



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

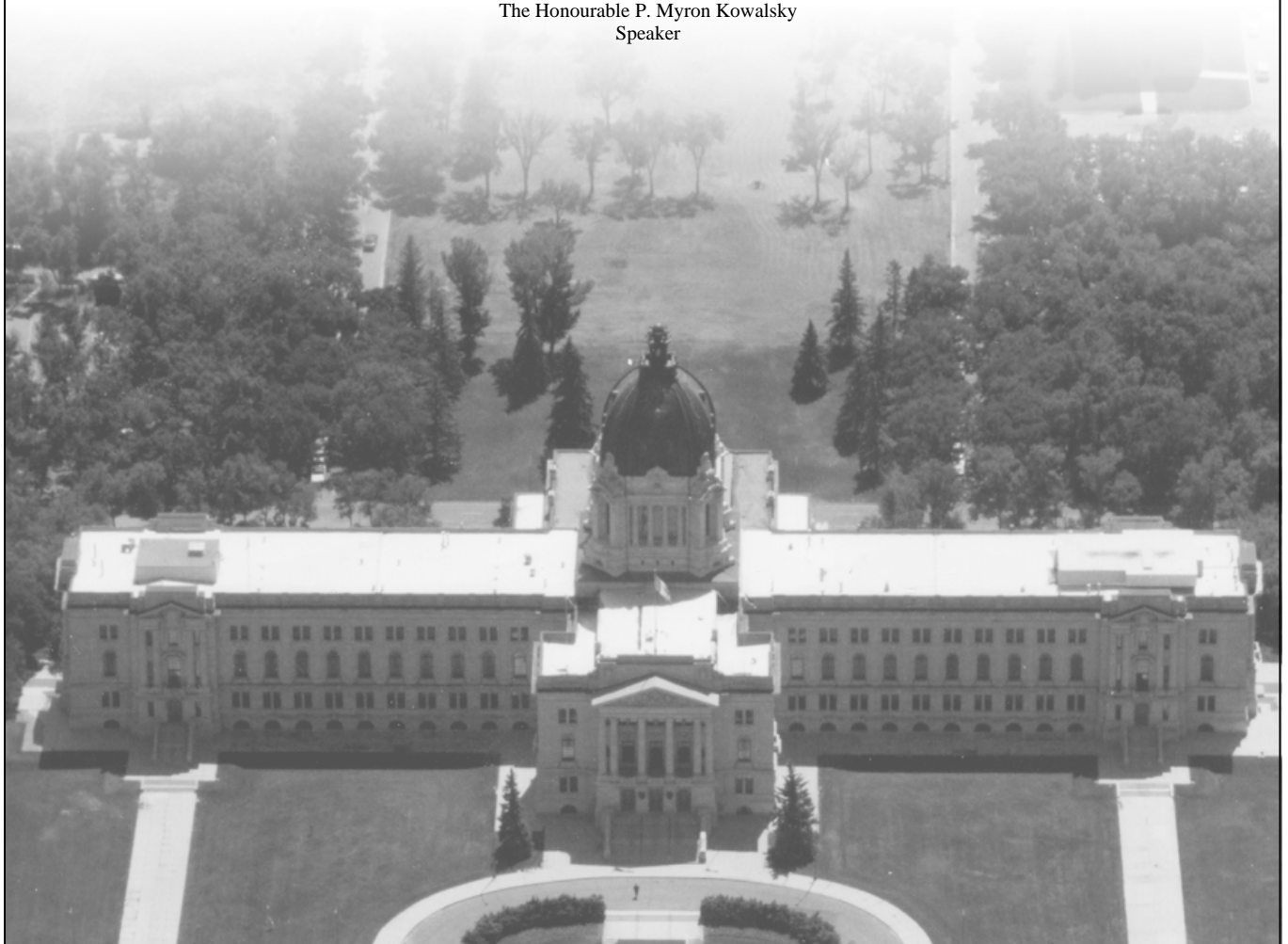
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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Leader of the Opposition — Brad Wall

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Morgan, Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
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Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wakefield, Milton	SP	Lloydminster
Wall, Brad	SP	Swift Current
Wartman, Hon. Mark	NDP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Yates, Hon. Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney
Vacant		Weyburn-Big Muddy

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege today to present a petition to this Assembly addressing some significant needs in the agriculture community and more specifically the CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] program. I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the provincial government work closely with the federal government to develop a simple and effective farm income assistance program that will adequately serve both Saskatchewan and Canadian agriculture producers.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition I present is signed by the good folks of the communities of Sinaluta and Wolseley. I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present on behalf of citizens of the province regarding the plight of agriculture and the concerns that they have going into this year's spring seeding. 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 actions to ensure that the provincial government works closely with the federal government to develop a simple and effective farm income assistance program that will adequately serve both Saskatchewan and Canadian agriculture producers.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from Summerberry and Wolseley. 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 that the government isn't funding the drug Avastin. The prayer reads:

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

The people who have signed this petition are from Tisdale, Star City, Arborfield, and Bjorkdale. I so present.

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

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

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

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, are all from the community of Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the lack of funding for the cancer drug Avastin. And the prayer reads:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition appears to be signed by individuals all from the community of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition regarding safer driving conditions on Highway No. 3. And 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 3 from Fairholme to Turtleford and including the Livelong access road.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The signatures on these petitions are from a very wide-ranging area: Glaslyn, Livelong, Meadow Lake, Turtleford, Lloydminster, and Mervin. I so present on their behalf.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to deliver a petition regarding the deplorable situation of Highway No. 3 as it leads to the very popular Turtle Lake area. The petition reads as follows:

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 to No. 795.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from Livelong, Lashburn; Hobbema, Alberta; and Wetaskiwin, Alberta. I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It will come as no surprise that I again today have petitions about 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 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, show how well travelled this highway is. They are from Meacham, Wadena; Calgary, Alberta; Regina, Saint-Front, Saskatoon; Edmonton, Alberta; Humboldt and La Ronge. I so present.

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the deplorable state of Highway No. 3. And the petition reads as follows:

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.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures to this petition are from Spruce Lake, Turtleford, Saskatoon, and Livelong. 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 constituents of Meadow Lake concerning the condition of 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 people of Spruce Lake, Turtleford, and Livelong. I so present.

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to

read a petition concerned with the cancer drug Avastin. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

And, Mr. Speaker, it is signed by the good people of Saskatoon and St. Louis. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here with citizens opposed to possible reductions in services to the Davidson, Imperial health centres:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Davidson, Imperial health centres be maintained at their current level of service at a minimum of 24-hour acute care, emergency, and doctor services available as well as lab, public health, home care, and long-term care services available to users from the Davidson, Imperial areas and beyond.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too today rise with a petition that this is the first time in the province's history that the government has denied coverage of a cancer drug recommended by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. And the prayer reads:

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

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition regarding the funding of the drug Avastin. I will read a portion of the petition. It states that the Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada states that in combination with other treatments, Avastin is the standard of care for this disease.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by concerned swing voters from the constituencies of Greystone and Eastview.

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

Mr. Kerpan: — Mr. Speaker, I too rise on behalf of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan who are concerned with the government's failure to address some of the concerns surrounding the autism spectrum disorder, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the prayer is too lengthy to read but I just will read a couple of brief points from what the petitioners are asking for. They're asking:

That access be made to specialized equipment and supplies based on the need, and ensure that ASD adult services and supports are accessible and based on need rather than on IQ or physical disability. And also to encourage and support autism-related research in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to present this petition on behalf of citizens from Saskatoon.

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, 13, 27, 64, 67, 638, 639, 664, 669, and 738.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 57 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: how many grains and oilseeds producers have contacted Crop Insurance after the March 31 deadline in an effort to reinstate their coverage for 2006?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Douglas Park.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I should like to introduce to you and through you to the members a new staff member in my office, a summer student who's joined me for the summer. She's just a terrific, bright, hard-working young person. And I would like all the members to welcome Caitlin Cottrell, who is seated in your gallery. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Chisholm: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly I'm pleased to introduce in your gallery my son, Bradley Chisholm. Bradley is a former Saskatchewan Junior Citizen of the Year. He was also Saskatchewan's representative to the United World College of the American West in Montezuma, New Mexico. Brad's a graduate of McGill in economics and a recent graduate of law from the University of Calgary. Brad is supposed to be home seeding today but, as the weather was not conducive, Brad stopped in to see his dad at work.

I'd like to ask that we all join to welcome Brad to what I hope will be his provincial Assembly some day.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all of my colleagues in the House I'd like to introduce 33 grade 8 students from Porcupine Plain Composite High School and their teachers, Annette Legare, Heidi Moulton, and Doug King, and the chaperone, Don Watt.

All these good-looking, enthusiastic, and obviously intelligent, very political people from Porcupine represent everybody. We're all the same in northeast Saskatchewan. But I'd like to identify two individuals specifically and I know that there are three ministers that know their fathers. Wes Black's daughter and Leo Howse's daughter, could you stand. I want you to know that we are all very proud, not only of your fathers for the work that they've done with the flooding concerns in that area of the province, but for all of the work that they're doing on behalf of farmers in this very desperate time. So thank you for coming. I look forward to talking to you later on.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome here today and introduce to you and through you 35 grade 10 students from the Melville Comprehensive School along with their teacher, Perry Ostapowich, who faithfully brings his classes in to the legislature to see the proceedings. Also chaperone O.J. Kozey. And I apologize to the bus driver, the lady at the back, but we also want to welcome her here today.

And on behalf of myself and the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood that some of the students live in, I ask all members to welcome them here today and hope they enjoy the proceedings.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Battlefords Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I had the pleasure last night of attending and participating in the Battlefords Chamber of Commerce 13th annual Business Excellence or BBEX Awards as the community honoured the best in the business sector.

[13:45]

In this, the Battlefords chamber's 100th birthday year, the actual award was again designed and built by local and world-renowned master craftsman, Stan Wychopen. The sponsors of this wonderful event included BCU Financial, RBC Royal Bank, CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce], and the provincial Crowns — SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], SaskPower, SaskEnergy, and Business of the Year sponsor, SaskTel.

This year's best included heritage winner, K & B Construction; community contribution winner, Sobey's Ready to Serve; export achievement winner, Northwest Organic Community Mills; marketing winner, Battleford Furniture; new business venture winner, Kitchen Zone; customer service winner, Viewpoint Photographic Design; people's choice winner, BCU Financial; and Business of the Year, Mr. Speaker, award for 2006, Scott Campbell Dodge.

The community thanks the chamber, its president, Rob Rongve, master of ceremonies David Dekker, and all those who made this a very special evening for these very special business people in the Battlefords.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatchewan Party Nomination in Regina Wascana Plains

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must apologize about this member's statement because it's information we've heard before, and it's information we're going to hear again in the future. But I think it's extremely important that it's said again.

Hundreds and hundreds of memberships sold, another packed hall, over 400 people in attendance, two great candidates delivering excellent speeches about the future of our province, another inspirational speech by the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party — yes, it's another Saskatchewan Party nomination meeting, Mr. Speaker.

Last night the constituency of Wascana Plains, Regina Wascana Plains members decided on who the next MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] would be for their constituency. Christine Tell and Don Saelhof both did an excellent job in selling memberships and getting their votes out. I am pleased to say today that Christine Tell will be the next candidate for the Saskatchewan Party.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Christine Tell will be an excellent candidate and an excellent MLA in this Legislative Assembly. She obtained her psychiatric nursing diploma from SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] before becoming a member of the Regina city police. Christine had spent over 26 years with both the Regina and Saskatoon police services. Over the last five years, Christine has been the president of the Regina Police Association. People of Regina Wascana Plains are looking forward to seeing Christine represent them in this Legislative Assembly as soon as the Premier gets enough nerve to call a general election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mental Health Week

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, on May 2 the Minister of Healthy Living Services, along with Regina's mayor, rolled up their sleeves to help serve lunch to the members and staff of the Regina branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association. This lunch was an event to help raise awareness about Mental Health Week which takes place May 1 to 7.

The theme of this year's week is: Take control of your health. Take care of your mind. This is a powerful message, Mr. Speaker. We often forget that being healthy also means taking care of the mind.

Mr. Speaker, many Canadians have mental health issues. In a recent Stats Canada survey almost the same percentage of people reported experiencing symptoms of depression as those experiencing diabetes or heart disease. Mental health is an important issue, Mr. Speaker. Our government recognizes this and annually spends about 140 million on mental health services and programs.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, this past week we announced significant increases to child and youth mental health services across Saskatchewan. With an extra 1 million this year and 2 million annually beginning next year, we will continue to work with groups like the CMHA [Canadian Mental Health Association] to provide excellent mental health services for children and youth as early in their lives as possible.

Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the commitment and work of the Saskatchewan division of the Canadian Mental Health Association and all of the other dedicated groups and organizations that work in the mental health field.

I ask all members to join me in recognizing Mental Health Week and congratulating those involved in providing these vital services. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Praise for Federal Budget

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the headline on the editorial line of today's *Leader-Post* says it all: "[federal] Budget keeps promises." Isn't it a refreshing change to see a government that keeps all of its promises with its first budget? It's a far cry from what we have seen in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, with everything from PST [provincial sales tax] hikes to cuts in agriculture budgets.

In this federal budget, working families will see significant tax savings through the lowering of the GST [goods and services tax] and an employment tax credit that recognizes the financial contribution that working families make every day. This tax relief will allow all Canadians to keep more of their money in their pocket.

Along with this well-deserved tax relief for Canadian families, we now have a government that seeks to stand with farm families and help them through this difficult time. This budget announced \$1.5 billion in new money for Canadian farm families which is in stark contrast to this provincial government slashing support for farm families in our province.

Apparently our federal Agriculture minister was able to buck up funds to help our producers. Now the question remains as to whether the NDP [New Democratic Party] min-i-steer of agriculture will now buck up his government's contribution . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please. I think I would advise the member to be judicious about adjectives applied to members of this Assembly.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The NDP Minister of Agriculture will now buck up his government's contribution to ensure that our agricultural producers are able to deal with the recent income crisis.

The *Leader-Post* editorial concludes by saying that Prime Minister Stephen Harper has established the all-important trust factor with voters, certainly a lesson this NDP government has yet to learn.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Coronation Park.

World Harmony Run Promotes Peace and Unity

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, it's all in the name. The World Harmony Run is a global torch relay promoting international friendship and unity. It is an expression of humanity's essential need for co-operation and peace.

This year international team members associated with the run will visit more than 70 countries, carrying a torch as a symbol of hope for harmony throughout the world. Mr. Speaker, last year I participated in the World Harmony Run in Regina. This year I was honoured to facilitate, through the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation, May 3 through May 6 being declared World Harmony Days here in Saskatchewan.

For the next four days the World Harmony Run will be in Regina, Saskatoon, Melfort, and Prince Albert, promoting peace and unity. I welcome the opportunity to participate in World Harmony Run 2006. Today at 5 p.m., on the steps of this legislature, all MLAs are invited too. And who knows? There might even be an opportunity to hold the harmony torch.

Mr. Speaker, we should be mindful and even proud that Canada is envied by much of the world for our unity within diversity. Please join me in thanking Sutapa Adelman for coordinating Saskatchewan's World Harmony Run events and in congratulating all participants for promoting unity and oneness within the human family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

North American Occupational Safety and Health Week

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, April 30 to May 6 is North American Occupational Safety and Health Week. Regardless of the workplace, a good work site is a safe work site. Today, on behalf of the Saskatchewan Party, I want to express our ongoing support for the efforts of businesses, employees, and unions to ensure that all workers are able to do their jobs in a safe workplace.

First established in 1997 following an agreement between Canada, the United States, and Mexico, North American Occupational Safety and Health Week is an opportunity for workers and employers to focus on the importance of workplace safety.

Mr. Speaker, all too often in Saskatchewan we hear stories on the news about workers injured on the job, including workers employed by the government or Crown corporations.

Here in Saskatchewan we are fortunate to have an occupational health and safety division in the Department of Labour which strives to protect people's health and safety at work, and whose goal it is to prevent and reduce the number of accidents, injuries, illnesses, and deaths on the job in Saskatchewan.

Today I want to ask all members of the Assembly to join me in expressing support for North American Occupational Safety and Health Week and the need for ongoing efforts to keep our workplace safe.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

New Book Honours Saskatchewan Centenarians

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — They say, Mr. Speaker, that one's soul can be seen through the eyes of a person. Through spectacular black and white images, Mark Greschner has captured the hearts and souls of many Saskatchewan centenarians.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the House to congratulate Mark on

the release of his book, *One Hundred Years of Heart*.

Along with the two main sponsors, the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation on behalf of Saskatchewan Centennial 2005 and Mayo Schmidt from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, I was pleased to join Her Honour, Dr. Lynda Haverstock, who hosted this event at Government House this morning.

I was also pleased to visit with Brent Pylot, a former Meadow Lake resident who did an outstanding job in the design of the book and who too should be congratulated.

As a friend and neighbour from Goodsoil, I was thrilled to join Mark's parents, George and Mary Greschner, and his in-laws, Mike and Helen Pylot, as well as Mark's wife, Cindy and their two children, Drake and Orisha.

Many, many family and friends from across the province and indeed from across the country were also there with Mark and his family on this very special occasion.

The centenarians' faces will tell many stories and they are stories about the history of this province. They were young when this province was young and together they shaped our future and we owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

It is with an enormous sense of pride that we thank Mark Greschner and our centenarians for giving us this lasting legacy.

As Mark said, "Their images are captured by the camera, but their spirit is boundless."

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Wait Time Guarantees

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the federal government announced that it will be working towards developing patient wait time guarantees. Such a plan would ensure that people have access to medically necessary treatment within clinically defined wait times. The commitment is really a breath of fresh air, especially for Saskatchewan people who linger on some of the longest waiting lists in Canada.

The NDP has never made a commitment for such guarantees. Now that the federal government is taking the lead on this issue, will this provincial government follow along and guarantee wait times like the federal government is asking?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite will know, prior to the federal budget I

have had a number of interviews and made a number of comments with regards to the federal government's desire to institute wait time guarantees.

On behalf of the province of Saskatchewan and in conjunction with other provinces, Mr. Speaker, we are saying to the federal government we are prepared to sit down and talk with them about wait time guarantees. But we need a commitment from the federal government to ensure that the financial resources are available, committed to ensure that those wait time guarantees do not penalize any province in this country, Mr. Speaker — provinces that have different needs and priorities, provinces that are working on their own wait time guarantees in their own ways. Mr. Speaker, we are prepared to work with the federal government on this, but we need additional commitments from the federal government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, when I've asked this minister and the former minister about wait time guarantees, they normally give the answer about the Saskatchewan Surgical Care Network website about managing the wait times and managing people on these wait times. It brags about how people can phone this network and find out where they're at.

Well unfortunately we found out last week that people phone the wait list to find out how long they have to wait and are told that they have to wait to find out how long they have to wait, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, websites and waiting list hotlines do not deal with the issue of wait times. Mr. Speaker, the solution is personnel. The solution is people. It's doctors. It's nurses. It's specialists. It's other health care professionals. Mr. Speaker, how does the province expect to follow along with the federal government's leads on guaranteed wait times when it can't supply the professionals we need in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again the member opposite is aware that prior to the federal government . . . in fact two years ago, Mr. Speaker, the first ministers met. They set up a 10-year action plan in health care. In that 10-year action plan were commitments that each province would make with regards to wait times and surgical care and other matters pertaining to the health care field.

Mr. Speaker, this province is leading Canada in some of the responses to that 10-year plan begun by the premiers in 2004. And, Mr. Speaker, we are very proud to say that our Surgical Care Network, our new diagnostic imaging network, Mr. Speaker, are being looked at by other provinces. Our wait times are being reduced, Mr. Speaker.

And we will continue to work with the federal government with additional resources to ensure that we can meet the needs of

Saskatchewan residents.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We appreciate the hard work that our health care professionals do on a daily basis. But you have to understand the workplaces that they're working in. They're short-staffed which leads to high stress and burn-out. Increase in WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] claims are all results of short staffing levels, Mr. Speaker. And short staffing levels result in long waiting lists.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses have gone and said that we need 600 new nurses to fill the vacancies, the retirements going forward, but more importantly, so nurses can maintain professional standards. And yet the minister doesn't seem to give them the time of day. He won't deal with that issue.

Can the minister provide this Assembly with some sort of a timetable when he'll start filling the vacancies so that we can at least get in the ball game of guaranteed wait times?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And again the member opposite will know that this government has committed in the previous budget — as a result of previous discussions with the federal government — \$42 million to assist with the recruitment and retention of physicians practising in the province, Mr. Speaker, a commitment that is having an effect in Saskatchewan with the number of physicians practising increasing year over year.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to hear the member opposite cheerleading for the federal government and their budget announced yesterday in the one area where there was no additional money for the provinces to keep up our needs and priorities.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to the people of Saskatchewan. We will do it within the resources we have available and, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with the federal government and other provinces to keep that commitment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the course of this session, the official opposition has raised a number of cases that demonstrate the shortage of specialists throughout Saskatchewan. Despite the high incidence of diabetes in Saskatchewan, we know that there are three vacant endocrinologist positions in Saskatoon. People are requiring to

go out of the province to get services that should be delivered in this province, Mr. Speaker.

We've learned over the last couple of weeks that there's a shortage of oncologists, where people in this province have to wait three times the national average to see an oncologist for a first visit. Mr. Speaker, we cannot come anywhere close to guaranteeing wait times until we sufficiently supply this province with specialists, with nurses, and other health care professionals. When will he take his job seriously and start dealing with the real issue in this province, and that's a personnel issue of specialists in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm glad the member opposite raises the issue of endocrinologists, particularly in the Saskatoon Health Region because it is a case where the region and the province is working very hard to replace professionals and specialists who are leaving the province with other ones who can do the job, Mr. Speaker. Indeed in endocrinology in Saskatoon, we have one retiring, one on a leave of absence, one on maternity leave, and one who had left the province for other reasons.

Mr. Speaker, we have recruited and are very close to agreement with a new endocrinologist. We have worked on building a part-time locum to work there. The department of medicine is currently recruiting for two additional positions.

Mr. Speaker, we take this responsibility very seriously. We are acting on that, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to work with the regions and the people of Saskatchewan to ensure their care needs are met.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Declining School Enrolments

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I told this Assembly how the NDP's failure to grow the economy and its pathetic economic policies are causing teaching positions to be cut across the province.

Mr. Speaker, this is causing a domino effect throughout the education system. A CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] news story reported that enrolment is down by 10,000 over the last three years and that classrooms will be cut by 300.

My question to the minister is this: how many schools will have to be closed across this province to make up for the cut in classrooms?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite

leaves all kinds of openings to have a bit of a debate here.

The Minister of Industry and Resources would love to get up and talk about our booming economy and all the good things that are going on in the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talks about the drop in enrolment, and he is accurate in his numbers. There has been a drop in enrolment of 10,000 over the last three years.

Mr. Speaker, with no adjustments or major adjustments in staffing over that time, many of the divisions have been waiting to see what the restructuring would do, what resources were needed at that time. And now, Mr. Speaker, we've moved on with restructuring. The new divisions are in place, and there will be decisions made over the next short while.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Impact of the Economy

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would be a pleasure to listen to the Industry minister talk about how this robust economy is resulting in 10,000 fewer students in the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, by any measure, that is a dismal failure. It's not only students that are leaving this province. It's parents. It's teachers. It's other people who are leaving in spite of a booming economy, Mr. Speaker. That simply cannot be explained.

Mr. Speaker, the minister dodges the question. She has said and admitted that we've lost 10,000 students. How many schools are going to be closed as a result of this NDP government's mismanagement of the economy?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to accept the invitation to get up and talk about the economy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — And just a few things going on that I might want to remind the opposition of, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan has achieved a decades long dream of our people to become a have province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — One of only three in Canada. Mr. Speaker, the province was reported recently for the first time in our history of having personal income above the national average . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — With only two other provinces, Mr. Speaker. And according to the Fraser Institute, Mr. Speaker, I'd like the opposition to know this. We have the second lowest bundle of personal taxes for our people in the country, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — And, Mr. Speaker, as all of these facts would show, we have a growing economy and we're going in the right direction, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, only in the NDP's jaded mentality would they suggest there's a booming economy resulting in 10,000 students leaving the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Only in their economy would they admit that losing these students and their parents and the teachers that they need to teach them and other citizens, our losing the population in this province, that would be a success. Only in the NDP's reality would they believe that losing workers and losing jobs is a successful economy.

Mr. Speaker, the people who are leaving this province are not doing so because there's a booming economy here. They're doing so because they need to find their dreams and their opportunities in other provinces and other countries.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister, how many schools are going to be closed in this province as a result of their booming economy?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — The opposition says that only we talk about the booming economy. Well I want to say to the opposition, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Todd Hirsch, the chief economist for the Canada West Foundation that the opposition likes to quote, he has this to say in *The Globe and Mail*, Mr. Speaker. He says we have "... the third-highest rate of GDP growth ..." That's what he says, Mr. Speaker. He says we're "... the newest member in the club of 'have' provinces ..." He says, Mr. Speaker, and I quote, "Taxes are falling." He says we have favourable personal income taxes. He says, "Business taxes ... are coming down."

And then he says this, Mr. Speaker. He says, "People in Saskatchewan don't really [need] ... to be so miserable all the time." And I would say, Mr. Speaker, you could rephrase that to say people in the Saskatchewan Party don't need to be so miserable all the time. He says our glass is half full, and we have a lot to celebrate in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Minister of Industry has the names and addresses and the forwarding addresses of all these parents of these 10,000 students.

I hope he has the forwarding addresses of all the people that have left this province seeking to build their dreams elsewhere, Mr. Speaker. And I hope he has forwarding addresses of those students and he has the addresses in Saskatchewan of the communities where schools are going to be closed.

Perhaps he can send this buoyant information that he's broadcasting in this legislature to those families and to those parents and tell them about their buoyant economy, tell them how many schools they're closing in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, he invited me to get up and talk about the economy. Now he invites me to tell people in other parts of the country about the exciting things happening in the Saskatchewan economy, and we're going to do just that, Mr. Speaker. We're going to do just that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — We're going to have a campaign to counteract the doom and gloom of this opposition, Mr. Speaker. And if I have to listen to this doom and gloom every day, I'd probably leave the province too.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — But I want to complete the phrase that Todd Hirsch used in *The Globe and Mail*. He said, Mr. Speaker, "If you can keep them . . ."

The Speaker: — Order please. Would the Minister of Industry and Resources complete his statement.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is what Todd Hirsch has to say about the moaners and complainers. He says:

If you can keep them from complaining for 10 minutes [we haven't been able to do that yet] you find that they are actually a lot of fun. Deep down, beneath the layers of pessimism and despair, they are the most thankful people on earth. And they should be — the glass in Saskatchewan is more than half full.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, deep down there is . . .

The Speaker: — Member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Terms of Appointment at Labour Relations Board

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. The Government of Saskatchewan's website states that Saskatchewan's Labour Relations Board operates in a quasi-judicial manner to resolve disputes arising under The Trade Union Act. I take this to mean the activities of the board are free from political interference. Can the minister tell us if that is his understanding of the term quasi-judicial and whether the current board is still operating without political interference.

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to take the question of course. The Labour Relations Board operates in that fashion, and we believe it to operate today in that fashion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, The Trade Union Amendment Act of 2005 allows members of the Labour Relations Board to complete their active cases after their appointments have expired. Can the minister tell us if the Labour Relations Board is in compliance with the provisions of that Act?

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Labour Relations Board is a very important part of The Trade Union Act and the work that it does. And we have a good board. But it's important to realize it is arm's length and that the work that it does, it's important that we don't interfere in it. And I'm not sure if the member opposite is going on a bit of a fishing trip here or what. But I am concerned about the direction he's going here.

You know we have people on the board — the Vice-Chairs and the Chair — and they're hired through the Public Service Commission and the advertising that goes on with that. And we think this is the appropriate way to do things. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when Walter Matkowski, the Vice-Chair of the Labour Relations Board went to work March 2, 2006, his card would no longer let him into the parkade, and when he arrived at his office, his computer was gone. Mr. Matkowski still had Labour Relations Board cases left to complete.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why this Vice-Chair was removed apparently in violation of The Trade Union Amendment Act?

[14:15]

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — You know, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's really important that the work of the Labour Relations Board . . . does its work in a timely fashion and be efficient as possible. And when situations arise and some of the cases are taking a bit of time, I think that it would be appropriate for the board to think about this.

I mean here's a specific case, so I think it's really important to continue to be arm's-length here. The Chair of the board is acting in the way that he feels is appropriate. And I don't think it's appropriate for me to comment on one or two or three cases, but it's really important that the Labour Relations Board does its work and that people have faith in the work it does.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, it's not a matter for the minister to say it. I think it should be dealt with in cases. I want to quote from The Trade Union Act, section no. 4, clause (1.2). And this is what it says:

If the term of a member of the board expires after the member has begun hearing a matter before the board but before the proceeding is completed, the member may continue as if his or her term had not expired for the purpose of completing the proceeding.

That is what The Trade Union Act says. Can the minister assure us that the Labour Relations Board is not in violation of this section of the Act?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I think the operative word here is, may. It's really important that the work of the Labour Relations Board moves appropriately, in an appropriate fashion after they do their hearings and witnesses are called. And so this is a case where it may be extended.

But it's really important again to keep this at arm's length so people have faith, both the employers and employees have faith in the board, and that this must not become a political football. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have obtained a copy of an affidavit of Mr. Matkowski prepared by his legal counsel. On pages 2 and 3 of that affidavit, Mr. Matkowski states that on June 24, 2005, he was told by the deputy minister of Labour that he would not be reappointed because, and I quote:

Craik advised me that some of the unions had been complaining about my decisions. I asked Mr. Craik what . . . the Unions [were] saying about me, and he would not say, advising me it was "hearsay". I stated to him that it was obviously effective hearsay, to which he agreed.

Mr. Speaker, was the Vice-Chair of Saskatchewan's Labour Relations Board removed by this government because of his rulings? And does this not constitute an example of direct interference in the affairs of the board?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I find this very interesting, this line of questioning where we're getting into a political debate here. We know the work of the Labour Relations Board and how important that is.

Last Friday we heard the members opposite in their debate talk about competitive labour law, and then they bring it up in the House here. He has completed a term, and we know that. You're hired to be on the board, you do your work, you do it well, and then that's the way it goes.

But I think it's really unfortunate that this becomes a political football. And the folks over there may laugh, but this is very serious to the people in the trade union movement and for employers, that the board does its work well and is at arm's-length from the politicians.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister to confirm again, based on the affidavit that has been put forward on behalf of Mr. Matkowski and the concerns raised by his . . . the fact that he still has cases to deal with, with the Labour Relations Board. Can the minister conclude that in fact that the reason to not reappoint Mr. Matkowski was not political?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Well again, Mr. Speaker, I think it's appropriate to respect the arm's-length nature of the board. And I would ask the member to table his work that he's quoting from here. I think that it is appropriate that we can all see what he is quoting from. I think that what is the process that's outlined is appropriate. It's the right way to do things, and I think that's the way to go. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the

matter of Jack Hillson, taxpayers were left with a much higher bill at the end of the day following a court ruling which said former politicians must be given their old job back. In this matter, it appears someone has lost a job with the Labour Relations Board even though that person still has outstanding cases to resolve. This also appears to be in direct violation of The Trade Union Amendment Act, 2005.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister undertake to investigate this matter to find out exactly why Mr. Matkowski was removed, and whether this was in violation of The Trade Union Amendment Act?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — You know, Mr. Speaker, I think it's really important to emphasize some of the things that we've reviewed: the operative word being, may; the term expired the end of March. I think it's very important, critical to understand that this is arm's-length. The work of the board is critical to many people in this province, employers and employees, and there is no guarantee of the job for life.

And I would say, Mr. Speaker, that it's appropriate that we do not make this into a political football. This is most unfortunate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order please. Order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government I will be tabling written responses to written questions nos. 1,066 and 1,067.

The Speaker: — Responses to 1,066 and 1,067 have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 54

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 54 — The Cancer Agency Act** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to enter into debate on Bill No. 54, The Cancer Agency Act, and

just the different issues that this Bill presents. It's interesting that this Bill is in before the House today, and in light of all the different issues that we have been talking about regarding the cancer agency. And I want to talk about some of those different specific issues as we go through this Bill and the changes that this Bill makes.

This Bill really is changing the whole governance structure of the cancer agency. We've had the privilege of meeting with the cancer society as well as . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please, members. Order. I would ask all members to reduce the level of the whispering so that the member who is speaking can be heard. I'll just wait for a moment for members to kind of settle out. I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, the cancer agency has certainly been in . . . We've been talking a lot about it over the last number of weeks and I want to talk about some of the issues that we have been saying about the cancer agency.

But in particularly this Bill talks about governance and the change of structure for the cancer agency. I was saying that we've had the opportunity to meet with the cancer society and have their input as to what they felt, how this Bill would impact their society. And we've also had the opportunity of meeting with the cancer agency themselves, Bob Allen, and talking to them as far as how this Bill will affect them doing their work and the whole change in governance.

And there are some major changes in the governance and the way the board is structured, from people being appointed from different organizations to now the minister having the authority to appoint the board as they see fit. And the cancer agency didn't seem to have any real concerns about that because they felt that regardless of who was appointing it, that the members on the board as long as they had the right skill sets, that they brought the right skill sets to the board . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please. I wonder if the two members might excuse themselves and . . . Order please. Once again I invite the member for Indian Head-Milestone to proceed.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know whether I should start from the top again or not but I was saying about how the governance structure will change and the skills sets that are brought to the board don't necessarily have to come from each organization, they can come from outside those organizations. And the change in the structure with the minister being able to appoint may very well bring that about.

So most of the people that are involved with this Act felt it was moving in the right direction. It was though interesting when we met with both the cancer society as well as the cancer agency we'd talk about the Bill, and the major conversation or the major dialogue in the meetings that we held with these two organizations was about the Bill itself. But you can't help but — after you've done talking about the Bill — start talking about some of the other issues that have been in the media recently; some of the issues of people having to wait as long as they've

had to wait to see oncologists, some of the various issues around cancer treatment in the province.

And I think it's extremely important to say today, and I want to have on the record, the absolutely marvellous work that the people in the cancer agency do, the absolute marvellous work that oncologists do.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely unrealistic for this government to think that when you're running with three short, three vacancies of oncologists in this province, that you'll be able to deal with the backlog that you have.

I mean, it's unbelievable that the government sits over there . . . And they're hooting and hollering now because they, you know, they think I've said something really amazing. And it's absolutely not amazing. We absolutely do respect the work that the people in the cancer agency do. In fact, we absolutely admire it because the people in the cancer agency — whether it's the nurses, whether it's the oncologists — are expected to do so much with such short personnel.

We know that we are short three oncologists in the province. So you're expecting fewer oncologists to deal with the demand. If we didn't need the use of those oncologists, it would be fine to have the vacancies there. But the oncologists that are here in this province right now are having to take up the slack of these vacancies.

So when I talked to . . . And we talked about it today in question period when I questioned the minister on the fact of vacancies. And he talks about, well we had one endocrinologist in this case retire and now we're starting to recruit. You know, we've talked to this government and asked this government for years now to have human resources plans. Doctors don't retire just like that. They know, we know well in advance that there should be physicians, whether it's endocrinologists, oncologists, whoever it might be, will be retiring.

So what has this government done to fill those spots? It's not good enough to have an endocrinologist talk about retiring today and now we're going to start recruiting. The recruitment needed to start a couple of years ago. And that's just the exact problem with this provincial government, that they have no human resources plan. They fail to deal with the issues that are put at hand.

And I think when you deal with a cancer agency it's extremely important to realize that when you're running short three vacancies — when you have three vacancies, for example, of oncologists — that you're expecting the ones left in this province to do so much more work. They have to do so much more work. They're running at absolute capacity. And the problem with that is when they're running at absolute capacity is they can't keep up. And when you can't keep up . . . Well the member from Saskatoon Nutana seems to be — I don't know what type of gestures I could describe them; I don't think I will — making gestures over here.

[14:30]

The fact is that those endocrinologists, that people in the cancer agency are absolutely running at capacity because this

government fails to give the resources for the personnel that they need to do the jobs that they need to do. You know, it's absolutely amazing that the member from Saskatoon Nutana would stand there and make the gestures that she has been making, when this province has three times the wait time for people visiting an endocrinologist or an oncologist for the first time. Three times the wait. The average for waiting from physician referral to the first visit of an oncologist is four to five weeks. That's the average wait. But what is the wait in Saskatchewan? I ask the member from Saskatoon Nutana. What's the wait in Saskatchewan?

Do you not have any . . . does she not have any constituents that are waiting 12 weeks for that first visit? And then to see the gestures that she's making in here, making fun of it, is absolutely appalling. You know, I mean it's absolutely appalling. Does that member not have people waiting to see an oncologist for the first time? Because if she does, I would like her to go and make those same gestures to them, say, oh it's okay that you have to wait three times the national average for a first visit to oncologists. It's unacceptable.

What we have done for people, the professionals that are working in this field, is expected them to do so much with such a backlog that you do get issues of stress and of burnout because they are expected to do so much with so little. They don't have the professionals, they don't have the personnel to do the job that they want to do. And that is absolutely a given.

And, you know, we have talked about this for a very long time. We have talked about it and it doesn't matter whether it's in cancer treatment, whether it's in general medicine, whatever area of the health field, we continually see that there is a shortage of personnel. And as I said in question period, you know you can do all the work you want to do around a surgical care network and a website and a hotline where you can phone. That does not deal with the root cause of the problem. The root cause of the problem is not enough health care professionals.

You know, a classic example why we'd be short of oncologists or endocrinologists and people are leaving, the minister says we had four leave in the last little while. In the Saskatoon region they've recruited one. We still have three vacancies.

Well I would submit to you that one of the reasons why people leave this province, why some of the health care professionals leave this province, is because they don't have the support. They don't have sufficient human resources. They feel that they . . . if they had, for example, these vacancies filled that it would make a certain . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Why is the member from Estevan on her feet?

Ms. Eagles: — To introduce guests, please.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member from Indian Head-Milestone for allowing me to do this. But, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of this honoured Assembly I would like to introduce two people that are very special in my life. And every session they come up and spend a couple of days with me and this is a total surprise again, but my two sisters, Edna Irwin and Audrey Thompson. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Assembly. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

**Bill No. 54 — The Cancer Agency Act
(continued)**

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was interesting. Just as I was sitting down I heard the minister yell across, say, did you interview these physicians why they were leaving? Did you interview them?

You know what? A better question is, did that minister interview the physicians when they've left this province, you know? Because they certainly do not.

We know of an oncologist that has left this province that has gone to BC [British Columbia], that was very vocal on the way this government deals with the whole issue of cancer in this province and the lack of human resources that they have, Mr. Speaker. So instead of him asking whether we interview him, it would be a very good idea if that minister would do an exit survey of all the specialists that we lose in this province, Mr. Speaker.

But back to the Bill is that the Bill certainly does deal with the governance of the cancer agency and for the most part that is well received. What isn't well received is the way this government deals with the human resources in health care and that is seen in many different fields. So at this time we'd move this Bill to committee.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 54, The Cancer Agency Act, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would move that the Bill be referred to the Crown and Central Agencies Committee.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 54 be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Bill No. 51

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 51 — The Regional Health Services Amendment Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It certainly is a privilege again to enter into the debate on this Bill, Bill No. 51, An Act to amend The Regional Health Services Act. And it's again an interesting Bill to talk to. We've talked to a number of organizations and they feel it's a companion Bill to the previous Bill I spoke of, the cancer agency.

But I do want to say a few things with the health care authorities — first of all districts and now authorities — and the changes that those areas have been through. Of course we started when we went through this health, not rationalization, health . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . reform, thank you. When we went through the health reform, we went to 32 health regions. Obviously that was a mistake because the government then went down to 12 health authorities. And there are still problems in the whole structure. Now this Bill deals with the RHAs [regional health authority] and their relationship with the cancer agency. And you know as I said, it's a companion Bill.

But we do know that there are still many issues that the RHAs are dealing with — dealing with issues of communication. You know, and I don't know if it has ever been more evident than when you hear the case of baby Paige and what that family has gone through over the last number of weeks. And it really is astonishing that our health care system could have someone like that fall through the cracks like that poor family and that poor baby has experienced over the last couple of weeks. And thank heavens that that family had the fortitude and the foresight and the desire to get out of this province and take their child to Edmonton where they were able to receive the care that they should have been able to receive here in Saskatchewan.

Now the minister still hasn't released the report and hasn't

talked much about the report regarding this whole situation. But there are issues around the MRI [magnetic resonance imaging], whether it was operating or not. In the House he used the analogy about taking your car in for servicing and that was done with an MRI.

But the point being with the different health authorities and communication that if there wasn't the capacity in Saskatoon, that why wouldn't they have talked to Regina? Regina has just installed a new MRI. If it was an emergency, why they couldn't have talked to Regina and sent the child back down to Regina? But there seems to be some issues with communication with the RHAs. And unfortunately in this situation, this family had to endure, and endure a screaming child for three weeks, before they finally couldn't stand it any more and got out of the province. It's a real, if you ask me, a black mark on our health care system.

I know that a number of people access the system and have no problems going through the system. But I think how you judge a system is when you have cases like this and how the system responds. And this was one incident where unfortunately the system did not respond very well. So there are issues with the RHAs.

As I say, this Bill is a companion Bill with the previous Bill that I spoke on regarding the cancer agency, and it deals with those issues. I am looking forward to the day when the minister will stand in the House and deal with some of the real issues that we're finding in health care, and that's the human resources issue. So at this time, Mr. Speaker, I would move this Bill to committee.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 51, The Regional Health Services Amendment Act, 2006 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would move that the Bill be referred to the Crown and Central Agencies Committee.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 51 be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the Minister for Advanced Education and Immigration.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, in order to expedite the work of the committees, I would move that the House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for Advanced Ed and Immigration 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. The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:42.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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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
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Minister Responsible for Investment
Saskatchewan Inc.
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Water Corporation

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Gaming Authority
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