



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

---

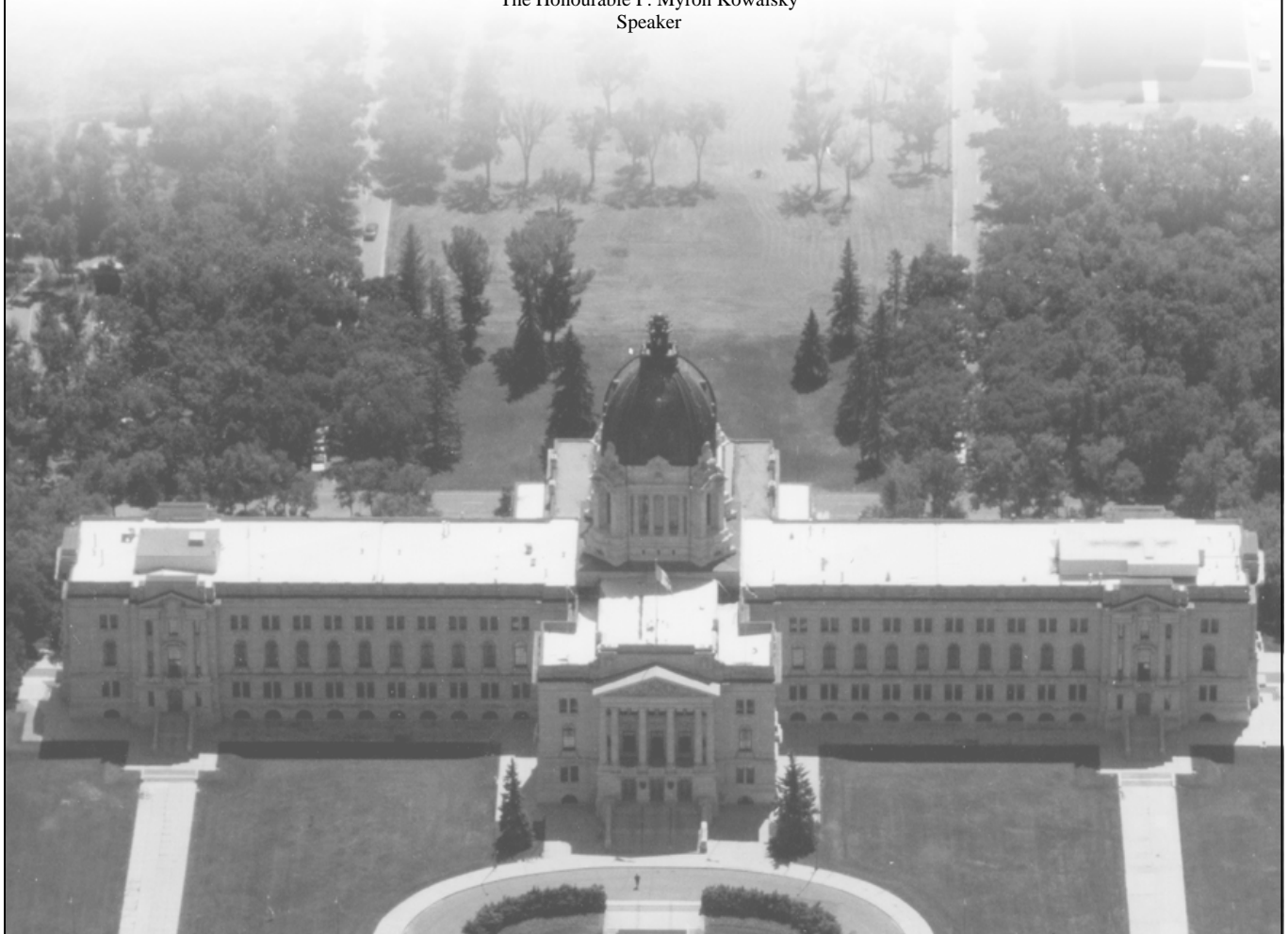
**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

---

(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

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
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
Bjornrud, 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 10:00.]

[Prayers]

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a departure from my regular and normal practice, I stand today to present a petition on behalf of somebody else's crumbling highway. The prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Rose Valley, Humboldt, Invermay, Burr, and Watson. I so present.

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise again today on behalf of people who are concerned about Highway No. 310. Your prayer reads:

The petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to repair Highway 310 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth and tourism in Foam Lake, Fishing Lake, Kuroki, and surrounding areas.

The people that have signed this petition are from the flooded areas of Fishing Lake and from Kuroki, Wadena, Yellow Quill, and Regina and Humboldt. I so present.

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It'll come as no surprise today that I have another petition with citizens concerned with the safety of Highway No. 5. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Tisdale, Bruno, Fulda, Lanigan, St. Gregor, and Rose Valley. I so present.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present another petition from citizens who are concerned about safe driving conditions on Highway No. 3. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to resurface and properly maintain Highway No. 3 from Fairholme to Turtleford and the Livelong access road.

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

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

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition on behalf of parents across Saskatchewan that are concerned that Saskatchewan is the only province besides PEI [Prince Edward Island] that does not have a dedicated children's hospital. Mr. Speaker, the prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement an allocation of financial resources before the next election to build a children's hospital in Saskatoon.

The petitioners today live in Dalmeny, Erindale, Arbor Creek, and Silverspring in northeast Saskatoon. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to improve SaskTel cellular service in rural Saskatchewan.

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from Strongfield and Carrot River. I so present.

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from citizens who would like to not only survive but also to thrive as they drive along Highway No. 5. I will 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 upgrade and widen Highway No. 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

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

I so present, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Kerpan:** — Mr. Speaker, I too rise today, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of citizens who are concerned with the narrowness of the Highway No. 5 and the wideness of the ditches. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, signed by citizens from Spalding, Saskatoon, Humboldt, and Naicam. I so present.

### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Deputy Clerk:** — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14 are hereby read and received as additions to previously tabled petitions being addendums to sessional paper nos. 7, 27, 64, 67, 638, and no. 669.

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

#### Standing Committee on Human Services

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the committee to report The Boiler and Pressure Vessel Amendment Act, 2005 without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — And when shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. When shall this Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

### THIRD READINGS

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

**Hon. Mr. Yates:** — I move that the Bill now be read a third

time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill 21 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure is recognized.

#### Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure

**Mr. Harper:** — Mr. Speaker, I've been instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 4, The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2005 with amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, I request leave that the consideration in Committee of the Whole be waived.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has requested leave that Bill No. 4, consideration of Committee of the Whole be waived. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. When shall the amendment be read a first time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

### FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

#### Bill No. 4 — The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2005

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that the amendment now be read the first and second time.

**The Speaker:** — Leave is required for this. Is leave granted that we read it the first and second time?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 4, the amendments be read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First and second reading of the amendments.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 4 — The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2005

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, I move the Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister, by leave, that this Bill now be read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

#### Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure

**Mr. Harper:** — Mr. Speaker, I've been instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 5, The Cities Amendment Act, 2005 with amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration of Bill 5 in the Committee of the Whole. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. When shall the amendments be read a first time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

### FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

#### Bill No. 5 — The Cities Amendment Act, 2005

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I move the amendments be now read a first and second time, with leave.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First and second reading of the amendments.

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

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 5 — The Cities Amendment Act, 2005

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, by leave I move this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been requested. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. It been moved by the minister that Bill No. 5 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure is recognized.

#### Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure

**Mr. Harper:** — Mr. Speaker, I've been instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 6, The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2005 with amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this Bill be considered in the Committee of the Whole? The Chair recognizes the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been requested to waive consideration of this Bill in Committee of the Whole. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. When shall these amendments be read the first time?

### FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

#### Bill No. 6 — The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2005

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I move the amendments be now read a first and second time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt that motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First and second reading of the amendments.

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 6 — The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2005

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

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, by leave I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been requested. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 6 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — The Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure is recognized.

#### Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure

**Mr. Harper:** — Mr. Speaker, I've been instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 15, The Highways and Transportation Amendment Act, 2005 without amendment.

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

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. When shall this Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 15 — The Highways and Transportation Amendment Act, 2005

**Hon. Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, I move this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 15 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 49 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: in the fiscal year 2005-2006 how much money was collected through the environmental tax? What amount of the funds collected was allocated to the General Revenue Fund? Were funds collected through this tax allocated to any other agencies? If so, which agencies and how much did each agency get?

And, Mr. Speaker, I have similar questions for the year 2004-05, 2003-04, 2002-03, 2001-02, and 2000-2001. I so present.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Mr. Wakefield:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure for me, in fact it's a very proud moment for me. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all my colleagues here in the Assembly, my family that has come and joined us in the Assembly on the occasion of a school break and on the occasion of seeing their grandfather primarily in the legislature.

But first I would like to introduce of course my wife, Carrol, who is in the back. If you'd just give a wave, Carrol. Also my sons, Greg, his wife, Tari. If you could just wave. And my other son, Lane, and his wife, Carrie. They're from Lloydminster. Greg was from Saskatoon, or is from Saskatoon.

I would also now like to introduce some really good-looking young ladies. First of all, if I could get them to wave. First of all, there is Sidney. Wave, Sidney, if you . . . there you go. I would also like to introduce Hunter. She's in the front row. Kaitlyn, if you'd wave. McKenzie and Stephanie.

I would ask all in the legislature to help welcome these people to their legislature. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[10:15]

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is an honour this Friday morning to introduce a group of young cadets from the community of Canora and area. These cadets are part of the Canora Squadron No. 566. And they are accompanied this morning by the commanding officer of this squadron Captain Bernie Wlock, who is obviously a little closer to Yorkton but still does a great job in making sure that that squadron does have a commanding officer and he does a tremendous amount of work.

They are accompanied this morning by one of the parents who's acting as a chaperone, Mrs. Lorie Wasyliw. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming the Canora squadron and their leaders to their Assembly this morning.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Centre, the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the House, I'd like to introduce some employees of SaskWater who are visiting with us today. We have Stuart Kramer up in the west gallery. Stuart Kramer is the president and Denise Soar, Greg Argue and Jeff Mander.

We are very proud of the good work that SaskWater does. And I'd just like to ask all members to welcome them to our House here today. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Hon. Assembly a group of very accomplished women in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. And I'd ask them to each rise briefly as I mention their names: Deanne McMillan, Lee-Ann Ricci, Christine Martyn, Bev Pyne, Therese Voden, and my wife, Mr. Speaker, Linda Stewart.

Mr. Speaker, this group of local women planned an adventure to Africa, which took place this past January, principally to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. The women paid for the expedition entirely out of their own pockets, but before they left they raised \$15,000 at a very well-attended dinner that they put on here in Regina last fall and donated all of that money to a clinic for abused women in the city of Goma in the Congo where the clinic was run by Dr. Joe Lusi and his wife, Lyn.

When they reached Africa in January, the women spent five

days on safari in the Ngorongoro crater and the Serengeti plains in Tanzania, then eight days climbing and descending Mount Kilimanjaro also in Tanzania — an impressive feat since Kilimanjaro, the summit of Kilimanjaro, Mr. Speaker, is about 20,000 feet above sea level and lack of oxygen is a serious issue. But each of the six Regina and area women made it to the summit.

Mr. Speaker, after that, the women flew to Rwanda and travelled through Rwanda by car — which is a dangerous enough experience — to the border of war-torn Congo where they were met by Mrs. Lusi who escorted them also by motor vehicle to the city of Goma, where they visited the clinic which they had donated the \$15,000 to. They found this to be a very emotional but a rewarding experience.

I hope all members will welcome this heroic group of local women who have been awarded centennial medals for these and other accomplishments and have been invited to the upcoming Governor General's luncheon in Regina as people of courage.

Also, Mr. Speaker, accompanying this group is my daughter, Alison — she isn't going to stand up — visiting from Ottawa, visiting from Ottawa to search out an appropriate venue for her upcoming wedding.

I hope all members will welcome this group.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce someone today who's no stranger to this House, Bob Ivanochko. But I particularly am bringing him to your attention this year because he's kept my father out of trouble for two whole years working on a book about working people, the history of working people in Saskatchewan. And it's a very interesting book. It goes all the way back to the fur trade and goes through the various premiers, some of the earliest, some very progressive people who understood the plight of working people.

So I just want to recognize Bob again in the House. Thank him for the work he's done and welcome again to Bob Ivanochko.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

### Earth Day

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is Earth Day. It's a day that we pay particular attention to the plight of our environment and take the time to educate ourselves about environmental issues. The Earth Day Network, a non-profit organization founded by the organizers of the first Earth Day in 1970, has encouraged and organized events across the globe in celebration.

Tomorrow the network officially launches its three-year climate change campaign to educate people all over the world about environmental issues. Their mission is simple: to broaden the environmental movement worldwide and to educate and mobilize people, governments, and corporations to take responsibility for a clean and healthy environment.

The Earth Day Network has hoped for 10,000 Earth Day activities worldwide, Mr. Speaker, several of which will occur right here in our great province. For example, tomorrow the Royal Saskatchewan Museum is hosting numerous events including the showing of films about whooping cranes. And in addition, members of the Canadian Wildlife Service will speak in detail about whooping cranes and what can be done to protect these rare birds.

For more information on Earth Day celebrations, I invite everyone to consult the official website at [www.earthday.ca](http://www.earthday.ca).

Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite all members to join with me in congratulating the Earth Day Network for their hard work and dedication to our environment.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### **Foam Lake Company Active in Biodiesel Industry**

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government forgot agriculture producers and the rural economy in their current budget. But citizens of rural Saskatchewan were disappointed with the lack of recognition and support, but they come from hardy pioneer stock, and they know how to just get on with it and create new opportunities.

Milligan Bio-Tech Inc. of Foam Lake is one such business which saw an agricultural product which wasn't fully utilized. They had a vision and developed it into a resourceful and successful biodiesel industry which utilizes canola and protects our environment.

This Saskatchewan-based developer and producer of high-quality biodiesel and diesel additives recently announced that Clearview Agro Ltd. has joined the growing dealer network offering a blend of MBTI's [Milligan Bio-Tech Inc.] biodiesel-based fuel conditioner directly to their customers. This agreement is important to the company, their customers, and the local economy.

Mr. Speaker, not only will this product benefit the producers of canola, Milligan Bio-Tech Inc., and the community of Foam Lake and area and the province. It will also benefit our environment. As gas prices continue to increase, consumers will be willing to try this product as it's been proven to reduce engine wear by up to 50 per cent and increase fuel economy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Speaker, this is a success story that the Government of Saskatchewan should be promoting, not only in the province but nationally and internationally. It's a win-win situation — an environmentally friendly product that utilizes a renewable

agricultural product that cuts gas consumption and emissions while reducing greenhouse gas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### **Federal Commitments Regarding the Kyoto Protocol**

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've watched with great disappointment over the past three weeks as the federal Conservative government has slashed national programs aimed at reducing our country's greenhouse gas emissions. Forty per cent of this year's federal budget for climate change programs has been cut from the federal departments of Natural Resources and Environment.

Now Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government has announced it will abandon trying to achieve the legally mandated targets for greenhouse gas reductions set by the Kyoto Protocol. Canada is the only country in the world that has signed and ratified the Kyoto Protocol but is in effect abandoning the Protocol and massively cutting back the spending needed to implement it.

As the consequences of climate change accelerate, it is clear that the Prime Minister's actions are highly irresponsible. Our world is experiencing more drought, more intense hurricanes and tornadoes, more forest fires, melting glaciers, melting ice caps, rising sea levels, and a rapid loss of species due to climate change. If action is not taken to address climate change, the world's coastal cities will be put at risk and severe weather events will seriously jeopardize public safety across the globe.

Mr. Speaker, achieving Kyoto targets should be one of Canada's highest priorities, and provincial governments across our country should join forces in insisting that Ottawa honour its international commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member from Melfort.

#### **LeRoy Student Wins First Prize in National Competition**

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, Rachelle Block is a grade 6 student from LeRoy who entered her Remembrance Day essay in the junior category of the Royal Canadian Legion, Watson branch. Rachelle's essay was entitled "Do You Listen to the Sound of the Trumpet?" And she was pleased when she won first prize; she was surprised and elated when her essay continued to advance to the zone, district, and provincial levels, and at every level, she won first prize.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to announce today that Rachelle Block's essay claimed first in the junior category of the Royal Canadian national literacy competition. Rachelle and the winners of other categories will be featured in a national publication of the *Legion Magazine*. I'm also honoured to post Rachelle's essay on my website.



“Do You Listen to the Sound of the Trumpet?” explains what we are remembering and why. If you read this essay, I am sure you will never listen to the trumpet the same way again on Remembrance Day. Mr. Speaker and members of the legislature, please join me in congratulating Rachele Block on a job very well done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### **Communities Pull Together to Help Evacuees**

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I, along with my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Centre, had the opportunity to stop by the field house in Saskatoon where many of the evacuees from the Red Earth First Nation have been staying following the flooding in their community.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the people of Red Earth First Nation for their patience and fortitude in dealing with the disruption in their lives that the flooding has caused. I want to further acknowledge the high level of co-operation between the various levels of government in their evacuation. These efforts have contributed greatly to having the procedure smoothly run.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that services are being provided to evacuees by a number of different communities including Prince Albert, Nipawin, and Spruce Home. But I particularly want to acknowledge the incredible group effort under way at the field house in Saskatoon. It involves the city of Saskatoon, the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, the Saskatoon Health Region, St. John's Ambulance, SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] Kelsey, and Prairieland Park, the Department of Community Resources, members of the business community such as Market Mall and many, many individuals from the general public.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the efforts of all the individuals and organizations working on behalf of evacuees and ask all members to join me in commending them for their dedication and hard work in providing an excellent level of service.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### **Drake's 2005 Citizen of the Year**

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to rise in the House today to talk about a remarkable constituent of mine from the town of Drake. On April 2 at the banquet held at the Drake Community Centre, Mrs. Janet Blair was presented with the honour of the 2005 Citizen of the Year. The annual Drake Citizen Award is presented to “an individual who displays continuous pride and dedication towards their community through their involvement and achievements.”

The list of Mrs. Blair's achievements is very impressive: manager of the girls' softball team, active in the Drake Figure Skating Club, in the rink centre kitchen committee, dinner theatre coordinator, Drake homecoming committee, Drake community services for senior and minor hockey awards banquet coordinator.

Janet Blair was the main volunteer and humanitarian in the community of Drake. Her example was a bright light to those around her. Janet's commitments are so like the many volunteers across our province today, so I would like to ask all members to join me in congratulating Mrs. Janet Blair on her remarkable work for the community of Drake. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

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

#### **First Graduates of New Nursing Education Program**

**Mr. Borgerson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the number seven has always been associated with good fortune. In fact some have believed that it is the number of perfection. Well, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to tell the Assembly today that tomorrow seven nurses will graduate from the new nursing education program of Saskatchewan in Prince Albert.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Borgerson:** — Tomorrow in a ceremony held at the Prince Albert Exhibition Centre, the first graduates will receive their degrees since the program's inauguration. Mr. Speaker, the accessibility of the P.A. [Prince Albert] program, still in its infancy, is not widely known, and program facilitators hope that the first graduation will stimulate interest. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the size of the class following the original seven has already grown to over twenty.

Mr. Speaker, the nursing education program of Saskatchewan is offered through the northern campus of the First Nations University. Preference is shown to applicants who are either Aboriginal or residents of the North. It is hoped that this preference will result in graduates returning to Aboriginal and northern communities, providing them with much needed health care professionals.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to invite all members to join with me in congratulating the first graduates of Prince Albert's nursing education program of Saskatchewan. May these seven be a sign of good things to come for the community of Prince Albert and for our great province.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

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

### Consequences of Budgetary Policies

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all know the Minister of Finance is spending close to a half a million dollars advertising his budget. But it hasn't exactly turned him into a star, Mr. Speaker. The other day the minister held a meeting in Weyburn to try to sell his budget and, according to the *Weyburn Review*, less than a dozen people showed up. Less than a dozen people, Mr. Speaker.

And what did they hear from the minister? Well apparently he told them it's critical for the residents and the businesses of the province to change their attitude. Apparently the NDP [New Democratic Party] is doing everything right. It's the residents and the businesses who need to change their attitude.

Mr. Speaker, if that's the minister's message, it's a wonder anyone bothered to show up at all. Apparently no one really wants to hear about this budget. Will the minister do at least one thing right and cancel what's ever left of this bogus half million dollar ad campaign?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was indeed pleased to be in Weyburn the other night at a meeting organized by the chamber of commerce. I guess it shows that members of the chamber are in fact satisfied with the budget as they seem to have all of their questions already answered before I got there.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that it has been very interesting listening this last week as to what the opposition has been saying about this budget, both reading in the rural papers what they've been telling their constituents and what they've been saying here on the floor of the House. It is interesting to note that that opposition voted against this budget, but has come forward in that interim with a huge list of what it is that they would undertake.

This list that they have outlined over the last week and a half alone has included cuts to the PST [provincial sales tax], has included more money for CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization], more money for crop insurance, more money for hospitals, more money for nurses, more money for SIAST, more money for the school boards, more money for highways, more money for municipalities, more money for the drug plan, more money for flood relief, and the list goes on. And yet those members have no ability to balance the budget.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to remind that minister when there's cuts to agriculture, when there's no funding for nurses, when there's cuts to the Department of Learning, this opposition will vote against budgets like that each and every time.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, in Weyburn the minister was also forced to defend his decision on a hidden tax hike — the \$5.3 million tax hike to the Weyburn School Division. Apparently, Mr. Speaker, apparently the minister called it fair. The minister thinks it's fair to nail the people of Weyburn with a huge tax hike.

Mr. Speaker, I have good news for the minister. He doesn't have to worry about a dozen people showing up next time to his meeting. He doesn't have to worry about a new advertising campaign. The Saskatchewan Party will tell everyone in Weyburn-Big Muddy that the minister thinks that big tax hikes are fair.

Mr. Speaker, the minister promised that amalgamation was going to be good for school boards. Remember that? The Premier promised permanent property tax relief. Will the minister please explain how hiking property taxes on the people of Weyburn is fair?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Speaker, this opposition has no credibility. This critic has no credibility on this issue.

And what is very clear is this. This budget and the regional pooling model that has been introduced by the Minister of Learning in terms of dealing with school financing means very simply this: there is no reason that residents in the Sunrise, the former Sunrise School Division, including the city of Weyburn, should see any increase in their education and property tax as a result of these changes. And furthermore, residents in the city of Estevan should see a tax decrease. Those members should start coming forward with the . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Those members should be more credible in the arguments that they are presenting, Mr. Speaker. Those members should start telling the truth to their constituents.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, speaking of the lack of credibility, I know the minister hasn't been the minister of Learning for a while but he should refer to his own department's website to get his facts straight, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read one more part of the *Weyburn Review* article, and it's a quote. It's quite an article, Mr. Speaker, and I quote, "When asked why there wasn't a transition period to ease the impact of such a loss of revenue, the minister didn't answer the question . . ." Imagine that, Mr. Speaker, that minister not answering a question. I guess he thought I was asking the question here in question period

although, Mr. Speaker, he does get bigger crowds here in the legislature than he does in Weyburn.

Mr. Speaker, we now know why the minister likes being on TV commercials. You can't ask a TV commercial a question although from what I hear, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of people yelling at their TVs when that commercial comes on.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister please admit that his budget is a flop and cancel what's ever left of his half million dollar leadership campaign?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — I'm glad to hear that the critic, Finance critic for the Sask Party, has figured out that talking to the TV is not going to do him any good. But what he needs to do is start to come clean in terms of what the true figures are within this budget.

As long as the defeated Sask Party candidate who is running that school board down there takes a look at the numbers, she will see clearly that there is no need in the Sunrise Division for any increase in the city of Weyburn on education property tax, and in fact there should be a tax decrease in the city of Estevan.

Now the member for Estevan voted against this budget, voted against that proposal, and I have no doubt today will find the courage to stand on her feet in this House and explain why. What I do not know is how it is that that party puts forward any credible, any credible candidate in Weyburn that is going to campaign against the fact that there is money in this budget to make sure there is no education property tax increase in the Sunrise Division. That's the issue, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Funding for Hospital Construction

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, not to be outdone by the Minister of Finance, the Industry minister came out to Humboldt for a budget meeting, and, Mr. Speaker, just like the Minister of Finance he only drew about a dozen people. So it looks like the NDP leadership race is running neck to neck. And you know, Mr. Speaker, it's kind of like the Premier's canoe race. They're both tied for last place.

Mr. Speaker, one of the few people who did show up said he was disappointed that the minister didn't say anything about the Humboldt hospital. This is the biggest issue facing Humboldt right now, and the minister completely ignored it.

Mr. Speaker, why would the minister come out to Humboldt and not even mention the Humboldt hospital to his crowd of about a dozen people?

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Once again we have the critics on the opposition side trying to change the, change the channel. What we have here is a critic who voted against the budget that contains money in it for the Humboldt hospital, who is trying to change the formula that has been in this province for more than a decade in terms of how we deal with capital projects, who has voted against the largest infrastructure spending budget in the province's history, who has voted against the single largest health care budget in the province's history, who has voted against the initiatives that will support her community. That's what that opposition is about.

It is not about putting the interests of Saskatchewan people forward. It is about looking after the politics of the Saskatchewan Party.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the Finance minister that I voted against a budget that put less money into the Humboldt hospital than they're asking from the Humboldt community — \$2 million less for the Humboldt hospital.

Mr. Speaker, the minister finally was forced to talk about the Humboldt hospital, but only, only when he was questioned by the *Humboldt Journal*. However he wasn't any better at answering questions than the Minister of Finance. He didn't say when construction would start. He only said, well they're moving along with plans. Mr. Speaker, that's what the NDP said seven years ago.

On August 16, 1999, the minister of Health announced the planning of a new Humboldt hospital, and last week the minister told the *Humboldt Journal* that they're still planning the Humboldt hospital. Mr. Speaker, if the minister is going to come out to Humboldt and speak to a dozen people about the budget, will he at least provide some answers? What is the NDP going to do to address the \$5 million that they're requiring the local community to raise? And when are they going to stop planning, and when are they going to start building the Humboldt hospital?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, we've seen once again the opposition's just not credible in terms of their approach on this. They do not understand the formula that is in place. They do not understand the process that goes forward in terms of major capital construction. But I will add this to the tab that the members want to run up on the budget.

We've already got them asking for 150 . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please, members. Order. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Speaker, we already have this

opposition calling for 150 more in tax cuts. We've got them calling for — what was the number? — 150 million more for CAIS. We've got a call for more money in crop insurance. We'll add 5 million more — is that what the member is saying she wants for Humboldt? — on top of what we've already put on there.

We've got the request by the Health critic who's beaking off . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The health care critic now saying from his seat, oh and we need more money for nurses, both in terms of wages and in terms of seats, more money for SIAST. More money for the school board, says the Finance critic. More, more, more. And yet do they support the budget that is one of the biggest budgets in provincial history and is a balanced budget? No.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, he's right when he says that we don't understand the process. This hospital was announced seven years ago. That is one slow process. And they've announced it several more times since then. And every month that passes by, the cost to the community goes up. The people of Humboldt and area now have come up with another \$5 million. And even then, even then, Mr. Speaker, the Industry minister comes out to Humboldt and basically admits that he has no idea when they're going to build the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, apparently not one municipal official showed up to the minister's meeting — not one, Mr. Speaker. And is it any wonder? Why should the people of Humboldt have to shell out an additional \$5 million due to the incompetence of this NDP government? And when are they going to start building the Humboldt hospital?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the . . . Order please. Order. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Speaker, the capital budgets in health care, the capital budgets in education, the \$1.1 billion in capital spending across the Crowns and the executive government are in place, and there is a process that we follow.

That process is what keeps the budget in balance. It is that process that keeps us from following the recipe that that opposition advocates, which is a recipe which will cut taxes and dramatically increase spending on whatever the whim of the day is. It is that process that resulted in us today still needing to pay \$550 million in interest costs on a debt built up when those guys were on the Tory payroll. That, Mr. Speaker, is what the problem is when we listen to the kind of advice from the Saskatchewan Party that is not reflective of the will of the Saskatchewan people.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

[10:45]

#### **Status of Agreement Concerning Lakes' Low Water Levels**

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, another summer is approaching, and cottagers, year-round residents, and business owners on Round and Crooked Lake are concerned that low water levels will once again waste another summer for recreation and tourism. In the past, boating, fishing, and all kinds of recreational activities have all but been eliminated.

Mr. Speaker, the low water levels are a result of a dispute over the control of water structures on First Nations land. The dispute is going on for four years now, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Watershed Authority update this Assembly on the status of the negotiations and tell us if an agreement is close?

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government have been working on the negotiations. Watershed Authority officials have been part of the discussions. And it's my understanding that they have been able to move the agenda along, and they are looking at sorting out some of these issues. What they're doing is working with each group along the valley as it's possible to do that. And my sense, Mr. Speaker, is that they will be able to work out an agreement over the longer term.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, this is I believe the fourth year that water levels have got extremely low out there, and I believe this is the third Environment minister that I've asked this question to. And we get the same answer: in the long term we'll have an agreement.

Mr. Speaker, there was similar problems with Echo and Pasqua lakes in the past few years, but a two-year interim agreement was reached last year, with the water levels at these lakes now stable.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us if the province took part in that agreement, and did the province put any funding towards any part of the interim agreement?

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, the agreements that are being reached between the federal government and First Nations have worked on the upper lakes. The lower lakes, they

haven't got those ones sorted out. The province is participating in the appropriate place where we should be there. We have certain responsibilities, but these are agreements that are happening with the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, the federal Minister for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada is very aware of this particular issue and has spent some time talking with people who are involved there. And my understanding is that the federal negotiators are working diligently to resolve this matter.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Bjornerud:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the current Labour minister took the time last summer to tour the area and knows very well just how devastating the low water levels are out there to the environment, to the people that live along there and to everything concerned with the low water levels.

Mr. Speaker, the Friends of the Qu'Appelle are a group of concerned cottage owners who believe that both the federal and provincial governments have a role to play in helping find resolution to this ongoing dispute. This group is so concerned, Mr. Speaker, it even hosted a booth recently at the Regina Sport and Recreation Show to raise public awareness about the issue.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister again. Did this government have anything to do with funding the interim agreement at Echo and Pasqua Lake? And if they did, why can't that same type of an agreement be put in place, even for the interim, for Crooked and Round Lake?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Prentice, who is the federal minister involved with this, I know has had discussions with Mr. Durovick who is the man that the member opposite is talking about. I have written a letter on behalf of the Watershed Authority, as minister responsible, to Mr. Prentice in March identifying the concerns. I've received information from Mr. Durovick saying that he appreciates the support.

And, Mr. Speaker, we, as a province, are participating in the resolution of these particular issues, and we will be there as is needed. But it is in negotiation between the federal negotiator on behalf of the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and the First Nations. Mr. Speaker, we will be there as required.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### **Former Member's Settlement with the Legal Aid Commission**

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I was surprised to read this

morning comments attributed to the Minister of Justice. For weeks that minister has been loudly proclaiming the sanctity of his policy of non-interference in the management of the Legal Aid Commission. Now he's not ruling out becoming involved in the decisions of the commission in the Jack Hillson matter if those decisions are, and I quote, "patently unreasonable."

The article goes on to say the minister refused to define what is patently unreasonable. Mr. Speaker, since he won't answer the question for reporters, I would like to ask the minister if he considers the Legal Aid Commission breaking The Labour Standards Act to be patently unreasonable.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, this is where I considered it patently unreasonable. The member from Saskatoon Southeast accused the Legal Aid Commission of being involved, a party to a political vendetta. He then said that if there was no direction from the minister's office, he would withdraw those remarks and apologize for them.

What is patently unreasonable is that the member from Saskatoon Southeast complains about a cloud over the Legal Aid Commission but continues to refuse to apologize for his remarks, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we learned yesterday that taxpayers are on the hook for close to \$34,000 in outside legal fees to defend the Legal Aid Commission in the Hillson matter. Combine that with the back wages, pension payment, prejudgement interest, the total bill for the unnecessary incompetence demonstrated in the Hillson affair approaches a quarter of a million dollars, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Hillson offered to settle this claim for \$94,000. That offer was rejected by the Legal Aid Commission. Does the minister consider that decision to refuse the settlement offer to be patently unreasonable?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I know that the opposition's viewpoint about how you negotiate these matters is for the government to flip open the chequebook and say, how much? That's not a responsible way to deal with public money, Mr. Speaker.

Now on top of, on top of accusing the Legal Aid Commission of being party to a political vendetta, of deliberately breaking the law, the member from Saskatoon Southeast wants to add and they're incompetent as well, Mr. Speaker. When is his apology going to be forthcoming, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the comment about incompetence was directed at the minister for not dealing with this matter earlier.

Breaking the law is patently unreasonable. Refusing to settle a lawsuit when the cost to taxpayers would have been much lower is patently unreasonable. I don't know what more proof the minister needs that something is wrong. And it's time for him to do his job and get involved.

The hard-working staff of the Legal Aid Commission deserve better. They are now under a cloud. Mr. Speaker, what will this minister do to remove that cloud? What will this minister do to be sure that those responsible for the incompetence demonstrated in the Hillson matter are held accountable?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — The member from Saskatoon Southeast, the opposition accused the Legal Aid Commission of being involved in a political vendetta. Again they repeat today that they deliberately broke the law, as opposed to a disagreement about what the law is, Mr. Speaker, that they deliberately broke the law; that they are incompetent. Some of the most distinguished council in Saskatchewan serve on the Legal Aid Commission, Mr. Speaker. And the member from Saskatoon Southeast wants to continue to call them incompetent lawbreakers involved in a political vendetta.

And he says, what will the minister do to remove the cloud? Well I suggest the member from Saskatoon Southeast remove the cloud that he has cast over himself and over the commission, and make an apology.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the cloud now extends to this minister, and it's a cloud of incompetence as well. Mr. Speaker, will this minister commit now to making sure there are no further appeals by the Legal Aid Commission, no further money wasted, and that the judgment in the Hillson matter is paid promptly so that the taxpayers' money is not wasted any further, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I am under the growing suspicion that when the member from Saskatoon Southeast was rewarded with what he calls a patronage appointment and put in charge of the Legal Aid Commission by Grant Schmidt of the day, that he took his direction directly from the minister's

office. I can assure the members opposite again that it's not the practice today.

Again, again the member has said he would apologize for these remarks about a political vendetta if his fishing expedition showed no evidence of it. Where is the apology, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — If that minister would have done his job competently, the Hillson matter could have been settled for less than half of the final cost. Now we've spent over a quarter of a million dollars. Will this minister commit today that these funds will not come out of the legal aid budget and will not be taxed on those that can ill afford it, that are the recipients of legal aid services from Legal Aid? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — I can assure the House and members of the public that there will be no reduction in legal aid services because of a personnel matter at Legal Aid.

But I can also advise the House, Mr. Speaker, that federal investment funding in legal aid ended on March 31 of this year. The province has been backfilling to make sure that we didn't lose lawyers, that we didn't lose services. That is a much more pressing issue to legal aid services in this province than this matter, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we have seen a history from this minister and this government of refusing to admit they've made mistakes, compound problems, and run up expensive legal bills. We've seen it in Klassen, Kvello. We've seen it in the Martensville matter. We've seen it in the SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] matter and a host of other things that are absolute, utter incompetence, that have ran up massive amounts of public waste and public dollars from the inability of this minister and that government to admit they've made a mistake and correct problems before they become huge, massive problems for the taxpayer.

Will the minister apologize and commit to stopping this ongoing waste?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I had referred earlier to the member from Saskatoon Southeast's relationship with Mr. Schmidt. As many of us know, one of the trustees of the Progressive Conservative war chest in this province is the

campaign manager, or was the campaign manager for the member from Saskatoon Southeast in the last campaign. And so out of all loyalty to the man who appointed him as leader of the Legal Aid Commission, you would think that the member from Saskatoon Southeast would like to get his talons off that money and let Mr. Schmidt use it to advance the cause of people who are willing to call themselves Conservatives in the province of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**The Speaker:** — Order. For ministerial statements, the Chair recognizes the Provincial Secretary.

#### The 80th Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, today is an historic day for all Canadians — the 80th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada. Her Majesty has been our Canadian head of state for 54 years. In 2002 we celebrated her Golden Jubilee, 50 years as Queen.

Her Majesty has dedicated her entire life to the Commonwealth of which we are a part and especially to the 16 countries of which she is Queen. Canada is blessed indeed to be one of those countries.

The Queen's role as our Canadian head of state is not just a formality. Her Majesty has visited Canada many, many times and considers our country to be her second home. She and Prince Philip have come to Saskatchewan six times — in 1951, '59, '73, '78, '87, and then of course most recently just last year for our provincial centennial celebrations.

On all of those visits Queen Elizabeth has shown how closely she follows Canadian issues and events, how familiar she is with our way of life, and how much she loves Canada. In return, Mr. Speaker, Canadians of all cultural backgrounds have repeatedly demonstrated their respect and affection for a truly remarkable woman. The Queen has placed her imprint on the history of the country. She has shown constant dedication, integrity, and devotion to duty.

The Queen and the members of her family treasure their special link with First Nations. They genuinely understand and value the treaty relationships first established by Queen Victoria. That relationship is symbolized by the runner and cushion for the mace presented by First Nations to this Assembly on its centennial. They join the portrait of Her Majesty and other symbols of the Crown in this Chamber.

In front of the Legislative Building is a very special tribute to our royal heritage: the bronze statue of the Queen on her favourite horse, Burmese, a horse born and raised in Saskatchewan and given to Her Majesty by the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. During her centennial visit in May of last year, the Queen unveiled this beautiful statue to commemorate her Golden Jubilee. It will forever be a reminder of the role played by Queen Elizabeth II in the history of Canada and Saskatchewan.

[11:00]

I'm pleased to announce this morning, Mr. Speaker, that individuals in our province have the opportunity until Sunday, April 30 to personally congratulate the Queen on her 80th birthday. You can either visit the Department of Government Relations website to electronically send a message, or you can personally sign a guest book at either the Legislative Building here in this building, Mr. Speaker, or at the Government House Museum and Heritage Property.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in wishing Her Majesty a very happy 80th birthday, health, happiness, and many more years as our Queen.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, first of all I'd like to thank the minister for sending over a copy of his ministerial statement earlier this morning.

On behalf of the official opposition, Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to join the Provincial Secretary in wishing Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II our best wishes on this her 80th birthday.

The fact that the Queen has visited Saskatchewan six times is proof of the special place Canada and Saskatchewan have in her heart. The last visit by Her Majesty was just last year during our province's centennial. And I think we all recall the pouring rain that Her Majesty endured to fulfill her duties, and that is just evident of her dedication to her role.

Mr. Speaker, during the 1987 royal visit, I had the honour of attending the royal performance at the Globe Theatre here in Regina and then went on to Kindersley to attend the luncheon in honour of the Queen and Prince Philip. And after visiting Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle a couple of times, that had a very special place in my heart, something that I will never forget. And as the minister stated, the Queen is truly a remarkable woman and has been devoted and dedicated to her duty for over 50 years.

And I join the Provincial Secretary in encouraging the residents of our province to sign the guest book here at the legislature or at Government House. And, Mr. Speaker, in closing I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in extending Her Majesty health, happiness, and God's blessings on this, her 80th birthday. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill No. 62 — The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 2006

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

Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 62, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read the first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 62, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

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

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

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

#### **Bill No. 63 — The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2006**

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 63, The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 63, The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — I'm tempted to ask for leave right now, but instead I'll say simply next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

#### **Bill No. 64 — The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2006**

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to move first reading of Bill No. 64, The Income Tax Amendment Act of 2006. I would move that it be now introduced and read for the first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 64, The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2006 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

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

**The Speaker:** — And when shall the Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Next sitting.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

#### **WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — On behalf of the government I will be tabling responses to written questions no. 903 to 907 inclusive.

**The Speaker:** — Responses to 903 to 907 inclusive have been submitted.

### **SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE**

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

#### **Funding for Boards of Education**

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to enter into debate about an issue that I think is critically important for the people of Saskatchewan and property tax payers right across this province.

Mr. Speaker, in entering this debate, or beginning this debate, I would like to speak a little bit about what I believe are the many challenges and the hard work that is being done every day across this province by people in the education and the learning system.

You know, Mr. Speaker, in the fall we see countless numbers of parents going to the schools in their communities, their child's fingers in their hand, and walking up to the school board and to the school building and entrusting to the teachers of the province the future education and learning of their child.

Mr. Speaker, that particular occasion is one where there's a special commitment and bond between the parents of this province and their children and the educational system. And by and large, Mr. Speaker, the people that deliver the educational programs in this province live up to that challenge in an incredible and very positive way.

Mr. Speaker, there are also many people in this province who aren't directly connected to the schools who have their children that are grown and perhaps who only see the part of the



education system that is reflected on their property tax bills. And, Mr. Speaker, those people are very concerned about what they see happening and what they've seen happening over the term of this NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, I recall when I was on the Melfort Board of Education, and had the honour of chairing it, that we used to have a relationship between government funding and local property taxes and that 60 per cent of the cost of delivering an educational program in our board's jurisdiction, 60 per cent of the cost was delivered by the provincial government and 40 per cent of the cost of delivering that program came from the property taxes. Mr. Speaker, that was the relationship and the ratio that existed at that time.

Mr. Speaker, over the term of this government's mandate that has consistently and steadily eroded to the point where, in essence, 60 per cent of the funding for educational programs are now coming from property tax payers and 40 per cent are coming from the provincial government. Mr. Speaker, that has created severe difficulties for the property tax payers right across this province.

Now I understand that there are jurisdictions where those ratios are slightly less or different, but I also know that by and large this is very symptomatic of what the ratio of provincial to local property tax payers' funding has been over the years.

Mr. Speaker, it is always difficult to know what is the exact perfect balance in taxation policy. I understand that there is always a mixture of taxation sources in any government's jurisdiction. You have consumption taxes, profit taxes, property taxes, and those kinds of things. And some of them are less sensitive than others to the varying changes in the economic fortune of the people that have to pay those taxes. And certainly I believe that at long last the government recognized — when they made the announcements in Birch Hills — that they were going to provide special funding for agricultural land to get back to that 60/40 ratio that I spoke about that used to exist 15 years ago.

The minister opposite says that this never existed. Well I disagree. That used to exist very close to those numbers, and in essence that was the norm that was established over the years. Mr. Speaker, it never maybe existed in that minister's memory because he certainly was part of the administration that dramatically changed it over the last decade and eroded that basic relationship.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, we also know that there are jurisdictions whereby the property and the assessment of the property is very profitable, is very, very positive and in those jurisdictions under the way the formulas used to work that there were jurisdictions that were called zero-grant boards in that because of the nature of the assessment on property in those jurisdictions, that in essence no money was forwarded to that board from the Department of Education.

Mr. Speaker, the government then decided that there was going to be a mandatory restructuring of the way boards of education were going to be functioning in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, at the time we sort of expressed our concerns that there had been a great deal of emphasis placed by previous ministers

of Education and I think reasonably well-received and encouraged that there should be voluntary amalgamations across this province, that the people who were delivering responsibilities for educational programs at the local level were those who best knew how to reorganize their boards in order to provide maximum benefit to the students that they served. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that there was some pretty good track records of considerable progress being made in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, the current Minister of Finance when he was the Learning minister, decided this wasn't good enough and arbitrarily set a program of forced amalgamation across the province. When that happened, there was a great deal of concerns expressed from boards of education, from school trustees, from teachers, from LEADS [League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents], and school administrators, saying that this process was going to create a great deal of disruption and there needed to be some transition in order for it to be implemented. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that is shown that it would have made sense.

The government did provide four and a half million dollars last year to do some bridging, particularly on extensions and validation of contracts that needed to be carried forward into the new divisions. But in this year's budget there was nothing provided for in terms of transition. The boards simply were on their own.

Mr. Speaker, to make this even more difficult for boards of education at this time, they're in a process, now that they're in the middle of this reorganization, to also implement something that the school boards association had been lobbying for. And that is, is that their fiscal year would follow the school year. And legislation is just on the order paper, is just forward in the House now, that enables that to happen. And, Mr. Speaker, we do support that concept and we think it will be positive in the long run.

In the short run it is creating a tremendous amount of work for the administration of school boards as they bring together budgets from the individual boards that have been a part or are now part of the amalgamated boards. They have to deal with the financial statements of those boards coming forward. And I think that it's being shown across the province, as we see the results of some of that work, that this is much more difficult than anyone thought it would be. They are having to bring forward operating statements. They're having to bring forward balance sheets, and in many instances they're finding deficits. They're finding that there were assets on the books on properties in many locations that have not the value that is being shown on the financial statements. And so this amalgamated merge to the financial statement is very difficult to bring together.

Coupling that with the fact they now have to go into a new fiscal year, so they're preparing budgets for in essence eight months. They have to bring together all the assets in the communities. They've got to then determine what their mill rates are going to be, and they have to recognize that within most of these boards there is a fair bit of discrepancy on what were the mill rates of the boards previously. I know in the Northeast for example the mill rates previously ran from 15 to 22 mills. And as a result they've now got to decide at what level

they're going to bring together the new amalgamated mill rate.

Mr. Speaker, to make this more difficult, we also then to make sure everything was very much complicated in this whole process, they are now moving into the new foundation operating grant structure. They're moving to a system that would instead of having a great number of factors that go into the calculation of the operating grant, they are now minimizing those factors so that it moves towards a single value per student, if you like, for the operating grant — urban, rural, remote locations or otherwise. That, Mr. Speaker, is a matter for some debate.

It has always been held in my opinion that it did indeed and was recognized that there were indeed extra costs to provide a unit of education in rural and particularly remote rural locations as compared to the concentrated urban locations. There also are arguments that would be said in the urban locations that they have a disproportionate number of special needs students that require extra funding as well, and that debate is one that is ongoing.

[11:15]

But, Mr. Speaker, my point is this: at the end of the day in the budget that was tabled there was 11-extra million dollars of funding for the learning system K to 12. And, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is, is when you look at the costs of providing basic educational services in this province, the \$11 million is simply not going to be enough to provide the increased costs.

Mr. Speaker, I think everywhere in the education system these costs are indeed occurring. In some places though . . . And I would argue that there is a special case that can be argued in rural locations, and that is because of the influence of the cost of transportation particularly on their system. In the urban centres they have all of the costs of heating and electricity and support staff and things of that nature, as they do in rural locations. But in the rural locations particularly with the fact that we've got oil over \$70 a barrel, that we see diesel and fuel costs going up dramatically to transport students, we see this as a burden that is particularly onerous for the rural boards of education. And therefore, we're ending up with situations that are untenable.

Mr. Speaker, to make this even more complicated and to further put extra burdens on people in the province, we see in some jurisdictions, and the most glaring one in terms of the total numbers is the Weyburn School Division — the Cornerstone School Division in Weyburn — who is seeing a decrease in the funding grant from the board or the Department of Education of \$5.539 million, Mr. Speaker. It's the largest decrease in funding anywhere in the province, and it's particularly difficult to see this kind of a massive removal of provincial funding in one school year to any jurisdiction in the province.

Now the government argues that's because there is a zero-grant board in this jurisdiction in the new amalgamated issue. Now I fail to understand why this would impact in a comparison from last year to this year. If it's a zero-grant board, they received no funding last year from the province of Saskatchewan either. So if there is no funding for that component of this board this year, it really is a comparison that should not explain this kind of a

loss. I recognize and see that there is some student loss in the jurisdiction, some 2 per cent or 164 students. And that does explain a certain amount of funding that is not available because of the loss of population.

But, Mr. Speaker, the amounts are simply outrageous in terms of the impact on the people in the Weyburn area. And, Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of thing that does little to have people understand and build support for the schools in their community. What people are going to see in that area is a massive shifting of money onto their property taxes. And that is going to create an environment whereby people again are not going to be as supportive as they should be of the great fundamental work that school divisions do and school systems do to provide education for children.

So instead of having a discussion about the value of the education in these communities, what we end up having happen far too often is the discussion about the funding and the fairness of the funding of the education because the government simply has not provided adequate funding for the education system in this province.

Mr. Speaker, when we're going through such a massive restructuring of any provision of fundamental services, there has to be time to allow this to happen in a way that is appropriate and fair. And if indeed there has to be and it is appropriate that there's a shifting of funding from rural to urban locations, if the argument indeed is valid and accepted that this should be done, then, Mr. Speaker, it's got to be done in a way that looks after the fundamental funding of the costs of learning and the costs of providing basic services.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move today, seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly:

That this Assembly condemn the government for not providing adequate funding to all boards of education to cover the increased costs of delivering education programs, resulting in increased mill rates and further tax increases to ratepayers.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Melfort, seconded by the member for Canora-Pelly:

That this Assembly condemn the government for not providing adequate funding to all boards of education to cover the increased costs of delivering education programs, resulting in increased mill rates and further tax increases to ratepayers.

The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to enter into debate this morning on the motion that my colleague has put forward regarding funding of the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] system in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to try to spend my short time explaining a little bit to the people that are not only watching but may read the transcripts of this morning's debate about how education is funded in the province of Saskatchewan. Because there has to be an understanding first of all before you recognize whether or not problems develop.

Mr. Speaker, from the Department of Learning's information that they circulate, they explain the provincial K to 12 operating grant by simplifying it to a formula. And basically what they say to the people and to everyone involved in education that the funding formula is simply  $A - B = C$ .

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to clarify that A means it is the school division's recognized expenditures. Okay, so that means that all of the costs of operating a school division whether they're human resource costs, the teachers, the bus drivers, everyone that is employed by a school division. It is also the cost of classroom materials. It is the cost of physical education materials. It is everything that is involved in the operation of a school division.

B is the school division's recognized local revenues. And, Mr. Speaker, that is determined, first of all, by the government. It is not determined by the local tax base. What the government does or the Department of Learning does is take the assessment of that particular school division and apply equalized mill rate to that assessment so that all school divisions are treated equally. That is what is meant by recognized local revenues.

So now you have local expenditures, A, minus B, the revenues that can be derived by that formula of applying that uniform mill rate to the assessment, and the difference between that is C, which is the operating grant.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to enter into . . . a paragraph into the record here. This is put forward by the Department of Learning. And it helps to explain why school divisions, certain school divisions, are in the predicament that they are today. And the paragraph is this, and I quote:

Since the total provincial operating grant is a fixed amount, the formula ( $A - B = C$ ) must balance. Any increase in recognized expenditures must be offset either by an equal increase in recognized revenues, provincial grant or a combination of recognized revenue and provincial grant. Similarly, any adjustments that result in a grant increase for one or more than one school division can only be achieved by reducing grants to other school divisions by an equal amount."

Mr. Speaker, that last statement I think summarizes what people are saying across the province when you have a decision made by this government to change the amount of money that is derived at the local level. They have made those changes to a significant number of school divisions. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there are nine school divisions who actually are going to be receiving less grant.

Now the reason for that, and the Minister of Finance, the former minister of Learning, understands this and I think he understands this quite well. When he says . . . He knows that if you are going to address an inequity in terms of the funding

provided to students in a public school board versus those students in rural Saskatchewan — and there are some who would argue that it is more expensive to deliver an education in rural Saskatchewan — but if you understand the concept and agree with the concept that you have to make the student worth the same amount of dollars, Mr. Speaker, whether they live in Regina, whether they're taking grade 10 in a high school here in Regina, or whether they're taking grade 10 in Invermay School, the government has decided that the amount of grant provided for that student shall be the same.

So, Mr. Speaker, that movement of recognizing an increased cost for a student is significant. It's millions of dollars. And I had the opportunity to look at again the government's website where they recognize the school divisions, the larger urban school divisions in Regina, in Saskatoon, both the public and the separate systems, Prince Albert. The amount of money allocated to those — I believe it's six or seven school divisions — is about \$18 million from the operating grant formula. Mr. Speaker, that's more money than was put in by the Minister of Finance into the total operating grant formula.

Now you remember, Mr. Speaker, the last sentence that I read from the government's information says that if you increase money to a particular school division it is at the expense of another school division because the grant remains the same. They don't adjust the grant. So what has happened to many school divisions, especially in Weyburn? In my area of Canora-Pelly, Mr. Speaker, the Good Spirit School Division, they have had a reduction in the amount of tax dollars that they will receive from the government by way of a grant. It's been reduced.

Now, Mr. Speaker, at the same time the Good Spirit School Division has had a reduction in its assessment — small, but a reduction. So if you apply that formula that says that you take an assessment and you multiply it by a particular computational mill rate, or equalization mill rate, that number is now going to be smaller as well. So, Mr. Speaker, as I pointed out from the information provided by the Department of Learning, where does the board of education receive its money? Where does it balance its books? The grant has been made smaller. There is a cost that in fact is increasing.

My colleague from Melfort pointed out some of the increases that are taking place: the new contract for human resources, whether that be teachers or any of the other people involved in providing the education system; utility rate increases; or for that matter, Mr. Speaker, just regular cost of inflation. Those dollars are estimated to be significant. In fact I understand that the School Boards Association is suggesting that the cost of education in the province of Saskatchewan for the pre-K to 12 system is going to be increasing by as much as 40 to \$70 million.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I just indicated to you, the foundation grant formula has only increased by 11 million. If costs are going to increase by 40 million — we'll stay on the low end of the range of projection — where does the rest of the money come from?

Now I listened very interestingly this morning to the minister stand in his place and say there will be no tax increases in these

school divisions. Now tell me, how does he expect the board of education to provide a balanced budget?

Now I understand the Minister of Finance does not understand the word balanced budget, but school divisions must provide a balanced budget. If they're short a specific amount of money when they have prepared their budget, they have two choices, Mr. Speaker. They can reduce costs, which means cut staff, cut personnel, cut program, close schools, a variety of things that they can do. But, Mr. Speaker, those are all cuts that will be done at that local level.

Now if they decide that due to the fact that, you know, the loss of a certain number of students across a whole division doesn't mean it came out of one specific area where you can now reduce the number of teaching staff. Because if you have a classroom that had 19 students in it last year and today it has 16 students in it, that doesn't mean that you can cut a teacher, if you look at the whole school and now that it's dropped 15 or 16 or 17 students. So, Mr. Speaker, the choice that a board of education has is to go to the taxpayer because the grant, as I indicated, is fixed. So this government has decided that we're not going to provide enough dollars to address all of the things that are coming towards the boards of education as far as costs.

We listened to the Premier talk about 60/40 funding of education in rural Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is just not going to be accurate. And the reason it's not going to be accurate is that the boards of education, predominantly in rural Saskatchewan, are going to be faced with a revenue shortfall. And if that revenue is required from the taxpayer, they're going to apply it to the mill rate.

[11:30]

Mr. Speaker, there are so many other things that this government has failed to recognize and one of them is the capital expenditures. Mr. Speaker, last year in the budget that we have looked at, the amount of money that was allocated for capital expenditure was about \$37 million. That has been reduced, Mr. Speaker, this year to 21 million. Now inflation takes up all of that.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are tremendous inadequacies and weaknesses in the system and I'm pleased to second the motion put forward by the member from Melfort.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow, the Minister of Learning.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and it's a pleasure to stand in the House and speak against this motion put forward by the opposition. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would argue that this government has done more to ensure equitable funding of our education system and equitable learning opportunities for students than has been done in the past 60 years.

This government has made significant changes to the K to 12 education system to ensure that all K to 12 students here in our province have access to the best possible education

opportunities regardless of where they live. And with that we've made significant changes in how we fund our education system to ensure it is accessible, equitable, and sustainable to all our students and ratepayers.

Mr. Speaker, the government's response to the Boughen Commission in May of '04 committed to a three-phase initiative to renew our education system here in Saskatchewan. We promised to restructure school division boundaries to create fewer, larger divisions with the capacity to deliver high-quality programs and service to all students.

We said we would develop a new system of school operating grants that is simpler, fairer, and more transparent. And we said we would address the issue of property taxes and dedicate 30 per cent of new and ongoing compensation on equalization from Ottawa to property tax relief to shift that balance off of education property.

Mr. Speaker, boundary changes are now complete and we now have 28 school divisions where before we had 81. Former zero-grant boards have been amalgamated into larger divisions, and this has made financing and services for students across the province more equitable.

Mr. Speaker, we've also made substantial progress in our commitment to redevelop the school operating grant, guided by four principles — equity, simplicity, transparency, and accountability.

In '06-07 boards will receive more unconditional funding, more funding earlier in the fiscal year, and will have greater management flexibility. We have eliminated the urban-rural basic rate differential, resulting in a common basic rate for all students regardless of where they live. And this change is balanced by continued — and, Mr. Speaker, I'd like the opposition to listen to this — by continued recognition for rural schools through isolated schools and higher transportation rates and continued differentials for shared services and technology.

Mr. Speaker, this year provincial funding for K to 12 operating grants is up \$10.8 million and brings our '06-07 funding to \$563.2 million. However, Mr. Speaker, the total provincial operating grant is a fixed amount. And as the member said, the grant is provided to school divisions using an equalization formula based on the principles of fairness and equity.

The grant formula distributes funding to divisions based on need. School divisions with lower assessment and therefore lesser capacity to raise revenue locally receive higher levels of support, while school divisions with greater capacity to raise funding at the local level receive a lower level of support.

These principles of fairness and equity have long characterized the foundation operating grant, and in recent times the development of highly assessed school divisions threatened to undermine the long-standing principles on which school division funding was based. Restructuring helped to re-address this concern, which also means the highly assessed areas — usually occurring as a result of natural resources such as oil and gas — would make a fair and equitable contribution to the provincial funding pool, provincial funding that would benefit all students regardless of local circumstance.

And as we said we would do in our response to the Boughen Commission, Mr. Speaker, we provided education property tax relief. Last year, Mr. Speaker, we announced education property tax relief for '05 and '06 totalling \$110 million, and in March of this year our Premier announced a 53 million in targeted support for agricultural properties. This is ongoing, sustainable funding to support our farm families. Combined with the agricultural land share of the 55 million, this additional \$53 million will mean an overall 38 per cent reduction of the education portion of property tax on farm land. It will mean for our producers that the provincial local split on average, provincial-wide basis on education property tax will be 60/40 now.

The Premier also stated when he made his announcement in Birch Hills that this is a long-term commitment — that on average, provincial basis, the 60/40 split on agricultural land will be maintained indefinitely. And we will monitor this yearly to ensure that this commitment is met. Our Premier has delivered on this commitment that the status quo is not an option.

Mr. Speaker, it's also this government's ongoing commitment to continue to work with boards of education and our education partners to bring the provincial-local 60/40 split on education funding to all classes of property tax. This is our long-term goal.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time, the single largest operating cost for school divisions is teachers' salaries which account for almost half of all division costs. In 2005-06 and '06-07, the government provided funding to fully cover the cost of current teachers' collective agreement totalling \$41.6 million. This is a significant cost that the province has borne alone to help mitigate further pressure on property tax base and local boards.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial government continues to provide financial assistance to restructuring school divisions. In '05-06, the government provided \$8.5 million in funding to cover those transition costs that resulted from restructuring. This year we will provide a further 4 million for these costs, bringing our contribution to the one-time restructuring costs of 12.5 million. This funding has been provided so that the boards of education can direct their resources towards program delivery and service enhancement for students.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think we can agree that we have made substantial progress in our commitment to provide the highest quality education to all of Saskatchewan students regardless of where they live.

We also need to be mindful that each year changes in enrolment and programs within school divisions, as well as changes in taxable assessment and provincial funding levels, can cause significant shifts in the allocation of funding. This year 11 out of 28 school divisions will receive grant increases in excess of 5 per cent and 8 will receive grant increases up to 5 per cent. In other words, 68 per cent of our school divisions have received an increased grant in the 2006-07 year.

As we anticipated, the creation of larger school divisions has had a significant impact on school division grants. Elimination of inequities caused by zero-grant boards has increased the

taxable assessment for students, and their local revenue raising capacity is now benefiting the new larger divisions. However in this transitional year, this will result in significantly reduced provincial grants for 9 of our 28 school divisions. Allowing these changes to impact the grant funding is consistent with the principle of equity. The larger divisions blend urban and rural areas, allowing all school divisions to achieve similar economies of scale. This equalizing feature is fundamental to the allocation of the provincial operating grant.

Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the most significant determinants within the grant is student enrolment counts. Decreases in school division enrolment will result in decreased grant allocations. Conversely the reverse occurs for those school divisions that experience an increase in enrolments. Enrolment declines occur every year and have a significant impact on the grant a school division receives and the overall grant distribution. Student counts as of September '05 are down, and only four divisions have been positively affected by enrolment increases.

Mr. Speaker, we expect these enrolment declines may result in some reduction in staffing levels of . . . boards of education adjust to the lower enrolments and as we recognize that some of our newly restructured school divisions will be challenged to address issues as well as other challenges caused by reassessment and the elimination of zero-grant boards.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do appreciate this opportunity to give a quick overview of the funding to Saskatchewan schools. Madam Speaker, the opposition is inaccurate in their comments and their allegations, and we'll continue to support education in the province of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Chair. This is a very interesting debate that touches the very heart of Saskatchewan. It touches the people and the students and the children of this province. So I'd like to read a headline from one of my local papers dealing with this very issue. And the headline in the *Carlyle Observer* says, "Significant impact of the provincial budget announcement."

Now in itself that's a fairly generic comment on the budget. It says it has a significant impact — doesn't say good or bad. But the article itself really explains the feelings of rural residents as to what this government has done to education across rural Saskatchewan. It talks about:

The provincial restructuring initiative and regional pooling has resulted in an estimated loss of provincial grant revenue to this area [southeast Saskatchewan] of over 5.3 million dollars.

And I'll quote again:

This is a loss of 56% of the provincial grant previously received for public education in the southeast.

And we're talking the South East Cornerstone School Division — the Weyburn School Division — Madam Deputy Speaker. And they have taken a hit of 56 per cent of their provincial grant money.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is a huge hit. That means that the dollars that are going in to support education can only come from one other place, and that's from the property tax payers of the southeast Saskatchewan.

And while the minister in reading her speech may have said that there was changes in the oil and gas revenues, yes there have been in that area. But when the division sets the mill rate it doesn't just target that on to those industries that have developed, on to the oil and gas industry. Everybody is affected by that increased mill rate. Whether you're the smallest business person, the smallest farmer, whether you're a homeowner working for the Department of Highways — whomever it may be — whether you're a schoolteacher in the division, you pay that additional mill rate. And there will be an increase in that mill rate.

The old Bengough-Weyburn Rural Division they amalgamated a few years ago . . . I don't remember the name of that division, the new name that they had picked. Everybody just thought of it as Weyburn Rural or Bengough. And they're going to face up to a 50 per cent increase in their mill rate.

**An Hon. Member:** — South Central.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Now when you're talking . . . The past minister says South Central. The individual families that are going to be paying that don't simply look at the mill rate. They don't simply look at what their assessment is. They look at the real dollars they spent on education property taxes last year. They look at the real dollars that they're spending this year. And notwithstanding the government's promise of some tax relief on property taxes — an ad hoc tax relief; nothing in place permanently; it's year-to-year announcements — notwithstanding that, those families, farms, businesses, individuals are all going to face paying more money for education.

[11:45]

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, that goes counter to what the Minister of Finance was saying in question period — that there would be no tax increase. Madam Deputy Speaker, there most assuredly will be a tax increase for a good many people in the Weyburn School Division.

It's not like the Department of Education didn't know about it, because I'll quote again from this article in the *Carlyle Observer*. I quote:

The Board [meaning the school division board] was proactive in sharing its concerns with [the] Department of Learning officials two months prior to the budget. Property tax relief for agricultural producers, although welcome by the Board of Education, provides no ability for the Board to reduce the burden of education property taxes to all taxpayers of the southeast.

Most of the taxpayers in the Southeast will see a property tax increase even after you have subtracted any small amount of money that may have come from the Premier's much-belated announcement on property tax relief. It was announced in the 2003 election campaign and it's finally, a little bit of it, going to be delivered this year.

You know, so I understand the government members opposite look with some skepticism when members of the opposition stand and talk about issues. They seem to believe that members on this side of the House are unaware of the issues and don't know what the real concerns are, you know. And I have to question whether the minister knows what the real concerns are when it comes to education, when she's afraid to stray from a prepared text in talking on this very issue, madam. She had to read her speech because she was afraid to stray from whatever it was that her officials had written for her.

I'd like to read from an editorial, also from the Carlyle paper by Jerry Mamer. Now Jerry was the former mayor of Stoughton, but that's not what his claim to fame would be on this particular issue. His claim to fame on this, Madam Deputy Speaker, would be that Jerry was the long-time principal of the Stoughton K to 12 school, so very familiar with education, very familiar with education in the Southeast, Madam Deputy Speaker. And he is a new . . . he would have been . . . His school would be within the boundary of the South East Cornerstone, the Weyburn School Division.

And he goes on to say in his editorial, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I quote, "This certainly looks like a cash grab to me." And that's exactly what's happening, that the system that is taking place here is grabbing more dollars from the families in that school division.

And as my colleagues have pointed out earlier, it's certainly not the only school division because there's eight or nine of them for a total of \$13 million, which is more money than the Minister of Finance put in as additional money in this year's budget in the Department of Education.

So Mr. Mamer goes to say, "The school division in the southwest is rumoured to be thinking of eliminating up to fifty teaching positions." So this affects not only property taxpayers. It affects not only students. It affects teachers very dramatically. And I know that the southeast school division is in a very same position. The South West School Division is looking at cutting up to 50 teachers. I know that the Weyburn School Division is looking at cutting up to 40 to 50 teachers. It's going to have a huge impact across the whole area.

That means student ratios are going to go up. Yes, there's a 164 less students in the Weyburn School Division. If you cut out even 40, that's one teacher for every four students that were lost. I don't think that student/teacher ratios in that division are 1:4. So this is going to have a huge impact in the communities. It's going to have an impact with those that are available to support communities in total, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Mr. Mamer goes on to talk about that "While there's a moratorium on our schools at the present time, that will be coming off at the end of this year, and there will be significant closures of schools."

You know, the minister talked about the level of support that the province provides for education. In the Weyburn School Division next year, there will be no level of support. The property taxpayers of that area will have to support the education costs 100 per cent on their backs.

And schools are closed already. In the last two years Gainsborough School has closed. The Storthoaks School has closed. The Alida School has closed. And on the chopping block may very well be a couple of more schools — just in my constituency, not in the whole division. Carievale and Manor Schools would also be in jeopardy. So when the minister is talking about support, the province is not providing the necessary support. And it's hurting the education of the students in southeast Saskatchewan, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am indeed pleased to enter into this debate today. This is an important debate about the future of education in our province and indeed very much allows us to highlight our vision and our belief of how we can make that education system more sustainable, how we can strengthen the ability for teachers to provide high-quality learning throughout all communities in this province, including those that are not blessed with a lot of the resources that we see in some of the divisions.

When I was initially appointed as the minister of Learning just after the 2003 election, I had an opportunity to meet with a number of stakeholders from across the province including parents, including representatives of the business officials, including trustees. And it became clear as we had the discussion that there were some real difficulties within the system. Saskatchewan education is changing. In part it is changing because of a decline in student population numbers.

In the last 10 years, we have seen about a 25,000 student population drop within the system . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member opposite says that the declining birth rate is the fault of the NDP government. That is an interesting argument when in fact declining birth rates are a phenomenon across the country.

What we have seen though is 25,000 fewer children in the system. By necessity, you would argue then that there is a change going on within Saskatchewan's school system, within the education system, that is certainly impacting more significantly in the southern part of the province where we are seeing a combination of urbanization and declining student population. Conversely, as you move further north what you see is pressure on the system to make sure we've got new facilities to deal with the growth of the student populations in other communities.

So there are two issues at play within the system. One is a . . . [inaudible] . . . student numbers across the province, and the second is a shift within the province as to where those students are.

The system that we had in place was really designed by

Woodrow Lloyd when he was the Education minister under Premier Douglas. It was a system that was, at the time, in 1944 . . . a major set of changes, the first major set that had really been undertaken since '05. In 1944 they decided that they would embark on a — introduced rather famously in this legislature — a Bill simply called the larger school division Bill. This caused a number of amalgamations to happen at that point. I think they dropped from almost 1,000 school divisions down to at that point I think about a couple hundred I think is what they were at. And what we saw in 1944 was essentially the system re-stabilize. That worked fairly well as the province went through the '50s and '60s and remained largely unchanged until we introduced this last set of changes in the last two years.

As a result of change not having been undertaken in that time period since Woodrow Lloyd had been the Education minister, one of the things that became obvious is that the systems that were in place were no longer working as accurately or as much as perhaps we would have hoped in terms of the benefit of students. And there were a number of areas where we saw the problem.

First of all, the system became characterized by a number of disparities. There was a disparity in the ability for different school divisions to provide resources to the students in the schools. That disparity was in some cases as much as 25 to 1, meaning simply, some divisions had the ability to provide 25 times the resources per student than others in the poorer divisions.

The second problem that we saw is that the ability to raise money was also suffering from disparity. And so what we were not having any longer was a relatively uniform mill rate across the province. There was not a relatively uniform taxation policy. Instead we had a fairly significant swing of almost 10 mills. Some divisions were charging as low as 13 mills. Some were charging as high as 24.

And what we were seeing as a result of that is that when you take a look at what that means, property that was worth approximately half a million dollars is taxed significantly differently depending on where it was located within the province. From a taxpayer's perspective that's simply not fair. So we had a problem that the system was no longer equitable in terms of its ability to raise resources and no longer fair in which the way it was doing it.

We had, in the late part of the '60s, early part of the '70s, come up with an equalization formula to try and sort some of this out, and it was called the foundation operating grant program. That program had a number of factors. I think there was some 20 factors that were included within it taking a look at special needs, distance, sparsity, basic per-pupil rates, transportation factors, and a whole range of other ones. The formula however, because of the number of times we went in to amend it in that 30 years since it was introduced, became so complex that it was very hard to predict what the funding was.

So when I became the minister of Learning the one thing I heard time and again from every set of the stakeholders was, simplify the system, make it more transparent, make it fairer. And that was what we embarked on.

As a result of Ray Boughen's work, one of the things that Ray Boughen had recommended is that we embark on full provincial pooling of all commercial and resource revenues. This would have had a significant consequence, particularly in rural divisions, that would have moved oil and gas revenue out of the rural regions to the benefit of all students throughout the province. While that would have certainly aided some of the poorer divisions in terms of meeting their needs, it was seen largely by stakeholders to confiscatory and as such we rejected that recommendation of Mr. Boughen's.

Instead what we embarked on was a regional pooling model which said you need not have line of sight to the nearest oil well in order to benefit from it, but indeed the larger communities around, within the regions, should have access to those resources. And as such, we embarked on these larger school divisions, going from 82 divisions down to 28 divisions.

The result was a simpler system. We have a fairer system. We have a system today which is more manageable. And we have a system which allows for regional pooling of resources. One of the consequences of that is that, as the money is now being collected within the taxes, it is being shared somewhat differently within the regions.

South East Cornerstone is an interesting example of this. Within the South East Cornerstone division today, we have a huge disparity within what the mill rates were. The city of Estevan, for example, had the highest mill rate within that newly reformed division at almost 22 mills. Conversely, just outside of Estevan in the south central area you've got a mill rate of barely 15, barely 15 mills. So this is a huge difference — 6 mills within the neighbouring area.

What this system of regional pooling will allow us to do is to come up with a relatively uniform mill rate. Simply put, that will mean certainly some mill rates will come up; some mill rates will go down. And that was very much what the objective was, was to reduce the tax burden that was being felt in some communities, particularly Estevan, and in this case we would also see the same in terms of Weyburn.

It does however mean that some of the oil-rich, resource-rich areas that have a lot of commercial and pipeline activity are going to see an increase in their mill rates. This is part of what we are calling on them to do to support the education in the communities that simply don't have derricks located in the middle of the downtown. I think it's a fair system, and I think it's an appropriate one.

We have also embarked to increase the amount of funding to education in this budget. We have embarked to make sure that there is a simpler, fairer foundation operating grant system, that relies not only on per-pupil rates but takes into account still a number of factors. Undoubtedly we'll need to account for special-needs students. We're going to need to look at sparsity and density factors. We need to take into account transportation issues. There are a number of these issues that will continue. However it will not need to be the complex, convoluted formula that currently exists.

[12:00]

The other thing that we embarked to do was to provide this year in this budget \$67 million worth of property tax relief specifically for farmers. And we did that because we recognize the problem that people are feeling and the unfairness that is perceived with the tax on farm land. This is not a reduction which is available to commercial owners; that's true. It's not available to the resource companies, and it's not applied on the residential property beyond the 8 per cent. But that 67 million allows us to correct an imbalance in terms of how, particularly in rural areas, how the money is collected.

I believe that the agenda that we laid out that is being carried forward by the Minister of Learning will provide us with a system that is simpler, that is fairer, that is more transparent. As we go through the transition, certainly there'll be shifts within. But it is simply nothing more than fearmongering by an opposition to say that across the board that it's either a tax grab or that it is going to result in higher mill rates. This is simply unfounded. Because it is a closed system, it will create shifts within it. Many divisions will receive more money. Some divisions will receive less money. It will be picked up by assessment, and that will be done on a differential basis.

I think the members opposite are aware of that. What is essential in this however, I think, is that we take a look at this in a way which is accurate, which is fair, and is removed from the fearmongering which we're seeing opposite. I would support the Minister of Learning and oppose the motion.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. And one of the problems with speaking in fourth place on the Speaker's roster is that most of the good material you wanted to use has already been covered by your colleagues. And I know that the critic for Education, the member for Melfort, understands this whole issue very well from a philosophical and technical basis. I know the member from Canora-Pelly covered a lot of the financial implications and the tax data and the enrolment issues that are going to be implicated by the amalgamation issue. My colleague from Cannington covered some of the human cost of this particular government initiative.

But nevertheless, Madam Deputy Speaker, I wanted to take a few minutes to involve myself in this debate because from the perspective of southwest Saskatchewan, the constituency of Cypress Hills, lesser so maybe for the constituency of Swift Current, but part of Wood River, part of Thunder Creek, this amalgamation will be nothing less than a travesty for the people down there. For the students affected, for the parents affected, for the teachers who will be affected ultimately, for the communities that will be affected by school closures, and for landowners and property taxpayers throughout the entire constituency, this particular plan is a travesty because of the hardship it will bring to the constituents of the far Southwest.

Madam Deputy Speaker, forced amalgamation of education in this province was really a Trojan Horse. It was given the appearances of equity and fairness. It was given the appearances of better education, better programming, more opportunities.



All of those things were promised as part of the forced amalgamation agenda. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe that it would be safe to say on behalf of the constituents of the Southwest constituencies, and specifically the Cypress Hills area, that none of those promises are likely to be realized without inflicting a lot of pain on the people of the region.

What this amalgamation has produced are huge school districts. Nowhere is that more a fact of life than in the southwest part of this province. I would like to just show how that is true, Madam Deputy Speaker, by referring to this map that was pulled off the website of Saskatchewan Learning. And when you look at the Cypress Hills area which is now known as the Chinook School District Region 2. It is now at least one and a half times the size of the Cypress Hills provincial electoral constituency. That means, Madam Deputy Speaker, that there is roughly 16,000-plus square miles inside the boundaries of Region 2 — 16,000 square miles.

I would argue, Madam Deputy Speaker, that if the one-size-fits-all approach had not been taken in this amalgamation process, the southwest part of the province ought to have been treated like the Far North. The scarcity of population, the vast geographical area, the distance to cover from community to community really makes us much more akin to the regions of the Far North.

We're not the same as communities immediately outside of Regina or Saskatoon. We're not in a similar situation to the area around Humboldt. We're not in a situation that bears any resemblance to Lloydminster for instance. The fact of the matter is that the southwest part of the province is completely unique, and this particular amalgamation model has created a travesty for the people that are affected by this particular huge geographical entity — 16,660 square miles — with an enrolment of 6,350 students which is about 250 students less than what had originally been projected for the area. But what makes matters even worse, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that the division is already estimating that its enrolment levels will drop by another 1,000 students in the next four years — 1,000 students gone from the Chinook School District or division in the next four years.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to put those numbers together and to look at the impact on education and on the remaining students and the parents that are looking desperately for solutions to this dilemma, what that impact will be on those people given the loss of another 1,000 students over the next four years.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, if I look at another piece of information from the Department of Education's website, it talks about the operating grant. Now the operating grant that is coming to the Chinook School District this year is going to be down by \$2.786 million. That's a drop of 32.2 per cent from monies received by the school districts prior to this amalgamated division. A loss of 32 per cent of funding is considered to be fair and equitable? By whose standard?

Madam Deputy Speaker, I listen to the minister, and I listen to the former minister of Education — the current Finance minister — say that what they were trying to do is achieve equity. How can an imposition of a 32 per cent drop in funding

on one geographical area of the province prove to be equitable? What kind of definition would allow for that set of circumstances?

Grant decreases caused by negative-grant boards affecting the Chinook School District amount to \$3.3 million. The taxable assessment is up just slightly — less than 1 per cent — and as I said, we're going to lose 248 students this year from last year.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this amalgamation effort, while there may have been some justification at some level, was simply too radical, too dramatic, and too singular-minded to really be about the best interests of students. There had to be a much more sinister objective. And I believe, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this is a political, a political ploy, a tack by this particular government to impose its will on southwest Saskatchewan in a way that is going to be very detrimental to our communities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to read just a few words into the record today from a story in the *Shaunavon Standard* on April 18, under the headline "School closure concerns." Here is what the human element is all about here. One individual who attended this meeting said:

"I don't like this [one bit]" . . . "We've been down this road before with health care."

"We didn't fight hard enough for our hospital . . . [and] we aren't going to make that same mistake again."

"We aren't going to lay down so you can walk all over us . . .

. . . [Some suggested] that some schools within the division might not be viable in the future [and] that raised concerns among those in attendance.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have 63 schools in that massive area, 25 of which are on Hutterite colonies, leaving 38 public schools. Out of that 38 remaining schools, dozens of them frankly are schools of 100 students or less. Some are as few as 50 students. We even have some that are fewer.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when those schools close, those young people are going to be at least 25 to 50 miles further removed from the next closest school. What are the options left to parents in that situation? Is it the agenda of this government to close schools to force people to relocate out of the southwest part of the province? I would dare say that will be the result, whether or not this government likes it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, at the way we're losing population down there, soon we won't have any reason to have schools of any kind, and it'll be partially because of this government's philosophy and its agenda.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The time for debate has elapsed and we're entering the question and answer period. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — With leave to introduce guests, Madam

Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Granted.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. In the gallery, in the Speaker's gallery today is a constituent of mine from Saskatoon, Paul Jacoby, who is a teacher at Nutana Collegiate. Paul not only is a very fine English teacher in our city, but he also is a great artist. Joining Paul today is his mom, Mrs. Jacoby.

I think it was just a little before Christmas, Paul's father passed away, and he was a very long-time civil servant, public servant in the province. He served with the Provincial Auditor's department, I think, for over 30 years.

And I don't know when the last time Mrs. Jacoby was at the legislature, but I think we should all welcome not only Paul who has travelled here from Saskatoon, but his mom, Mrs. Jacoby, to the Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

#### Funding for Boards of Education

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much. My question is in fact to the member for the southwest corner of the province who in his comments made a fairly fanciful flight of rhetoric, accusing of many things. My question to him is simply this: if he believes it's a travesty, if he believes that it's a sinister agenda, will he commit the Sask Party to undoing the amalgamations and to freezing all school closures if they're elected?

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Well that's an interesting proposition. Maybe I should consider that. Madam Deputy Speaker, the fact of the matter is that this government could have looked very much more carefully at how it was going to design amalgamation. They'd had a process in place where they were encouraging voluntary amalgamations. There was momentum that was taking place. It was working quite well. And frankly, if they had allowed that process to move forward, we would have been satisfied, I think, with the operations or the outcomes of voluntary amalgamations.

And I think that if you let the people make the decisions that are in their best interests, frankly quite often they come about with a better result than the government has managed in this particular instance.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Finance, the former minister of Education. If there's anyone in this Assembly that can answer this question with certainty . . . And I heard that member heckling, calling across the way saying that he didn't hear an answer. So let's see how well he answers this question, Madam Deputy Speaker. Is the minister prepared to guarantee the property owners of the southeast corner school division that they will not see an increase in their education tax for 2006?

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — I made it clear in question period today that there are sufficient funds being provided through the foundation operating grant. That in Estevan — the old Estevan Division, in the Sunrise Division — that there is no need for a property tax increase. And in fact, in the Estevan Division, there should be a property tax cut.

This is very clear within the Weyburn . . . which members should know is within the Sunrise School Division. Shame on them if they don't. There should be no reason whatsoever that Audrey Trombley and that school division need to increase the property taxes in the old Sunrise Division. There will however be property tax shifts within that amalgamated division, and there will be increased taxes as they move to a uniform mill rate, as they see some of the property from the old Estevan rural move in and move up to a uniform mill rate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for Advanced Education and Employment.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much. My question to the member from Canora who was the former president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association in our province. The member will know that the principles of the foundation operating grant have been in existence in this province for over 30 years, and they have weathered a number of administrations. My question to him is: do you or do you not support the fundamental principles of the foundation operating grant which is about equity and fairness?

[12:15]

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, as I tried to explain to the members opposite about the foundation grant formula, you have to understand the components of A, B, and C if you are to understand the formula. And the member opposite has asked a question about understanding the foundation grant and understanding the actual recognized expenditures.

The minister doesn't quite understand that recognized expenditures are in fact not entirely all of the expenditures that a school division has. So to distribute money by a foundation

grant formula has been an accepted way and it needs to be improved. And therefore when you look at the fact that recognized expenditures are at least 15 per cent below the amount of expenditures that school divisions actually have, the member has to understand that there needs to be an improvement in that formula before you can adequately distribute the funds.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. You know, I'm listening to the hypothetical questions from the members opposite and I'm glad for their hypothetical questions because their questions recognize that the next government in Saskatchewan is going to be the Saskatchewan Party government.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — But we would like to deal with today's issues, not the future government, Madam Deputy Chair. The Minister for Finance says there will be no tax increases in the South East Cornerstone School Division. So I would like to ask the minister of Education, the minister of Education, since they cut the budget by \$5.6 million there is no tax increase, how . . . Is the minister going to guarantee to the students and teachers of this division that there will be no program cuts, no teachers will be fired, no support staff will be eliminated, and no schools closure?

My question is to the minister of Education.

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

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Madam Speaker, it's been ongoing in this House that the Saskatchewan Party, whenever there's a report put forward, they jump out front and say, it's our idea and implement it. Well they did that with Vicq, but Madam Speaker, they avoided the harmonization issue. Now also, Madam Speaker, with the Boughen report, they also jumped out in front of it and said, implement, implement. There's a number of them on record to say, implement the Boughen report.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm curious. Do they support provincial pooling? Do they support that recommendation also? Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, the member from the opposition there, he criticized me for reading a speech. Well maybe when I've been here as long as he has, I'll have the practice and I can stand up and wing it.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — My question is to the member for Cannington. Does the member not understand the difference between the old Sunrise Division and the new South East Cornerstone Division? Does he not understand how the difference in the mill rate affects, or is he purposely, is he purposely attempting to draw a different conclusion?

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Chair. I certainly do understand what happened in southeast Saskatchewan with the forced amalgamation of five school divisions. What it means is that a significant number of people in that school division are going to be facing real dollar increases in their property taxes — very, very real property taxes.

In fact is the one school division, old school division, is looking at a 50 per cent increase in their property taxes — a 50 per cent increase. That's while their schools are being closed; their kids are being forced to be bused for hours on the bus. All of this in the name of that member's — when he was the minister of Education — idea of better savings and better education.

Madam Deputy Speaker, his program is not going to deliver better education to the people of rural Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, my question is to the current Finance minister, the former minister of Learning. Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister implied in his comments in the Boughen report that there was this huge number of school divisions that were outside of the average in the province.

And I note from the Boughen Commission that the report of Mr. Boughen indicates that the average mill rate in the province in the year that he provides the data was 19.1. My question is very simple. Can the Minister of Finance tell this Assembly how many school divisions were beyond 4 mills, either positive or negative below that 19.1? So could he answer the questions to indicate the number of school divisions that were outside a 4 mill plus or minus factor of a 19.1 average as provided in the Boughen Commission report?

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — I am amazed to hear the Sask Party say that they believe an 8-mill variance is an acceptable variance in terms of this province. That is a huge, huge amount of money that they believe should be allowed to exist. It just shows that it's really about looking after their core constituents and not worrying about fairness and equity and transparency.

What I also find interesting is how quickly they have backed away from the Boughen Commission recommendation for full provincial pooling of resource revenue that we all know would have been seen as confiscatory in many of the rural areas, although it would have been to the benefit of Saskatoon and Regina and the larger divisions. For shame on that member for suggesting an 8-mill variance is an acceptable variance. Let us hope we never see that party in government.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the minister of advanced education and learning.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, my question is to the member from Canora who also is a former president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, and obviously is an expert on the foundation operating grant. My question to him, given that he is so enamoured with the . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The time for question and answer period has elapsed. I thank all members for the spirited debate. We will now move forward in the agenda. I remind members that they will have time for further debate. Order. Order.

Committee of the Whole. I do now leave the Chair.

### PRIVATE BILLS

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

##### Bill No. 301 — The Faith Alive Ministries World Outreach Centre Inc. Act

**The Chair:** — The Bill before the committee is Bill No. 301, An Act to provide for certain degree granting status for Faith Alive Ministries World Outreach Centre Inc.

Questions of the Bill? Seeing no questions of the Bill, I would move the preamble. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

[Preamble agreed to.]

[Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — Therefore Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: An Act to provide for certain degree granting status for Faith Alive Ministries World Outreach Centre Inc.

I recognize the member from Moosomin.

**Mr. Toth:** — Madam Chair, I move that the committee now report the Bill.

**The Chair:** — It has been moved by the member from Moosomin that we now report the Bill without amendment.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Agreed. Carried.

##### Bill No. 302 — The Orange Benevolent Society Amendment Act

**The Chair:** — The next Bill before the Assembly is Bill No. 302, An Act to amend An Act to incorporate The Orange Benevolent Society of Saskatchewan.

I move the preamble before the Assembly. Any questions of the Bill first? Seeing no questions, move the preamble. All those in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

[Preamble agreed to.]

[Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — Therefore Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: An Act to amend An Act to incorporate The Orange Benevolent Society of Saskatchewan, Bill No. 302.

I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you. I move that the committee report the Bill without amendment.

**The Chair:** — The member has moved that we report the Bill without amendment. Is that the favour of the Assembly?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

##### Bill No. 303 — The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Repeal Act

**The Chair:** — The next Bill before the Assembly is Bill No. 303, An Act to repeal The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Act, 1995. Are there questions of the Bill? Seeing none, I would move the preamble. All those in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

[Preamble agreed to.]

[Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.]

**The Chair:** — Therefore Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 303, An Act to repeal The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Act, 1995.

I recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Ms. Junor:** — I move that this Bill now be reported without amendment.

**The Chair:** — The member has moved that we now report the Bill without amendment. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. If I could now invite a member to ask the committee to rise and report progress and ask for leave to sit again. I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Madam Chair, I move the committee rise to report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

**The Chair:** — So moved. It has been moved. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[12:30]

### THIRD READINGS

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. I recognize the Chair of committees.

#### Bill No. 301 — The Faith Alive Ministries World Outreach Centre Inc. Act

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 301 without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

**Mr. Toth:** — I move that Bill No. 301 be now read third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Moosomin that Bill 301 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

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

#### Bill No. 302 — The Orange Benevolent Society Amendment Act

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 302 without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 302, The Orange Benevolent Society Amendment Act be now read a third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Indian Head-Milestone that Bill 302 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

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

#### Bill No. 303 — The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Repeal Act

**Ms. Hamilton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by

the committee to report to you Bill No. 303 without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — And when shall Bill 303 be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Eastview.

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 303, The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Repeal Act be now read a third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Eastview that Bill 303 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

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

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

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, in light of the hour of the day and the fact that some of the members of our Assembly are about to proceed to celebrating a holy weekend of the celebration of Easter in the Ukrainian rite, I'd like to wish those hon. members Chrystos Voskres and move adjournment of the House.

**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 Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:32.]

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

Elhard .....	1245
Draude .....	1245
Harpauer .....	1245
Weekes .....	1245
Cheveldayoff.....	1245
Brkich .....	1245
Morgan .....	1245
Kerpan .....	1246

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk .....	1246
--------------------	------

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

##### Standing Committee on Human Services

Junor .....	1246
-------------	------

##### Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure

Harper .....	1246
--------------	------

#### FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

##### Bill No. 4 — The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2005

Hagel .....	1246
-------------	------

##### Bill No. 5 — The Cities Amendment Act, 2005

Van Mulligen .....	1247
--------------------	------

##### Bill No. 6 — The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2005

Van Mulligen .....	1247
--------------------	------

#### THIRD READINGS

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

Yates .....	1246
-------------	------

##### Bill No. 4 — The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2005

Hagel .....	1247
-------------	------

##### Bill No. 5 — The Cities Amendment Act, 2005

Van Mulligen .....	1247
--------------------	------

##### Bill No. 6 — The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2005

Van Mulligen .....	1248
--------------------	------

##### Bill No. 15 — The Highways and Transportation Amendment Act, 2005

Lautermilch .....	1248
-------------------	------

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Huyghebaert .....	1248
-------------------	------

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Wakefield .....	1248
-----------------	------

Krawetz .....	1249
---------------	------

Forbes .....	1249
--------------	------

Stewart .....	1249
---------------	------

Crofford .....	1249
----------------	------

Atkinson .....	1268
----------------	------

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

##### Earth Day

Hamilton .....	1249
----------------	------

##### Foam Lake Company Active in Biodiesel Industry

Draude .....	1250
--------------	------

##### Federal Commitments Regarding the Kyoto Protocol

Prebble .....	1250
---------------	------

##### LeRoy Student Wins First Prize in National Competition

Gantfoer .....	1250
----------------	------

##### Communities Pull Together to Help Evacuees

Iwanchuk .....	1251
----------------	------

##### Drake's 2005 Citizen of the Year

Brkich .....	1251
--------------	------

##### First Graduates of New Nursing Education Program

Borgerson .....	1251
-----------------	------

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Consequences of Budgetary Policies

Cheveldayoff.....	1252
-------------------	------

Thomson .....	1252
---------------	------

<b>Funding for Hospital Construction</b>	
Harpauer .....	1253
Thomson .....	1253
<b>Status of Agreement Concerning Lakes' Low Water Levels</b>	
Bjornerud .....	1254
Nilson .....	1254
<b>Former Member's Settlement with the Legal Aid Commission</b>	
Morgan .....	1255
Quennell .....	1255
<b>MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS</b>	
<b>The 80th Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II</b>	
Hagel .....	1257
Eagles .....	1257
<b>INTRODUCTION OF BILLS</b>	
<b>Bill No. 62 — The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 2006</b>	
Van Mulligen .....	1258
<b>Bill No. 63 — The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2006</b>	
Thomson .....	1258
<b>Bill No. 64 — The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2006</b>	
Thomson .....	1258
<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>	
<b>WRITTEN QUESTIONS</b>	
Iwanchuk .....	1258
The Speaker .....	1258
<b>SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE</b>	
<b>Funding for Boards of Education</b>	
Gantefoer .....	1258
Krawetz .....	1260, 1268
Higgins .....	1262, 1269
D'Autremont .....	1263, 1269
Thomson .....	1265, 1269
Elhard .....	1266
Hart .....	1268
Atkinson .....	1268, 1270
<b>PRIVATE BILLS</b>	
<b>COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE</b>	
<b>Bill No. 301 — The Faith Alive Ministries World Outreach Centre Inc. Act</b>	
Toth .....	1270
<b>Bill No. 302 — The Orange Benevolent Society Amendment Act</b>	
McMorris .....	1270
<b>Bill No. 303 — The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Repeal Act</b>	
Junor .....	1270
<b>THIRD READINGS</b>	
<b>Bill No. 301 — The Faith Alive Ministries World Outreach Centre Inc. Act</b>	
Toth .....	1271
<b>Bill No. 302 — The Orange Benevolent Society Amendment Act</b>	
McMorris .....	1271
<b>Bill No. 303 — The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Repeal Act</b>	
Junor .....	1271

# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

## CABINET MINISTERS

---

**Hon. Lorne Calvert**  
Premier

**Hon. Graham Addley**  
Minister of Healthy Living Services  
Minister Responsible for Seniors

**Hon. Pat Atkinson**  
Minister of Advanced Education and Employment  
Minister Responsible for Immigration  
Minister Responsible for the Public  
Service Commission

**Hon. Joan Beatty**  
Minister of Northern Affairs  
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

**Hon. Buckley Belanger**  
Minister of Community Resources  
Minister Responsible for Disability Issues

**Hon. Eric Cline**  
Minister of Industry and Resources  
Minister Responsible for Investment  
Saskatchewan Inc.  
Minister Responsible for Information Services  
Corporation of Saskatchewan

**Hon. David Forbes**  
Minister of Labour  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Water Corporation

**Hon. Glenn Hagel**  
Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation  
Provincial Secretary  
Minister Responsible for Gaming  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Government Insurance

**Hon. Deb Higgins**  
Minister of Learning  
Minister Responsible for Literacy  
Minister Responsible for Liquor and  
Gaming Authority  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Telecommunications

**Hon. Eldon Lautermilch**  
Minister of Highways and Transportation  
Minister of Property Management  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Transportation Company  
Minister Responsible for the  
Forestry Secretariat

**Hon. John Nilson**  
Minister of Environment  
Minister Responsible for the Office of  
Energy Conservation  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Power Corporation

**Hon. Frank Quennell**  
Minister of Justice and  
Attorney General

**Hon. Clay Serby**  
Deputy Premier  
Minister of Regional Economic and  
Co-operative Development

**Hon. Maynard Sonntag**  
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations  
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation  
of Saskatchewan

**Hon. Len Taylor**  
Minister of Health

**Hon. Andrew Thomson**  
Minister of Finance  
Minister Responsible for Information Technology  
Minister Responsible for  
SaskEnergy Incorporated

**Hon. Harry Van Mulligen**  
Minister of Government Relations

**Hon. Mark Wartman**  
Minister of Agriculture and Food

**Hon. Kevin Yates**  
Minister of Corrections and Public Safety