



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

---

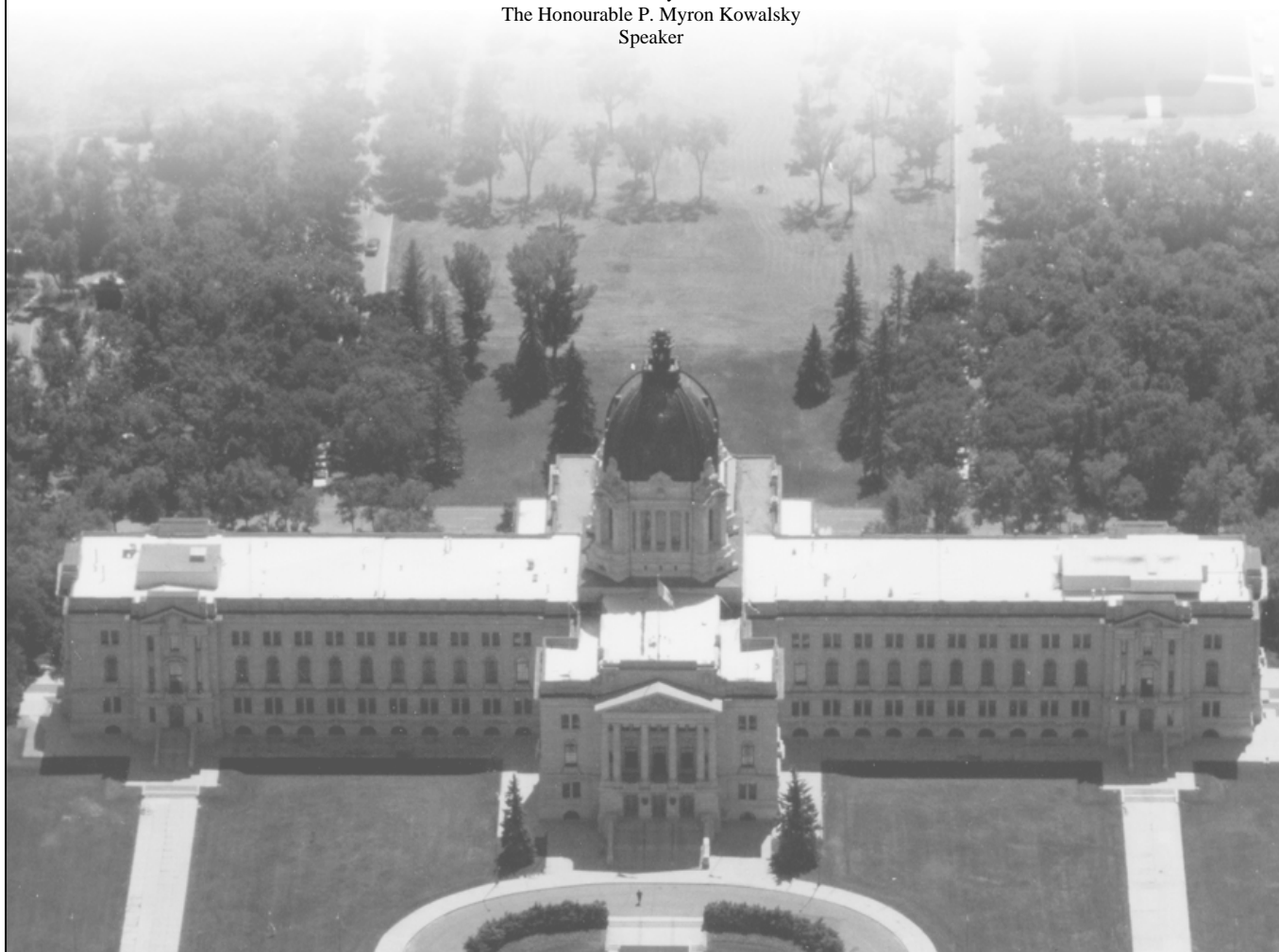
**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

---

(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
Gantfoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, Hon. Glenn	NDP	Moose Jaw North
Hamilton, Doreen	NDP	Regina Wascana Plains
Harpauer, Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Ben	SP	Martensville
Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Higgins, Hon. Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kerpan, Allan	SP	Carrot River Valley
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Kowalsky, Hon. P. Myron	NDP	Prince Albert Carlton
Krawetz, Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lautermilch, Hon. Eldon	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Ted	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Morgan, Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, Hon. John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Prebble, Peter	NDP	Saskatoon Greystone
Quennell, Hon. Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Serby, Hon. Clay	NDP	Yorkton
Sonntag, Hon. Maynard	NDP	Meadow Lake
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Hon. Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Thomson, Hon. Andrew	NDP	Regina South
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wakefield, Milton	SP	Lloydminster
Wall, Brad	SP	Swift Current
Wartman, Hon. Mark	NDP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Yates, Hon. Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney
Vacant		Weyburn-Big Muddy

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

**Deputy Clerk:** — I wish to advise the Assembly that Mr. Speaker is not present today to open today's sitting.

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Speaker, today I present a petition on behalf of constituents of Cypress Hills concerned about the condition of Highway 18. 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 Highway 18 from Claydon to Robsart is repaved at the earliest possible time to ensure the safety of drivers in the area and so that economic development opportunities are not lost.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Madam Deputy Speaker, today's petitions are signed by individuals from the communities of Maple Creek, Eastend, Piapot, and Cypress Hills Park. I so present.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to present a petition to fund Avastin. Madam Speaker, the signatures on this petition are concerned that forcing patients to pay for this drug is an example of two tiered health care. The prayer of the petition reads:

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

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Madam Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from a number of communities including Esterhazy, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, and Martensville. And I am pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy 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.

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

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have petitions today 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 Wadena, Bruno, Saskatoon, Colonsay, Watson, Humboldt, Regina, Anaheim, and Muenster. I so present.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'd like to present another petition from citizens who would like the cancer-curing drug Avastin fully funded. The prayer reads:

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

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition on behalf of people across Saskatchewan who are disappointed that Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island are the only provincial jurisdictions that do not have a dedicated children's hospital. 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 in this year's budget to build a provincial children's hospital in Saskatoon.

And in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Today the petitioners live in northeast Saskatoon on Gray Avenue, Hogg Crescent, and Hurley Way. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the highway

conditions of Highway No. 3:

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 to No. 795.

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

Madam Deputy Speaker, the signatures to this petition are from Maidstone, Delisle, Livelong, and Thunderchild First Nation. I so present.

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The petition I have today is with the people concerned with the government's lack of funding for 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, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is signed by the good people of Saskatoon and Hudson Bay. I so present.

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, it's my privilege to rise in the House today to present yet another petition regarding autism spectrum disorder. This petition deals with the recommendations made by the Committee on Human Services that were made representations to the Minister of Health. It calls for:

Continuing to provide intensive behavioural intervention and other therapies for as long as an individual's lead medical professional deems them to be required and to increase the early diagnosis of children with autism spectrum disorder and to encourage and support autism-related research in Saskatchewan.

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

Madam Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Saskatoon. I so present on their behalf. Thank you.

### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Deputy Clerk:** — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) are hereby read and received as additions to previously tabled petitions being addendums to sessional paper nos. 42, 65, 67, 638, 639, 644, and 669.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Before guests are introduced by

members to the Assembly, I would like to introduce to you, on behalf of Mr. Speaker, members that are seated within the Speaker's gallery.

We have ambassadors from three visiting countries today. And I would ask that they would stand as I read their name and be known to the members of our Assembly. Her Excellency, Romy Asquez de Gonzalez of Panama; His Excellency, Robert Hanz Tippenhauer of Haiti; His Excellency, Nabil Ali Mohamed Barto of Jordan.

A number of tours have been arranged for these ambassadors by an ad hoc group of business people and community leaders, including a visit to the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] training facilities and the Ozonator and others throughout the province.

This trip serves to introduce the ambassadors to Saskatchewan people, culture, technology, and businesses with a view to fostering an appreciation and affinity that will undergird future relationships.

Accompanying the ambassadors are, and I would ask them to stand as well, Robert Montgomery, assistant director, Christian Embassy, Ottawa; James Ginther, Leadership Ministries representative, and Glenn Dynna, president, MuniSoft Regina, as well as host families in Regina here with them that have opened their homes to the ambassadors while they're on their visit to Regina.

I'd ask all members to give our visiting dignitaries a warm welcome.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you Madam Speaker. And as well as joining in to welcome the ambassadors to Saskatchewan from far way, from not quite so far away we have a group of visitors from Rosetown, Saskatchewan, and I'd like to introduce them to all of my colleagues here in the legislature. They are the grade 8 students from the Rosetown Central High School. If I counted correctly, I think there's 46 of them and they are coming here as part of the Rosetown Central High School's annual program to bring grade 8 students to Regina and tour the legislature.

Madam Speaker, the teachers that have accompanied the students include Miles Bennett, Tana Brown, Ken Boyd, Michelle Weinhandl and Todd Weinhandl. And as well there are a couple of chaperones: Novalee Heatherington and Joan Sinclair, and the bus driver is Dave Brigham.

And I've met Dave before. I understand he has a big new bus and he's used that to bring them down. I also know that he is the brother-in-law of the hon. member for Saskatoon Southeast. And I think the reason why he hangs around with a lawyer is because he also, besides having a bus, has an illegal driver. However I know he just uses the illegal driver on the golf course because I've seen him use it there, Madam Speaker.

It's my pleasure to welcome all of these students and those who've accompanied them to the legislature. I look forward to meeting them later in the day over a box of juice. Madam Speaker, would everyone please welcome the grade 8's from Rosetown.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow, the Minister of Learning.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's with a great deal of pleasure that I introduce to you and through you to all colleagues in the House a 10-member study delegation that are here in Saskatchewan from Namibia.

Madam Speaker, this group is part of the Saskatchewan-Namibia partnership and today I would like to welcome our Namibian partners to Saskatchewan. And they're here to work on three twinning projects with Saskatchewan Learning and the Saskatchewan Literacy Commission.

The study tour is focused on curriculum development in public education, grade 1 to 12, community-based early childhood development program, and distance education. The delegation will be with us for the next two weeks and will be visiting a number of our province's early childhood centres, schools, post-secondary institutions, and communities. And they'll share with us their expertise and experiences in delivering programs and services in remote and sparsely populated areas in a country that has many remarkable similarities to Saskatchewan.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like the members to please give a wave as I introduce them. First off, we have Mr. Benestus Kakujaha, Mr. Wynand Diergaardt, Mr. Cornelius Hess, Ms. Ursula Gawanas, Ms. Francina Soul, Ms. Indileni Daniel, Ms. Hildigonda Kruger, Ms. Alina Amukushu, Ms. Isabelle Fourie, and Ms. Loide Kapenda.

And also joining the group from Namibia is Dr. Margaret Lipp who runs the Literacy Commission here in Saskatchewan and works very hard on this partnership program and does wonderful work here in the province of Saskatchewan. I'm very pleased to have the delegation here. And I hope we have a great deal of information sharing and a lot of work done over the next two weeks, and both Saskatchewan and Namibia will benefit from that. And please, I would ask my colleagues to welcome these delegates.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's with pleasure that I rise and join the Minister of Learning in welcoming the Namibian study group to Saskatchewan. Certainly when you hear that your country is very similar as our province in remote and distance education challenges, that certainly I think that we not only can learn from you, but hopefully we have some things that we're able to help you with. And at the end of the day, it certainly is going to be a great benefit to both of our jurisdictions and our people respectively that we have this opportunity to share and dialogue.

So on behalf of the official opposition, let me extend our welcome to you as well in our province.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

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

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly a group of 25 high school students seated in your gallery from the Punnichy Community School. They are accompanied by their teachers, Ms. Wanda Grabowska, Ms. Betty Hryhor, and Ms. Teresa McNab.

I had an opportunity to already visit with them, and we did talk about the operations of the Assembly. And they were particularly interested in question period. And they are expecting very precise and pointed questions to be raised by the members on this side of the House, and they are also expecting precise answers from government members. And I'm sure we will not disappoint them today. So I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Remembering Economist John Kenneth Galbraith

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to influential, Canadian-born economist John Kenneth Galbraith, who died on Saturday, April 29 at the age of 97. Dr. Galbraith was born in Iona Station, Ontario in 1908 and was educated at the Ontario Agricultural College and Berkeley. After completing his doctorate in agricultural economics, he enjoyed a lengthy career teaching at Harvard and Princeton.

Galbraith wrote prolifically on economics, but he also wrote fiction and diplomatic manuals, particularly during his tenure as President Kennedy's ambassador to India. He was the recipient of over 70 honorary degrees, the Order of Canada, and twice he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Madam Speaker, even after his move to the United States, Dr. Galbraith referred to his home country as a model for the United States, noting Canada's admirable record in caring for the poor and the elderly. He believed in the power of government to improve people's lives. He believed in a system of progressive taxes and in public support for the arts, and he also supported public ownership.

Madam Speaker, John Kenneth Galbraith was an economist, diplomat, and writer whose unconventional methods made him a distinct and influential thinker. His writings were rooted in his strong commitment to a socially pain-free, decently egalitarian society. And he displayed this commitment by making his work

accessible and interesting to the public as well as to fellow academics.

Madam Speaker, Dr. Galbraith will be fondly remembered for his wit, style, and firm commitment to his principles. I would ask all members to join me in acknowledging his significant influence on politics, economics, and North American society.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Charity Fashion Show in Weyburn

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Last Saturday night in Weyburn, Mojo's Hair Candy and Reality Bites Clothing Company held their fourth annual charity fashion show. The show was held at the Connections bar and grill for adults and at the Connections banquet hall for minors. Along with the staff from the two private retail stores, there were 41 community volunteers acting as models. Over 300 people attended this charity event and in excess of \$3,000 was raised for Family Place in Weyburn.

Family Place provides support for families in need in the Weyburn area. Their support programs which assist parents and children that are at high risk and are vulnerable ... one particular program is their Mini-Go program for pre-kindergarten youngsters. Family Place employs 20 people in delivering their programs. With limited support from the province, Family Place relies on strong support from the community. This year's fashion show supported Family Place for the second year in a row.

Susan Hagel, the owner of Reality Bites and the organizer of the charity fashion show, won the 2006 Woman Entrepreneur of the Year for Weyburn because of her business skills and her strong support for her community and organizations such as Family Place. Congratulations to Susan Hagel, Reality Bites, Mojo's Hair Candy, and the community of Weyburn for their support of Family Place.

And for the edification of the member for Saskatoon Nutana and her great concern as to who may or may not be a relative, Susan Hagel is a successful female entrepreneur, a builder of a better community in Weyburn, and my sister.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cumberland, the Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs.

### Creighton Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council Celebrates 20 Years of Quality Service

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to attend the 20th anniversary celebration of the Creighton Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council as part of National Volunteer Appreciation Week. The CADAC [Creighton Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council] Outpatient Centre is a non-profit health care organization that focuses on prevention programs for youth. The council works closely with local

schools and community groups.

Madam Deputy Speaker, CADAC's board includes many committed, long-term members but none has served longer and is more dedicated than its director, Laurel Mackie. Laurel has worked with the organization since it began in 1986. She's a leader in Saskatchewan addiction awareness week and the alcohol and drug services provincial working group promoting the development of the clinical programs for alcohol and drug services.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the CADAC Outpatient Centre provides services for a wide variety of addictions and is an excellent example of community-based care. Successful addiction programs like CADAC not only ease the sufferings of patients but also helps reduce costs of the health care system.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like congratulate the Creighton Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council for 20 years of quality service to the people of Saskatchewan and wish them continued success. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Macoun Student Competes in National Writing Contest

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Speaker, I am delighted to tell you the accomplishments of a young constituent of mine. Beau Duckarmie is an 11-year-old grade 5 student at Macoun School. Through his school, he submitted a story for this year's Canadian Schools Creative Writing Contest. Beau's story was chosen to be included in the top entries by the Poetry Institute of Canada Young Writers, which is a great accomplishment because thousands of entries were received.

Beau's story, titled "Survival," is the story of three pilots from New Zealand; their plane ran out of fuel over the rainforests of Burma while they were on their way to Saudi Arabia, and how they survived. His story will be published in *The Monkey's Tale* and will be in the final competition to be judged this fall.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Beau calls himself a war historian. He orders and reads many books on World War II through a military book club and tracks locations on the globe. He is also studying piano and trumpet.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm especially proud of this young man's accomplishments because Beau is my grandson. Congratulations, Beau, and good luck in the finals. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan Awards

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the Association of Professional Engineers and

Geoscientists of Saskatchewan, or APEGS, held their annual awards banquet in Saskatoon over the weekend. These awards are held every year in conjunction with APEGS' annual general meeting to celebrate exceptional professional achievements of their members.

Madam Speaker, this year's winners include Derrick Bellows who received the Brian Eckel Distinguished Service Award; Dr. Ding Yu Peng, recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award. Mr. Barry Collins was presented the McCannel Award. The Promising Member Award went to Mr. Ben Voss.

Madam Speaker, the Exceptional Engineering Geoscience Project Award went to Pavement Scientific International for their work in partnership with Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation and the Saskatchewan road builders on the mechanistic, full depth road recycling and strengthening system.

And, Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased to say that the Environmental Excellence Award went to a constituent of mine, Ken Kelln of Kelln Consulting. This award is given in recognition of exceptional professional achievements related to environmental protection and preservation.

Madam Speaker, I invite all members to join with me in congratulating the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan and the award winners on their fine work and their many contributions to the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Shaunavon's Citizen of the Year

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'd like to tell you about Mr. Gordon Speirs, this year's Citizen of the Year from Shaunavon who has tirelessly contributed to his community in many ways. Born and raised right in the area, Gordon graduated from the Shaunavon High School in 1944 and began a 45-year career in hardware and automotive supply sales. Besides operating the family business, Speirs Automotive Ltd., Gordon and his wife Shirley have raised four children and remain active members in the local United Church.

Now to give an example of the impact Gordon's volunteer spirit has made on the community of Shaunavon, here's just a partial list of the organizations in which he has participated over the years. Gordon was a member of the volunteer fire department for 46 years, serving as a fire chief for 42 of those years. He was on the town council for 13 years and served in the capacity of mayor for three of those years.

The rink board, recreation board, swimming pool, hockey club, school board, hospital board and housing corporation have all benefited from Gordon's participation. So too have the chamber of commerce, the Shawnee Club, the Kiwanis Club, museum board, Pine Cree Park Board and the Rock Creek Golf Club.

As an aside, Madam Deputy Speaker, when Gordon was asked

if there was any organization he had not been part of, he pondered for a moment and replied, yes — the United Church women. At 80 years of age and ostensibly retired, Gordon still volunteers five days a week with the Hometown Club who help maintain the local recycling program, among other projects.

Coincidentally, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want, for the record, you to know that I'm not related to Gordon Speirs, but we should say that we would offer our congratulations to him on his recognition as Citizen of the Year.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Community Resources and the member for Athabasca.

#### Voices of the North

**Hon. Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Last week I, along with Minister of Northern Affairs and Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations and a very large and appreciative audience, had the opportunity to see Voices of the North.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Voices of the North is a production of Musqua Entertainment of Prince Albert. And since 1993, they have been providing Saskatchewan Aboriginal youth the opportunity to showcase their musical talents and to gain valuable experience in the entertainment field both as performers and on the production side.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Voices of the North received tremendously positive responses for their performances last summer at a variety of venues including the Canada Summer Games, and so no one was surprised at the incredible show they put on last Thursday night.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the evening featured Voices of the North show band — 10 of the finest musicians you'll find anywhere and 12 performers ranging from age 11 on up — performing a variety of songs. Some were written by performers themselves; some were old standards, but all of them sounded great.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Chief Ken Thomas, the former chief of FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations], Perry Bellegarde, and the current chief of FSIN, Lawrence Joseph, were some of the performers at this incredible show.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in particular I want to mention one of the performers, Dakota Caisse who is originally from Ile-a-la-Crosse and who has family there. Dakota has a tremendous voice. He put on a tremendous show, and I know that the town of Ile-a-la-Crosse and all his family and friends are very proud of him.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to thank Voices of the North producer, Sheryl Kimbley, and all the performers and musicians for putting on an excellent show. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## ORAL QUESTIONS

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

**Funding Allocations for School Divisions**

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you. Madam Deputy Speaker, this is an NDP [New Democratic Party] government that continually talks about respecting the autonomy of school boards, and yet the Minister of Finance yesterday was clearly telling them what they should be doing. He told them they shouldn't be raising taxes. Yesterday he said this about the South East Cornerstone School Division which includes Weyburn, and I quote:

They made a political decision on the board to replenish their reserves, and so be it.

Does the minister really think they wanted to raise taxes in Weyburn and let teachers go? Does he think he left them with a choice? The only one hoarding money is the Finance minister who has socked away millions of dollars in his election slush fund for next year.

Madam Deputy Speaker, why is this minister blaming school boards for decisions they are making in the best interests of their students?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, here we are with the critic for the opposition who stands in the House every day and is telling us what should be happening in these school divisions in terms of the numbers of teachers they should have, the number of schools they should have, the number of classrooms they should have, the mill rates they should set. This is what he is saying that we should be doing.

And then he comes out today and he says, oh wait, but you shouldn't be telling the school boards what to do. Clearly that's just the domain for the Sask Party in terms of interference in local autonomy.

When it comes to what this government says, what I said was clear: that there was sufficient money in this budget, that there was no need for a tax increase in Weyburn, and there was sufficient money for cuts in Estevan and Moosomin.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Melfort.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, people are certainly tired of this NDP government telling them what to do, including school board officials. Don Rempel, the director of education for the South East Cornerstone Division, told the *Leader-Post*, and I quote:

"It's clearly inappropriate for a member of the legislature to comment on boards' decisions" . . .

That's all we heard yesterday from the Finance minister about his comment on board decisions, and I quote:

"That's their choice to do it, but there was no need to increase taxes in the old Sunrise division (of Weyburn) or . . . any [other] increase in Estevan."

Mr. Speaker, why is he blaming school boards when he is the one who is cutting their funding?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Okay now let's just bring the member up to speed in terms of where we're at in this debate. Now he is saying, now again, that we should be interfering in the autonomy of the boards and telling them not to increase taxes. Or he is saying that we should be telling them to cut taxes. What is the position of that member on this? Does he want taxes to go up? Does he think that taxes should have been held, or what exactly is his and that party's position?

Our position is clear. There was sufficient money in the budget that taxes could have been held in Weyburn. They could have been cut in Estevan and Moosomin. And yes, they would have been needed to be raised in the other three divisions. There was sufficient money in the budget to do that. The member opposite ought to stop playing politics with this and let the boards get on with their business.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Melfort.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Madam Deputy Minister, the Finance minister wants to assume the directions of the school board and that there's sufficient funds for them to operate. Unfortunately, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is not what Lionel Diederichs, the superintendent of finance for South East Cornerstone, told the *Leader-Post*, and I quote:

"We suffered a significant loss in provincial funding and there's only one place to make that up" . . .

Madam Deputy Speaker, if the minister does not want to admit what is obvious to everyone else in this province, Mr. Diederichs certainly points out, as the director of finance for that school division, that this government has let school boards down and now is telling them that in light of these decreased funding amounts that they still should be able to maintain taxes. That simply is impossible, Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the minister say what he intends to do in order to properly fund education in this province?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Let me begin by reminding that member that he had the audacity to stand in this House and vote against record spending for education in this province. This is the same party that voted against increases in health care. This



is the same party that voted against increases in social assistance. This is a party that says one thing in question period and does something completely different when the rubber hits the road and it comes time to a vote.

Let us remember this. There was sufficient money in this budget in Weyburn to make sure that taxes had held the line. They could have opted to phase it in over three years. There was sufficient money in this budget to cut the taxes in Estevan. He should ask his seatmate what she thinks about that. There was sufficient money to see that there was a tax cut in Moosomin. That was what was built into this budget and that's what the members voted against.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### School Attendance

**Mr. Morgan:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, a year and a half ago the death of 11-year-old Delores Bird shocked the city of Saskatoon. Delores was a girl who roamed the streets of Saskatoon looking for a place to sleep. Again, Madam Deputy Speaker, she was only 11 years old. She was found dead from a drug overdose.

At the time, the Kids Not in School organization estimated that there were 1,000 school age children in Saskatoon not attending school at all. Can the Minister of Learning tell us if that number is accurate and if not, what is the situation in Saskatoon today?

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

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, there is a number of children that aren't attending school on a regular basis. This has been an issue and I believe the case that the member raises is one that really brought it to the forefront.

Previous to that, the Department of Learning has been working on a tracking system so that we can track children, and it brings into play the health records that are used as a basis. There's been issues to deal with over privacy. A lot of work has gone on over the last year. The tracking system is up and running in the city of Saskatoon and we are hoping soon to have it spread right across the province.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, at the time of 11-year-old Delores Bird's tragic death, the Saskatoon-based organization Kids Not in School was lobbying the government to develop a provincial tracking system for children, using Saskatchewan health numbers, as many of these children were most likely not registered in school at all. According to documents on the Department of Learning's website, there is a student tracking program and it is designed to, and I quote:

... assist those responsible for Kindergarten to Grade 12

education in the province to identify children and youth who are of compulsory . . . age and are not participating in an approved . . . program.

Can the minister tell us when this program was brought into being, how many children in Saskatoon are not in school at the present time, and what is the status of the program in Saskatoon today?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Learning.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, last session we amended legislation so that we could put the tracking system into place. As I previously stated, there is the pilot project that is running in the city of Saskatoon. It is running quite well. I haven't heard any major complaints or major blips along the way.

Our plan is, is that by this fall we will have it operational across the province. And I know the member opposite realizes the importance of ensuring that children are attending school. And that is one thing that through the department and through this program that we hope to ensure and better enforce.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party's crime committee has been meeting with police officers, community workers, and others involved in finding concrete solutions to the root causes of crime. They point to the link between children not going to school and a strong likelihood of being on the street and involved in gangs or prostitution.

Madam Deputy Speaker, our question is to this minister: what is she going to do about it? And how many children are not going to school today? Can this minister tell us what the student tracking program has found today?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Minister of Learning.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has really hit on an issue that is I know near and dear to me. We know that children need the benefits of school. Many of us who come from families where the expectation was that you go to school, we all enjoyed going to school, but that's not the norm in many families in the province of Saskatchewan and other places.

For many reasons the traditional education system may not work for some families or for some children. And there are many resources that have been invested in and working toward solutions for those people, whether it's basic adult education, whether it's alternative schools, whether it's community schools, whether it's the tracking system to make sure that young children are in school and do have that benefit to, Madam Deputy Speaker, early learning and child care — which this province has a plan to put in place to have a early connect with very young children in the province of Saskatchewan — because we know by all the research that's been done in many countries, in many areas, that the earlier the contact is with the

child, the more successful the outcomes will be.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, the problems go beyond just the tracking system. It is clear from the minister's answers she does not know how many children are not in school and is unable to tell us that.

The second problem is, even if she did know how many of those children there are, who they are, she doesn't have a solution for what to do with those children. Otherwise they would be doing it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this minister should be dealing with developing a comprehensive program to deal with children not in school. Madam Deputy Speaker, can this minister tell us how many children are affected by not being in school and what she's going to do about it?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Learning.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, just for the member's benefit — he may not have been listening — there are many programs that this government has invested money into. And the member can say, well what's the number? What's the number? Well do you know something, Madam Deputy Speaker? There is more than numbers involved in this. Children are more than a number.

And we have to make sure that we have a variety of programs that provide the resources where needed and when needed. So that whether it's young children, whether it's early childhood learning, whether it's early childhood development, whether it's the ECIP [early childhood intervention program] program, whether it's basic adult education, whether it's opportunities through regional colleges, distance learning, community schools, alternative schools — Madam Deputy Speaker, we have done a number of things to access and to be accessible to learners, no matter what the age. And we will continue to work on those projects and develop projects that are more accessible and serve the needs of Saskatchewan learners.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Indian Head-Milestone.

### Recruitment of Endocrinologists

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Yesterday we learned that Saskatoon's last remaining endocrinologist is leaving that city.

Dr. Tammy McNab said that she wants to stay but didn't want to be the last endocrinologist dealing with thousands and thousands of patients. Dr. McNab said she is pursuing an offer in Edmonton mainly because recruitment efforts in this province were moving at a snail's pace.

We've seen numbers of examples over the past months where recruitment and retention by this NDP government is less than satisfactory. Now that we have an unsatisfactory situation of having to fly endocrinologists into Saskatchewan to deal with some of the diabetic patients that we have. Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, why is finding new endocrinologists for Saskatchewan such a low priority for this government?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. And it appears that on family day in the Chamber here, having a question from Saskatchewan's favourite uncle is most appropriate.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I fundamentally disagree with the context of the member's question that in fact this would be a low priority, Madam Deputy Speaker.

On endocrinology in this province, Saskatchewan Health, the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority, the College of Medicine, and the Saskatchewan Medical Association are all co-operating to recruit one of the most competitive sides of the health sector, endocrinology.

Madam Deputy Speaker, endocrinologists are in great demand across North America. We have been working very hard in conjunction with the . . .

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

**Mr. McMorris:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, with over 50,000 diabetics roughly in this province and no endocrinologists in Saskatoon, they don't find that really much of a joke whatsoever. Dr. McNab offered to find new recruits, offered to help recruit new endocrinologists so that she wouldn't be left alone in this province. She offered to sit at tables at job fairs but was told that wasn't necessary. She watched as possible new recruits lost interest in Saskatoon because people from this government wouldn't return phone calls, wouldn't explain the whole issue around recruitment and what was needed in Saskatoon.

Dr. McNab asked why that recruitment drives weren't conducted on a more aggressive manner. She was told that the efforts were usually ineffective and too expensive by the health district or by this government.

Why isn't this government working with the health districts to meet the demands that we're seeing in the province? Demands of zero endocrinologists in Saskatoon is absolutely unacceptable. When will this government start taking an aggressive attack and recruiting professionals that we need to maintain the health care system that provincial residents demand?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Saskatoon Regional Health Authority is taking a very aggressive position with regards to this situation. Not only does Saskatchewan Health, but also the Saskatchewan Regional Health Authority and the Saskatchewan Medical Association find it unacceptable to have no endocrinologists working in the city of Saskatoon. That's why they've taken steps to deal with the situation in the interim.

It would appear that there's one endocrinologist that has been recruited. The Saskatchewan College of Medicine is working very closely with two others, Madam Deputy Speaker, with \$42 million currently in the pot for physician recruitment and retention in this province and a workforce action plan to deal with this issue.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is unfortunate, but the people who need to be charged with this are working hard to ensure that the situation doesn't continue for much longer.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, this situation is like a slow-moving train wreck. We knew that there was retirements. You could hear of departures. There's a maternity leave happening, Madam Deputy Speaker. And this government has done nothing. When will this government set targets so that they can be measured and tracked?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. And as we've heard in the past, the opposition's rhetoric about doing nothing is not substantiated by the facts.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the criticism that he levels on Saskatchewan Health is criticism that would have to be shared, Madam Deputy Speaker, with the Saskatchewan Medical Association, with the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan, and with the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are dollars earmarked to ensure that we have an active and aggressive recruiting campaign, Madam Deputy Speaker, that has been successful in many of the fields in which we are recruiting, Madam Deputy Speaker. The number of physicians practising in this province today — 6 per cent higher than it was two years ago. Madam Deputy Speaker, the recruitment and retentions efforts are having some success. We will continue to do that.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Appointment at the Labour Relations Board

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. This morning the people of Saskatchewan learned that the former Vice-Chair of the Labour Relations Board is ready to consider arbitration or some other form of alternate dispute resolution.

Mr. Walter Matkowski says he would consider other options like arbitration if this NDP government is interested. Madam Deputy Speaker, what action has the Minister of Labour taken to explore these other options since hearing about them this morning?

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

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Well let's review the facts again. Mr. Matkowski was selected through an open competition for a five-year term. He completed his five-year term. It's expired. And there'll be another competition for another five-year term.

But you know what? We're talking about political interference in the Labour Relations Board. Let's talk about what the Sask Party would do. You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, just last spring the member for Thunder Creek said in this Chamber, and I quote:

No amendment . . . should be considered unless the government is willing to remove all current members of the Labour Relations Board and reappoint a full board . . .

So last spring the members opposite were calling for every member to be fired of the LRB [Labour Relations Board]. And today they seem to be suggesting that if you're appointed to the LRB your term should never expire.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is so typical of the members opposite. They say one thing one day and another the next.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, let's look at what this Minister of Labour has had to say lately. First of all he said that Mr. Matkowski's allegations were without merit. Then he said there was no political interference in the LRB but refused to produce the deputy minister. Then he allowed his deputy minister to talk about a conversation with Mr. Matkowski but refused to go into any details. Finally he said that there would be no investigation because he didn't want one taking place while a court case was on.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Matkowski is willing to consider alternatives in order to get to the truth. Why doesn't the minister want to get to the bottom of this?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy

Speaker. I guess they want me to just keep on repeating this. There is no political interference. Mr. Matkowski's term expired.

But, you know, if they want to keep talking about political interference in the Labour Relations Board, well let's just do that, Madam Deputy Speaker. Just yesterday I understand that in a scrum with reporters the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Sask Party, clearly stated, if he had his way the LRB would have a, and I quote, "a growth agenda." A growth agenda.

Mr. Speaker, clearly the Leader of the Opposition doesn't understand the job of the LRB and the work that they do. The LRB is an independent, quasi-judicial board that settles disputes that arise out of The Trade Union Act. It is not a board to minister a political agenda for a political party. It is not that.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, to say anything different is indefensible.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, over the noon hour we learned that the Provincial Ombudsman is willing to investigate these allegations of political interference in the Labour Relations Board. An Ombudsman investigation would be open and impartial. An Ombudsman's investigation would find out whether Mr. Matkowski's allegations have substance.

Mr. Speaker, apparently all the Ombudsman needs is some indications from the minister that he should get involved in this matter. Mr. Speaker, what has the minister done since discovering the Ombudsman would be interested in helping to resolve this matter without a lawsuit?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I've stated it many times and I'll say it again. There was no political interference at the Labour Relations Board. Mr. Matkowski simply, his term has expired.

Now I'm going to tell you another thing the member from Thunder Creek said last spring about those on the Labour Relations Board who complete their terms. And I quote:

... it's obvious to any member of the public that people in any job must leave their duties when ... their mandate expires.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, his mandate expired. And I've got a question for the members opposite: when will they quit their political agenda?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Labour seems to forget that Mr. Matkowski has alleged that the LRB ... his position on the LRB, he was asked to resign that position last summer. That's what Mr. Matkowski is alleging, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it appears once again this minister is rejecting all reasonable avenues for an investigation into allegations of political interference. Everything suggested is not good enough for this minister. Once again this NDP government seems to want a lawsuit; a lawsuit — as in the Hillson matter — they may lose.

Mr. Speaker, thankfully the Provincial Ombudsman does not need the government's permission to conduct an investigation. I have here a letter I am sending, asking the Ombudsman to conduct an investigation into allegations of political interference.

Madam Deputy Speaker, will this minister at least agree to co-operate fully with the Ombudsman's investigation regardless of where it may go?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Well you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, I find this very interesting. The Sask Party keeps spouting off about a need for fairness and balance in our labour legislation. And yet the opposition, the Leader of the Opposition, goes on record declaring war on working people here in Saskatchewan. How is that fair and balanced?

And then we hear the member from Thunder Creek says that every member of that board should be fired. And yet, and yet again they drag another name of a civil servant through the mud.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, they say one thing one day, and another the next. They're just not credible.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, with leave to introduce guests.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Premier, the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, has asked leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Premier.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. In the west gallery, Madam Deputy

Speaker, today are some guests of mine that I'd like to introduce.

First of all, Mr. Derek Froese, Derek has been working with me in the Premier's office for some time now. I think it's the first time I've had an opportunity to introduce Derek to the members. But with Derek today, I'm very pleased to be introducing his wife, Inna. Inna is still a relatively recent immigrant to our nation and to our province from Ukraine. With Derek and Inna today are Derek's mom, Barb Froese, who farms near Laird. Derek's dad — Barb's husband, Wilmer — is seeding as we speak. And also we're very privileged to welcome today, to the Chamber, Derek's grandparents, Ed and Mary Roth.

I would ask all members to welcome these guests to our legislature today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

#### **Bill No. 12 — The Consumer Protection Amendment Act, 2005**

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Madam Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Consumer Protection Amendment Act, 2005.

Madam Speaker, the main purpose of Bill No. 12 is to improve consumer protection and strengthen trust and confidence in Saskatchewan's marketplace. Consumers face a marketplace that is constantly changing as a result of introduction of new technologies and increasingly more complex and sophisticated products and services. Consumers are increasingly paying in advance for products and services. This places consumers at increased risk of incurring financial losses.

Madam Speaker, today's Bill provides for comprehensive changes to Saskatchewan's consumer protection legislation. It covers a broad range of goods and services and sets out new rules regarding agreements that involve future performance, delivery, or payment. The Bill includes new requirements for agreements regarding personal development services, such as health and fitness clubs, talent and modelling agencies, sports and dance studios. It also sets out new rules for travel club contracts and agreements that are entered into over the phone or by mail.

Madam Speaker, this Bill was introduced in the Assembly on November 16, 2005. The Bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services after first reading to allow members of the Assembly to discuss the proposals in the Bill and to provide the public with an opportunity to make submissions and to provide advice on the issues raised by the Bill. The Standing Committee on Human Services held public hearings on the Bill on February 20 and 22, 2006, and tabled its

report on the Bill on April 28, 2006.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the members of the committee for their diligent and extensive review of Bill No. 12 and for their report. I would also like to express my appreciation to the presenters who appeared before the committee and the individuals and organizations that provided written submissions to the committee.

The committee made a number of recommendations in its report. In response to these recommendations, I will be proposing some House amendments when the Bill proceeds to committee. I will discuss those amendments in the context of the relevant provisions in the Bill.

Madam Speaker, this Bill adds four new parts to The Consumer Protection Act. The first part sets out new rules for future performance contracts. An agreement is considered to be a future performance contract if the delivery or payment for goods or services is not made in full at the time the contract is entered into. Most future performance contracts involve consumers paying for goods or services in advance of delivery. The Bill provides for improved disclosure to ensure that both parties to the agreement have the same understanding of the agreement. It requires future performance contracts to be in writing and to contain prescribed information. The Bill also provides that a consumer may cancel a future performance contract if the supplier does not make delivery or begin the services within 30 days after the date specified in the contract.

The second part of the Bill sets out new rules for personal development services contracts including fitness club contracts, gym memberships, modelling and talent contracts, diet program memberships, martial arts, sports, and dance programs. The Bill applies to personal development services contracts for which payment is required in advance of the services being provided.

Madam Speaker, the Bill provides consumers with a 10-day cooling-off period during which they may cancel the personal development services contract without any reason. The cooling-off period is aimed at curbing high-pressure sales tactics and allows consumers to reconsider their purchasing decisions.

In its report, the committee recommended that the cooling-off period be reduced from 10 days to 7 operational days. I accept the committee's recommendation and will be proposing an amendment to the Bill in committee to change the cooling-off period for personal development services contracts from 10 days to 7 business days.

Over the years, a number of consumers in Saskatchewan have suffered financial loss as a result of fitness clubs going out of business. Since 1986 there have been nine bond forfeitures involving fitness clubs under The Sale of Training Courses Act. In six of these cases, the bond was insufficient to pay out all the claims made against the bond.

[14:30]

The Sale of Training Courses Act has become dated and has increasingly failed to protect consumers. Most fitness clubs, dance studios, and modelling agencies are not currently licensed

in Saskatchewan because The Sale of Training Courses Act is not broad enough in scope to apply to them.

While it is recognized that it is not possible to prevent companies from going out of business, the Bill attempts to limit the potential losses for consumers by restricting the length of the term of a personal development services contract to one year and requiring that monthly payment options be offered.

With respect to the length of the term of personal development services contracts, the committee has recommended that contracts be made for a term of no longer than two years and that advanced payment for services not exceed one year. I accept the committee's recommendation and will be proposing House amendments that adopt the committee's recommendation.

Madam Speaker, today's Bill also provides that a consumer may cancel a personal development services contract by giving a supplier a notice of cancellation by any prescribed means. The committee has recommended that the means for the delivery of a notice of cancellation be set out in the Act and that the Bill be amended to provide that a consumer may cancel a personal development services contract by giving written notice of cancellation to the business by personal service, registered mail, or by any other means set out in the contract. I accept the committee's recommendation and will be proposing amendments in committee to adopt this recommendation.

The next part of the Bill pertains to travel club contracts. Travel club contracts are defined as contracts where a consumer, through a membership in a travel club or a vacation club, acquires the right to discounts or other benefits on the purchase of transportation, accommodation, or other services related to travel.

Currently consumers who enter into travel club contracts do not have a statutory cancellation right. Memberships in travel clubs and vacation clubs are often marketed through high-pressure sales presentations. Many travel clubs entice consumers to buy lifetime memberships. Consumers may be discouraged from reading contracts or considering the details of the offer and frequently do not have the opportunity to seek third party advice before entering into such contracts and making substantial financial commitments.

Problems that consumers frequently report with travel clubs include the inability to realize any savings particularly if the member does travel frequently and failure to receive benefits because the company goes out of business. Under the Bill, travel club contracts will be limited to one year, and consumers would be provided with a 10-day cooling-off period.

With respect to travel club contracts, the committee has recommended that travel clubs be prohibited from requiring advance payment of more than a prescribed amount per year. I will be proposing House amendments to implement the committee's recommendations regarding travel club contracts.

The fourth and final part of the Bill sets out new rules for remote contracts. In essence remote contracts are agreements that are concluded by telephone, fax, or mail. Madam Speaker, Bill No. 12 would extend the protections that are currently

provided in the Act for Internet sales, contracts to other forms, or remote contracts.

For example the Bill would require businesses to disclose certain basic information to consumers and would allow a consumer to cancel a remote contract if goods or services were not delivered within 30 days of the delivery date agreed upon. In addition the Bill would allow a consumer to require the credit card company to cancel or reverse the charge if the consumer cancelled the contract and the seller failed to refund the money.

In summary, Madam Speaker, this Bill is intended to update and strengthen Saskatchewan's consumer protection legislation and to provide Saskatchewan consumers with the same level of protection that is provided to consumers in other jurisdictions. The amendments proposed in this Bill endeavour to strike a balance between the interests of consumers and businesses. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of The Consumer Protection Amendment Act, 2005.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 12 be now read a second time. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. This is the first time that the public hearing process was used in the Human Services Committee, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the presenters that made presentations to the committee. The committee worked hard to hear what the presenters had to say and to try and develop a consensus. There's no doubt from the number of presenters and the nature of the presentations that were made that there was significant concern raised about the introduction of this Bill.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd like to give just a brief bit of background. The Saskatchewan Party had gone on record in months prior to this about the unregulated nature of travel clubs. Citizens in this province have lost many thousands of dollars when unregulated travel clubs had gone out of business. Criminal charges ensued. People were prosecuted and sent to jail, but there was no recovery for consumers as a result of the operation of some of the travel clubs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the members of the opposition did not hear complaints from people that were using fitness clubs although it's clear that members on the government side did hear complaints because they chose to regulate in that industry.

The effect of this Bill was to try and deal with both areas of concern in one piece of legislation. The committee structure worked well to try and develop some compromises and do some trade-offs to try and meet the needs of both areas that were presenting.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it's still the position of the opposition that the fitness clubs do not require any degree of regulation. The amount of money that has been lost by fitness clubs going out of business is relatively minimal.

However having said that, the nature of the presentations were

such that we were able to develop some significant compromises and develop something that hopefully will be workable for the industry. They dealt with issues such as the length of term of the contract and how far in advance commitments could be made, the amounts that could be prepaid. That's the area where there is vulnerability for consumers where large amounts of money are prepaid.

Another area of significant concerns to fitness clubs was the method of cancellation and how cancellation could be made. We understand that this is going to be dealt with partly in regulation and partly in legislation. And we hope we have something where the consumers will be able to make their cancellations in an appropriate manner and have proof that their cancellation was received by the business without implying or imposing something that's too onerous on the business.

We've also agreed on reducing the cooling-off period, and that will have some significant benefits to businesses that want to be able to have longer term commitments and get on with doing business rather than have the spectre that a new member may choose to cancel or walk away during the first few days of their contract. The effect of a cooling-off period is that a consumer can use the facility with no cost to them for that number of days. If they choose to walk away or cancel at the end of the cooling-off period, the business is out that much money. So we have arrived at a compromise where that is somewhat reduced.

We also have heard significant concerns about directors' liabilities and the chill that it puts over businesses that may have had inadvertent or accidental non-compliance with the legislation. They could be facing substantial fines. It would not be a fine necessarily imposed on the business but on the directors as well. We appreciate that there may be times when that is appropriate, but it's certainly a troubling aspect of this. We realize that a business going out of business or not continuing would not have directors' liability, but there would be fines available and significant fines for some areas which is certainly something that may be an impediment or an area of significant concern for business operators.

Nonetheless the committee worked hard and developed some compromises that we hope will work well. We are waiting to see what the House amendments that will be brought forth by the Minister of Justice and hope that those reflect the committee's deliberations and the consensus that was arrived. We would like this to be something that, when it's brought back to the House, can be supported unanimously by all of the people that participated in the committee. So we will be looking carefully at those when they come back.

The biggest area of concern and the most troubling one was — and I mentioned earlier, Madam Deputy Speaker — is travel clubs. In Saskatoon there was a travel club that went out of business. People had deposited with the travel club many thousands of dollars from each individual. And when that travel club went out of business, there was massive amounts of loss. There was unfortunately no presenters on behalf of that industry, and we were not able to get a sense from either citizens that were affected by that, consumers that were affected, or by people that were in that industry.

Our concern is that we're going into an area where we're

regulating an industry where there has not been any input or any meaningful direction from that industry. In the end what was felt was best was that we would limit the amount of money that could be prepaid so that the amount of money that a consumer could lose would be limited by regulation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we look forward to seeing what happens when this Bill goes back to committee and what House amendments come forward by the minister. We are hoping and expecting that they will be consistent with that in the report, number five, that was prepared by the committee, and that everything will go forward.

We are supportive of the process that was used. And I would like to encourage all members to consider that the policy field committee is the method of dealing with issues that may be contentious in the future. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 12, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Clerk Assistant:** — Second reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — I move that Bill No. 12, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act, 2005 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 12, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act, 2005 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 30

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 30 — The Film and Video Classification Amendment Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, this Bill is the film

and video classification Bill. In earlier presentations by opposition members, we have made our concerns known about this Bill.

We support what this Bill is trying to do. The purpose of having a classification system is so that parents and guardians, schoolteachers, are able to understand and have a rating system that is appropriate for video games, for films, and other such like. Unfortunately this Bill does not address the concerns and does not adequately deal with the issues that will come forward. There is a lack of understanding about the current state of technology and how games are played online and how local area network gaming takes place.

Madam Deputy Speaker, our concern is that there is a lack of consultation with stakeholders, specifically business owners in this province who operate local area network gaming. This is a business that operates somewhat like an arcade where people go and play online sports and games with people that are in other areas. The operators of those businesses have little or no control over what takes place with the machines that are there.

While we're supportive of what this Bill is trying to do, it does not necessarily work to try and deal with what might take place and imposes very substantial and perhaps grossly unfair and disproportionate penalties to the users. It is our understanding that LAN [local area network] operators have also had the opportunity to meet with the Minister of Justice and his officials so that they are aware of the concerns that take place.

We understand that for video game distributors who operate in big box stores or normal video game retailers, this Bill does not cause a problem. They are dealing with over-the-counter boxed games that come with a label or a rating system on them.

What we're concerned with and what the operators of these arcades are concerned with is the ones where they are operating an online type of system. The mainstream operators that sell prepackaged games are not affected. But for local area network gaming this creates a huge problem because of the nature of technology that exists in today's world. It's the use of the Internet that makes sections of this Bill obsolete before it is passed.

Operators allow users to play games that are downloaded from Internet on PCs [personal computer]. Many of these games are unclassified. They do not come from the usual mass marketing distribution channels. So this effectively will create an environment in these businesses where they're forced to police each and every game operator or every console that's in the business.

This doesn't mean, Madam Deputy Speaker, that these operators are not responsible for the content of the games that children and youth might play in their . . . [inaudible] . . . One of them, Matrix Gaming, requires signed consent forms from parents to allow children to play in their . . . [inaudible] . . . The Matrix Gaming Centre monitors the use of the Internet to ensure that no inappropriate websites or material are viewed. And perhaps more importantly, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Matrix Gaming Centre is used on a regular basis by a wide variety of youth organizations such as Canadian Christian Youth Adventures, Big Brothers of Regina, and various youth,

sports, and church groups for parties and for other fundraising activities.

[14:45]

The problem isn't so much the fact that there's regulation. The fact is that there is not a regulation or a method of classifying these games and this method of game play. The opposition certainly has no problem in wanting to ensure that only appropriate material is shown to minors or is prepared to minors for purpose of game play. But when you have unregulated ones that may be appropriate and there's no source of identifying that, we're putting these people in the position of being subject to a large fine.

Unfortunately in this piece of legislation, Saskatchewan is proposing a maximum fine of \$100,000 for violating this Act. Manitoba's legislation, which is somewhat different than ours, has a maximum fine of \$5,000. We would submit, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the fine differentiation between the provinces is an indication that the fine proposed in Saskatchewan is disproportionate to what this Bill is trying to achieve.

We have asked that the government review the concerns of the LAN industry, and we hope that the government has heard those concerns. We are prepared to have this Bill go to committee with the hope and expectation that the government may well consider some House amendments as this Bill comes forward.

Our concern is that this Bill does not identify the needs and the problems posed by unclassified material. And it's our hope and expectation that the government can look at some other jurisdictions and come up with something that is both appropriate and fair, and in dealing with the penalty, something that is proportionate to what takes place in other jurisdictions. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 30, The Film and Video Classification Amendment Act, 2005 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Clerk Assistant:** — Second reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — I move that Bill No. 30, The Film and Video Classification Amendment Act, 2006 be now referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 30, The Film and Video Classification Amendment Act, 2005 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?



**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**Clerk Assistant:** — Committee of Finance.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Committee of Finance, I do now leave the Chair.

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### General Revenue Fund Environment Vote 26

#### Subvote (ER01)

**The Deputy Chair:** — Members of the committee, the item before us is the estimates for the Department of the Environment. And I'd like to recognize the Minister of Environment and ask him to introduce his officials. I recognize the Minister of Saskatchewan Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you very much, and I'm pleased to be here with the continuation of the estimates from the Department of Environment. And I'm pleased to have with me as officials, Lily Stonehouse, to my left who's the deputy minister. Behind her is Donna Johnson, the director of finance and administration branch. Beside her is Dave Phillips who is the assistant deputy minister of resource and environmental stewardship division.

To my right is Alan Parkinson who's the associate deputy minister of compliance and fire and forest division. Sitting beside him is Al Willcocks who is effectively the chief forester for our province. He's involved with the forestry. And then behind Allan Parkinson is Bob Wynes who is the assistant executive director for the forest operations. And Bryan Ireland is two seats behind me, and he's the vice-president for Saskatchewan Watershed Authority.

So these are the officials I have with me today. And I also have my colleague, the minister in charge of the forest secretariat, who may be available when we get to questions about forests.

**The Deputy Chair:** — I recognize the hon. member from Moosomin.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, and welcome to your officials. Mr. Minister, just recently a couple letters have come across my desk from, and specifically in my area, Kenosee park. And it's regarding the alcohol ban that I believe is being implemented in the park this year.

And of course, Mr. Minister, you're aware of the fact that over the past number of years, the May long weekend has certainly been a weekend that especially the business community has looked forward to as they actually just begin the new camp season and look forward to a lot of activity in the park, look forward to business opportunities as families and young people come to the park for the weekend. Mr. Minister, could you explain to me the reasons for the ban, and how the ban will be

implemented, and where it will be implemented?

Now we're all aware of what happened a couple years ago at Kenosee park. We're aware of what happened just outside of Qu'Appelle at one of the parks there last year and the vandalism that took place, and I think that may be why the discussion has taken place regarding an alcohol ban. But I would like to know exactly what the intentions are of the ban. Where it will be implemented? Who it will impact? Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you very much for that question. And I am pleased to have the opportunity to give further clarification about this. The alcohol ban will be in effect for all provincial parks and recreation site campgrounds in the province. It'll take effect from May 18 to 22 of this year, 2006. It's in effect in the campgrounds but it doesn't include rental cabins, hotel rooms, private cottages, or commercial businesses that are serving liquor in licensed establishments which may be located in provincial parks or recreation sites. So it's a broad-base ban right across the province in the provincial park system campgrounds.

Some of the regional parks may have similar kinds of rules, but they will develop those themselves. But we have been in consultation with the regional park system as well, so that there isn't an overflow of people from the provincial park system into their system.

So I think that gives you a pretty good idea. It's just for this one weekend. And it's to address and point out very clearly that our parks are for families and for positive outdoor recreation, and that we don't tolerate the kind of activity that's happened the last few years.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I think if I'm correct the letter that came from Kenosee park talked about what the park and what businesses has done last year to address what happened the previous year. And I believe there was a number of limitations especially on the age of individuals in regards to alcohol and who are allowed on the campgrounds. And from what I understand, actually Kenosee park experienced a very positive . . . had a good very positive experience in regards to park usage and the . . . really suppressing the type of activity that they'd experienced the year before.

Mr. Minister, when we talk about alcohol, alcoholic bans in park sites, does that include family units? And I think the question in one of the letters talked directly. As campers come into the campgrounds and a lot of these campers will be using the campsites, and they'll be coming in as families. But even adults, as they come in as families will probably . . . in a lot of cases there will be some alcohol. Does that mean that as they come into the campgrounds their camping unit is going to be searched? And if so, also, Mr. Minister, does that mean that adults or families will not be able to bring alcohol into the campsite?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The method that we're going to use on the ban in alcohol in the provincial campgrounds is that it will be a condition on the camping permit. So if there is alcohol in that campsite, whether it's a family unit or other individuals, they will have breached their camping permit, and they will be asked

to leave the campground.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Minister, if I understand you correctly then any family unit coming into the campsite, if there's alcohol they will not be allowed. Is that correct?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I think the answer is that one of the conditions of using the campsite in the provincial campground during this May long weekend will be that there will be no alcohol, and if there's an infraction they will be asked to leave.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, it seems to me that's somewhat restrictive. Now I'm not a consumer of alcohol. And I don't mind if there's campers around, and the fact that a lot of families are there to enjoy the time and don't consume alcohol. But I also realize that there are families where there may be some alcohol. And a lot of these families where there's alcohol in the camping as a family unit have not really created the disruption in the parks. A lot of the alcohol activity has come from individuals and young people that have gathered to party.

And it seems to me that we're almost overstepping the area and the restriction, and I guess that's the concern I have. If families are acting responsibly I do not believe those families should be penalized and that's a choice they make. But I guess at the end of the day we'll see whether or not this impacts negatively and in regards to families or individuals actually going out to our provincial parks on the long weekend.

Mr. Minister, I have another question and it was a concern that was raised this . . . just brought to my attention this morning. Is there a ban on quads in our provincial parks, use of quads?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I think the proper way to describe it is that there are restrictions on the use of quads in provincial parks. There are some designated areas where they can be used, but there are many areas where they cannot be used. So people will have to inquire as to the appropriate places for their use. So they're not banned, but they're restricted as to where they can be used in the parks.

[15:00]

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Chair, and Mr. Minister, the reason I raise that question is . . . The way it was presented to me today was, the understanding was that while you could be travelling through on No. 9 — you're on highway property — you couldn't whip off the property even into, say the village of Kenosee to fuel your quad.

And my understanding was that recently the community of Wawota had a quad rally. And they had to limit the amount of kilometres travelled on the rally simply because . . . to allow the quads to get back to the community to fuel up because they weren't allowed into the park to the service station in the village to fuel up. And I don't have a lot of information, but I was just asking the question in regards to that. And I may not have had information correctly. Or was it possible that people were not well enough informed as to what the requirements and the restrictions are regarding the use of quads?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Well I'm a little bit mystified by this question because my understanding is that you can access the community of Kenosee without going through the park. And so it more likely is an issue as it relates to that village of Kenosee or the provincial highway regulations which say that you can't drive a quad on the highway unless it's properly licensed.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I'll do some more follow-up on that because it was I guess a bit of a surprise to me as well. That's why I raised the question because I found it somewhat . . . Well I was just surprised about the fact that we would limit without basically having some guidelines that could be followed. So I'll do some more follow-up and then we'll proceed from there. So thank you very much.

Mr. Minister, one final level of questioning that I would like to bring to your attention. And I believe there was some discussion last week in regards to water levels in the Qu'Appelle Valley. And the two lakes that are of particular importance in my constituency are Round Lake and Crooked Lake.

Now I've had some contact with one of the chiefs of one of the reserves. Unfortunately we haven't been able to get together for a public meeting to understand where this band is going. But has any progress been made in regards to Round Lake and Crooked Lake and putting blocks back into the dams and allowing the water levels to increase, Mr. Minister?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I think the answer is yes, the conversations are ongoing as it relates to the First Nations and those particular lakes. And we are there as observers in the federal discussions or participants where necessary. But I think at this point, the discussions are continuing.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, the discussions as they continue, is it your department's estimation that we might be at a point that would allow for some of the blocks to be put back into the dams that would allow for at least an increase in the water levels in those two lakes as the water continues to flow from the west?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — That's the goal.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Minister, you said that's the goal. Any time period? Any time frame? Is it possible that we may be able to see some water level increases even this year?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — It's possible.

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, can we be a little more definitive rather than possible or goal. A time period? A time frame? Are we at that point where we would see a move, an actual placing back of some of the blocks to allow for an increase in water levels in those two lakes?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Well I think you're basically asking the same questions that we were dealing with last week. And the overall issue relates to negotiations between the federal government and the First Nations around the historical damages related to these particular structures. So that's where the main issues are being dealt with. Then it comes down to an issue of where the water line is, which then defines the boundary of the

First Nation as it relates to some of these lakes and the structures.

And so those issues are ongoing. The issues where the province of Saskatchewan is involved relate to the forward or future issues which include then the management of the water lake levels. And at this stage you're asking me questions about the negotiations which will form the base of a resolution of the issue, and that's where the federal government has a better sense of this.

All we're pleased about is that the conversations are continuing, and the goal is to accomplish a return to more normal levels of water in both of those lakes.

**The Deputy Chair:** — I recognize the hon. member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I'd like to refer to a situation in the past on Black Birch Lake, and there was an application for a outfitter's licence by a Mr. Baehl, B-a-e-h-l, from Lloydminster, Alberta. I understand that he was denied an outfitter's licence. And I also understand from the letter from your department or from one of your officials that he was required to:

... immediately cease occupying or using the site ... remove all improvements and personal belongings that [referring to this Mr. Baehl] you currently have on the site prior to April 30, 2005. These improvements/personal belongings include: [a] garage, trailer(s), camper(s), tractor, wood splitter, fuel drums, truck box, gazebo, building materials, and other miscellaneous items.

And the letter goes on to say:

Upon removal of the aforementioned items, the site must be reclaimed to a state that is satisfactory to the department.

I would just like to know the status of that situation and has these ... has this order been carried out and has the site been reclaimed to its former state?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — That particular case is not one where we have information with us today. I think the ... As you've indicated an order was made for some things to be done. If you provide me with a photocopy of that then we can track it down or we can go and look through the records that we have, and I can provide some information as to the status later in the week if that's satisfactory. But we don't have that information with us today.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I will send a copy of the letter over to you right now. I'd appreciate a response to that.

Just on some more general questions concerning outfitting licence in particular on Black Birch Lake and Careen, could you tell me how many outfitting licence are approved for both of those lakes? And if you're able to can you tell me who has the outfitting licence?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I don't have the specific information

lake-by-lake here but I can say that the number of angling outfitters — which I assume the question relates to fishing — is that in the year 2005 there were 148 outfitters' licences. In 2004 there were 147; in 2003 there were 150. The last three years there have been about 150, 148 angling outfitters' licences right across the whole province.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you. To the minister, would you be able to supply me with the information concerning those two particular lakes when you supply me with the other information? And a more general question. Would any First Nations' businesses would also be included in an outfitting angling licence or would that be a different type of description for the business that they carry on? And if so, could you also supply me with that type of information concerning First Nations as well as other outfitters' angling licence?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Yes, I'd be happy to provide that information for you. And as it relates to First Nations outfitters, there are some that would operate on the First Nation and they may not have a provincial outfitter's licence. But there are a number of First Nations outfitting organizations that do apply and have official provincial outfitting licence. So we'll try to obtain as much information as we can about that and provide that for you.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you.

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

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Minister, the situation has arisen and I talked to the Minister of Health about the type of refrigerant that the minister is, through an official, is mandating to be used in their chillers. And I have also been presented with some information that says that the HCFC-123 [dichlorotrifluorethane] is probably the better refrigerant to be using versus the 134. And I guess my question to you is, have your officials been in discussions with officials from the Department of Health over the most effective and most environmentally friendly type of refrigerant to be using in large industrial-sized chillers?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The answer is yes, that we have been in contact with the Department of Health officials. And you've raised questions about The Halocarbon Control Regulations and both the HFC-134a [tetrafluoroethane] and HCFC-123 are allowed to be used in the chillers. They're both listed in The Halocarbon Control Regulations as class I substances. Okay. Okay. So the ones ... Okay. These are class II ... Or they're class III substances or class II substances, these ones.

So the 134a, if I can use that shorthand, is a class III substance. The 123 is a class II substance. Any class I substances are being phased out.

And I think the question is, well what is the information as it relates to this one that we have? The HCFC-123 substance, which is a class II substance, has an atmospheric life of 1.9 years and ozone-depleting potential of .016 and a global warming potential of .019.

Whereas the HFC-134 substance, which is the class III, has an

atmospheric life of 20 years, an ozone-depleting potential of zero, and a global warming potential of .285 so it's a . . . These are technical comparisons. But as it relates to these particular substances, they're both still allowed under The Halocarbon Control Regulations.

**Mr. Hart:** — So, Minister, as far as a recommendation to other departments, when we look at the total environmental impact of the two substances — and we'll just shorten them up, the 123 versus the 134 — have you got a recommendation? Or are you just merely providing the information that both refrigerants are acceptable? What is your government's policy on the types of refrigerants that should be used?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Basically the department doesn't make a recommendation between the two so that they are both allowed under the regulations, given that they're class II and class III substances.

[15:15]

**Mr. Hart:** — So then I guess I'll have to re-ask my question to the Minister of Health as to why his department has stipulated to the larger health regions that they should be switching over to the 134. I would have presumed that it perhaps had something to do with the safety and the lessening of damage to the environment.

I am told — and I guess I would ask you and your officials to corroborate the information — that the 123 is much, it's much more efficient. In other words you need less of it. You need less energy to achieve the same effects. And that's why the global warming impact number is significantly lower for the 123 versus the 134.

You know, it just seems to me that perhaps . . . And which would then mean that if you need less of it and you need to run your chillers a shorter period of time, you're also reducing your costs. It would seem to me that perhaps you should be making some recommendations, particularly in your capacity where you recently came from the Department of Health and then now the Environment minister. It seems to me that perhaps the 123 in the overall scheme of things is the better one to have, probably equally safe to the environment as the 134 and much more efficient.

And I guess my question to you and your officials is that's the information, as I've just related, that I've been provided with, is the efficiency of the 123 versus the 134 . . . Do you have information as to the efficiency, and is my information correct?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Well I think the simple answer is that I have the same information that you do. And the officials in both Health and Environment will be meeting with the officials from Trane, the company, and that they will continue to look at this.

The classification of the substances is done by the manufacturers and the suppliers. And depending on the use, different products are the most appropriate. And they work together as an industry and as the people, the regulators, to try to make sure the best substance is used for the particular use that's required.

And some of the questions here relate to the chillers, and I think that it's a kind of technical area where the various manufacturers and suppliers need to work together, with each other, and with the government officials to sort out which is the most appropriate substance for use here in certain equipment in Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Hart:** — Minister, have you or your officials been in communication with the University of Saskatchewan over this particular issue? I understand that the University of Saskatchewan . . . and I'm presuming that they would have the resources on campus to make an informed decision as to the type of refrigerant used in their large chillers. They recently installed a very large chiller, and they are using the 123.

And I'm presuming — although I haven't talked to them — but I'm presuming that they are doing this because of efficiencies and the equal, I guess, small impact on the environment between the two. In fact I guess in the overall reading of things, unless we have a leak of the 123, it actually has a smaller impact on the environment.

So just to rephrase my question, have you or your officials been in discussion on this matter with the University of Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I don't think that the officials have been directly involved with the University of Saskatchewan. It's my understanding that the officials in this particular company have used the University of Saskatchewan and some of their recent purchases as an example of some new facilities that are being developed.

And I think the important part to remember is that it's manufacturers and suppliers — plural. There are a number of different groups that have different products. And one of the issues that you're raising here is a group saying, well the particular product we now have is the best one for certain systems or certain places in Saskatchewan. That's something that needs to be worked out together with the manufacturers, the suppliers, and the regulators. And those types of meetings are ongoing because that's what happens in this particular area of business.

**Mr. Hart:** — Well I guess, Minister, what I would hope that I would hear from you is that you have capacity within your department to look at all the information that manufacturers are providing to potential purchasers — particularly purchasers within government — and to be able to analyze the information and provide a recommendation based on sound science. Do you have individuals within your department that have the ability to analyze this information and come forward with a recommendation?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, how this works is that we do have officials within the department that are in charge of working with these regulations. A substance like this is a substance which is used nationally and on a North American or international basis. And what is done is we will have specialists across Canada that work together. The provinces and territories work together around how some of these standards work.

When new products come forward from an international

corporation like the one that's being referenced here, those are then part of an overall discussion. And as the standards change and situations improve, then they will be used and included in the regulations that are there. That's exactly why certain class I substances have been phased out.

Ongoing discussions will go to class II and class III substances under this particular regulation. And there is a meeting scheduled with the particular officials who have been writing these letters and providing carbon copies to you which is the normal course when you have issues like this.

**Mr. Hart:** — Minister, I presume you're aware that there was a pretty significant leak of 134 recently at the General Hospital. My question to you is, what are the regulations that would apply to such an incident? Were your officials contacted? And if they were, what actions did they take to deal with this incident?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Yes. I am aware of the spill that happened at the Regina General Hospital. It's a reportable spill under the spill control regulations, and basically a reportable spill is one that involves more than five kilograms of substance in a 24-hour period. This matter is being investigated by the environmental protection people who are involved in this particular area, and they are treating it very seriously like they do all spills.

**Mr. Hart:** — Minister, just to provide a bit of information and I guess a comfort level, could you indicate the level of expertise and knowledge that the individuals who are investigating this issue have? What type of education, what kind of training, what kind of work experience these individuals would have so we get some sort of a sense of their ability to deal with this issue?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — We have people in this particular area who have, you know, chemistry degrees and are very involved and have education to understand the substances involved, and they have years of experience working in this particular area. So yes, we do have people that understand this and work at various kinds of spills that may happen across the province.

**The Deputy Chair:** — I recognize the hon. member for Batoche.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And to the minister, on this softwood lumber deal, I'm wondering now, have Saskatchewan signed on to the agreement at all?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — There's nothing to sign on to. It's a federal jurisdiction, so it's a federal agreement between the federal government . . . There are a number of clauses that specifically relate to individual areas of the country, but there's nothing for us to sign on to.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Okay. Do we now know the terms and conditions of the deal? And what are they?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Well I thank the member for this question, and I will try to provide a simplified explanation of a fairly complicated agreement on one level, but fairly simple on another level. The basic terms of the Canada-US [United States] agreement on softwood lumber which was entered into on April

27, 2006, the terms are as follows.

First area is orders and deposits. The US will revoke all the various orders in their procedures on Canadian softwood lumber imports and stop collecting the deposits. It's estimated at the time of the signing of the agreement, April 27, 2006, the US is holding about \$5 billion in US dollars in deposits. Out of that 5 billion, United States will receive 1 billion, and the remainder will be distributed to importers of record — in other words, to the Canadian firms.

The amount going to the United States, which is 1 billion dollars, will be divided like this. Fifty per cent of the money will go to the Coalition for Fair Lumber Imports. A portion will go for a joint initiative benefiting the North American lumber market. And the remainder to meritorious initiatives in the United States as identified by the US government in consultation with Canada. So effectively, about half of what will go to the lumber companies . . . presumably to cover some of their costs involved in the litigation. This is acknowledged that how that money is distributed won't set any precedent for subsequent distribution of duties.

The scope of the particular agreement, what products does it cover? It only covers the products that were subject to the orders. And the scope or the extent of this agreement will only be changed by mutual consent, although each party has the ability to make a claim around a change and then go and go through a dispute settlement process around that.

What's going to happen at the border . . . And basically what'll happen is, there's an export measure. And different regions of the country will have to choose between an export charge with a charge varying on the Random Lengths framing composite lumber price or an export charge plus the volume restraint and where both the rate and volume restraint will vary on the price.

Now these are complicated words. Effectively what it means is you can choose to basically just have an export charge based on the price of lumber in the United States. And so how that works is that if the price of the lumber in the United States is over \$355 for 1,000 board feet, there's zero import charge. If it drops down to between \$336 and \$355, it's 5 per cent. If it goes down to \$316 to \$335, it's 10 per cent. If it's below \$315 US, it's 15 per cent. So you can choose that option if you're, say, one part of the country — say Alberta or part of BC [British Columbia] or Saskatchewan. So this is an area where it's going to take quite a bit of time for people to try to sort out what all this means and make choices.

[15:30]

The other option is that you can basically have an export charge and basically a quota. So if the price is over \$355 US, there's no charge at all. But when it starts dropping down again — the different levels are between 336 and \$355 — the charge would be two and a half per cent plus a regional share of 34 per cent of the US consumption. In other words whatever US consumption is, the regional share would be a percentage of that 34 per cent. And then it goes down 3 per cent, 5 per cent . . . in other words, fairly complicated.

The issue for Saskatchewan is of the 34 per cent share under

that particular quota system, our share has so far been deemed to be 1 per cent which is effectively half of what it was three or four years ago. And that's a problem for our forest industry.

So I'm not sure if you want me to go on. There are other issues around third country triggers, in other words surge mechanisms. There's exceptions to this. There's the ability to bargain and remove your forestry industry from all of the controls. The Maritimes aren't included. Nunavut and, I think, Northwest Territories aren't included.

So there's a whole number of other issues there, but I think that sets out the highlights for that agreement.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Now as long as the price is above that, am I right that the quota doesn't apply at all? So we're okay. We're . . .

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Yes. At present day prices there is no quota.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — And I'm wondering what per cent of Saskatchewan lumber goes to the USA [United States of America].

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Before the year 2001, it was about 95 per cent of our lumber went to the United States. Now it's between 60 and 65 per cent. So in other words, what's happened with the dispute that's gone on with the United States is our producers in Saskatchewan have located other Canadian markets or markets offshore for Saskatchewan lumber. But traditionally the number's been 95 per cent of the lumber went to the States.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Mr. Minister, could you inform me, the offshore countries who they are.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Yes, effectively I don't think there's very much, if any, offshore. The real issue that would happen when the forestry dispute was on was that the small producers couldn't afford to post a bond to ship into the United States. And so when we have that figure of 60, 65 per cent, when the dispute was on, that was effectively the very large producers were able to put the bond in and still maintain their export market in the United States.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Mr. Minister, I'm concerned with the forestry centre. We hear that part of the budget, the federal part of the budget, was cut. Are we correct on that?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you for that question. Effectively the Canadian forest service cut their \$300,000 contribution to the forest centre, which was their total contribution. We still receive \$652,000 from the federal government, which comes from the, I think, the Forest Development Fund . . . It was from the Western Economic Development Fund, the WED fund. And I think that's the one that our minister here in Saskatchewan, in the federal government, is responsible for. But practically the effect was to take a \$952,000 contribution from the federal government and reduce it to 652,000.

Now the thing also to remember about this is that this year we have a one-year extension on the original agreement around federal funding for the forest centre. And people have been

evaluating it and looking at, well what would be the longer-term funding arrangements? And those conversations are ongoing right now. And whatever the result of the discussion is, using the evaluation of the kind of work that's being done, will then be incorporated into the next federal budget. And our hope would be that they would see the long-term value of being part of the Saskatchewan forest industry through this forest centre and that we'd get stable long-term funding for this centre.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, the cutting of this part of the budget now, will that affect any specific area of the forestry centre?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — This particular funding in this year and other years was going into the Forest Development Fund which was a fund where the staff and others involved in forestry in Saskatchewan apply for funding for specific projects. So this one-time cut doesn't affect any particular jobs directly but it does affect the ability to fund certain projects that were there. And that's why we're concerned that this money is gone, because it was the kind of money that was being used for research and development which is crucial for our forest industry in Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — In particular I'm wondering how it will affect ag forestry.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — This particular funding was being used for forest ecology, forest fire ecology — what happens when there's fires in the forests — and for agroforestry. Those were the two areas where this research money was being used. So it will have an effect on the ability to do further research around agroforestry.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. At the convention in Saskatoon that was just held, the Premier said that — and correct me if I'm wrong on this — that if the funding is not there, that the provincial government will take up funding on this?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The whole area of agroforestry is being led out of the Industry and Resources budget so that's where the budget issues around dollars that would go there. But the forestry centre and the forestry department in Saskatchewan Environment will provide technical advice and other practical advice. So the amounts budgeted for those people are still included and will continue, but some of the specific initiatives around this will come out of the Industry and Resources budget.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you. So then there will be no cut in funding to the agroforestry program?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I don't think I can answer that question directly, Mr. Deputy Chair, because the money that was in this cut, the 300,000, was money that went into a research fund where then the people who were doing the research would apply to get dollars to do various applications kinds of issues. So the amount of research in agroforestry and in the other forest fire ecology issues will be \$300,000 less than they were last year. But we'll still be doing work in agroforestry and the initiative will be coming out of Industry and Resources. The technical work and supply of information and advice will continue to come from Saskatchewan Environment and the

forestry specialists.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you. Will the provincial government be picking up to keep that forestry program . . . which the green initiative . . . how we're going to get 10 per cent of our cropland into forest. Is the provincial government going to be picking that up to make sure that program keeps going?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Well I guess I'll have to answer it by saying it this way, that the work will continue that the province has been involved in. This particular area where the federal government has cut back has slowed down a number of the research projects. But it's also the subject of the negotiation for the longer-term funding for the forest centre. And so the ultimate result as it relates to that fund will depend on the ongoing negotiations with the federal government. But the province's commitment to continue to work on agroforestry will continue both in Saskatchewan Environment and in Industry and Resources, and where appropriate through Agriculture and Food because we all work together in this area.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. But my question still is, will the government be putting more money in to fill that missing spot?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Well as it relates to that particular funding, we will not take dollars from somewhere else and put it there because it wasn't included in our budget. We didn't know that this was going to be a gap until last week.

But what we will continue to do is support the initiatives and work that we think is important. And as I said, we're in ongoing negotiations with the federal government around long-term support for the forestry centre which we think is crucial for the future of the forest industry in Saskatchewan. And we would appreciate any help that you as a forestry critic for the opposition could provide in making sure that the people in Ottawa understand how important this is for all Saskatchewan people.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I've got a question now. When the building across from the mall where the forestry used to be in was vacated, who owns that building now? Is that still government building or . . .

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, I need some better information as to which building you're talking about. There are a number of buildings in that area, so if you could be very specific then I maybe can answer the question.

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you. I think it was a big Safeway store at one time, right across from the mall, and the forestry centre offices were in there.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — If I'm understanding correctly, you're referring to what used to be the OK Economy building. And that building is privately owned and so presumably the owner would take whatever steps are necessary. But it's not a building that's managed by the provincial government.

[15:45]

**The Deputy Chair:** — I recognize the member for

Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, welcome to your officials here this afternoon, especially the forestry people that I believe have come from Prince Albert. I just want to piggyback a few questions on behalf of my colleague from Batoche in regarding the softwood lumber issue.

In your comments to him you were mentioning about the duty that was held by the United States and that was going to be divvied up now. In your comment did you say how much money would be coming to Canada as far as duty funds?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Yes. The total amount that was in that fund on April 27 was \$5 billion, and the United States is going to keep 1 billion. So that leaves \$4 billion that will come back to Canada to primarily the large Canadian producers because some of the smaller ones couldn't afford to put money into that fund.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. In regards to Saskatchewan, is any of the Saskatchewan firms receiving any of that money and which firms will be?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Yes, I'm pleased to be able to answer that question, Mr. Deputy Chair. The estimated amount that will come to Saskatchewan is about \$60 million Canadian, and most of that money will go to Weyerhaeuser, about 70 per cent. NorSask will get about 20 per cent, and then the remainder will go to Carrier and the Zelensky Brothers mills. So it's primarily the larger operations in Saskatchewan will get that money.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. With the new deal now that the federal government has just put forth, what is the Government of Saskatchewan, what's their feeling in regards to the signed agreement, and how does Saskatchewan play a role in that signed agreement with the federal government?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I'm pleased to be able to try to answer your question. And, Mr. Deputy Chair, this may be a little bit longer answer as I develop this because what has happened is we have a few pages worth of the agreement which I described to you earlier. And now the actual negotiators, the lawyers, are sitting down to write the agreement and it's going to take a number of months to do all of the fine print around all of these different rules. And we can't answer all the various specific questions until that final wording is completed.

Now one of the things that I can say on behalf of the provincial government and I think on behalf of all Saskatchewan producers and Saskatchewan people is that we're very disappointed about the situation that we're in as it relates to this agreement, and the minister in charge of the forest secretariat said that very publicly last week. So we're disappointed and this is why.

In the late '90s our share of the export into the United States was somewhere between two and two and a half per cent of the total amount going into the United States. When the duties were put on to the lumber, many of our smaller suppliers didn't have sufficient cash to pay the penalties to get their exports into the United States. The agreement takes the exports into the United States as of the last year and our share is down to about point

eight per cent of the total amount that's available.

We are trying to work with the federal minister in charge, Mr. Emerson, around correcting this particular issue. But part of our problem is, is that we will be competing with all of the industries across Canada for a share of that market into the United States. And as I described earlier, it's a 34 per cent cap, if you use that kind of . . . when the prices drop below \$355 US per 1,000 cubic feet of lumber. And so our share of that 34 per cent is just under 1 per cent as opposed to over 2 per cent, where we were five years ago.

And we don't know until we get all of the detail back around the technical agreement how that's going to affect our Saskatchewan industry. It has effects given some of the other clauses in this, in how we actually even manage the forest, how we look at what we do with various parts of the industry. And so at this point, we're disappointed. We've let the federal government know that and we're going to have more discussions with them as we try to sort out what happens in Canada.

But it appears that we have now an agreement with the United States that we have to work within and make sure that it has the least amount of damage to what's happening in Saskatchewan. But at this stage, we're quite disappointed by some of the rules that have been put in; not necessarily by the US, but between the provinces and territories of Canada.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Well back in 1995 or '96 — I'm not sure what the year is — there was an agreement signed with the federal government with the United States, but there was only four provinces at the time that signed on to that agreement. It was Alberta, BC [British Columbia], Ontario, and Quebec at that time signed on. Saskatchewan did not sign on to that agreement; and for whatever reason, I don't know.

From what your comments are right now — that Saskatchewan is part of this new agreement that the federal government is putting through — if that's the case, then Saskatchewan will or should be signed on to this agreement. Am I correct in saying that Saskatchewan will be part of this new agreement that they're signing on to right now?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Well the answer to this one is quite simply that in the various complaints that were made through United States processes, in the most recent round of complaints, the province of Saskatchewan and our industry was added to those particular complaints so that the orders then applied to Saskatchewan. So we had no choice. I mean they — the complainants in the United States — included Saskatchewan in this round.

Now some of it may have had to do with the fact that we actually were sending more lumber, that it was more of a concern to some of the US producers than it had been say in the early '90s or the '80s. But we had no choice about whether we were included or not. And when the agreement was entered into, it included all people who had been named in the US complaints.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — So I take it from that then, Mr. Minister,

that we are going to be signing on to this agreement as a province then. Am I correct in saying that?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — No, you're not correct in saying that. We are included in the agreement which is a federal agreement between two nations — between the United States and Canada. And because we were named in the various orders that put these charges on the exports into the United States, then we're included in this agreement. We have no choice. There's no signing on or signing off. We're just there.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. I understand that. But being that the four provinces in 1995 signed on to that agreement, it doesn't make any difference now that we do not sign on — even though we've been named — in the fact that because of the amount of exports that we send off to the United States, wouldn't it be to our benefit to be the fifth province to be signed on to this agreement and have some interest and some say in what goes on with this agreement?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Well I think the explanation is this. That in 1996 there was a negotiation and a settlement. And so the four provinces that had been named in those prior to that by the complainants in the United States entered into an agreement, and so it was signed and settled.

This particular situation was not a settlement in the sense that all the provinces and the markets agreed. It was imposed by the federal governments on both sides. So there wasn't any signing by forestry companies in the United States either. A lot of them don't like this issue in the same way that many people on this side of the border. But it was very much something that was done between the national governments and they didn't concern themselves directly in the same way. Whereas the agreement you're talking about was an agreement between the province and the provincial industries and industry people in the United States.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I also have another situation that I need some clarification on and that is in regards to . . . Back in 2001 there was a contract signed between Renewable Resources and Environment management, a partnership agreement between the province of Saskatchewan represented by the minister of Environment and Resource Management — known as SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management] — and the Agency Chiefs Tribal Council which consisted of Pelican, Witchekan, and Big River First Nation.

Now again in 2005, there was another agreement drawn up. And I'm reading from the *Daily Herald*, Prince Albert, Monday, November 7, 2005, and:

In signing the agreement, the ACTC now has first right after Weyerhaeuser to all the burnt wood in Weyerhaeuser's Forest Management Agreement, as well as the directive to establish a forest management plan . . . [for] all Saskatchewan Agriculture lands in the northwest — about . . . [290] hectares.

This land in question, Mr. Minister, is this land known as occupied Crown land or unoccupied Crown land?



**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The particular agreement that the member's referring to is an agreement with the Agency Chiefs back in 2001 to work with them to develop a wood supply for some of the projects that they were doing. And that was the intent of it at that particular time.

[16:00]

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Okay. Thanks for that, Mr. Minister. And you're correct. What I'm wondering about is in the remark made that "... the directive to establish a forest management plan ... [to] all Saskatchewan Agriculture lands ...". Is this lands that have a lease on it or not?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — It could include land that is leased for grazing purposes for example or some other purpose. Or it could be land that is not leased. So it includes both types of land.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Okay. Mr. Minister, what is the process if a person leasing Crown land for agricultural purposes, specifically maybe for pasture land, who has a 33 or a 50 or whatever lease term he has, and he has woods on that land that he wants to utilize? Is there a process in place that he can take that wood off that lease land where he pays taxes on? Can he actually take that wood off that land?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Yes, it is possible to take the wood off that land. But he has to get a permit to take the land ... a forest harvesting permit.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — In order with that then, Mr. Minister, he has to get a permit. He would get the permit then from SERM officials in order to remove that land. What is the conditions regarding removing that forest off that occupied Crown-leased land?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Basically the conditions would be that it's an environmentally sound harvest of the trees. And if it's on wildlife habitat protection lands, then it has to return back to trees. In other words, it has to be replanted and done in appropriate fashion.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Regarding my questioning, this is just leased land. And the reason I bring this up, because I've had many residents from in and around Leoville, Chitek Lake, Spiritwood areas that have leased land. It's occupied Crown land that they have leases on. They've gone to SERM to get cutting permits. And after they got their cutting permits and had taken the wood out ... And most of the wood was probably sold to Tolko, which was not worth a whole lot. But anyway they got the permits to do that. Now they're all receiving bills in the mail from Agency Chiefs Tribal Council.

And I have one here billing for timber removed from Crown ag lands within the Agency Chiefs Tribal Council traditional territory as per ACTC's wood supply agreement with the Government of Saskatchewan. There's a bill here for \$11,600 which is \$1 per cubic metre of wood taken off that land.

If the lessee of that land has gone through all of the rigamarole to get this permit to take that wood off there, and according to the agreement that was signed back in 2001 and now re-signed

in 2005, does Agency Chiefs Tribal Council have the right to bill the individuals for land where the wood was taken off and sold?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The answer is no. And there's been a bit of a misunderstanding because we have received copies of these same bills in my office, and so officials have been working with the Agency Chiefs to clear up the understanding. But the original agreement was around developing some forest supply for activities by the Agency Chiefs, but it did not include this particular steps that they've taken. And so people are working to resolve it.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Okay. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Would the information then be provided to these landowners from Agency Tribal Council or will it be coming from SERM?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The information will be coming from Saskatchewan Environment.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. In regards to this agreement that was signed, would it be fair to say that the leased land within the, I guess, Weyerhaeuser agreement which Agency Tribal Council have signed on to, the land that they would be utilizing would be unoccupied Crown land rather than occupied Crown land?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The Weyerhaeuser FMA [Forest Management Agreement] doesn't include any occupied Crown land. It's only unoccupied, if that was your particular type of question you were asking here.

And then the Agency Chiefs have the ability to go and do some harvesting in areas where Weyerhaeuser has harvested. So they go and take out trees that Weyerhaeuser maybe hasn't used, and they do it in a complementary fashion if I can put it that way. And that's where the agreement was, to try to get wood supply for some of the Agency Chief industry.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And that's the route I was going. Many of the grazing people from that area are concerned because they don't want to go and cut timber off their land after they get a permit through SERM and then find out that they will be billed for wood taken off that land because that land is occupied Crown land, not unoccupied.

So thank you for your answers. I will turn it back over to the critic for Environment.

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

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Chair. Minister, I am looking at a publication that your department has put out and it's entitled *Saskatchewan's Wildfire Management Strategies*. And in this brochure there is a map which outlines the fire protection areas and areas that are observation zones and so on. It also indicates a number of locations, particularly north of the Churchill River, that they're called the structural values. And it says that there are 473 of those locations I'm guessing.

How many of those locations would be commercial operations? In other words, outfitting, fishing, and hunting operations.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — If the specific question is, as it relates to the many places across the North that are identified as priority spots, I don't have the exact number here, and we don't have that with us. It is something that we could probably get if the member's interested. But practically, for it to be on that particular map, it is . . . include some of the residences, some of the fishing lodges, some of the businesses. And so that's how the map has been developed.

**Mr. Hart:** — Well, Minister, it's not critical to our discussions today to have that exact number. But if you could forward it at a later date that would be certainly be satisfactory.

I wonder, could you explain, as I understand it . . . I guess I'll preface my remarks or my question with a few remarks. My understanding of the wildfire strategy for that area basically north of the Churchill River, other than the full-response zones which I assume are around northern communities, my understanding of the strategy is to basically observe the fires, and if they are endangering property and people, you have some procedures that kick in to help protect buildings and those sorts of things.

I wonder if you could just explain what happens when a wildfire is threatening — let's use a commercial fishing outfitting camp on a lake; let's use that as an example — and just explain what happens when that fire is threatening a location like that.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Well I thank the member for that question. And, Madam Chair, this particular question I think is about how do we respond when there's a wildfire in the North that's going to affect a particular residence or a particular fishing camp or business that's there. And I'll try to describe it in my lay language. I haven't actually been there to see it myself.

But effectively what happens is that when the fire is reported, it's assessed, and there's a sense then of how quickly the fire is spreading, where it's going. And there's a lot of information, both visual so you can see where the lakes or rivers or swamps are versus the forests, and there'd be an assessment by professionals from the air as to what is going on.

As it relates to a particular camp, what may happen is that they will go in with sprinklers and pumps and try to wet down a big area around where the camp is, which is one level of protection. They may use fire retardant from the airplanes. They'll come in and try to divert the fire another direction away from that priority spot. Obviously when they bring in sprinklers and pumps and things like that, they've brought in personnel to be working there. Some situations may have the ability to bring in equipment to create firebreaks which could be bulldozed or whatever in the forest or cut.

But practically the assessment is done, and then the various tools and personnel that are available are used in the most appropriate combination to either put the fire out if they can or divert it away from a residence or a business.

**Mr. Hart:** — But, Minister, the basic strategy though in the observations though is to let the fires burn unless they are threatening structures or commercial ventures.

There was the incident or the fire, the Howes, Jewett Lake fire last summer that ended up destroying a number of privately owned cabins and so on in the forest. It threatened a number of commercial set-ups, fishing camps on some of the lakes in that area. I certainly received quite a number of calls from particularly, well, property owners — both people who owned a cabin out in the forest or people who have businesses in that part of the province — who were very distressed by the lack of response by your department as for as protecting their properties.

And finally there was some response to some of the calls for help. And some, you know, property was prevented from being lost. But basically what these people were asking for is to review the whole strategy . . . well not so much really reviewing the strategy of fire management and letting wildfires burn, but perhaps providing more protection for that area north of the Churchill that is, you know, where we have a fairly high concentration of tourist visits and commercial fly-in fishing camps which you know plays a pretty significant role in our tourism industry.

And so I guess my question to you, Minister, is, are you looking at perhaps reviewing the area of coverage as far as fire protection?

[16:15]

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — So, Madam Chair, I will try to answer the member's question. But I think the simple answer is that the firefighting people involved learn from every particular situation that's going, and they continually are evaluating what happens as different events happen each year.

And I think one of the things that's part of the Saskatchewan Environment program is called FireSmart where people and communities are encouraged to think through what kinds of measures they can take to protect their community should a fire come to that area. And it also includes people who have recreational properties where there may not be people there all the time. Clearly the issue of human life is a primary factor around protecting from forest fires. And so that becomes one of the issues.

Now you've referenced the question around the Howes Lake fire, I think it is. And this was a fire that was discovered on July 2, 2005 about 100 kilometres north of La Ronge. And this fire's located within the observation zone for the forest fire management strategy. Within this zone the policy states that an assessment is made of the values at risk with the intent to allow for fire in ecological processes. Intervention's considered based on the values versus the cost of suppression.

Due to the threat to values in the area, on July 7, 2005 sprinklers were placed on the properties in the Howes fire area including three that were later burnt. On July 8, 2005 the smoke in the area made it unsafe for crews to return and service the sprinklers. The fire grew from 1,000 hectares to 12,000 hectares during the day.

The primary goal of the department is to protect human life and one of the secondary goals is to assist the residents to protect themselves from wildfires. None of the three structures

involved, in other words the residences that were there, were occupied during the fire. On July 9 after the smoke had cleared, the crews were able to return to the area and discovered that these three structures had been burnt. The total size of that fire was 24,000 hectares.

**Mr. Hart:** — Minister, when crews are sent in to set up sprinkler systems to protect property, what's the process? They're flown into the area with their equipment and personnel, they set up. I'm guessing they wet the place down. How long do they stay? Do they leave at the end of the day? Because you mentioned that because of smoke conditions they were unable to return. So if you could just basically outline the whole procedure when an incident like this occurs.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The sprinklers are either driven to a site if there's a road there or if it's a site on an island or in a remote place then they would be flown in probably, well, either with a helicopter or with a float plane if it's on water. And pumps would be set up and the sprinklers set up.

Often when a fire is there, there is a number of points where you are trying to fight the fire so I would assume that the personnel go different places and end up trying to service the pumps effectively, I would say, as putting more fuel into the machine so that it continues to operate. So in this particular case it appears that the smoke got so bad that they couldn't get back in to that particular spot. And so therefore the pumps couldn't operate on a continuous basis.

**Mr. Hart:** — So, Minister, if I'm understanding you correctly the crews are put in, their equipment is put in place, set up and so on. But they are . . . the crew's pulled out before nightfall and then returned the next day if they can get back. I mean, this is some of the criticism that I was hearing from property owners with this particular fire that they were telling me that by 5 o'clock the crews were out of there and, you know, the equipment was left there until the next morning if the crews could return. And I wonder if you could explain what the process is and whether that information in fact is correct.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Well typically a sprinkler set-up with a motorized pump will have a large tank which has sufficient fuel to last at least a day. And so it will be set up in that way with a sprinkler system. If there's active forest fighting in that area, well there would be maybe some crew left there, but most often they would go and maybe set up some sprinklers in another spot.

Practically, we're not going to leave staff in the face of a fire that's moving towards them as well because we're very concerned about staff as well. It sounds like in this particular instance they were planning to return the next day and put more fuel in the tanks for the motors. And they were not able to get there because of the smoke and the intensity of the fire. And therefore the sprinklers ended up not having sufficient water to work any more.

**Mr. Hart:** — Minister, a number of the business owners that contacted me . . . And I guess I should explain. You know, these business owners, they're owners of some of the outfitting camps, the fly-in fishing camps and so on. But they aren't large, you know, well-funded, some of them aren't large, well-funded

entrepreneurs. This is another business that they have and they operate it during the summer.

But they still have some pretty significant dollars invested in their business. And one of their concerns is — and I think it's certainly an important concern — is that even though they may not lose their facilities, their cabins and their boats and their motors and that sort of thing, but if the forest is completely burnt around them, around their lake and so on, they really have difficulty the following season to book tourists and fisher-persons, I guess is today's term, for the upcoming season. And many of these people are catering to the US market. And they say, how do we go to the various sports shows and so on and the various market promotion activities that they do during the winter, and attract customers to their businesses if they show photographs of a forest completely burnt down?

I mean we're talking, you know, people spending up to \$1,000 or more per day to come and fish in our lakes, to experience Saskatchewan wilderness. And by and large those people aren't going to come to an area that's been burnt out. The people that are operating these camps have investments of a half a million to several million dollars invested in the business. They are, like you know, bringing significant tourist dollars into our economy from outside of our province and outside of our country.

And what they've been asking is that we need to look at our response to fire situations that threaten their businesses. I don't think they're advocating, and I certainly am not advocating that we return to putting every fire out. I'm sure there's large areas of our province where fire plays a very useful role. Fires have happened in the forest and in the prairie areas since our province has been here.

But I think we have to pay attention when we have concerns expressed by these people. And we are hampering and we are actually detracting and having a very negative effect on their opportunities to bring tourists to our province. And they are asking that you review your response areas, I guess, and the way you would deal with fires that would affect this prime fishing and hunting area just north of the Churchill River, north of Missinipe. I believe there's certainly other areas that we perhaps could apply it to.

But we need to, I think we need to review how you and your department reacts to wild fires, you know, very similar to the Howes and Jewett Lake fire of last summer. And I was wondering, are you going to be doing anything in an official way or are you going to leave it up to your officials to learn from experiences, and just perhaps be more proactive?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Madam Chair, the question that the member asks is an important one around acknowledging the policy behind the forest fighting in the boreal forest and in fact in any forest.

One of the concerns that has arisen in many parts of North America is that we have an ability to go and stop fires which have cleaned out a lot of the debris in the forest which then, because we've stopped these fires, the debris builds and builds and builds and so that the intensity of the fires when they do come are so great that they're very difficult to stop.

And so what we have in our forest fire management strategy, and included in the particular area that the member's been asking the questions about, is the point that we're going to actively fight fires that come within 20 kilometres of a community, a larger community, and that we'll work very closely with property owners to help them protect themselves from fires if they are very isolated or if they have fishing lodges or other kinds of businesses. That's what the FireSmart program is about. It includes I think everything from making sure that you get the debris out of the trees or anywhere near your operation to actual setting up some of the plans and sprinkler systems and other things like that.

But the important part to remember is that in our budget this year — and we're here discussing the budget — we have \$93.716 million for our fire management and forest protection subvote. And that's almost \$100 million that we are committing to deal with forest fire fighting on a broad basis across the province, which is borne by the taxpayers of the province. And we have very good crews, we have good equipment, and we're continually renewing that, learning and developing new strategies.

And we have to make sure that we do this in a way that allows us to protect our communities, but it also allows some of the natural courses to take place in the boreal forest. The boreal forest regenerates itself through fire. The trees, a lot of these pine cones or the seed pods in the trees actually burst open when they're heated sufficiently to then plant a new forest. You need some of those things to happen on an ongoing basis.

One of the things that does happen after fire has been through an area is that the new greenery, the new trees encourages a whole number of the animals to return to that area because it is a bit of an oasis in the forest.

And so what we have to recognize is both the forest ecology and the protection of the public, protection of human life, and try to get the appropriate balance. That's what Saskatchewan Environment is trying to do through its forest fire management strategy.

[16:30]

**Mr. Hart:** — Minister, I think you hit on the key word, and that is balance. And you know, I certainly agree with, you know, most of what you said as far as the role that fire plays. And you mentioned that, you know, we have significant dollars in this year's budget to fight forest fires. And I guess what I am doing, I'm voicing the concerns that I heard last summer from individuals and business owners who are saying, we have the ability to attack fires in certain areas.

We're not talking about, you know, broad brush, you know, putting out every fire in the observation zone. And particularly when we have an area of the province that plays a pretty significant role in attracting tourist dollars to our province . . . And again a lot of these dollars are US dollars coming from, you know, from US tourists and fisher people and so on. And you know, I think what they're saying is we need to find that balance where we can let fire play its natural, beneficial role. But we also have to protect that area of commercial activity and tourist activity. And they are calling on you to re-evaluate not

so much the basic policy of a wildfire, but the response in the observation zone.

So as I said, we need to find that balance, and I guess we probably don't agree at this point in time where that balance point is.

Having said that, I think my colleague from Rosthern-Shellbrook, he has some further questions for you, and then we'll pursue some other matters.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Just before we leave this area of the forest fires, I've been able to get the answer about your question at the beginning, around the number of commercial operations. Basically most of these identified dots on the map that you are wondering about are trappers' cabins and recreational leases and not fishing lodges. So there's very few that are fishing lodges, and so that's the answer to that question.

The other thing is that I myself have spent time in this exact area that you've been raising questions about. And it is very dramatic when you come in a canoe or a boat to an area where there's been a forest fire. But then when you come again and see it next year or the year after, it's also dramatic — how green that space is and how much the forest regenerates.

And I think that, once again, we have to emphasize that balance between the necessity of the continual renewal of the boreal forest with the protection of lives and property. And that's what our forest fire management plan is built to do.

**The Chair:** — Recognize the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Minister, I just noticed in your comments there that you have nearly \$100 million that will go into firefighting this year. And I'm glad to see that; I really am. One of the things I've always said, that we should be looking after our forest. And if any way we can retain our forest, then we should be firefighting it and maintaining it.

A few questions regarding fires. If a fire starts on a First Nations and then comes off the First Nations onto provincial land, what is the manner that that forest fire is paid for? Does the federal government come to the table and help out in firefighting or whatever cost has contributed to that fire?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Yes. The federal government does come and contribute to the cost.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Is it on a percentage basis, or does the federal government come to the table and pay for the full costs?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The costs and how they're allocated are assessed based on each particular fire. But essentially, if it starts on federal land and then spreads out, 100 per cent of that cost would be for the federal government.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. In regards to that, I don't know if it was in 2004 or 2005 — I believe 2004 — I believe the ministry of the day had a let-it-burn policy or something similar to that. In regards to that, and I think about back then, and also it was the dry years when it had that kind of

a policy in place. And now we've gone away from that to putting more money or allocating more money into firefighting and I'm wonder what the change around was?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The information that I have is that there never has been a let-it-burn policy. But clearly there was a new forest fire fighting . . . or forest fire management policy that came out a number of years ago, and that's what we've just been talking about with your colleague as it related to north of the Churchill River. But perhaps you maybe have some other questions you want to ask in this area.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Yes I do, Mr. Minister, thank you. I'm going back to 2004, and I remember north of La Loche there was a fire, and I believe it was 2004. And the fire got out of hand and the winds changed, and it blew it across the border into Alberta. What happens in regards to a scenario where it starts in one province and moves across the border to another province? How does that fire being paid for?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Well each particular fire is assessed as to what happens, and we have interprovincial agreements with our neighbours — east and west and presumably north, if we needed them, with the Territories — and then the costs are assessed. But practically we have a procedure and a process to go through based on what would happen in a particular fire.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you Mr. Minister. Back to the fire that happened north of La Loche in 2004, it started in Saskatchewan, burned out of control. The winds changed. It went across into Alberta. I believe at that time Alberta put that fire out. I'm wondering with the interprovincial laws that's there regarding forest fire fighting, did Saskatchewan contribute to that fire because it started in Saskatchewan first of all?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I don't have any specific information as it relates to the fire that's being asked about. But normally between provinces there's a reconciliation after the whole fire season is over, and there may be some fires that go one direction and others coming the other direction, and there's a discussion about how the costs should be allocated and then a final arrangement made. But I don't have any specific information about the fire that the member's asking the question about.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I will dig up some more information with that and I will talk to him personally in regards to that.

My final questions that I have, Mr. Minister, and that's in regards to a piggyback question to what the member from Batoche had last time when he was talking to the ministry, and that was in regards to the FMAs and specifically Weyerhaeuser's FMA. And it's regards to Weyerhaeuser's FMA, if the sale doesn't go through, what takes place with the FMAs and how are we handling them? Does Weyerhaeuser still have control of them?

One of the questions I have that there is a 24-month cause and that is after two years if there's no activity within the FMA then the . . . there will be other dealings done regarding the FMA and they may have to forfeit that FMA.

As we know that the forestry industry is in dire straits right now as the member from P.A. [Prince Albert] will know that because he's the Forestry Secretariat, and I hope and pray that we get the Weyerhaeuser mill up and running again because there's a loss of jobs, and we don't need that in northern Saskatchewan.

But in regards to the 24-month cause, we know that Weyerhaeuser through FMA is cutting hardwood and delivering it to Tolko, the OSB [oriented strand board] plant in Meadow Lake. And I believe that they're still doing it today even though Weyerhaeuser has closed down.

Weyerhaeuser in P.A. shut down April 13, and Big River shut down April 19. If this is the case and they're still taking timber from the FMA and delivering it to another mill, does that cause problems with the 24-month shutdown period in regards to the FMA?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The particular question that the member is asking relates to the FMA for Weyerhaeuser and the fact that there is some poplar trees that could be cut down. And those particular trees have not been fully utilized.

The cutting plan that was put forward to the department by Weyerhaeuser included all of the different plans that they were going to do. That was rejected because they've shut the mill down. And they are in the process of resubmitting a plan that relates to that, the poplar that may be cut down.

The clause in the agreement relates to the shutdown of the mills and the 24 months would continue whether that poplar was cut or not. So there's no implication around delaying the 24 months by them cutting the poplar trees.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. In regards then . . . So they're not cutting hardwood for the OSB plant as we speak today, but they have assigned or asked for a special agreement to cut some more.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Madam Chair, the Weyerhaeuser is not cutting right now. They're in the process of doing a revised plan which we're anticipating will include a plan to cut this hardwood which they haven't cut before in sufficient quantities, and that has not yet been received by the department so there's been no plan that's been approved.

**The Chair:** — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mrs. Chair. I have just one or two questions I think. I just had a couple of phone calls and reports regarding some biomedical waste found in a Saskatoon landfill that was untreated. Can you verify if that's true or not?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Yes, the department is aware of this and I've been aware of this. There was an inappropriate dumping of biomedical waste at the city landfill site and the officials are working with the city to correct any problems that are there and make sure that these things are done appropriately.

[16:45]

**Mr. McMorris:** — Could the minister then explain the process that was undertaken . . . or how was this found? Is there regular tests? Or in this particular case, how was the biomedical waste found at the landfill?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I think in this particular case somebody who was there observed this biomedical waste and phoned in a complaint and then investigation started immediately.

**Mr. McMorris:** — I would probably agree with you that somebody was there and found it. I'm just wondering, is it somebody from the department, somebody from your department that found this?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — No, it was somebody who was using the dump who was not a department employee. They do go and inspect sites on a regular basis, but we also respond to complaints from the public in general. And this was somebody who was very observant and made the appropriate calls to investigate right away. And we thank the public for doing that any chance they get.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Minister, then tell me what was the extent of the find? Was it a large quantity? Can he give me some details on what was found in the landfill in Saskatoon?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — To the best of our knowledge, it was a few bags filled with some sharps and possibly some blood products — so that was the extent of it — which was crucial that this was reported. And that inappropriate procedures that somebody's using for disposal of this will be stopped and changed, and that's what's happened.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Could you then explain to me what the proper process is? Where does the biomedical waste go? What is the procedure? I mean why would've this happened that it would have been found in a landfill used by the general public?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — The normal procedure is that the biomedical waste is separated and is dealt with and goes to the Loraas Disposal site which is a separate site from the city site in Saskatoon. And in this particular case that did not happen. This particular situation is being looked at with the Saskatoon Health Region officials and the city of Saskatoon officials and the Environment officials to discover how this particular waste ended up at the city dump as opposed to the appropriate spot at the Loraas Disposal site.

**Mr. McMorris:** — So then it's separated and it normally goes to a private landfill, as opposed to the public landfill where this waste was found this particular time.

When it goes to a private landfill, can you just kind of explain the procedure of disposing of this? Does it . . . Maybe I'll just leave it at that. What is the procedure of disposing of the biomedical waste once it gets to the private landfill, in this case Loraas Disposal?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Typically what happens and what is available at the Loraas site in Saskatoon is a special area which may have a clay seal and some other features to it which will allow for the biomedical waste to be disposed of there. And

then there's a regular schedule of making sure it's all covered and not exposed to anybody who might use the site.

But it's something that's managed differently than the general waste part of a dump. And in Saskatoon, the Loraas Disposal site has set up the appropriate procedures to make sure that this waste is dealt with appropriately.

**Mr. McMorris:** — So this would be unique to the Saskatoon Health Authority that they use Loraas, or is that the dumping facility for all biomedical waste from all the different health authorities? Is that just specific for Saskatoon or is it also . . . does Regina Qu'Appelle, for example, use that same facility?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Typically how it works, and there are different disposal sites across the province, but typically a health facility will have made appropriate contractual arrangements with experts in the field. Loraas is obviously one of them and waste management is another company. And sometimes the municipalities will have the professional people that work in their organizations.

And then what happens with biomedical waste is that there's a whole procedure right from within the facility all the way to the dump site so that everything is properly labelled and people know what they're working with and dealing with as it is transported to the dump site. And those protocols are ones that are part of how the hospital or other facility does . . . but it's usually worked out on a contractual basis with one of the waste disposal companies.

**Mr. McMorris:** — So I assume from that then . . . because I don't know if it really answered the question. My question was, does all the provincial biomedical waste go to Saskatoon or each authority contracts in their own area? And is it then all — in each case, in the 12 health authorities' cases — is it all handled within Saskatchewan? Or is any shipped out of the province to Alberta, to an incineration facility in Alberta?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I can answer your first question which I did before, which is that the Loraas Disposal is a site that's used in the Saskatoon area. There are other arrangements in other parts of the province. I'm not certain whether some particular kinds of biomedical waste may go out of the province but most often the arrangements are made locally or within certain regions. But it's usually done with the professional waste disposal companies who handle that.

**Mr. McMorris:** — I'm interested for example in the Saskatoon case. And I'm sure no expert, but what you're telling me is it's a private landfill. You know, for example, the two bags what you say was found in the public landfill, if that went to the Loraas Disposal site it would be put in a pit and eventually buried — no treatment, nothing done with the sharps.

What type of a process is gone through with this biomedical waste? I know it's got to go through certain procedures when it leaves the facility. It's got to be handled properly. It's travelling in a . . . whatever type of vehicle to get out there. But once it's there in a landfill, before it goes into the landfill, what is done with the biomedical waste?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I don't have all the expertise to answer all

the specific questions that the member has raised. But from Saskatchewan Environment's perspective, the biomedical waste, sometimes it's treated in the hospital before it actually goes into the waste containers to go to the waste disposal company. And I'm not quite sure what they would use there, but there are some various things that they can do with some of the products. And then it is specially handled, both in the transportation and then when it goes to the dump site, and is put into special places according to appropriate protocols by experts in this area. And that's the normal course in our province.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Can you, Minister, tell me then, is any sent out of the province? We know Saskatoon is there. We have 12 other health regions that are doing contractual agreements with waste disposal companies in their particular area. Are we sending any biomedical waste out of the province? Because I know there is a facility in Alberta that incinerates. Are we using that facility at all with any of our biomedical waste from Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — I don't have the answer to that particular question. I just don't know whether there is some incinerator capacity in Saskatchewan or not or whether . . . some that goes to Alberta. We do know from an environmental perspective that there are certain very toxic substances that go to the incinerator operation northwest of Edmonton. And I think practically they take substances from all of Western Canada and maybe even the whole of Canada for some particular products. But as it relates to the incineration capacity in Saskatchewan, I don't know the answer to that.

**Mr. McMorris:** — I don't know if Environmental estimates are going to be up again before the end of our session here, but I would be interested in finding out if and how much we are sending out of the province to be incinerated in Alberta. And a bit of a, you know, not a pure breakdown, but are we talking . . . We're not talking sharps. We're talking some hazardous waste. I'm not even exactly sure. So if I could get a little bit of an explanation on that, I'd really appreciate that please.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Well I appreciate the comment from the member and not all of this information would be directly Environment. I'll see whether there's some. And you may wish to follow up with my colleague later in this week on this particular issue if there's some other questions that you still have.

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

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Chair. I'd just like to thank the minister and his officials for providing the information through the course of our discussions on the various topics and particularly those officials that travelled from Prince Albert. We appreciate them being here this afternoon. And we certainly look forward to our next go around in consideration of estimates of the Department of the Environment.

**The Chair:** — I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Madam Chair, I'll move that committee report progress on Environment estimates and move to

consideration of estimates in the Department of Health.

**The Chair:** — It's been moved that the committee would report progress on the Department of the Environment and move to the estimates on the Department of Health. Is it the favour of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. It being 5 o'clock or very near that hour, I would declare the House recessed until 7 p.m. this evening.

[The committee recessed until 19:00.]

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

Elhard .....	1557
Hermanson .....	1557
Stewart .....	1557
Harpauer .....	1557
Weekes .....	1557
Cheveldayoff .....	1557
Allchurch .....	1557
Kirsch .....	1558
Morgan .....	1558

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk .....	1558
--------------------	------

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Deputy Speaker .....	1558
Hermanson .....	1558
Higgins .....	1559
Gantefoer .....	1559
Hart .....	1559
Calvert .....	1566

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

##### Remembering Economist John Kenneth Galbraith

Atkinson .....	1559
----------------	------

##### Charity Fashion Show in Weyburn

D'Autremont .....	1560
-------------------	------

##### Creighton Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council Celebrates 20 Years of Quality Service

Beatty .....	1560
--------------	------

##### Macoun Student Competes in National Writing Contest

Eagles .....	1560
--------------	------

##### Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan Awards

Wartman .....	1560
---------------	------

##### Shaunavon's Citizen of the Year

Elhard .....	1561
--------------	------

##### Voices of the North

Belanger .....	1561
----------------	------

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### Funding Allocations for School Divisions

Gantefoer .....	1562
Thomson .....	1562

##### School Attendance

Morgan .....	1563
Higgins .....	1563

##### Recruitment of Endocrinologists

McMorris .....	1564
Taylor .....	1564

##### Appointment at the Labour Relations Board

Krawetz .....	1565
Forbes .....	1565

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 12 — The Consumer Protection Amendment Act, 2005

Quennell .....	1567
Morgan .....	1568
Quennell (referral to committee) .....	1569

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 30 — The Film and Video Classification Amendment Act, 2006

Morgan .....	1569
Quennell (referral to committee) .....	1570

#### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

##### General Revenue Fund — Environment — Vote 26

Nilson .....	1571
--------------	------



<b>Toth</b> .....	1571
<b>Weekes</b> .....	1573
<b>Hart</b> .....	1573, 1579, 1585
<b>Kirsch</b> .....	1575
<b>Allchurch</b> .....	1577, 1582
<b>McMorris</b> .....	1583

# 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