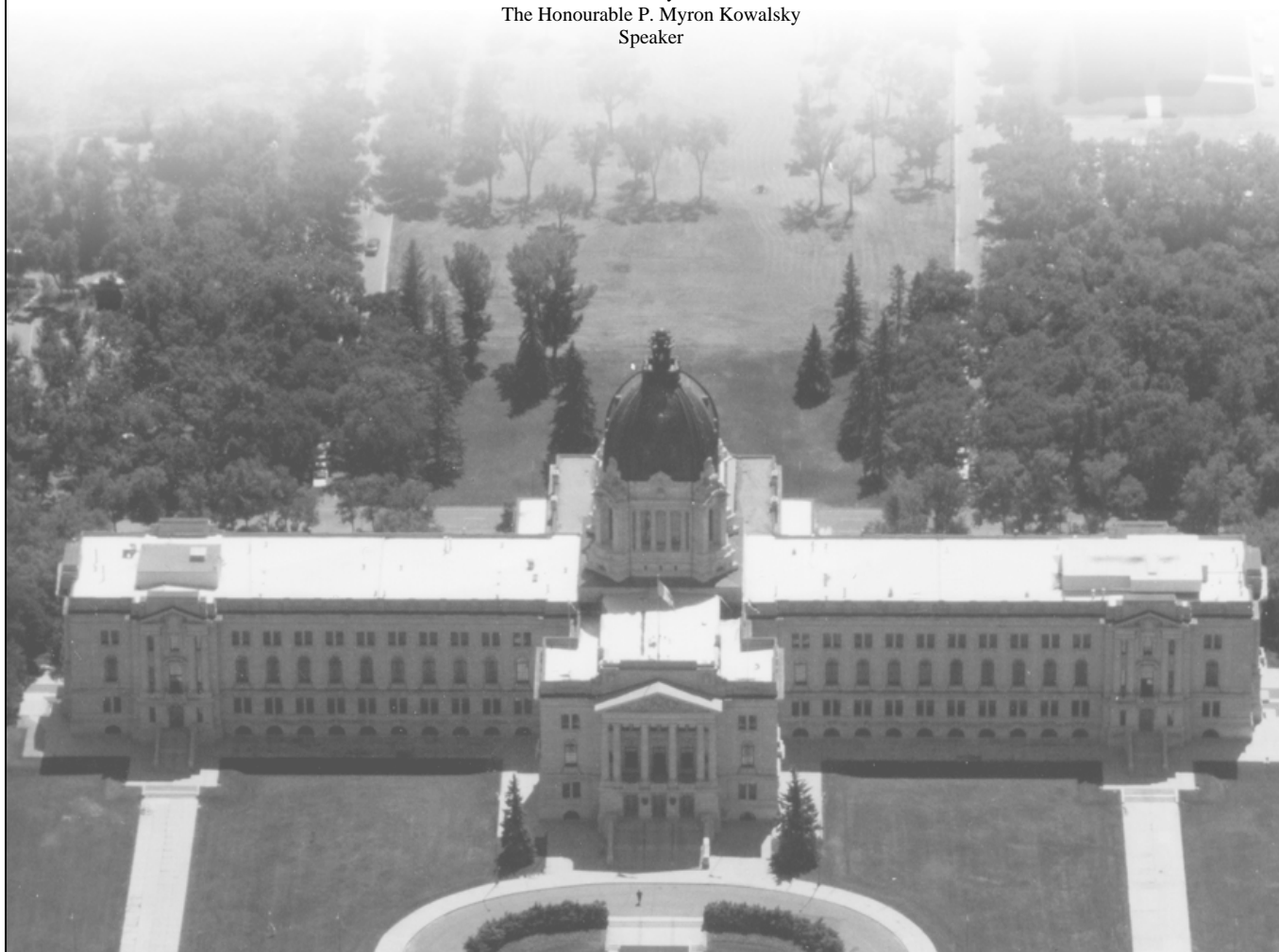
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

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

[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. For the second consecutive day, Mr. Speaker, I present a petition on behalf of individuals concerned about the availability of the cancer-causing drug Avastin. 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 fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this page of petitions is signed by individuals from the communities of Swift Current, Doddsland, Rosetown, Meadow Lake, Martensville, and Nokomis. I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition regarding the drug of Avastin 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 fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

Mr. Speaker, there are pages and pages of this petition. People from Saskatoon and many other locations have signed it. I so present.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions dealing with Avastin:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from Saskatoon and Borden, Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition to present, 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 fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from the communities of Langham and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of residents of this province with a similar prayer, with the exact same prayer actually. And it 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 fund the cancer drug Avastin.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today I represent are from the city of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of people who are concerned about the coverage of the drug Avastin:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to take the necessary action to fund the cancer drug Avastin.

The people who have signed this petition are from Saskatoon and Langham. I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to fund Avastin, signed by people from Saskatchewan who say that forcing patients to pay for this drug is an example of two tiered health care. The prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from Wiseton, Rose Valley, Saskatoon, and Dillon. And I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to do with the drug Avastin. The prayer reads:

Where your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon.

Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

The communities that called . . . the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Wadena, Saskatoon, and Luseland. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with cancer relief, and the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals all from the city of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens concerned with cancer care. 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 fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Regina and the great community of Strasbourg. I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have several pages of a petition of citizens who are concerned that forcing patients to pay for a certain cancer drug is an example of two-tier health care. 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 fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are all from the great city of Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with my colleagues to present a petition in regards to the funding of Avastin. 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 fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

Signatures on this petition this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, are from Saskatoon, LeRoy, and Humboldt. And I am pleased to present on their behalf.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of my constituents that are deeply concerned over the government's refusal to fund the cancer drug Avastin. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens of Estevan, Bienfait, and Macoun. I so present.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to present a petition from citizens that are concerned about the NDP [New Democratic Party] government's lack of funding for the cancer drug Avastin. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

Signed by the good citizens of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition from citizens who are very worried about a two tiered health care system in this province. 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 fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed in total by the good citizens of Wadena. I so present.

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in Assembly today to bring forth a petition. 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 fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures to this petition are from Saskatoon, Regina, and Maple Creek. I so present.

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also rise to read a petition. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

And as duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is signed by the good people of Wadena, Moose Jaw, and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'll join my colleagues too with a petition for the government to fully fund the drug Avastin:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from Davidson. I so present.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of citizens wanting to tailor a solution to two-tier health care. I'll read the prayer for relief:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

This petition is signed by Saskatchewan residents from Wadena. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned that the Department of Health officials are incorrectly reporting the drug Avastin as an experimental drug. 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 fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

And it's signed by good people from Saskatoon, Radisson, and Tisdale. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petition has been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) is hereby read and received: a new petition concerning funding for the cancer drug Avastin, sessional paper 639.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — The Chair of the Private Bills Committee is recognized.

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I present the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Private Bills which is as follows:

Your committee has duly examined the undermentioned petitions for private Bills and finds that the provisions for rule 75, 76, and 79 have been fully complied with:

Of the Faith Alive Ministries Outreach Centre Inc. in the province of Saskatchewan praying for an Act to confer religious and theological degrees at Faith Alive Bible College;

Of the Orange Benevolent Society of Saskatchewan in the province of Saskatchewan praying for an Act to broaden the society's powers to perform charitable acts and to increase its powers to distribute funds for charitable purposes;

Of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Inc. in the province of Saskatchewan praying for an Act to repeal The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Act, 1995.

I so present.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood:

That the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Private Bills be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Eastview, the Chair of the Private Bills Committee, seconded by the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood:

That the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Private Bills be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried, and pursuant to rule 82, the Private Bills 301, 302, and 303 are deemed to have been read the first time and are ordered for second reading on the next private members' day.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 34 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Culture, Youth, and Recreation: is the Government of Saskatchewan a party to any agreements to broadcast the Tommy Douglas movie on SCN or local community cable stations in the province? And if so, how much money has or will the Government of Saskatchewan pay or receive as part of these agreements?

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 34 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: did management of the department have established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risks or to help prevent or detect fraud in the year 2000-2001?

Mr. Speaker, I also have the same question for the fiscal years 2001-2002 and 2002-2003.

Mr. Speaker, I also give notice that I shall on day no. 34 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: how did management of the department monitor any established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risks or help prevent or detect fraud in the year 2000-2001?

And I also have the similar question for the fiscal year 2001-2002 and 2002-2003.

Mr. Speaker, I also give notice that I shall on day no. 34 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: does management of the department have any knowledge of any actual or suspected fraud or illegal activity within the department during the year 2000-2001? If so, what is that nature of this activity?

I also have similar questions for the fiscal year 2001-2002 and 2002-2003.

Mr. Speaker, I also give notice that I shall on day no. 34 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: what did management of the

department find as a result of its monitoring of any established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risk or detect fraud in the year 2000-2001?

[13:45]

And I have a similar question for the year 2001-2002 and the fiscal year 2002-2003.

And, Mr. Speaker, my final question. I give notice that I shall on day no. 34 ask the government the following questions:

To the Minister of Finance: is management of the department aware of any allegations of fraud or other illegal activity within the department or its agencies in the year 2000-2001 such as information received from employees, former employees, customers, clients, suppliers, or others. If so, what is the nature of this activity?

Mr. Speaker, I also have the same question for the fiscal years 2001-2002 and 2002-2003. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 34 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority: did management of the authority have established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risks or to help prevent or detect fraud in the year 2000?

I give notice that I shall on day no. 34 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority: how did management of the authority monitor any established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risks or to help prevent or detect fraud in the year 2000?

I give notice that I shall on day no. 34 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority: does management of the authority have any knowledge of any actual or suspected fraud or illegal activity within the authority during the year 2000? And if so, what was the nature of this activity?

I give notice that I shall on day no. 34 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority: what did management of the authority find as a result of its monitoring of any established programs and controls to mitigate fraud risk or detection fraud during the year 2000?

I give notice that I shall on day no. 34 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority: is management of the authority aware of any allegations of fraud or other illegal activity within the authority or its agency in the year 2000 such as information received from employees, former employees, customers, clients, suppliers, or others. And if so, what is the nature of this activity?

Mr. Speaker, I also have similar questions for the years 2001 and 2002. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

One-Year Anniversary of Swift Current's Southwest TV News

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday evening in Swift Current, community leaders from my hometown of Swift Current and indeed people from southwest Saskatchewan attended a very special celebration, marking the one-year anniversary of a new venture in Swift Current called Southwest TV News.com.

It's Swift Current's own locally owned television news channel. It's owned and operated by George Tsougrianis and Carol Andrews. George and Carol are a husband and wife team whose enterprise now provides the people of Swift Current and indeed southwest Saskatchewan with daily news coverage. It provides people with a community forum and an outlet to promote the achievements of the people and the organizations of southwest Saskatchewan.

Originally a news service operating solely on the Internet, Southwest TV News is now on Shaw Cable 10. It is growing significantly, Mr. Speaker. It now boasts as a partner SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network]. And SCN officials were down for the evening's event yesterday to confirm that SCN, now in partnership with Southwest TV News, will air the broadcast — the news programs of Southwest TV News — to the whole province. So you could see, Mr. Speaker, now Southwest TV News is not only providing, is not only providing this important service to Swift Current but through SCN to the entire province.

Mr. Speaker, George and Carol have stepped out in this entrepreneurial endeavour. They've taken a risk. And it is greatly appreciated by the people of Swift Current and indeed by the people of all of southwest Saskatchewan.

On behalf of the official opposition, I want to ask my colleagues to join me in extending congratulations to George and Carol and their entire team at Southwest TV News on their first anniversary. We look forward, we look forward to their efforts to tell Southwest's Saskatchewan story to ourselves in the southwest but more importantly to Saskatchewan and the rest of Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Outdoor Hockey League's First Annual Tournament

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Ehrlo Sport Ventures is a sport and recreation program designed to provide all youth and families with access to good quality recreational activities.

A prime example, Mr. Speaker, of Ehrlo Sport Ventures' good work is the Outdoor Hockey League which gives inner city kids a chance to play organized hockey by removing the barriers associated with the cost of equipment and hefty registration and ice-time fees.

This past weekend, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to attend the OHL's [Outdoor Hockey League] first annual Mayor's Cup-Dream Weekend Hockey Tournament held here in Regina — indoors for a change — at the Brandt Centre. Sixteen teams from the OHL, as well as teams from Carry the Kettle First Nation, took part in the two-day event.

It was an Olympic-style tourney with each team representing a different country. I must admit I had a certain bias in favour of my home rink team, The Grassick Slovaks. There was some great hockey played. There was a momentous parade of athletes, and all players received a medal following their final game because, Mr. Speaker, in the OHL everyone is a champion.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the players, officials, coaches, organizers, and sponsors of the OHL. And I especially want to acknowledge Regina's Mayor Pat Fiacco who followed through on a commitment to the athletes to host the tournament; Kris Johns, the terrific coordinator of Ehrlo Sport Ventures; and Ken Jones, Susan Lytle, and all the wonderful volunteers on the organizing committee who put a gold medal effort into the Mayor's Cup and the OHL. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Weyburn Hosts Saskatchewan Youth Parliament

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend the Weyburn Comprehensive School hosted the Saskatchewan Youth Parliament. About 30 young people between the ages of 15 to 21 years from all over our province spent the weekend debating issues from capital punishment to mandatory military service. A large room was transformed into a legislative chamber where members learned how to put together Bills and resolutions and hone their debating skills.

Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to act as the lieutenant governor delivering the throne speech on Saturday morning. My aide-de-camp was our very own legislative Page Nicolas Stulberg. Legislative Pages Patrick Button and Kyla Will also

participated. Mr. Speaker, upon election of the speaker, the speaker used more than the traditional resistance to taking her place. The premier, getting a little weary from the resistance, said, we don't really need a speaker this bad.

I'd like to congratulate everyone involved. Thank you to Myles Fish for making arrangements at the Weyburn Comprehensive School, and I would like to thank Brad Vermeersh for my invitation. It was wonderful to see so many young men and women involved. Apparently a few years ago, one of the items up for debate was if women should even be allowed to participate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Junior Achievement Awards Banquet Held in Regina

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday I had the privilege of attending to represent SaskEnergy at the Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame and Awards Banquet, held at the Conexus Arts Centre. As a graduate of the Junior Achievement program myself, I was especially pleased to attend.

Junior Achievement is a non-profit organization, Mr. Speaker, that educates young people in the areas of economics and entrepreneurship. Junior Achievement is all about inspiring and educating young Canadians, helping them to understand business and economics while developing entrepreneurial and leadership skills.

The business hall of fame and awards banquet is a celebration recognizing the Saskatchewan youth and schools in 22 categories that were winners of Junior Achievement Awards.

Mr. Speaker, SaskEnergy is a major sponsor of the awards, and I was proud to present the SaskEnergy Educator Award, awarded to the high school and representative that showed the greatest leadership in promoting and encouraging Junior Achievement programs. Mr. Speaker, this year the winner of the SaskEnergy Educator Award in Regina was Helen Sukovieff and Sheldon Williams Collegiate.

I would like to invite the Assembly to join me in congratulating the winners of every category for their wonderful accomplishments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Eastend Arts Council Hosts the Wallace Stegner House Dinner

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this month I had the privilege of attending the 19th annual Wallace Stegner House dinner. This annual fundraising event allows the Eastend Arts Council to maintain the childhood home of renowned author Wallace Stegner as an artist's residence. A record

attendance of over 200 people was treated to an evening of socializing, fine food, and first-class entertainment including Saskatchewan musician Connie Kaldor.

A special guest of honour, author Sharon Butala, regaled those in attendance with a reading from her latest book, *Lilac Moon*. She then followed with the well-established tradition of reading from a work by Wallace Stegner. And this year she presented excerpts from letters exchanged between Wallace Stegner and Corky Jones — a local businessman, historian, and amateur archaeologist — following Stegner's visit to Eastend in 1953 to do research for his book, *Wolf Willow*.

A special part of the event was the recognition afforded to Sharon Butala for her leadership and dedication to the Wallace Stegner House project. In earlier days, Sharon was one of the charter members involved in the formation of the Eastend Arts Council, and since then she has worked tirelessly with the council raising funds and refurbishing the beautiful home that now serves as an artist's residence.

To thank her for her dedication to the arts in Eastend and the hard work in developing the legacy of the Wallace Stegner House, Sharon was presented with a plaque and an honorary lifetime membership in the Eastend Arts Council.

Mr. Speaker, please join with me at this time to congratulate Sharon Butala and the Eastend Arts Council for the establishment of the Wallace Stegner House and the continued success of the annual Wallace Stegner House dinner.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Powwow Celebrates Traditions in Song and Dance

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to attend a powwow that took place in my constituency of Saskatoon Fairview. Dance Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre co-hosted the event. These two organizations have been collaborating for the past year to help ensure the traditions in First Nations song and dance continue on in young people from in and around Saskatoon.

The powwow was an opportunity to celebrate the elders' gathering that occurred between March 8 and 11 and had a particular focus on education. The dancers ranged in age from 3 to 73 and more than 600 people attended the event. Mr. Speaker, the powwow featured inter-tribal dances as well as traditional powwow dances and a variety of drum groups. The evening also featured presentations by the Saskatoon Pushpanjali India dance centre and the Yevshan Ukrainian Folk Ballet Ensemble. Both groups performed traditional works and shared the meaning of each dance.

Mr. Speaker, any of us who had the opportunity to attend the Saskatoon powwow will tell you First Nations culture is alive and well in Saskatchewan. And the event not only celebrated the culture of First Nations but also the multicultural spirit of this great province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I invite all

members to join me in congratulating Dance Saskatchewan as well as the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre and the city of Saskatoon on this very successful event. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Junior Achievement Awards Banquet Held in Saskatoon

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I note that the member from Regina Walsh Acres spoke about the Junior Achievement Hall of Fame Banquet in Regina. I had the privilege of attending the same banquet in Saskatoon on Friday, March 24. The banquet was an extraordinary success. Over 650 people were in attendance.

These awards recognize the hard work and professionalism of over 240 youth from grades 9 to 12. For 22 weeks they operate their own company. And I would like to acknowledge some of the individuals and their companies who were awarded and recognized for their accomplishments that night.

The Canjack Achiever of the Year was awarded to Nick Purich of the company the Front End, who is a grade 12 student at Walter Murray Collegiate. The Professional Leadership Award was presented to Seema Grover of the company Illuminision, who is in grade 12 at Walter Murray Collegiate as well. The Company of the Year Award was presented to the company AiLi, whose president, Michael Zhang, is in grade 11 at Walter Murray Collegiate. The President of the Year Award was given to Derek Guinan, in grade 12 at Holy Cross, whose exceptional leadership of the company Epsilon Omega won him this award. And last but certainly not least, Mr. Speaker, the Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Barry Grant.

I would like to ask all members of the Assembly to join me in congratulating these fine young men and women and also the businesses and sponsors that promoted this event and Les Morrison and Rod Antonichuck, the organizers of the event. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Plans for Population Growth

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question this afternoon is for the Premier. Statistics are out with respect to Saskatchewan's population. And in the last three months of 2005, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's population dropped, dropped by over 2,000 people. Two thousand people lost in one quarter while every other Western province, including Manitoba, has grown.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, not too long ago when faced with similar statistics

the then minister of Economic Development, current Highways minister had this to say. He said, we ought not to worry when people leave Saskatchewan because when they do, there is quote "more left for the rest of us." That's what came from the front benches of that government, Mr. Speaker.

The question to the Premier today is this: does he agree with that? We have lost 2,000 people. Does he believe there's now more left for the rest of us?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, what the Leader of the Opposition neglected to tell people is that in the last quarter, which he referred to according to Statistics Canada, 9 out of 10 provinces in Canada had net out-migration, Mr. Speaker, 9 out of 10. And he didn't mention, Mr. Speaker, that in the last quarter . . . He says Saskatchewan had a population loss. It's true, Mr. Speaker — 7 out of 13 provinces and territories had a population loss. The only province that had net in-migration was the province of Alberta.

So, Mr. Speaker, would we like to do better? Yes we would. But if the member opposite says that we're doing something terribly wrong in NDP Saskatchewan, he should remember we're in the company of his conservative cousins in BC [British Columbia] who call themselves Liberal, and his cousins the Liberals in Ontario as well. But where are we going? We're going to go higher, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — It's amazing, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Economic Development says, well don't worry about it because other provinces are having challenges right now. But other provinces, Mr. Speaker, are not this country's second largest producer of oil and other provinces aren't the third largest producer of natural gas. Other provinces don't have a third of the world's supply of uranium and a third of the world's supply of potash and all of the potential of our province — that is, I am of course describing Saskatchewan. And in those conditions, with booming prices in those commodities, this NDP government happens to be presiding over massive population losses, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Premier to stand up, the Premier to stand up today and answer the basic question in this Assembly because we don't believe they actually want to grow the province. We know that former Economic Development minister said, when people leave, there's more left for the rest of us. Does he believe that? Does he believe that we're all better off when we lose our most precious resource — the people of this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, when the Leader of the Opposition was talking about some of the good things going on in Saskatchewan, I think it's the first time I've ever heard him say anything good about this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — So that's an improvement. But I want to say this to the Leader of the Opposition. Do we have a plan to grow the population of this province and grow jobs? Yes we do, Mr. Speaker. It's called the personal income tax reform plan. It's called the oil and gas royalty reform. It's called the mining tax reform that has gone on. And I have every confidence that my colleague, the Minister of Finance, will present an optimistic, positive plan when he delivers the budget next week, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — And I want to say to the Leader of the Opposition, what will not grow Saskatchewan, unlike the plan set out by this government, is endless complaining and calling down our province. That will not grow Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, what will begin the growth in this province that is so long overdue is a change in the Government of Saskatchewan that is so long overdue.

That minister wants to talk about job creation. We've lost 4,400 jobs under his and the Premier's economic policies. With all of these fundamentals in our economy as positive as they are, they're managing to squander it. We've lost jobs, 4,400, and now in a matter of three months we've lost 2,000 people, Mr. Speaker. That's the plain reality of all of this that the minister seems unfamiliar with.

What does he have in mind? Does he have a goal for population growth? We know the Premier didn't a couple of weeks ago. Does he at least have a plan to grow the population of the province of Saskatchewan? And if not, will he explain to the people of the province what he's doing to earn his paycheque, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well you know, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition says maybe we're unfamiliar with what he's talking about. No, no, Mr. Speaker, because we've heard it all before. We heard it all before that all you needed was a change of government to do all these great things. We saw it in the government that the Leader of the Opposition was associated with in the 1980s and, Mr. Speaker, what we also saw then was the highest out-migration from Saskatchewan in the province's history.

And I say to the people of Saskatchewan, beware when you listen to the Leader of the Opposition because when he is asked what is his plan, what does he say, Mr. Speaker? He says, if I become Premier — heaven forbid — I will appoint a committee which will advise me what to do. That's quite a promise, Mr. Speaker. And his other comment when asked what he would do is, I would attract business because I'm a different brand. I don't think so, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, not only are Saskatchewan people being left behind right now by this NDP government. Grandparents and parents are saying goodbye to their kids and their grandkids.

The province itself, Saskatchewan, is being left behind. Every other province in the West is growing — every single province in the West is growing except ours. Manitoba managed to grow by 3,400 people in the last year and I noted that their NDP government didn't need a commission. They're going ahead and lowering those taxes on growth we talk about. BC grew by 54,000. Alberta grew by over 80,000.

What about NDP Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? What happened here? In that same time period we lost nearly 3,800 people. Isn't it time for the Premier to stand up now and answer some questions on this issue? How in the world could he be squandering all the potential and all the opportunity of this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we will see. We will see next week when the Minister of Finance stands up because, I say this, because the Minister of Finance issued this challenge last week. If the Minister of Finance presents a plan which the Leader of the Opposition says is needed in this province to create growth, jobs, and opportunity — very simple question, Mr. Speaker — if such a plan is presented, will the members opposite support such a plan? Yes or no, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Meadow Lake Pulp Mill

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what started as a \$159 million loan has ballooned into the biggest financial debacle in Saskatchewan history. With interest owing, cash flow loans, and other guaranteed advances over the years, total losses from an investment in the Meadow Lake pulp mill are now in excess of 800 million.

Mr. Speaker, will this government agree to a public inquiry into

the Meadow Lake pulp mill?

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, what would a public inquiry tell us? Would we want to have a public inquiry to tell us that the Meadow Lake pulp mill deal was a bad deal? We already know that, Mr. Speaker. It was a bad deal.

Would we want to have a public inquiry, Mr. Speaker, to tell us who made the deal, Mr. Speaker? We know who made the deal, Mr. Speaker. The Devine Conservatives supported by those people over there made that deal, Mr. Speaker.

Would we want to have a public inquiry to find out how much money went into the deal so far from the government? I'll tell you how much went in, Mr. Speaker. It's been audited. A total of \$340 million of which, Mr. Speaker, 246 million was spent by the previous government between 1988 and 1991; \$94 million in the last 14 years to preserve jobs in Meadow Lake in what has been an unfortunate deal, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a public inquiry could review the books.

The Speaker: — Order, order please. Order, order. Member for Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, a public inquiry could review the books to discover why the losses took place and how could they have been avoided. But just as important are the jobs of the local people working at the mill and connected to the mill. An inquiry could involve those local people in reviewing options available to save these jobs.

A public inquiry could involve First Nations. It would give us a chance to hear the voice of those who need to be heard.

Mr. Speaker, we need a public inquiry with a well-defined mandate and a clear timetable. Will an inquiry be held?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, we do not need a public inquiry to tell us that it was a bad deal. We do not need a public inquiry to tell us who made the deal. We do not need a public inquiry to tell us how much money was spent.

And if the members opposite think we need a public inquiry to tell us how to prevent such a deal from ever happening again, we don't need an inquiry into that, Mr. Speaker. The way to prevent that from ever happening again is never, ever elect those people to run the finances of this ... [inaudible] ... That's the way.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, when this government came to office it inherited a series of bad deals from the previous administration. That is a fact. We fixed the Lloydminster Upgrader, we fixed the NewGrade deal, and we tried to fix this one in good faith. But if that member thinks he's going to hang that deal on this government, Mr. Speaker, that member has another think coming.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, shutting down the mill immediately as some people have suggested would be heartless. It would throw hundreds of people out of work. Further public investment would be unwise. This government appears incapable of mustering any other coherent course of action. So why not hold a public inquiry, Mr. Speaker? The taxpayers have already lost 800 million.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I notice that the Leader of the Opposition, who was working for the minister of Economic Diversification when this deal was being made, does not get up and ask these questions.

The Speaker: — Order please. Order. Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — You know, Mr. Speaker, while we're on the subject of a public inquiry, since the Leader of the Opposition worked in the office of the minister of Economic Diversification, why doesn't he just tell us everything that happened, Mr. Speaker? You know, why spend millions of dollars and months on lawyers for a public inquiry when the Leader of the Opposition was right there at the time, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Funding for Avastin

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the NDP government reaffirmed its new-found commitment to two-tier health care by refusing to reverse its decision on covering Avastin.

Let's review. Right now in NDP Saskatchewan, you can only access this drug if you can pay for it. For those people suffering from this disease that cannot afford Avastin, they have to go without the drug, Mr. Speaker. So much for medicare. So much for the Tommy Douglas legacy.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why he's promoting two-tier health care in Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated yesterday, the decision taken by this government was a difficult one back at the beginning of March. It continues to be a difficult decision, Mr. Speaker. But we made the responsible decision to ensure that the sustainability of the system remains in place. But the cancer agency work would be available to people in Saskatchewan should they have the resources to access it.

Mr. Speaker, I indicated yesterday I was aware of the Throne Speech, Tommy Douglas's Throne Speech in 1961. I would like to quote, Mr. Speaker, from the Throne Speech in 1961 in which the premier at the time, Tommy Douglas, said, and I quote:

I believe . . . if this medical care insurance program is successful . . . it will prove the forerunner of a national plan . . . ultimately [to] cover all services — not just hospitals and . . . [medicare], but eventually dental . . . [and] drugs and other . . . services [Mr. Speaker].

[14:15]

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the minister to reverse his decision on two-tier health care. I also went on to say that there are alternative plans for Avastin and would he look into them. The minister's answer was that he'd bring it up with the provincial counterparts in the meeting this summer, sometime this summer.

Well the timetable of this minister may be well and good for him, but people suffering from this disease cannot wait on his timetable. They don't have the luxury of time.

Mr. Speaker, in the 2003 election platform, this government promised to have the best health care system in Canada. Mr. Speaker, why won't it act on those words? Why won't it keep its promise, reverse its decision, and cover Avastin for the people of Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite is aware, I've talked frequently in regards to this drug, about the need for the provinces to work together to review the access, the assessment, and the funding of new drugs coming on to the system. Mr. Speaker, Avastin is still not universally available in any province in this country.

And, Mr. Speaker, the provincial ministers of Health and the premiers have been talking about a national pharmaceutical plan

and a program to review new oncology drugs under the common drug review. Mr. Speaker, I support the enhancement of the common drug review to include IV [intravenous] administered drugs. And, Mr. Speaker, I will work with the other provincial Health ministers to ensure that we have the ability to build a national pharmaceutical plan that would address some of these issues.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I ask the members on the opposite side of the House to see if they know who made this quote. The minister just quoted. I have a quote as well and this is the quote:

. . . I came to believe that health services ought not to have a price tag on them, and that people should be able to get whatever health services they require irrespective of their individual capacity to pay.

Mr. Speaker, that was spoken by Tommy Douglas.

Mr. Speaker, this government has forgotten their roots with the decision of Avastin. Mr. Speaker, this government has money to put together a Tommy Douglas film, as distorted as that film was, but it did talk about the birth of medicare. Without the reversal of this decision, Mr. Speaker, there'll be a movie made of this Premier, this Premier, and it will be about the death of medicare.

Will the Premier stand up and ask his Health minister to reverse his decision? Because without the reversal of the decision, this Premier's legacy will be the destruction of medicare.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If there's one thing that's very clear coming through on this debate, it goes back to the member from Cannington's original statement that if Health Canada says it's okay, we should fund it.

Mr. Speaker, there are 400 new drugs in the system. If we were to fund absolutely every one of those drugs without assessing them on a sustainability basis, on a provincial level, Mr. Speaker, that would bankrupt the system. Mr. Speaker, that would deny people access to not only drugs but hospital care and doctor care, ophthalmic care in this province, Mr. Speaker.

This government is committed to sustainability of the system and providing care for the people of Saskatchewan, and we will do this in a provincial and national context, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of

Agriculture and Food to speak to a noticed question.

Crop Insurance Premiums

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I took under advisement a question regarding the registered letters that were sent out to those who are investing in crop insurance, Mr. Speaker. I followed up on that. Indeed there were 3,800 registered letters sent out. As of today, Mr. Speaker, there are over 1,000 of those people who received the letters who have now come forward and have either paid or made arrangements for their crop insurance coverage. It is our expectation that most of the rest will make those in the next day or two, Mr. Speaker.

For 45 years there has been a deadline on crop insurance, Mr. Speaker. For 45 years most of the people who want in to crop insurance know what the deadline is and make the arrangements on time, Mr. Speaker. And we anticipate that is exactly what will happen this year as well. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Support for Agriculture

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that minister's not getting off that easy. This is without a doubt the worst crisis in the history of the province of Saskatchewan for farm families, and that minister doesn't have a clue. He said yesterday — and got sarcastic saying it — it's really the farmers' fault. It's up to them — make arrangements, go to your bank, tell the banker to stroke you a cheque and you'll go pay your crop insurance premium. Well it doesn't work that way. Many cases out there the only way a farmer can get money is if he went and held it up, Mr. Speaker.

Will that minister admit today there is a crisis in agriculture and explain to farmers out there what he plans to do to help them instead of adding to the stress levels like he did yesterday?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we recognize clearly that this is one of the most difficult times that farmers have faced. Mr. Speaker, we have come to the table with over \$700 million last year, 1.32 in the last couple of years, billion in the last couple. Mr. Speaker, where are the federal Conservatives, their cousins, who said they were going to provide support? They were going to do it quickly. These people were all behind them, Mr. Speaker.

What did Chuck Strahl, what did Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture for the federal government, say to the farmers when they were telling them how bad it was? What did he say? He said buck up, buck up farmers; forget it.

That's not what it's about. It's about the government being

responsible like other federal governments in this world, coming to bat for the farmers in this province and every province across the country. They are suffering, Mr. Speaker, and we need our federal government to be there for them like other federal governments in this world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear Chuck Strahl make that comment but I'm hearing that minister telling our farmers, get lost, because there's no help in that NDP government and on that side of the House. And the minister himself said today, and repeated it, 3,800 farmers received registered letters. And if it all costs the same — about \$7 — he spent \$26,000, in excess of that, telling farmers we're going to help put the last nail in your coffin.

Well, Mr. Speaker, precedent has been set before. They've had extension deadlines in crop insurance, 1996, 1999. It's happened before. It wouldn't cost this government or Crop Insurance one cent to give them a two- or three-month extension to try and get the money together to make their crop insurance payment.

And if they don't have crop insurance, which that minister said you're not going to have by Friday if you don't pay up, they also don't get a spring cash advance. It's tied to being in crop insurance. Of course that minister wouldn't understand that because this is involving agriculture and that minister does not have a clue about agriculture. It's showing more and more.

Will the minister do the honourable thing and resign and maybe somebody else over there could take the portfolio?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have seen again a fine example of how incredible that Saskatchewan Party is, Mr. Speaker, completely incredible.

The Speaker: — Order please. Order. Order. The Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we very clearly have said that we are there and we have shown that we are there for farmers in this province, Mr. Speaker. We have been there far more than any other province, Mr. Speaker, far more on a per capita base. In real dollars we have been there — \$700 million this past year, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, every farmer who is into crop insurance knows the value of that. They know that there is a deadline. I got a call today from a farmer, Mr. Speaker, another farmer who says 100 per cent support for the position of this government. This is responsible government, he said, that will stand firm and it's only fair, Mr. Speaker, only fair to those other farmers who

conscientiously meet their deadlines and make sure that the program is in place for themselves and others. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister . . . Order please. Order please. Order. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Advancing the Biodiesel Industry in Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to say I'm very pleased to rise before this House this afternoon to share with you, Mr. Speaker, and with all members of the Assembly the efforts and the progress that we are making in advancing the biodiesel industry in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

We are looking forward, Mr. Speaker, we do . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Order. I will have to ask for order so the ministerial statement can be heard. Order. Once again the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do see a positive future for agriculture. And, Mr. Speaker, one of the areas that we see positive future is in the area of biodiesel.

In June 2005, this government partnered with industry to launch a new biodiesel development task force. The task force presented me with an interim report and the draft recommendations in January 2006. Some of the key issues they identified include the need for a consistent national policy for mandating a blended product, a common . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please. I would ask a few members, including the member from Prince Albert Northcote, to take a deep breath. And I'd like to hear the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some of the key issues that the biodiesel task force identified include the need for a consistent national policy for mandating a blended product, a common set of quality standards, and the need to consider development incentives to encourage rural participation in new facilities. The task force is finalizing its report and we expect to have it very soon, Mr. Speaker.

In the meantime, I'm very pleased to report that the province has taken their initial ideas and carried them forward to the federal government. Renewable fuels including biodiesel represent a huge opportunity for farmers here in our province. With 42 per cent of Canada's farm land and 46 per cent of Canada's cropland, we have the potential to become a major player in the collection and processing of biomass into biofuels and related industrial products. This will create new markets for our agricultural and agroforest products and new value-added opportunities and economic activity in rural areas.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you and the members of this House,

that on March 9 when I met with federal Agriculture and Agri-Food minister, Chuck Strahl, here in Regina, I urged him to act on our request for a national renewable fuels mandate — one that his party campaigned on during the last federal election. Minister Strahl was very much aware that Saskatchewan was the first province in Canada to mandate the use of ethanol in gasoline under our greenprint strategy. On March 23 the Deputy Premier and I once again met with Minister Strahl and again urged him to energize his cabinet colleagues in moving this file forward in a timely way.

The Speaker: — Order please. Order. Once again I see several members very eager to get into the debate, but unfortunately we can only handle one at a time. Order please. Once again the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

[14:30]

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 23 the Deputy Premier and I once again met with Minister Strahl and again urged him to energize his cabinet colleagues in moving this file forward in a timely manner. Renewable fuel production is well under way in many countries.

The US [United States] is now producing 10 times more ethanol than it did in 1980 and is now using 14 per cent of its corn to make ethanol. With new policies being implemented in the US for biofuels, it is expected that in the near future 25 per cent of the US corn crop will be consumed in ethanol production. Similar events are taking place in Europe and Brazil.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan will not be left behind. The province is working to bring this opportunity to fruition by lobbying the federal government, by supporting the biodiesel development task force, and by funding the Saskatchewan Research Council for quality testing equipment.

Mr. Speaker, the province is also supporting a number of specific research projects and activities including: \$165,000 per year for a five-year agreement with the University of Saskatchewan for a Chair on lipid quality and utilization; 278,000 for a project entitled industrial products for vegetable oils in support of the recently established Chair; \$10,000 for a study on biodiesel combustion emissions; 20,000 for a study on recovery of glycerol, a by-product of biodiesel production; 15,000 for a biodiesel co-product market study; 10,000 for a bio oil symposium; and funding to support a biodiesel demonstration project involving city buses in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, there are many reasons for the province to pursue the development of a bioenergy industry here in Saskatchewan. Bioenergy is good for the environment. It will promote economic diversification, and it will create jobs in rural Saskatchewan. It will take us beyond primary production to value-added economic development.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to investing in our agriculture industry and to supporting our producers. We see the tremendous potential that bioenergy holds for the province, and we are anxious to realize the benefits to our economy and our environment. We have the drive and the enthusiasm to become leaders in the bio economy, and we are taking action to move this promising sector forward. Thank you very much, 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 appreciate having the opportunity to respond to the minister's statement.

And, Mr. Speaker, we also realize the enormous potential that exists in the province of Saskatchewan for a biodiesel industry. In fact we also had the opportunity — the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Swift Current, and myself — to meet with the federal minister when he was here for SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention and talk exactly about things like biodiesel and ethanol and projects such as that, that we're going to need to help save agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan.

But, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot more to this. There's a thing called investment dollars and there's a thing called trust. And the problem right now is, with this government, there is no trust anywhere out in the financial world to put money into Saskatchewan and trust that government not to change the rules, change the regulations, and tax them to death. And that's why there's no investment money coming to this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately we often see this government sitting idly by while farmers in our province are being left behind.

And, Mr. Speaker, we saw announcements by this government before. It was not long ago — a year or two ago — that we saw the Premier himself announce the Broe deal for the ethanol project. In fact if I remember right . . . And I'm quite sure if you went out and looked by Belle Plaine, Mr. Speaker, you'd probably see the shovel still stuck in the ground. It seems to me there was a backhoe there, but probably the guy that owned it has gone to Alberta to get a job and actually be able to make a profit and get ahead and grow his family in Alberta where . . . something that doesn't seem to be able to be happening right here. And, Mr. Speaker, we know what happened with the Broe deal and actually it probably set the ethanol industry back in this province by many, many years.

We saw the SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] venture that this government announced many years ago, got in, and then neglected to tell the public about how many millions of dollars they'd actually blown of taxpayers' money in a venture they should have never got into in the first place.

We also remember the Channel Lake deal where this government got involved in business, had no clue what they were doing, and lost millions and millions of dollars of taxpayers' money.

And then today again, Mr. Speaker, we see the job numbers. We see population drop in the province of Saskatchewan — exactly why we need a bio industry, an ethanol industry. We need many of those projects to go in Saskatchewan.

But talk is cheap. We've seen this government when they have no resolve and they have no answers to what is going on in the province, they create a study or they're going to check it out for a number of years. And when we announce these things, nothing ever seems to really come of it, Mr. Speaker. And I hope that isn't what's happening this time — that all we're doing is talking about it and until the next election's past nothing ever, ever happens.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm supportive of what the minister's saying here. I just hope this project has some credibility, not like many of the projects they've announced in the past and absolutely nothing has turned out good for the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I am tabling response to written question no. 596.

The Speaker: — The response to 596 has been tabled.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Meadow Lake, the Minister for First Nations and Métis Relations.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin I'd ask leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member for Meadow Lake has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The member may proceed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to my colleagues as well who have granted leave.

Seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, are several chiefs who are here to hear some of the remarks as it relates to the motion I'm about to make. I'd like to introduce first of all Tribal Chief Helen Ben from the Meadow Lake Tribal Council. I would just say for those who don't already know, Chief Ben is the first female tribal chief in our province's history, so please join me welcoming Tribal Chief Ben. Give a little wave.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — I'd also like to introduce from the Flying Dust First Nations, and a former tribal chief leader actually, is Chief Percy Derocher. So Chief Percy.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Seated between the two of them and from the Waterhen Lake First Nation is Chief Sid Fiddler.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — And from the English River First Nation, and behind them, is Chief Archie Campbell.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Kelowna Accord

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If I could, then I will go straight into the motion. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to be able to stand in my place today to talk about the Kelowna accord. And at the end of my remarks I will move the following motion:

That this Assembly recognize the progress and goodwill that resulted from the action plan to improve the socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal people which was advanced and achieved at the first ministers' meeting in Kelowna; and,

that this Assembly recognize the leadership role Saskatchewan has undertaken to close the gap in quality of life between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people; and further

that this Assembly urge the federal government to share a greater percentage of the costs associated with the investments required to improve the social and economic conditions as well as support structures to Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan; and that it begin to work on achieving the targets identified at the first ministers' meeting in Kelowna by developing new policy and program arrangements.

Last November, Mr. Speaker, in Kelowna, British Columbia, a meeting of immense significance to Saskatchewan took place. It was a first ministers' meeting on Aboriginal issues with the leaders of national Aboriginal organizations.

Mr. Speaker, this meeting placed a national focus on working more effectively to improve the quality of life of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people right across our country. It was a historic meeting. It opened a new era of co-operation with the federal government, with the provinces, and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people in policy development and of course in service delivery.

It demonstrated that Aboriginal people must be at the table when important decisions that affect their lives are being made. In the end, it resulted in agreement between first ministers and Aboriginal leaders on a course of action to improve the socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal people.

I cannot emphasize enough, Mr. Speaker, how important this agreement is. In Saskatchewan, as you know, we have a large

and growing First Nations and Métis population. We are working hard together to ensure that First Nations and Métis people are able to participate fully in the economic and social prosperity of this province, Saskatchewan.

However we also know we all need to work harder and that more needs to be done. Let me just touch on a few of the reasons why. In terms of jobs, an increasing number of Aboriginal people are taking part in the Saskatchewan labour force, but there is still a significant gap. In 2001 the unemployment rate for Aboriginal people was five times — five times — higher than for non-Aboriginal people. The average annual employment income of First Nations people on-reserve is just about half that of other Saskatchewan residents.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, 48 per cent of Aboriginal people have less than high school education compared to 31 per cent of non-Aboriginal people. More than 70 per cent of the people in Saskatchewan jails are unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, Aboriginal.

The point is that Aboriginal people and communities rank significantly behind non-Aboriginal people and communities in every socio-economic indicator. With the growing Aboriginal population, these bleak statistics will continue if changes aren't made now and if we don't all work to make sure that this happens.

The challenges facing First Nations and Métis people are not peculiar to Saskatchewan. They are right across the country, and that's why this national meeting was so very, very important. This is what the Kelowna meeting was all about and this is why it is so important.

The former prime minister was there, the leaders of all the provinces and territories were there, and the leaders of the five national Aboriginal organizations were of course also there. They were working towards the same goal and that goal was to develop a plan to help close the socio-economic gap that exists between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people right across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan this government works closely with First Nations and Métis people. We respect their constitutional relationship with the federal Crown and the Aboriginal and treaty rights that exist. The treaties signed more than 100 years ago created a code of friendship that continues today even as we work together to address unfinished business.

At the meeting our Premier said, and I quote:

The future of Saskatchewan, as the future of Canada, is much linked today to a large and a growing Aboriginal population. We in Saskatchewan see the relationship, first and foremost, being founded on a historic treaty relationship; a constitutional relationship. In our view, the treaties are vital, living, and sacred undertakings that are the foundation of the definition of our relationship.

The cornerstones of our relationship with First Nations and Métis people are mutual co-operation and mutual respect.

We also recognize that, as in any relationship, things do not always run smoothly. We sometimes do have disagreements.

However with a strong foundation we attempt to work through those disagreements. One thing we do know is that we cannot take our relationship for granted and that we must continually direct efforts towards building and strengthening it. We are committed to strengthening that relationship, Mr. Speaker.

One example of that commitment is taking place in these legislative chambers tomorrow, March 29, Mr. Speaker, where a special ceremony will be held that recognizes the fundamental contributions of First Nations to the creation of this province and honours the special treaty relationship between First Nations and the Crown. And I hope that everyone here will be in attendance to witness that historic event, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, while we all have more to do in resolving the issues facing Aboriginal people, no one person or one government can do it alone. We all have to work together. Here in Saskatchewan we have taken a leadership role in trying to close the gaps in the quality of life between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in areas such as housing, education, and economic development.

We want to urge Ottawa to fulfill the commitment it made at the first ministers' meeting in November to work with the Government of Saskatchewan and the First Nations and Métis people of Saskatchewan, to achieve the goals and targets identified at that meeting. The federal government announced an ambitious plan to improve the lives of Aboriginal people. There were a number of financial commitments in key areas that were made: \$1.8 billion for education — 1.05 billion of that would be used to promote education innovation on-reserve; 500 million would go to post-secondary education including bursaries, scholarships, and apprenticeships; and 100 million to fund existing initiatives for urban Métis and northern Aboriginal children. \$1.6 billion for housing and infrastructure which included 600 million to support market-based approaches and the transformation of social housing on-reserve and 300 million of that for northern housing partnerships.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that there was 200 million for economic opportunities — 188 million of that 200 would go toward economic development framework initiatives and 12 million toward accelerating the regulatory regime under the First Nations Commercial and Industrial Development Act for commercial and industrial activities. And 1.3 billion for health — 870 million of that would go to stabilize the First Nations and Inuit health system and 445 million to promote transformation and to build to capacity.

Add it all up and the federal government promised a total of about 5 billion over five years, all aimed at improving the social and economic conditions for Aboriginal people.

It's interesting to note that the Kelowna meeting came just a day after the federal government made another significant promise. It announced a compensation package for victims of abuse in the residential school system. Aboriginal people who suffered in those schools are looking forward to the implementation of that promise, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the commitments made by the federal government

at the Kelowna first ministers' meeting marked a significant step forward in terms of its usual approach and established policies. We welcome that step forward, as did First Nations, Métis, and Inuit leaders at the conference.

Saskatchewan supports this ambitious plan, and we are eager to begin working with Ottawa and First Nations and Métis people on these initiatives. Saskatchewan is well positioned to begin working collaboratively with federal agencies and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the provincial Métis agencies to meet new policy directions and take a leadership role on initiatives that will provide increased investment towards better outcomes for First Nations and Métis people.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan, through our Premier, took a leadership role at Kelowna first ministers' meeting. One thing he did at that meeting, Mr. Speaker, was to offer to host a national economic summit with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people, governments, the private sector, labour, and other relevant partners. Planning for that symposium is currently under way. We believe this event could help to jump-start new and innovative economic solutions to the many, many challenges that we face.

Mr. Speaker, the communiqué at the end of the first ministers' meeting outlines opportunities for the provincial government to work collaboratively with the federal government and the First Nations and Métis people. We can do this through the sharing of information, the building of capacity, providing expertise, joint planning, and many other areas. This kind of co-operation would improve how the two orders of government and First Nations and Métis service providers deliver services to Aboriginal people. Saskatchewan's objective, Mr. Speaker, is the development of new policy and program arrangements that will result in Ottawa sharing a greater percentage of the costs associated with investments required to improve the social and economic conditions of Aboriginal people in the province.

As you all know, since the November Kelowna first ministers' meeting, we have obviously had a change in federal government. The prime minister who made the promises is no longer there and a new one is in place. And that brings us in part to today's motion. We need the federal government to uphold the commitments made in Kelowna, Mr. Speaker. Because the new federal government has indicated it supports the objectives, the targets, and principles agreed to in Kelowna, we invite it as well to honour the federal financial commitment of \$5.1 billion over five years, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — First ministers and national Aboriginal leaders agreed that the commitments outlined in the main document of the first ministers' meeting must be implemented. And they agreed that this must be done by working together at a provincial level with implementation focused on practical approaches. We therefore urge the federal government to fulfill the promises and commitments that it made.

The results of the first ministers' meeting marked a new beginning for Ottawa, the provinces, and the Aboriginal people of Canada. Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan is

eager to begin working with the new federal government to close the gap in the quality of life between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people. We are committed to working to achieve the targets identified by the federal government at the Kelowna first ministers' meeting.

Mr. Speaker, when I talk about working together, I don't just mean the federal government and the provinces. I mean the federal government, the provinces, in co-operation with national and provincial Aboriginal organizations. Ottawa's commitment to invest \$170 million in Aboriginal organizations that provide services will go a long way to building the capacity to ensure that co-operation; 90 million of the 170 million was committed to provincial, national, and regional Aboriginal organizations to enhance their own capacity to work with governments in policy development and in other initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, the Kelowna meeting represented an unprecedented level of consultation and co-operation between governments and Aboriginal organizations. A lot of good work went into planning it. A lot of good work came out of it. I believe it's imperative that we continue to build on this good work and that the federal government honour commitments made.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Ottawa to live up to its promises to not lose the precious momentum and goodwill that was developed through a lot of hard work by a lot of people. And it's not just Saskatchewan and other provinces that want Ottawa to live up to these commitments. So do the Aboriginal leaders who were also at the Kelowna table.

And, Mr. Speaker, I note and I would like to quote from in fact the *Leader-Post* of today, March 28 of this year, from Grand Chief Bird. He says that, if account . . . This isn't a quote but a lead-in to the story. It says:

If accountability is a top priority, the federal government should honour the former Liberal government's \$5-billion Kelowna agreement on native poverty, says Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations . . . Chief Alphonse Bird.

And he goes on, and this is a quote. It says:

If we three (governments) can agree to improve and close the gap on poverty by putting all our minds together that is where the real solution is.

And I couldn't agree with him more, Mr. Speaker. And that's what really what this motion is all about.

So expectations were raised and Aboriginal leaders expect them to be met as is evidenced by that quote, Mr. Speaker. So I would like to conclude, Mr. Speaker, with the following motion, seconded by the hon. member from Cumberland. And the motion again is as follows:

That this Assembly recognize the progress and goodwill that resulted from the action plan to improve the socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal people which was raised and achieved at the first ministers' meeting in Kelowna; and

that this Assembly recognize the leadership role Saskatchewan has undertaken to close the gap in the quality of life between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people; and further

that this Assembly urge the federal government to share a greater percentage of the costs associated with the investments required to improve the social and economic conditions as well as support structures to Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan; and that it begin to work on achieving the targets identified at the first ministers' meeting in Kelowna by developing new policy and program arrangements.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I urge all my colleagues to support this motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for First Nations and Métis Relations, seconded by the Minister for Northern Affairs:

That this Assembly recognize the progress and goodwill that resulted from the action plan to improve the socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal people, which was advanced and achieved at the first ministers' meeting in Kelowna; and,

that this Assembly recognize the leadership role Saskatchewan has undertaken to close the gap in quality of life between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people; and further,

that this Assembly urge the federal government to share a greater percentage of the costs associated with the investments required to improve the social and economic conditions, as well as support structures to Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan; and that it begin to work on achieving the targets identified at the first ministers' meeting in Kelowna by developing new policy and program arrangements.

The Chair recognizes the Minister for Northern Affairs.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak in favour of this very important motion. As mentioned by my colleague, a first ministers' meeting on Aboriginal issues with the leaders of Canada's First Nations, Métis, and Inuit organizations took place last November in Kelowna, British Columbia. The result of the meeting was an historic agreement between First Nations and Aboriginal leaders on a course of action to improve the lives of Aboriginal people in Canada.

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

Mr. Speaker, this agreement known as the Kelowna accord was a very significant achievement and is important to all Canadians. A tremendous amount of hard work was done by many people, especially by the Aboriginal leadership. A lot of goodwill went into the first ministers' meeting, and we should

be building on this as we attempt to move forward in making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal people.

At that first ministers' meeting, the federal government committed approximately \$5 billion over five years. We must urge the federal government to honour the commitment that was made in Kelowna.

It is no secret that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people face horrible social, economic conditions today on- and off-reserve. The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to begin working with a new federal government and the Aboriginal leadership to close the gap in the quality of life between Aboriginal people and the rest of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan took a leadership role at the first ministers' meeting in offering to host a national economic summit with Aboriginal people, governments, the private sector, labour, and other partners. At the first ministers' meeting, it was agreed to take immediate action to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal people in four key areas: number one, health; number two, education; number three, housing; and four, relationships.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has a huge First Nations and Métis population. It is also a population that is growing faster than the non-Aboriginal community. And there is no question we have many challenges, but we also have much potential.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk a bit about some of the challenges that First Nations and Métis people of Saskatchewan face every day. According to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the life expectancy gap between First Nations and other Canadians is seven years. The suicide rate for First Nations youth ages 15 to 24 are eight times the national rate for females and five times higher for males. First Nations have a 6.6 times greater incidence of tuberculosis. They are three times as likely to be diabetic, and two times as likely to report a long-term disability. The state of water and sewer facilities on First Nations communities is forefront in the news these days.

In regards to education, more than half of First Nations people have less than a high-school certificate. Approximately 23 per cent of First Nations people have achieved a post-secondary education as compared to 39 per cent of the rest of Canadians.

The statistics dealing with housing are no better. According to the latest census, 125 of houses in First Nations communities are considered overcrowded as compared to 1 per cent for the rest of Canada.

[15:00]

In northern Saskatchewan where the vast majority of the population is First Nations and Métis, there is an exploding youth population. Forty-five per cent of the northern population is under the age of 20, compared to 28 per cent for the rest of the province. Only 19 per cent of the northern population is over the age of 44, compared to 36 per cent for the rest of the province.

We have unique challenges in northern Saskatchewan in terms of infrastructure. Many northern communities are isolated and

access to educational, training, and employment opportunities are very limited. This government is attempting to do its share in improving the infrastructure as it announced a \$65 million contribution late last year. But we need help from the federal government in the many issues facing the Aboriginal people, whether you're in the North, South, on- or off-reserve.

Mr. Speaker, I have listed some startling statistics which demonstrate the urgency of acting on the commitments made at the First Nations meeting. Just as important as the statistics is the capacity and ability to understand and comprehend the reasons why Aboriginal people are in trouble today. The First Nations, Métis, and Inuit find themselves in these conditions because of the often misguided displacement of assimilated policies of past governments including the failure to honour treaty commitments.

Everyone has heard of the legacy of Indian residential schools and their devastating effects on Aboriginal people. The forced removal of children from their homes led to the devastation of generations of Aboriginal people. Many suffered loss of their languages which resulted in a loss of cultural identity. The lasting effects of displacement, assimilation, and residential schools has led to a breakdown of relationships within the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities themselves. They have also led to the breakdown of relationships between Aboriginal people and other Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to mend these relationships whether they be political, legal, constitutional, social, or other. But the will must be there from all governments. The commitments made at the First Nations-first ministers meeting in Kelowna, if fulfilled, will further the healing of these relationships and help immensely in dealing with the many issues facing Aboriginal people.

In addition to the funding commitments, there was a 10-year commitment to closing the economic gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Saskatchewan believes in the principle of working in partnership with Aboriginal people to ensure that their interests are respected and addressed.

The commitment of strengthening relationships and closing the economic gap is supported by the First Nations leadership in Saskatchewan. Chief Alphonse Bird of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, in speaking about the accord is quoted in today's *Leader-Post* as saying:

"If we three [meaning] (governments) can agree to improve and close the gap on poverty by putting all our minds together that is where the real solution is."

I ask all members to support the motion urging the federal government to fulfill the commitment made for the first ministers' meeting. Let us demonstrate to the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people that we are committed to strengthening relationships and to closing the gap between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to end with a quote from Francis Frank, a First Nations elder from British Columbia. He states:

By tackling the issue of dependency, by creating more

independent people and communities, we will change the manner in which our communities function so that we will be contributing to the wealth not just of our communities, but of this country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena, the critic for First Nations and Métis Relations.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin my remarks, I ask leave of the Assembly to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member is requesting leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the member.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to my colleagues. I too would like to welcome the First Nations chiefs: Tribal Chief Helen Ben, Flying Dust Chief Percy Derocher, Waterhen Chief Sid Fiddler, and English River Chief Archie Campbell to their Assembly today. It's very important that you're here today to understand that the issues that are dealing with First Nations are something that affect everybody in this Assembly and that we are working towards a better life for everyone in our province. So thank you very much for attending.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Kelowna Accord (continued)

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be part of the debate today, the historical agreement that was discussed in Kelowna last fall. The Sask Party, the official opposition, supports the principles of the Kelowna accord. The question that we have and that many people in Saskatchewan have is why did it take 100 years before we have been addressing the issue that's affecting so many people in our province?

There's too many people in this province that don't understand the treaties — the sacred agreement that was made — and understand how it affects everybody in this province not just the First Nations people. I think many non-First Nations people would be surprised if they understood that the reason they have a right to own their house, to own a business, and to make plans and dreams for the future is because of the treaty agreements.

But you know too many of our First Nations have never thought about rights and they have never thought about the agreements, what they are allowed under the treaties, because too many

spend much of their days thinking about just plain existence. They think about food and housing and medical needs; some of the things that many of us take for granted.

The Saskatchewan Party believes fundamentally that the province will never succeed, will never reach its potential without the support, without the co-operation, and without the input of our First Nations people; side by side, equals in a consensus-building relationship.

Mr. Speaker, when the Saskatchewan Party reviewed their policies last year, we had an opportunity to lay the foundation for what we believed would be a beginning relationship with anybody when we are talking about building together. And we didn't decide, talk about how the fine details of every agreement was to be worded, because if you're going to build a partnership where everybody is at the table, you can't talk about what all the end products are. You have to talk about the foundation.

The foundations that we agreed on were working proactively with Saskatchewan's First Nations to encourage the federal government to fulfill its responsibilities to First Nations people living both on and off the reserve. We passed the resolution that a framework for relations between a Saskatchewan Party government and First Nations and Métis people will be based on respect and inclusion. We talked about the partnership with First Nations and Métis people to implement existing agreements and develop new agreements to build our province.

Our leader has spoken many times in the last year and a half about the enterprise, our enterprise agreement and that the First Nations people will have a membership on that board at all times, not something that will be taken away at any time. But when it came to making agreements on building the economy, their voice would be at the table at all times.

We also passed a resolution that talked about consulting with First Nations and Métis people in development and prior to implementation of provincial legislation that impacts on jurisdiction of Saskatchewan First Nations.

And I know that the members across know that one of the issues that wasn't consulted on was the issue that came to the forefront last year when we talked about the smoking ban. The First Nations people weren't consulted. And the opportunity that we had to build a relationship that would be healthy for First Nations and non-First Nations was lost. And I think it's the type of thing that shows that there has to be more than just words; there has to be actions when people make agreements.

A year ago in November, the Supreme Court talked about the duty to consult. And that issue is something that we look at very intensely when we think about developing the province and the opportunities there's going to be in Saskatchewan over the next few years and the importance that First Nations voice is going to have.

The Saskatchewan Party's government would work in partnership with First Nations and Métis people and the federal government to improve the health and well-being of First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan and that we would work in partnerships with First Nations and Métis people and

the federal government to identify and remove barriers that impede the participation of First Nations and Métis people in the economy.

One example I have of that, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the other day somebody told me at the Public Service Commission right here in Saskatchewan, there is nobody at the front desk to talk to First Nations people about some of the things . . . questions they may have when it comes to trying to get a job with this government. There is nobody there to answer the direct question that will help people who maybe don't understand the process that we have in government. And it's the type of thing that has to be addressed if we're going to ensure that everybody has an opportunity to work in every area of this province.

This is a Saskatchewan Party policy, and they are the points that are covered in the Kelowna accord, and that's why we support the principles of the Kelowna accord.

We know that some of the issues that are covered in the Kelowna accord deal with things like the education issue. It's a very troublesome trend in the province when we have an education gap between First Nations and Métis people and non-First Nations people in the province.

According to the 2001 consensus, 39 per cent of Aboriginal males and 35 per cent of Aboriginal females of the age 15 to 34 did not complete their elementary or high school education. According to the 1996 census, 14 per cent of Aboriginal people age 15 to 24 in Saskatchewan didn't complete grade 9, compared to only 2 per cent of non-Aboriginal population. Of that, First Nations on reserve had the lowest level of educational attainment. The disparity in attainment between younger Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals signals the continued quality of life differences.

Mr. Speaker, it was just not too long ago that the then minister of Learning had brought forward a training systems review that talked about programs like our SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] programs. And we've been waiting patiently for this government to deal with this issue that will actually ensure that all people will have the opportunity to get the trades they need as our workforce is so very short of skilled people, and yet we have a study on the shelf that would have an opportunity for more people to be in the trades area.

We know that advanced schools have attained a higher rate of graduation and that's very important. But we need to have more. We need to do more and make sure it's a principle that everybody believes in.

According to Stats Canada, in December 2005 the Aboriginal unemployment rate was a startling 14.6 compared to only 4.8 in the non-Aboriginal population. Mr. Speaker, these numbers signal several things. It signals that this government hasn't done enough to reverse the dismal unemployment record, that the NDP government has not moved to help First Nations and Métis people into skills training and education programs. Saskatchewan is facing a labour shortage, and there is a huge, young, unemployment Aboriginal population, and the NDP's job to join these two. I'm sure the members across would like to

get involved in this because they must have something to say about it, or they didn't have anything to say about it as our young Aboriginal people are not working.

Mr. Speaker, the health issues that we have in First Nations are something that we also can't be proud of. First Nations people have significantly higher levels of diabetes than non-First Nations people. Type 2 diabetes affects First Nations and Métis people three to five times more than the general Canadian population.

There is a considerable gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal men and women compared to non-Aboriginal population. On average First Nations men live seven years less than other Canadian men and First Nations women live five years less than Canadian women.

Higher rates of suicide, especially amongst Aboriginal youth, the suicide rate of First Nations youth is five to six times higher than the national average. Suicide is the single greatest cause of injury-related deaths for Aboriginal people. I believe our Aboriginal youth are being left behind.

FAS [fetal alcohol syndrome] is a huge concern in Saskatchewan, not just in First Nations but in non-First Nations as well. But we do know that it affects a number of people. And one of the devastating facts that I personally as a legislator am embarrassed about is that if people have a reason to suspect FAS, they will check it out for First Nations but in non-First Nations they'll consider it ADD [attention deficit disorder]. That's the type of thing that sends the idea that we have different problems within different groups of people in this province, and it's very wrong. Children with FAS usually attain lower economic status, have poorer education attainment, and much greater likelihood of becoming part of the justice system.

This government has dragged their feet on the issue, and First Nations people have suffered. This government has refused to fund an FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder] centre of excellence. They've sat on the mountain of money when First Nations and Métis people are being left behind. Many of these issues in which the province has a large role, if not a sole jurisdiction, is theirs to deal with. And I believe Aboriginal people are being left behind.

I also was on the committee not too long ago, Mr. Speaker, to deal with children who were being sexually exploited on the street. Again too many of those young people were First Nations. And this government had seen a set of recommendations — 49 recommendations to be exact. And I believe that there are three or four of them have been dealt with and the other ones too are left on the shelf.

Mr. Speaker, there are 44,000 children living in poverty in Saskatchewan. That's 44,000 kids that are being left behind. First Nations children and children of lone parent families headed by women experience poverty rates that are far higher than the provincial average. Aboriginal people experience a ratio of poverty almost four times greater than the general population.

[15:15]

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party supports the principles of the Kelowna accord. The objective to aid in lifting Aboriginal population out of poverty, providing better health care and educational opportunities and housing for our communities is what must be done.

The federal government has much more to do but so does provincial governments. The provincial government has not, but it should be, taking a leadership role in helping out our Aboriginal people. The minister a few minutes ago noted that Saskatchewan has the highest ratio of Aboriginal people per capita of any place in Canada. Why would this not be the place where we take the leadership role in ensuring that our First Nations are a part of our economy? The NDP government in this province, they must have the commitment to improve the lives of our Aboriginal people.

Mr. Speaker, the government motion before the House requests that the federal government take more responsibility for First Nations issues, and we agree that the federal government must live up to its roles and responsibility. In fact the Premier said, "These jurisdictional lines are not serving anyone well anymore." And he went on to say:

For people to be falling through the cracks because governments can't get their jurisdictional act together, is not satisfactory in my view.

And I applaud the Premier on that statement. But we do believe that it's the fault of governments, both federal and provincial, that First Nations people are falling through the cracks. This government has been on that side of the House for 15 years. I'm asking them, how is First Nations peoples' lives any better now than they were 15 years ago?

This government motion asks the federal government to do more but so should they, and they cannot absolve themselves of responsibility. Mr. Speaker, the NDP government directly contributes to the jurisdictional line that the Premier has talked about. In another news article it says that the Kelowna accord may lead to significant different relationships between the province and First Nations, including a larger role for the province that had traditionally been the responsibility of the federal government. So my question is, does this government have a plan to deal with the possibility of new responsibility? They didn't have one for nurses.

How does this government feel about a new role for the province? Is the NDP government willing to take on this possibility of a new role, or will it play jurisdictional games while First Nations people get left behind? The government is content and willing to play jurisdictional games while First Nations and Métis people suffer from higher rates of addictions, poverty, unemployment, and lower educational levels.

Mr. Speaker, the Kelowna accord is just more words if there isn't a plan, if there isn't a commitment, and if there isn't a time frame. There has to be measurable outcomes. Saskatchewan has the highest number of First Nations people per capita, and therefore we have a responsibility to take the lead with ideas, with commitments, and with time frames.

Mr. Speaker, anybody can give money. Anybody can say the

right words. But the reality is, unless something is actually accounted for and unless there is a difference, it's just words.

How is our First Nations people better off under this government? Last year, I waited with anticipation to find out how First Nations women and Métis women would be better after the government declared this the Year of the First Nations and Métis Women. Is there fewer people, fewer First Nations women abused? Is there fewer First Nations babies dying? Is there anybody that really benefited for making the show? Mr. Speaker, there has to be something tangible if we're talking about issues dealing with people.

The Kelowna accord is being applauded by the Premier and cabinet as it is by the Saskatchewan Party. Call me a doubting Thomas, but I have to wait to see how this government will react differently to First Nations issues when the Kelowna accord goes ahead.

Why does the federal government basically have to bribe the province to work with our First Nations people? Our people are our greatest asset — all of our people, non-First Nations and First Nations.

What is this provincial government's plan to deal with the Kelowna accord? As such, Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment moved by myself and seconded by the member from Saskatoon Southeast:

That all the words after "first ministers' meeting of Kelowna" be deleted and the following be added:

that this Assembly will work proactively with Saskatchewan's Aboriginal people to encourage the federal government to fulfill its responsibilities to Aboriginal people living both on- and off-reserve; and further,

that this Assembly recognizes the need for true and equal partnerships of the three levels of government in areas of housing, economy, health, and social services to improve the socio-economic status of Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan; and further,

this Assembly urge the federal government to share a greater percentage of the costs associated with investments required to improve the social and economic conditions, as well as support structures to Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan; and that it begin to work on achieving the targets identified at the first ministers' meeting in Kelowna by developing new policies and program arrangements.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Kelvington-Wadena, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Southeast:

That all of the words after "first ministers' meeting in Kelowna" be deleted and the following be added:

that this Assembly will work proactively with Saskatchewan's Aboriginal people to encourage the federal government to fulfill its responsibilities to Aboriginal people living both on- and off-reserve; and further

that this Assembly recognize the need for true and equal partnerships of the three levels of government in areas of housing, economy, health, and social services to improve the socio-economic status of Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan; and further

that this Assembly urge the federal government to share a greater percentage of the costs associated with the investments required to improve the social and economic conditions as well as support structures to Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan, and that it begin to work on achieving the targets identified at the first ministers' meeting in Kelowna by developing new policy and program arrangements.

Debate on the amendment and the motion will proceed concurrently. The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak to the motion and the amendment, and I would like to join with the previous speakers in welcoming the chiefs to their legislature.

Mr. Speaker, it's been said that we live in two solitudes with the First Nations and the non-First Nations people in this province. Unfortunately I am part of that problem with two solitudes. I spent the first 30 or 40 years of my life not being aware which treaty I was governed by or that I was governed by any particular treaty and had virtually no understanding of the background of that part of our province's history.

I'm not alone in that. Many members of the House would share my life experience, and unfortunately far too many members of this province share that kind of life experience where they're not aware of our shared history and our shared culture and the steps that we're going to have to take to try and overcome that.

I spent several years working with the Legal Aid Commission, and it was one of the more eye-opening and interesting experiences that I've had in my life. I had the opportunity to travel to many of the First Nations in the northern court points and to a large number of the First Nations and met with people that lived on- and off-reserve and had discussions with them about the challenges that they were facing and the failings that government and non-First Nations peoples had caused them and the way the system worked had created economic and social, educational, health, justice barriers that are unfair and are things that we cannot and ought not let to continue in what we regard as a civilized society.

The undertakings in the Kelowna accord must be continued, must be fulfilled by our federal counterparts. But as a province we must do more, and we must recognize the needs and the failings that we have had as a provincial government in the past. We have to recognize and promote the economic and development goals of First Nations people, and they should be

commended and thanked for undertaking many of the initiatives that they've taken.

In my own constituency is Whitecap First Nation. I'm pleased to say that I enjoy a good relationship with the people at Whitecap. I've been there. They are very aggressive, very active in promoting economic developments, economic partnerships. They've developed a world-class golf course and have undertaken to build and have started construction on what will be the largest casino in this province. And I'm proud to have that in my constituency and proud to have worked to support that.

Mr. Speaker, as we go forward we have to understand and develop abilities to negotiate with First Nations people on a nation-to-nation basis. We need to develop a framework for continuing the relationships. We need to recognize the treaties as the basis for our relationship with those peoples. We have to consult with those people. We have to understand. We have to develop methods of understanding. And we have to educate people both on- and off-reserve.

Mr. Speaker, it's an embarrassment that people such as myself were able to go through the grades K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] system in the city of Saskatoon and develop a university education without knowing anything about the treaties, without the treaties having been taught or anything more than passing reference to the fact that they exist.

I'd like to commend specifically the work of the Treaty Commissioner in reaching out to non-Aboriginal people to try and develop some form of understanding. The Office of the Treaty Commissioner I think has taken great steps forward in developing an understanding of what the needs are, and hope that that is a process and something that will continue for a long time.

Mr. Speaker, when I've met with and had the opportunity to go to various First Nations, it's abundantly clear that we have some grotesque and embarrassing failings. The education system that exists on our First Nations, on our reserves, is not acceptable, is not satisfactory. We have not committed sufficient resources as a province to try and assist and work with the First Nations to allow them to develop appropriate schools. The same can be said for the health system that exists. There are many problems that exist there that don't exist elsewhere because of inadequate health facilities being there.

As a lawyer I can comment more specifically on the failings within the justice system. We have had studies, we have had inquiries, we've had royal inquiries, we've had any number of things that all come with a common theme or common recommendations at the end of it.

We need to have more Aboriginal police officers. We need to have more cultural and sensitivity training for non-Aboriginal officers. We need to work to develop partnerships with First Nations so that the officers can be trained and can get an understanding of what's taking place. We know that our prosecutors have to have more training. We need more Aboriginal and First Nations prosecutors and defence counsel. We know that we need more Aboriginal court workers. We know that we've come a long ways to educate our judges and to

work within the court system but we have not yet done enough.

When I have had the opportunity to go to the various correctional facilities in the system, I think my reaction would be the same as many of the people. You're overwhelmed at the number of Aboriginal people that are in the correctional system. It is a disproportionately and unacceptably disproportionately high number of First Nations people that are in the correctional centres. And it's a sign of the failings that we have had in our education system and the lack of economic opportunities and the lack of economic partnerships, a lack of economic abilities for those people to try and develop meaningful careers both on- and off-reserve.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has made considerable progress in this area and has developed policies in this area. And I'd like to just review some of those policies very briefly. One of them is clarifying the role and responsibility of the government. This is by way of a resolution that was held at Saskatchewan Party convention, and I will read it:

Be it resolved that a Saskatchewan Party government will work proactively with Saskatchewan's First Nations people to encourage the federal government to fulfill its responsibilities to First Nations living both on and off reserve.

[15:30]

Another one to build a framework for relations between the province's First Nations and Métis people.

Be it resolved that the framework for relations between a Saskatchewan Party government and First Nations and Métis people will be based on respect and inclusion.

Another one:

Be it resolved that a Saskatchewan Party government will work in partnership with First Nations and Métis people to implement existing agreements and develop new agreements to build our province.

We must consult, Mr. Speaker, with the legislation that affects both First Nations and Métis people, another resolution from the Saskatchewan Party. Another one that deals with health and well-being of First Nations and Métis people, and I will read that one as well.

Be it resolved that a Saskatchewan Party government will work in partnership with First Nations, Métis people and the federal government to improve the health and well-being of First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan.

And one of the most important ones, Mr. Speaker, is one that deals with removing barriers to employment for First Nations and Métis people.

Be it resolved that a Saskatchewan Party government will work in partnership with First Nations, Métis people and the federal government to identify and remove barriers that impede the participation of First Nations and Métis people

in the economy.

Mr. Speaker, I can't imagine a better thing to try and make as one of our priorities as we move into Saskatchewan's second century than to try and deal with economic opportunities and employment opportunities for First Nations people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to just look at some of the specifics of the Kelowna accord. This is a \$5.1 billion, five-year initiative by the federal government for funding. It was done in consultation with and direct result of meetings with First Nations people. This is a large amount of money and will go a long ways trying to address some of the needs.

It will include \$1.8 billion in federal funding over five years for education; \$50 million of that money will flow to the North. By 2016, Native high school and post-secondary graduate rates should be similar to non-Aboriginal people. I hope that that is a goal, Mr. Speaker, that will be met. \$100 million over the next five years to be spent on existing programs in the North to prepare children for their school-age experience.

\$1.32 billion will be invested in health care, including an effort to double in the next 10 years the number of Aboriginal doctors and nurses from 150 to 1,200 respectively. \$1.6 billion to be spent over the next five years to advance the federal commitment to reduce housing shortfalls by 40 per cent over the next five years and by 80 per cent over the life of the 10-year plan. \$200 million will be invested in economic opportunities, \$170 million within the next five years to build relationships and accountability among First Nations and non-First Nations people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party supports in principle the Kelowna accord. The Saskatchewan Party believes the federal government's role needs to be clarified and a Saskatchewan Party government would encourage the federal government to fulfill its commitment to First Nations people in Saskatchewan. A Saskatchewan Party government would work with First Nations and Métis to implement new and existing programs to better the lives of First Nations and Métis people.

Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP government has a terrible record of consultation with Saskatchewan First Nations people. The smoking ban that was implemented by the provincial government last year was one example. What has now become a major hurdle, and something that has now become the subject of racist comments and a racist issue between our peoples has now grown and escalated to that point, when what should have happened was that type of initiative should have been something we could have worked together on, and developed something that would have been positive for all people in the province. Unfortunately the utter lack of consultation, the utter lack of understanding or the ability to go forward has created a major impediment and now we have something that's got to be worked through rather than something where we just go forward on it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party will work with First Nations and Métis people. One of the initiatives of the Saskatchewan Party is a document called, Enterprise Saskatchewan, which will be an initiative of partnerships, consultation, and developing a system to remove barriers to

growth in this province and to develop economic initiatives, and to remove specific barriers that would impede or prevent the province and prevent First Nations from moving forward through consultation, through partnerships.

I'd like to encourage the members opposite to go to the Sask Party website and download a copy of that agreement, or that document — read it carefully, study it, because it's something that would benefit their party and would certainly go a long ways to promoting our relationship with First Nations people, not to mention the rest of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm particularly troubled by the educational opportunities and lack of educational opportunities for First Nations people. We know that in our cities of Saskatoon and Regina there are hundreds and hundreds of children that are not enrolled in any kind of school system and are outside of the educational system and outside of any kind of the supports and other things that are delivered through our school system.

It would be a Saskatchewan Party priority to try and identify those children and try and find ways to get them back so that they become engaged in the educational system. That's one of the failings that we have in our society right now and it is an unacceptable failing. Every child deserves to have an education. Every child deserves to have a warm, secure home. Every child deserves not to live in fear. Every child deserves something where they have a warm, secure, loving home environment and unfortunately the current system with the NDP is not providing that in a system that it should be.

What should happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the government of the day should work with Aboriginal people, work with First Nations, to try and develop the partnerships, try and develop the method for delivering those services to ensure that those students are not left behind and are able to participate fully and are given every opportunity to grow and prosper and flourish within our society.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the unemployment rate among First Nations people in our province is unacceptable. In December 2005 the unemployment rate amongst Aboriginal people was 14.6 per cent compared to 4.8 per cent in the non-Aboriginal population — a statistic that is not acceptable and should not be acceptable to either us or the First Nations people. We need to work with those people to try and develop employment skills, employment opportunities, and to ensure that there are appropriate employment situations for them. And hopefully those employment situations could be found in Aboriginal and First Nations businesses that could be developed over a relatively short period of time.

The large percentage of Aboriginal people that we have in our province should be seen as an opportunity for growth for this province. And we should target our resources to ensuring that those people are the ones that get first priority and new opportunity for education, for economic growth rather than looking elsewhere. It should be a first priority to try and deal with the existing people in this province.

Unfortunately our health system as well has failed Aboriginal First Nations people. There is a gap in life expectancy. On

average First Nations men live seven years less than other Canadian men, First Nations women five years less than other Canadian women. An unacceptable statistic when you have one segment of the society that actually is living a shorter lifespan than other portions of the society.

We also know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we have a huge problem with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, much higher occurrence in First Nations children. These people usually attain lower economic status. They have poor education and much greater likelihood of interacting with the justice system; something that is unacceptable and must be addressed by our province. The NDP have dragged their feet on this issue and as a result First Nations people have suffered.

Much as we support the initiatives of the Kelowna accord, we also have to accept responsibility within this province for the education system and for the failings that are within provincial jurisdiction. We support the initiatives that take place within the Kelowna accord, but we recognize as well that we are leaving people behind as a province. We have to increase those people and the commitment that we make. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting both the motion and will be supporting the amendment.

I believe that there is one more speaker on this side of the House that wishes to participate in the debate as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I understand there's another speaker and I recognize the hon. member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you Mr. Chair. I would like to, with your permission, Mr. Chair take this opportunity while I'm on my feet to introduce someone who is sitting in the west gallery. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the house, my sister Gail Smith who has unexpectedly appeared in the Assembly to observe the proceedings this afternoon. I ask all members to welcome her.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Kelowna Accord (continued)

Mr. Borgerson: — Mr. Chair, I stand in support of a motion put forward by the member from Meadow Lake, the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations, and seconded by the Minister of Northern Affairs, the MLA from Cumberland.

Mr. Chair, last Friday I made reference to a presentation that I heard from Professor John Borrows, who's on the faculty with the University of Victoria. And I acknowledged him as being Anishinabe from the Nawash First Nation and Canada's leading indigenous law scholar.

And as I indicated last Friday, Mr. Borrows introduced the concept of reconciliation with the definition that I had not heard before. And this definition for reconciliation was, to sit back

down together. And he reminded us that we as peoples all sat down together through the Crown when the treaties were first signed and that as a result we are all treaty in a sense, all signatories of the treaties. And he talked about five aspects of reconciliation.

He talked about legal reconciliation to see that the values and beliefs and practices of Aboriginal people are reflected in the justice system. He talked about social reconciliation to ensure that indigenous people have the health, education, and social services that they need and deserve. He talked about political reconciliation so that there is a recognition of sovereignty along with the mutual exchange of respect and understanding. He spoke of economic reconciliation to provide for Aboriginal economic development.

And, Mr. Chair, he spoke of spiritual reconciliation which includes a recognition and respect for indigenous belief systems and underlying this, an important foundation of trust and relationship.

So treaty was and is not just a political and legal entity but one of honour, of respect, of trust, a spiritual trust. And it rested on a very firm foundation of relationship, a powerful sense of relationship.

Our Premier stated this in Kelowna in November. He said, and I quote:

In our view, the treaties are [vital] vital, living [and] sacred undertakings that are the foundation of the definition of our relationship.

The Kelowna summit, Mr. Chair, was a time, to quote, "to sit back down together." It was a time for reconciliation. It was a historic meeting on Aboriginal issues that included federal and provincial leaders meeting with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis leaders.

The summit responded to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis initiatives and to a plan by the Assembly of First Nations to close the gap and the quality of life between First Nations and the average Canadian. The result in the words of Phil Fontaine, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations was, quote:

A plan to improve First Nations health, housing, access to education and economic opportunity, and opportunity for self-government. A plan to help eliminate First Nations poverty and to improve quality of life for Canada's First Peoples.

[15:45]

The ministers of First Nations and Métis Relations and of Northern Affairs have already quoted provincial statistics that illustrate the inequalities that exist in this province and in this country for Aboriginal people. And I'll give two or three more of those statistics, Mr. Chair: 44 per cent of First Nations people off-reserve and 47 per cent of First Nations people on-reserve live below the poverty line; 52 per cent of Aboriginal children living in Canadian cities live in poverty. And, Mr. Chair, in 2003 Canada's Aboriginal people ranked 78th on the United Nations development index — an index on which Canada as a

country is always in the top three.

The purpose of the Kelowna accord was to set a framework to significantly address this shameful reality. Again Phil Fontaine, chief of the Assembly of First Nations, quote:

This is not about more money and more spending, but about investing. This is about creating a solid and stable foundation for future growth and productivity. We will turn poverty into prosperity, and turn Canada into a country where First Nations peoples and cultures survive and thrive as First Nations citizens in the modern age. Today is about turning Canada into the kind of country that Canadians want it to be.

The Kelowna accord was, I believe, an act of economic, social, and political reconciliation. Five billion dollars over five years: 200 million for economic development and economic opportunities; 1.8 billion for education to create school systems, train more Aboriginal teachers, and identify children with special needs; \$1.6 billion in housing including \$400 million to address the need for clean water in many remote communities; \$1.3 billion for health services. It was an act of political reconciliation because it involved a commitment to developing and increasing opportunity for self government.

National chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Phil Fontaine, said, quote:

The fact that the Prime Minister and the First Ministers sat with the First Peoples of this land to engage in a real discussion on our issues and our agenda, our inherent Aboriginal and Treaty rights, is in itself historic.

But more importantly, we are making history by taking the first steps towards creating a new Canada and forging a new Federation; a Federation where the First Peoples of this land enjoy the same quality of life as other Canadians; where we control the decisions that affect our lives; where we give life to the spirit and intent of the Treaties and full expression to their inherent rights.

Where we give life to the spirit and intent of the treaties. The Kelowna accord was not just a social and economic and political reconciliation, it was a spiritual reconciliation as well. It was an accord that was a matter of trust. And I would argue that this matter of trust, although not as significant as the treaties, builds on the spiritual nature of the treaties and that this trust should be fulfilled. It should not be betrayed.

In the March 7 issue of the *Globe and Mail*, John Ibbitson wrote:

In Kelowna, everyone finally declared enough is enough. All sides resolved to spend their energies on improving the aboriginal quality of life, on breaking the cycles, on finally going to work on closing the gaps . . . If Kelowna is lost, then that opportunity is lost, an act of faith is betrayed, and there is nothing to look forward to except a return to the bad old ways . . . Because Kelowna is the last, best hope to improve the lives of native people in this generation.

So now, Mr. Chair, we wait for the federal government to

endorse the Kelowna accord. We wait for the federal Speech from the Throne in April to see if it endorses the Kelowna accord. We wait for the federal budget to see if it includes the agreed-to provisions and the financial commitments of the Kelowna accord.

And as Ibbitson points out in his column:

If neither of those circumstances comes about, or if the funding is inadequate compared to their needs, it will be just another broken treaty that the Native people have signed. But if the Conservative government can honour the Kelowna accord, it could mark the time we finally turn the corner after years of neglect, and Native people can begin the ascent into a world with a future for the first time in hundreds of years.

So, Mr. Chair, there is a trust here, a reconciliation that has resulted in Métis, Inuit, and First Nations people sitting down together again, representing hundreds of communities from the north and south and east and west, rural and urban, meeting with the first ministers who represent another great diversity, forming relationship and finding common ground in the form of an accord, taking a great step forward toward social, economic, political, and spiritual reconciliation.

Mr. Chair, I began by talking about a presentation by Anishinabe, John Borrows. I'd like to close with the words of my friend, Willie Ermine, who is Cree from Sturgeon Lake First Nation. Willie is a renowned artist, educator, researcher, and presently administrator at First Nations University in Prince Albert.

Last summer at the Sturgeon Lake centennial powwow he spoke to me about a paper that he had written and presented last spring called "Ethical Space: Transforming Relations." And I spoke to Willie about a week ago about the same paper. And I think he would appreciate the words and thoughts of Professor John Borrows, and I think says many of the same things in a different way.

Since the treaties, Willie says, we've ended up in, he says, an entangled dilemma. He also calls it a schism of understanding. And Willie says that this misunderstanding has occurred because of the encounter of two solitudes, and I quote:

... each formed and guided by distinct histories, knowledges, traditions, values, interests, and social, economic, and political realities.

But Willie says there is a space where we can speak in the language of possibility. And he calls this an ethical space. He says it is a, quote, "... precarious and fragile window of opportunity ..." And he says it will form, quote, "... as new, previously oppressed ... [and] silenced voices enter the discourse."

Willie says, quote:

The new partnership model of the ethical space, in a cooperative spirit between Indigenous Peoples and Western institutions, will create new currents of thought that flow in different directions and overrun the old ways

of thinking.

Reconciliation, relationship, ethical space — these are lofty ideas and lofty goals. And they offer great hope for all of the people of this province and this country.

The Kelowna accord is a landmark agreement. I urge the new federal government to honour it and members of this House to honour it as well by supporting the motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I recognize the hon. member for Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to speak to this motion. Mr. Speaker, we do not need to find solutions for First Nations people and Métis peoples. We have to find solutions with them. We must find ways of reaching goals that are beneficial to all people of Saskatchewan.

We must find solutions that are based on mutual respect and understanding to achieve any long-term objectives. We must build a framework between the province's First Nations and Métis people. Mr. Speaker, we cannot advance the cause of either side under a cloud of mistrust. When we start to work together, then we will start to see real success.

If we approach Ottawa with a united front, we will achieve success. Together we must implement existing agreements and develop new agreements to build our province. Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House believe that together with First Nations we can carry our issues to the federal government with such force that we can lay the groundwork for an exciting new Saskatchewan, a Saskatchewan the likes of which the world will look at with admiration and new respect.

A large part of this framework must be built around consultation. How can we achieve anything if there is no consultation? I look to the no-smoking Bill that was introduced last year. Mr. Speaker, we are still struggling with the results of the lack of communication and consultation that should have occurred before that Bill became law.

Government of the people, by the people, for the people does not occur without extensive consultation. The right of the people cannot be understood without consultation. One side cannot impose its will on the other side and expect not to have any backlash. In today's political climate this is no longer acceptable.

We must form partnerships, and in doing so we will have to make some sacrifices. But the rewards will be as big as our dreams. All of these lofty platitudes that I have mentioned must be achieved in order to reach our common goal. Mr. Speaker, the term being used by that side of the House is, no one is left behind. Let's apply that to the current First Nations and Métis people.

According to the 2001 census, 39 per cent of Aboriginal males and 35 per cent of Aboriginal females of the age 15 to 34 non-reserve population did not complete elementary or high school. According to the '96 census, 14 per cent of Aboriginal

people age 15 to 24 in Saskatchewan did not complete grade 9, compared to 2 per cent of non-Aboriginal population. Of that, First Nations on-reserve had the lowest level of educational attainment. The disparity in attainment of education between younger Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals signals continued quality-of-life differences. And the NDP say no one is left behind.

Mr. Speaker, according to Stats Canada, in December 2005 the Aboriginal unemployment rate was a startling 14.6 per cent compared to only 4.8 per cent in the non-Aboriginal population. Métis people in Saskatchewan have a higher unemployment rate than the non-Métis population. As of December 2005 it was 10.1 and was as high as 15.2 in the last 18 months.

These numbers signal several things. The NDP government has not done enough to reverse this appalling unemployment record. The NDP government has not moved to help First Nations and Métis people into skill training and educational programs. Saskatchewan is facing a labour shortage and there is a huge, young, unemployed Aboriginal population. And the NDP have done little to join these two.

The NDP have finally moved to build a northern road network. This has been 10 years in the making and is a positive move toward improving life conditions of the northern Saskatchewan people, many of whom are First Nations and Métis, by lowering the cost of goods and improving access to economic opportunities. Except the NDP have dragged their feet and all we have is a press release and an announcement. Again the NDP have turned their back on First Nations and Métis people.

Mr. Speaker, First Nations people have significantly higher levels of diabetes than non-First Nations population. Type 2 diabetes affects First Nation and Métis people three to five times more than the general Canadian population. As a result there's a considerable gap in life expectancy of Aboriginal men and women compared to non-Aboriginal population. On average First Nation men live seven years less than other Canadian men, and First Nation women five years less than other Canadian women. Mr. Speaker, this is being left way behind.

The suicide rate of First Nations is five to six times higher than the national average; and for Inuit youth, 11 times higher. This is not acceptable. Suicide is the single greatest cause of injury-related deaths for Aboriginal people. Aboriginal youth are being left behind. FASD has a much higher occurrence in First Nations children. Children with fetal alcohol syndrome usually attain lower economic status, have poorer education attainment, and much greater likelihood of interacting with the justice system.

[16:00]

Again the NDP have dragged their feet on this issue and First Nations people have suffered. The NDP has refused to fund an FASD centre of excellence. They have sat on their mountain of money while First Nations and Métis people are being left behind.

Mr. Speaker, 44,000 kids live in poverty in Saskatchewan. That's 44,000 kids being left behind by this government. First

Nations children and the children of lone parent families headed by women experience poverty rates that are far higher than the provincial average. Aboriginal people experience the ratio of poverty almost four times greater than the general population. The 2001 census indicates that 50 per cent of Saskatchewan children identified as Aboriginal live in poverty, compared to 19 per cent of Saskatchewan children. So how can the members opposite say no one's left behind?

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party supports the principles and the objectives behind the Kelowna accord. Those objectives are to aid in lifting Aboriginal populations out of poverty, provide better health care and educational opportunities and housing for communities. The federal government has to do more, but the NDP provincial government should and has not taken a leadership role in helping our Aboriginal people out.

Due to the situation in Saskatchewan, we can't wait for the federal government to find answers. We must sit down with Aboriginal peoples and put all our cards on the table in order to have honest and fair discussion. This in turn will mean giving and taking on both sides. No stone must be left unturned. We must put aside old hatreds and close old wounds. Now is when we have come to the point where we must walk the walk and not just talk the talk.

Saskatchewan can take its place in the sun, but only if we work together. Neither side can do it on their own. The time has come. With our resources as a cornerstone, we can build a province second to none. The choice is ours — work together or stay a wee province. History will mark us with what we achieve in our consultations. Our generation has been given the task. Success or failure is ours to choose.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — There being no further speakers, I will put the questions. There are two questions before us. There's first of all the main motion as moved by the member for Meadow Lake and seconded by the member for Cumberland; and to that main motion there's an amendment put by the member for Kelvington-Wadena and seconded by the member for Southeast. We will first consider the amendment. And the amendment reads as follows:

That all of the words after "first ministers' meeting in Kelowna" be deleted and the following be added:

that this Assembly will work proactively with Saskatchewan's Aboriginal people to encourage the federal government to fulfill its responsibilities to Aboriginal people living both on- and off-reserve; and further

that this Assembly recognize the need for true and equal partnerships of the three levels of government in the areas of housing, economy, health, and social services to improve the socio-economic status of Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan; and further

that this Assembly urge the federal government to share a greater percentage of the costs associated with the investments required to improve the social and economic

conditions, as well as support structures for Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan; and that it begin to work on achieving the targets identified at the First Nations meeting in Kelowna by developing new policy and program arrangements.

We will now take the vote on the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the amendment?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. The amendment has been carried. The question before us then is the main motion as amended. Will the members take it as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave of the House to move a motion of transmittal.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave of the House to move a motion. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly and seconded by the hon. member for Kelvington-Wadena, I move:

That the Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, transmit copies of the motion and verbatim transcripts of the motion just passed to the Prime Minister of Canada, the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and northern development, and federal interlocutor for Métis and non-status Indians and the leaders of the federal opposition parties.

I so move. Thanks.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader, the member for Moose Jaw North, seconded by the member for Kelvington-Wadena:

That the Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, transmit copies of the motion and verbatim transcripts of the motion just passed to the Prime Minister of Canada, the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and northern development, and federal interlocutor for Métis and non-status Indians and the leaders of the federal opposition parties.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

Bill No. 39

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 39 — The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Amendment Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I take my place today to make a few comments regarding Bill No. 39, the Act to amend the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, 2005.

And before I speak to that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments about the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, especially some of the work that's being done in my area, in my constituency which is just around Shell Lake. I know a couple of people that are on the Watershed Authority from Shell Lake and they do a wonderful job, as is the same in probably most parts of the province where they have a Watershed Authority.

In regards to this Bill, Mr. Speaker, a Bill was introduced last year in 2005 and it was called Saskatchewan Watershed Authority amendment Act, 2005. And in regards to that, this Bill was brought forth called The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act, 2006. And I believe that it was introduced to allow for more enforcement powers. I don't know if it's enforcement powers by the Watershed Authority, but enforcement powers by the government.

In regards to the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, 2005 the enforcement powers that were included in this Act enabled the authority to (a) register notices of complaints against drainage works on the titles to the lands on which the works are located. And so, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm wondering in regards to that in an explanation, does this allow a caveat or a lien to be put forward on the land title on the registered land? Deputy Madam Speaker, if that is allowed, that goes against the quarter section of land, and therefore that has to be cleared before it can have a sale.

In the second part (b) under this authority, it states, registered orders with respect to remediation, work, required on land titles. Again I ask, does this mean that there will be a caveat or a lien put on this quarter section or land that is in question?

This is the same, Madam Deputy Speaker, for (c). And (c) says, in the case of non-compliance with an order to undertake the

remedial work order and register with the Court of Queen's Bench a certificate of the authority's cost which, once registered, has the same force as if it were a judgment of the court for the recovery of that debt. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, again I bring to light that . . . is this a caveat or is this a lien?

Anybody that has been following this in regard to the watershed authority Act, I'm sure is a result of the issues that was raised and the problems that arose in the southeast part of Saskatchewan — and especially in the RM [rural municipality] of Churchbridge. As we know there was a court case — and I still believe this court case is ongoing — in regards to the issues of the RM of Churchbridge and the water authority. And I believe this is why this Bill came to play. It gives the power of the government in power, the NDP, more power to conquer and control.

I'm sure, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for that area, the member for Melville-Saltcoats would love to speak to this, and I'm sure he will take his place later on to enlighten the Assembly of what's transpiring there.

But in regards to the comments I want to make, Madam Deputy Speaker, regarding this Act, is the fact that it's tough enough for the farmers in all parts of Saskatchewan to deal with what's out there as far as agriculture problems. And especially after the last couple of years where we have a significant amount of rain and snow, there's going to be water puddles all over. The way this Bill reads is a fact that no farmer can do anything to that land to drain some of those sloughs so that he can seed the land. And the Act that came into play now with the Bill 2006 will show that the farmers have less control on the land that they own, less control on the land that they pay taxes every year to.

In the latter part of this Act, where it says section 83.1 is intended to make clear the orders made persecute of section 69 of The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act prior to May 27, 2005, may be enforced with these new measures made available in the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, 2005. That means, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I believe that the measures that's pronounced in this Act were retroactive back to before 2005. Now I'm no lawyer and therefore I cannot make assumptions in regards to that, but that's what I believe happens when this takes place. To the farmers in Saskatchewan that are dealing with this — and like I say, there are many — I'm sure many of them have questions in regarding this.

One of the other problems that I know farmers have had in regards to the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority and the government is the . . . [inaudible] . . . of the ocean and fisheries and their presence in Saskatchewan. You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, I understood that when it came to ocean and fisheries that was to deal with oceans, yet to remember that there's no oceans in Saskatchewan.

In a case in my home community of Spiritwood, there's a case right now that the RM [rural municipality] is looking at where they applied for some money to build a road. And that was granted by the government. Then all of a sudden, through the works of ocean and fisheries, with ocean and fisheries they came into play that they can't finish this road for the simple

reason ocean and fisheries have come into play and said that there is a culvert or a bridge out of place. And that ocean and fisheries said the creek that runs through this; there may be some fish.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I know this creek, and I know very well there is no fish. And it's understandable because if there was fish you'd see fishermen fishing it, and there are no fishermen fishing the creek. But this is the power that oceans and fisheries have — on not only Canada but on Saskatchewan — in regards to the control of the land.

[16:15]

There again I also want to bring forth that Saskatchewan Watershed Authority is now taking more control on the land that the farmers own. So it brings a question to many of the farmers in the area, why is this being allowed? Why is the NDP government wanting more control on land that we as farmers pay taxes on?

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, in regards to this Bill, The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act, 2005 . . . the amendment to the Act, I mean, I'm sure there's many other of my colleagues would like to speak to this — not that we don't agree with what the Watershed Authority is doing in most areas. In regards to this Bill here, there's some unanswered questions that need to be answered, and therefore, Madam Deputy Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Rosthern-Shellbrook 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. 40

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 40 — The Income Trust Liability Act** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to enter the debate on The Income Trust Liability Act. The minister had spoken to this a few days ago and outlined that the intent of the Bill was to provide protection from liability for investors in Saskatchewan income trusts. So in other words this Bill will legislate that beneficiaries of Saskatchewan income trusts will not be held responsible for any act, default, obligation, or liability of the trustees.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister acknowledged that there has not been a history of unit holders of Saskatchewan income trusts being held liable for debts or obligations. But without protection, the possibility that it could happen is still there and, you know, it does need to be addressed. I believe the income

trusts are becoming an increasingly popular avenue for investors, and consequently the risk will rise as there are more and more of the income trusts. And indeed a situation may arise where the trust properties are not sufficient to cover a liability.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister also stated that similar legislation has been passed in other provinces. And it's important to acknowledge that we in this province need to be competitive with other provinces when it comes to attracting dollars from investors. If this NDP government doesn't wake up and recognize that, soon we're going to have so many people left behind that our Premier won't even be able to count them all.

Sadly, Madam Deputy Speaker, this legislation is just one small step in the right direction that this government needs to take in order to level the playing field to attract investment. Considering the massive out-migration — and we brought that up in question period today — and the job losses that our province is experiencing, the government needs to wake up and see that we need to look at a number of fronts in which we need to be competitive, not just in the area of protecting beneficiaries of income trusts.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are not competitive in our tax regime, in the corporate capital tax, small business tax, provincial sales tax. We're not competitive in a number of the regulations that we have here in the province. We're not competitive in royalty structures. We're not competitive in labour laws. We're not competitive in the availability and the maintenance of our primary highways, and all of those are significant to economic growth within our province.

The list could go on and on and on where we're not competitive within this province. So it's . . . We're pleased to see that this particular piece of legislation seems to be addressing at least one small area to make us competitive, but the official opposition wants to take some time to speak with some officials or some authorities on it and get some opinions on that. We also want to take time to compare it with the other provinces and their pieces of legislation to ensure that it covers this issue adequately. So with that, I would like to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 41

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 41 — The Partnership Amendment Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to rise today and take part in the discussion on The

Partnership Act. At initial glance, we know that the Bill appears to be mostly housekeeping with just adding definitions to the Act that defines firm, the firm's name, Indian bands, and persons, the definitions that are used in the business world.

One of the issues that is brought up in the House in this Bill is the fact that the age of . . . that an individual must be 18 years of age to be a partner in a partnership now. And so this raises the question about how this was brought to the government's attention — if there had been cases where individuals were below the age of majority, and it caused some kind of a problem, and has there been any repercussions.

As we move forward in this province to grow our economy and ensure that people have a chance to be part of a growing province and the opportunities to start business, not just be part of someone else's business, we have to have all of our Acts and regulations in line and ready to go.

It's interesting that only now do we have the definitions changed so that an Indian band can be part of a partnership Act, even though we hear the word partner so very often from this government and joint agreement, joint partnerships with First Nations people.

I'm wondering why this Bill wasn't changed a little while ago if it's something that was needed to ensure that we can have businesses go in with First Nations people. It's been a number of years since we've heard this government use the term. So has it been used out of context? Has there been some concerns? Why is it just . . . Why is this amendment being brought forward now?

Madam Deputy Speaker, there is many things that have to change in this province before we can get the economy going. One of them will be the changes of things like this partnership Act, and the other one will be a change in government. I look forward to both of them. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — Do you have a motion for this debate?

Ms. Draude: — I move adjournment of this Bill at this time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Kelvington-Wadena 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. 42

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 42 — The Respiratory Therapists Act** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise to participate in the debate on this significant Bill. And I

say that and I don't intend that to be taken lightly. This is a Bill that is an indication that the respiratory therapists have in effect come of age and are joining a number of other professions that have become self-regulating.

That includes groups such as lawyers through the Law Society, realtors through the real estate association, doctors through the College of Physicians and Surgeons, accountants through their institute, dentists, and even veterinarians.

Earlier this week, Madam Deputy Speaker, we heard the hon. member for Arm River speak at some length about the veterinarians' Bill, the changes to their self-regulating system. One of the significant things that was in that Bill and also in the respiratory therapists' Bill was provisions that would allow for prosecution for unauthorized practice, clearly something that would be important to veterinarians. And I presume the same could be said of all of the self-regulating and self-governing professions. I want to commend the member for Arm River-Watrous for his comments in that area because it's something that's incredibly important.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I practised law in this province since 1978. And every year or two since I've been admitted to the bar, there has been circumstances where people have been prosecuted, or the Law Society has to deal with people who have engaged in unlawful or unlicensed practice. These would be people that would be preparing wills, doing estates, and a variety of other transactions for which they weren't licensed, weren't competent, weren't insured.

And I'm sure in dealing with Bill 42, the respiratory therapists, we would expect the same from their self-regulating agency, that they would take every step to ensure that there is not unlicensed or unregulated practice. In fact they go further and are part of the large comprehensive scheme of our regulation of our health system. And they would be practising in hospitals and in health institutions where it would be absolutely imperative that all steps be taken to ensure that those engaging in that type of practice are licensed, insured, and properly qualified, and have been examined and met all of the professional requirements.

No doubt, with respiratory therapists, there is a need for a self-regulating body. And they are the ones that clearly have the expertise in this area, and it's a sign of their maturation and the fact that they are ready to do this, that they have come forward and asked the legislature to pass this type of legislation on their behalf.

Clearly this is something that the members would in general terms want to support and would want to see put forward for discussion and debate. We would of course want to ensure that all of the appropriate and proper steps are taken to ensure that the Bill has received due discussion, due deliberation, and that it has progressed in a fashion that it should. Whenever there is issues of self-regulation there is always the potential for public concern that the legislation is merely self-serving and will not be in the best interests of the public. I have every confidence, Ms. Deputy Speaker, that the concerns and the reasons for this Bill being put forward were in the best interests of the public and in the best interests of public safety.

As we go through consideration of this Bill, when it reaches the committee stage, we will want to have questions answered that would deal with the type of professional competence and how the competence is measured, the type of examination and the licensing procedure, and all of the steps that their agency will take to try and determine that those that practice in this profession are competent, qualified, competent, insured, and the rest of the steps that will be necessary to ensure that the public is adequately, completely, and properly protected.

We have a health system and in spite of the concerns that we have with the delays that take place and what things are funded and what things are not, we have some of the best and most qualified and competent health care professionals anywhere in this country and anywhere in the world for that matter, Ms. Deputy Speaker. And this group of professionals fit well within that scheme, and they are to be praised for their competence, their professionalism, and their commitment to serving the public. And I think all members of the House would join with me in thanking them for their competence, for their hard work in the services that they deliver.

I also want to commend them for moving forward with this important step to become a self-regulating body. We have got a number of questions that we're going to be asking in committee. We will want to know where the Bill was initiated from. We understand it was from the association. We will want to know what's taking place with respiratory therapists in other jurisdictions, in other provinces, and in particular the Western provinces.

I know that the members opposite frequently deal with Manitoba legislation. I think we'd like to look a little further afield and we'd like to look at what's taking place in British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario, not to mention the far Eastern provinces. And when we look at the areas of the Maritimes, we know that they have similar issues, similar legislation.

[16:30]

So I think dealing with and having a careful look and careful scrutiny with what's happening in all provinces is something that we want to deal with, and make a careful detailed analysis to make sure that the interests of the public and of the professionals involved are adequately protected and well served.

We frequently, Madam Deputy Speaker, want to consider what's taking place in American jurisdictions. Not just for America envy as I'm sure the members opposite may well want to accuse us of, but we know that we have a growing shortage of health care professionals and we know that they're leaving to go to Alberta, and we also know that a number of them are leaving to go to the US.

So when we deal with this Bill, one of the things that will be significant in my mind is the reasons why people would or might be leaving the province and I'll certainly be asking, in committee, questions. What is in our regulatory scheme for respiratory therapists and other professionals that would cause them or may incite them to want to leave our jurisdiction? Is it a matter of compensation? Is it a matter of professional training that's available for continuing education? Or is it a matter of

other things that they're troubled with in the province — the tax system?

Maybe they just don't like the current brand of government. I know there's many people in this House and in this province that aren't happy with the government. And maybe that's just something that respiratory therapists feel as well. They just don't like the NDP government and are looking at that as a reason to move. And I'm not a respiratory therapist. I'm a lawyer and I don't like this government and I think I'm probably fairly typical. And if respiratory therapists are in a similar position, Madam Deputy Speaker, they may well feel the same way, that that may be a reason for them to want to leave the province.

And I'd like to offer them some hope that as we go forward in this province, we will do our best to try and remove that impediment and that reason for them to be uncomfortable with this province. So we'll certainly be looking to the government — the NDP government — to either resign or call an election. And we can move forward and see if we can't give the respiratory therapists a good reason to want to stay in the province, you know, as they move forward with their licensing.

They clearly can't put something like that in the legislation, but I'm sure it's a factor that they would be considering as they make their career choices.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that you've come back because some of the reasons that . . . and points that I'm raising are very important, not just to the Deputy Speaker, but to yourself as well.

And one of the significant things that self-regulatory bodies have is they fulfill a broader mandate other than mere regulating their own profession. They serve an advocacy role on behalf of their profession as well.

Many people in the province aren't aware of what a respiratory therapist does, what kind of role they fulfill. And they will as part of their professional association give some significant help to the public by providing public education and making the public informed about the role and the duties that they serve, and will want to serve an advocacy role on behalf of the profession, and will also want to serve notice to the public that there are things that they need to ensure that they are able to fulfill their role, whether they need things by way of funding, equipment expertise, training, facilities, etc. And that will be part of the advocacy role that this institution is going to fulfill.

And I frankly, Mr. Speaker, look forward to hearing from them and hope that they are one of the more outspoken groups within the medical profession that will come forward with issues and matters that need to be addressed.

I'm sure that they will also put forward the position that, you know, they have the expertise to deal with their own licensing position, their own testing and examining position. And that's why we are able as a province to licence and allow for things like the respiratory therapists to become self-regulating because they do have that internal expertise.

So that's something that's of some significant import to the

people that are in that . . . and also to the public, that we know that those that are most able to deal with this, and have the expertise and have the knowledge, are the ones that will be charged with the licensing and self-regulating process.

Another and more serious thing that they have to deal with will be discipline, Mr. Speaker, of their own members. And I know as a lawyer I regularly read the reports that come out of the Law Society about the disciplinary steps that the Law Society has to take to deal with their own members. And during the last year or two the Law Society has had to deal with the issues and accusations that the system they had of complaints was seen by some members of the public as an old-boys' league, to use that term. And what the Law Society did to try and address that is they ensured that on the complaints panel was a civilian or a non-bencher or a non-lawyer member which went a long ways to ensuring that there's somebody on there that could relate to a complainant as a regular citizen and not merely a member of the profession that was being criticized or against whom the complaint was made.

And with the respiratory therapists, Mr. Speaker, I would want to encourage them as they develop a discipline process to consider having a civilian or a lay member on that committee to ensure that there is a higher level of comfort with the public and to ensure that members of the public don't feel threatened that they're dealing with people that are highly professional and don't understand the public's concerns.

A lot of issues that come forward to these disciplinary tribunals are issues of communication — not so much professional competence but where the professionals become so embroiled in their own profession that they're not able to adequately communicate with their patients, with their clients. So I'm sure respiratory therapists and lawyers have that in common, that you became so caught up in your profession that you're not able to adequately or comfortably deal with all of the members of the public that come forward with their concerns. And so I would want to give them that encouragement.

And it's imperative to maintain confidence in the integrity of the system. That we ensure that the public's complaints are seen and heard and that there's an understanding and awareness on the part of the public that, if they make a complaint, that they are genuinely listened to. Oftentimes the complaints arise because members of the profession don't communicate adequately with those people, and by having a process in place we can go a long ways to do it.

More seriously though, this is the same process that will take away somebody's licence to practise. It's the same process that allows the disbarment of a lawyer by striking the lawyer from the rolls. It's the same process that would prevent a doctor from practising any further, a dentist, an accountant, or a veterinarian, or any one of the other many self-regulating professions. That is a very serious consequence for a professional to lose their ability to earn a livelihood.

And it's not something that would ordinarily be taken lightly or something that would be taken without the utmost seriousness in the process and having a process in place that's fair, open, accountable, transparent, and ensuring that the principles of natural justice would apply, Mr. Speaker. In these cases we

would want to ensure that the process that would be used would comply fully with the principles of natural justice, and I just want to review those briefly for the record, Mr. Speaker.

That would include a right that immediately upon receipt of the complaint that the complaint would be forwarded to the respiratory therapist so that they would be aware that a complaint was made and give them the right to address the complaint in a timely and prompt matter. They would also have the right to have notice of the hearing, that they would have the opportunity to make a full answer in response to the complaint. They would, if they chose to, have the right to be represented by counsel.

Now I know some people criticize lawyers and say that lawyers shouldn't be involved in things other than court, but where you deal with something as serious as somebody's right to earn a livelihood, to deal with their career, their profession, their right to have a lawyer, instruct counsel, would be of the absolute, utmost importance.

They also want the right to cross-examine the person that's making a complaint. And that may well have to be done in a caring and sensitive manner. They would also want to have the right to call witnesses, perhaps expert witnesses that would be other respiratory therapists to say how a procedure should be performed or how things should be done. They would want to know that that process that deals with that complaint is done in a timely manner and would be done in a manner that respects their professionalism and their integrity.

I think it's important for people to be aware that where you have a complaint against a professional, it's not merely a complaint that's to be dealt away, bargained, or settled. It's a complaint against that person's competence, their professionalism, and is often seen as a direct attack on their integrity. So the process has to respect not only that sensitivity but also the sensitivity of the person making the complaint.

Oftentimes the people that make complaints, Mr. Speaker, are people that are disadvantaged, people that are poverty stricken, that do not have the opportunity to be represented by counsel. Oftentimes they're new Canadians that have a language barrier and many of them would receive the able assistance of the Open Door Society or another agency to ensure that they have a comfort level that's there.

They may well want to be represented by a counsellor or have somebody with them — a family member — somebody to make sure that as they go through that process of advancing a complaint that they're not intimidated or troubled by what they would see, what they may well perceive as this professional body against whom they have to deal with it. This is something that when you have a complaints process, it's not merely a matter of going on an attack mode.

Also, a number of professional bodies are now using alternative methods of dealing with alternative dispute resolution where there's mediation and other methods of resolving complaints. And respiratory therapists, through their association, would be . . . I would certainly invite them to consider that as an option that they may want to consider when they deal with these complaints.

Not all complaints have to be dealt with on a winner or a loser situation where things have to be drawn out to the very end. These complaints can often be dealt with by an exchange of information, a sharing of information, and other methods other than going through a full-fledged hearing.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's certainly something that all professional agencies — and in particular, a new agency like the respiratory therapists — should consider as methods of mediation and alternate dispute resolution. So I think that's something that they need to address and deal with.

Other things that a new agency is going to have to deal with is maintaining a roll or a register of those that are entitled to practise in that profession. And I can add — once again, going back to personal experience — the signing of the rolls for a new lawyer is something of very much significance. The Law Society maintains a roll that is done on a parchment type of paper and new lawyers are actually expected to sign it with a quill pen that is provided by the Law Society — a marvellous piece of tradition. Now I know that respiratory therapists may not have that sense of tradition or history, but nonetheless this is an important thing.

As they go on through their career they will certainly want to have some kind of formality to that process. And it's certainly going to be incumbent on their association to ensure that records are kept in a formal, proper, meaningful manner. When you have a Bill like the respiratory therapists' Bill, you would want to ensure that they would understand — and I fully expect that they will — the need to maintain a proper roll, a proper registry, an accounting of the people that have joined the profession, left the profession, and as well as other records that are necessary to maintain that type of association. That would include individual files for the members that would include how they applied for membership, what documentation was provided with them by way of professional credentials or qualifications, examination marks, as well as a history of disciplinary complaints.

[16:45]

I know that with the Law Society, each member's file contains a history going right back to when the member was first admitted. I had the opportunity some years ago to represent a lawyer in a disciplinary hearing. The lawyer was actually admitted to the bar in the 1950s. So this is somebody that had practised for well in excess of 40 years, and I was amazed at the depth and breadth of correspondence that the Law Society held on his file for that particular member. It varied from routine inquiries to letters of complaint, for comments on unpaid bills, and a myriad of things that were there.

Nowadays with issues of privacy and issues of public transparency and accountability, we expect them to develop a protocol for what things will go into a therapist's file, what things would not go into a therapist's file. And they may well have to develop a code or a guidebook. And speaking of codes, Mr. Speaker, they will have to develop a code of professional conduct, a code of ethics. As lawyers have a code of professional conduct, so as well must respiratory therapists and many of the other professions that are now regulated in our province.

Moving on to a slightly different topic that this association is going to have to fulfill will be the need to maintain proper accounting records dealing with the fees paid by the members, the expenditures. All these types of agencies will be expected to provide full accounting records for their members, no doubt on an annual basis as they go through this. The accounting records will, I'm sure, have to be an audited financial statement to ensure that things are done in the most competent, professional manner.

And then the respiratory therapists will be relying on yet another self-regulating body, the Institute of Chartered Accountants which I can advise you, Mr. Speaker, has its own very stringent code, deals with complaints, and also deals with removing people's professional licences and professional certificates. Mr. Speaker, these are just a few of the things that they have to deal with. They will as well have to deal with developing bylaws for their association, the usual forms that they have to do.

And, Mr. Speaker, when I read this Bill, one of the things that I noticed was not in this Bill was the authority for them to own real estate. Earlier this year we dealt with the real estate association. And the real estate association — and I think one of the ultimate ironies since I've been a member — is they wanted a legislative authority so that they could purchase or own their own real estate. And, Mr. Speaker, I was surprised that a real estate association licensed through this Legislative Assembly was not entitled to own real estate, the very persons that license, govern and control it. So I'm glad that we were able to give real estate agents the ability to hold real estate.

And so I would've thought that new Bills may well have that provision in there so that respiratory therapists, so that their association could purchase real estate. Absent that in the Bill, they are not able to do that so they will, Mr. Speaker, have to occupy rented premises rather than owned premises, which may in the short run not be a problem. But wanting the respiratory therapists to have all of the options open to them that would be open to realtors, would be open to other people, it's something that we may well see back here on another date where we're looking for an amendment to allow them to purchase property for themselves. So we're looking to see that this comes forward for them.

I understand, Mr. Speaker, that this self-regulation process for respiratory therapists has been something that's been a long time in the making. Our communication with their association now indicates that this is something they've been lobbying and working towards for some 11 years. So I think all members of the legislature would want to commend them for working that hard, that long to ensure that it's finally brought to this point. Because this is something that's of that much significance to them, I want to make sure that all members give this Bill the consideration that it's due and that it's taken seriously and not something that's sloughed off. If there are things in this Bill that aren't workable we will want to raise those things and try and deal with it by way of amendment rather than by way of rejecting the Bill and not having it.

We know that when they've worked that hard for that long, I'm sure that the members on the government side will want to ensure that this Bill gets passed. And we will want to ensure

that it gets passed but, Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that if there are things that need to be changed to protect the therapists themselves, to protect the public, to protect the role of the health professionals in our province, we will want to ensure that we give this Bill all of the maximum and absolute consideration that is necessary to ensure that when this Bill ultimately gets passed in its final form, that it is something that the respiratory therapists can feel that their legislature did a good job for them, for their individual members, and for members of the public.

So I want to ensure that the members here take that responsibility very seriously and that they're going to give this Bill very careful and very due consideration. This group of professionals provides a very important role in our health care system.

There are a number of other health care agencies or groups in the province — the nurses, the doctors, the anesthetists — within our health care. We recognize them, we commend them.

Respiratory therapists are something that we don't hear of very often. And I would like to suggest that maybe they want to come forward in the future and ask us to participate in a public education program so more of us can understand what they do, what their role is within the medical. Perhaps we could have a respiratory therapists' day proclaimed by the legislature at some point; where we would all have a brochure pass, where we would get an understanding of what their role is and the appreciation and respect that any health care professional — and in particular, because we're talking about Bill 42, respiratory therapists — what we need to do to ensure that their profession is properly and formally recognized.

We place our life in the hands of health care professionals on a regular basis and want to ensure that any health care professional is adequately recognized. We often talk about EMTs, emergency medical technologists, and the hard work they do and how they frequently will save lives by reviving people. And we also hear about the hard work that doctors do.

And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the work that is done by respiratory therapists would have similar importance. But I feel that with a public education program, more of us can know about it, more of us can get an understanding.

Last summer, Mr. Speaker, I attended an event outside city hall where there was a piping in of the police officers that came. And they had an honour guard piping them in and the lead piper was a gentleman named Donald McDonald, who was a retired police officer who had cardiac arrest at that. They were able to revive him with an automatic defibrillator device that they brought from the police station. And I was extremely pleased to see that there was a great flurry of activity when he collapsed right on the middle of the street. And I was glad that there was medical technologists, people like the respiratory therapists, that were present, that were able to identify what the problem was, identify where the help could come from, from the police station with the equipment, and I was glad that they were able to do that.

And within five or six minutes, before the ambulance actually got there, Mr. Speaker, Mr. McDonald was sitting upright, breathing, and walked to the ambulance under his own steam.

I'm pleased to report that he had triple bypass a few days later and has now recovered completely. I ran into him at a social function not long ago, and was very pleased to see.

And would also like to add, that he is now Saskatoon's Citizen of the Year, a competition sponsored by CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.]. And, Mr. Speaker, with that . . . on that note, I would like to move adjournment of debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has moved by the member for Saskatoon Southeast that debate on second reading of Bill No. 42 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I move this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:56.]

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Minister Responsible for Seniors

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