



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

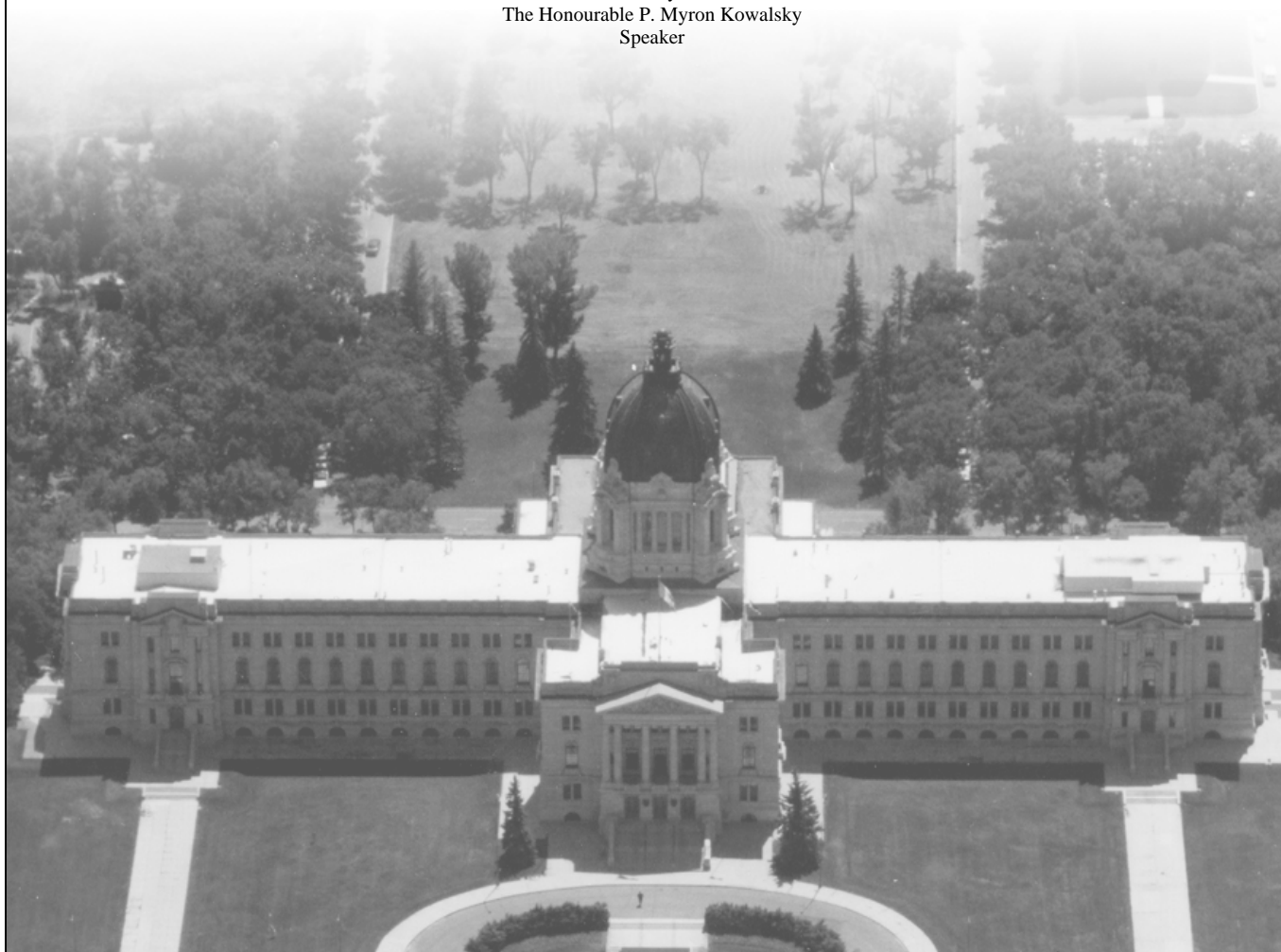
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky
 Premier — Hon. Lorne Calvert
 Leader of the Opposition — Brad Wall

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

[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

Clerk: — Members, I wish to advise the Assembly that Mr. Speaker will not be present to open today's sitting.

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition on behalf of individuals from the constituency of Cypress Hills concerned about the condition of Highway No. 18, particularly the stretch from Claydon to Robsart, although I understand Highway 18 right across the province has some difficulties. 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 two pages of petitions come from individuals living in the communities of Maple Creek, Robsart, and Consul. I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a petition regarding autism spectrum disorders. Madam Speaker, it's a rather long petition so I'll just read part of the prayer. It is signed by people who are concerned that in Saskatchewan the number of children being diagnosed with ASD [autism spectrum disorder] is high — as high as 1 in 251. A portion of the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to act upon the following recommendation made February 2005 by the Government of Saskatchewan caucus committee on human services to the Saskatchewan Minister of Health.

Madam Speaker, two of the recommendations are:

To ensure that ASD adult services and supports are accessible and based on need rather than on IQ or physical disability, and secondly, to encourage and support autism-related research in Saskatchewan.

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

Madam Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from the city of Saskatoon and I am pleased to present it on their behalf.

The Deputy Speaker: — 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 is signed by individuals from the communities of Saskatoon and Calgary, Alberta. I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of citizens who are concerned with the lack of services for children with autism. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to act upon the following recommendations made to the Committee on Human Services surrounding the support of autistic children.

Two of the recommendations are, Madam Deputy Speaker:

To have a respite and family support accessible based on need and to encourage and support autism-related research in Saskatchewan.

Signatures to this petition, Madam Deputy Speaker, come from the great city of Saskatoon. I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I again today have a number of pages of petitions of 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 to demonstrate how many people drive on Highway 5, the signatures are from Humboldt, Quill Lake, Colonsay, Viscount, Bruno, Laird, Biggar, Wadena, Meacham, Saskatoon, Vonda, Englefeld, St. Denis, Cudworth, and Red Deer, Alberta. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'd like to present another petition from constituents who are opposed to possible reductions of their health care services in Biggar. The prayer reads:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise today to present another petition on behalf of the 600 children under six years of age and their parents in the Saskatoon Silver Springs constituency regarding a much needed elementary school in the Arbor Creek area of Saskatoon. 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 an elementary school in Arbor Creek.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The petitioners today live on Peters Cove, Guenter Bay, and Wright Crescent in northeast Saskatoon. I so present, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition. The prayer reads as follows:

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

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

Madam Deputy Speaker, the signatures to this petition are all from Saskatoon. I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise to read a petition from my neighbouring constituency, Arm River-Watrous. And it reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Department of Highways section shop in Watrous, Saskatchewan remains open and as to ensure the safety of all motorists and Saskatchewan Highway employees who would be affected by such a possible closure.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And it is signed by the good people of Watrous. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I have a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to upgrade Highway 20 to primary weight status:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that Highway 20 be upgraded to a primary weight status to ensure the economic viability in the surrounding areas.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from Lanigan, Drake, Jansen, Lockwood. I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise again in the House today to present another petition regarding autism spectrum disorder. I will read a short portion of the petition:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to act upon the recommendations made by the Government of Saskatchewan caucus committee on human services regarding autism treatment. First to coordinate among departments of Health, Learning, and Community Resources with input from stakeholders to formulate a provincial comprehensive autism spectrum disorder treatment program and to provide adequate, effective, and early treatment based on intensive behavioural intervention and include speech, communication, occupational, physical, and medical attention for ASD-related conditions.

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

Madam Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by good citizens from Saskatoon. I'm pleased to present it 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, 67, 639, 644, and 669.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Northeast.

**Standing Committee on Intergovernmental
Affairs and Infrastructure**

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee of Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure has requested I report Bill 62, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 2006 without amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: — The committee is reporting Bill No. 62 without amendment. When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? The minister of Intergovernmental Relations.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 62, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 2006. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall this Bill be read a third time?

THIRD READINGS

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — I move that it be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 62, The Municipal Revenue Sharing Amendment Act, 2006 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING
AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Northeast.

**Standing Committee on Intergovernmental
Affairs and Infrastructure**

Mr. Harper: — Madam Speaker, the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure has requested that I report Bill No. 45, The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2006 without amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? The minister for Intergovernmental Relations.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 45, The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2006. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Agreed. When shall this Bill be read a third time? I recognize the minister.

THIRD READINGS

**Bill No. 45 — The Local Government Election
Amendment Act, 2006**

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

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Government Relations has moved that Bill No. 45, The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2006 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING
AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Northeast.

**Standing Committee on Intergovernmental
Affairs and Infrastructure**

Mr. Harper: — Madam Speaker, the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure has instructed that I report Bill 52, The Meewasin Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2006 without amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole?
I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has requested to waive

consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 52, The Meewasin Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2006. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall this Bill be read a third time? I recognize the minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 52 — The Meewasin Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2006

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 52, The Meewasin Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2006 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Northeast.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure

Mr. Harper: — Madam Speaker, the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure has instructed I report Bill No. 55, The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Act, without amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Industry and Resources.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 55, The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Act. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall this Bill be read a third time? I recognize the minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 55 — The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Act

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Industry and Resources has moved that Bill No. 55, The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Act be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

[10:15]

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on Human Services

Ms. Junor: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 without amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I request leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall this Bill be read a third time? The minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 56 — The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 56, The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on Human Services

Ms. Junor: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 57, The Residential Tenancies Consequential Amendment Act, 2006 without amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I request leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall this Bill be read a third time? The minister.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 57 — The Residential Tenancies Consequential Amendment Act, 2006/Loi de 2006 portant modification corrélative à la loi intitulée The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 57, The Residential Tenancies Consequential Amendment Act, 2006 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on Human Services

Ms. Junor: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 30, The Film and Video Classification Amendment Act, 2005 without amendment.

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I request leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall this Bill be read a third time? The minister.

THIRD READINGS

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 30, The Film and Video Classification Amendment Act, 2005 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on Human Services

Ms. Junor: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm instructed by the

Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 50, The Queen's Bench (Mediation) Amendment Act, 2006 without amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a third time?

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 50 — The Queen's Bench (Mediation) Amendment Act, 2006/Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine (médiation)

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 50, The Queen's Bench (Mediation) Amendment Act, 2006 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on Human Services

Ms. Junor: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 38, The Settlement of International Investment Disputes Act without amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall this Bill be read a third time? The Minister of Justice.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 38 — The Settlement of International Investment Disputes Act/Loi sur le règlement des différends internationaux relatifs aux investissements

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has moved that Bill No. 38, The Settlement of International Investment Disputes Act be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on Human Services

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 12, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act, 2005 with amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 12. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the amendment be read for the first time?

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a third time?

THIRD READINGS

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

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

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 12 be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — All those in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this Bill.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 63 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Highways and Transportation: to date in the current fiscal year how many claims have been submitted to the department for vehicle damage, and what is the total dollar value of these claims?

Also:

To the Minister of Highways and Transportation: will the section of Highway 20 between Lanigan and Nokomis be upgraded this year to the primary weight category; and further, will any other stretches of Highway 20 be upgraded as well?

Thank you.

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 64 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Northern Affairs: did Northwest Community Wood Products submit a status report to the department after receiving \$25,000 from the Northern Development Fund in July of 1999?

I give notice that I shall on day 64 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Northern Affairs: how much of the \$291,677 maximum funding amount as detailed in the order in council 508/2001 was actually disbursed to Northwest Community Wood Products?

And my final question, Madam Deputy Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day 64 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Northern Affairs: did Northwest Community Wood Products submit an interim report after receiving an initial disbursement of 65,000 as per the funding agreement with the Saskatchewan Northern Affairs signed in March of 2001?

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

Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 64 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission: how many government employees who have been terminated because of cases of fraud since 2003 have been subsequently re-employed by the Government of Saskatchewan?

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 64 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: how many nurses, including RNs, RPNs, and LPNs, are currently employed in the following employment categories in each regional health

authority: permanent full-time, permanent part-time, and casual?

I also have a second question for day no. 64 for the government:

To the Minister of Health: how many nursing vacancies, including RNs, RPNs, and LPNs, are there in the following employment categories in each regional health authority: permanent full-time, permanent part-time, and casual?

I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 64 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskTel: to date how many SaskTel employees and their immediate families have been compensated for appearing in commercials for SaskTel products and services, and what was the total compensation?

In addition I give notice that I shall on day no. 64 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskTel: for the calendar year 2004, how many SaskTel employees and their immediate families have been compensated for appearing in commercials for SaskTel products and services, and what was the total compensation?

And I have that same question, Madam Deputy Speaker, for year 2005.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, it's my privilege today to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly a number of guests who are seated in your gallery. These guests are partners in the prairie conservation action plan, known as PCAP, and they are here to mark Native Prairie Appreciation Week which will be observed next month from June 18 to 24. Madam Speaker, the purpose of the week is to raise awareness of the importance of native prairies to Saskatchewan's agriculture and environmental sectors.

It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly the chairperson of PCAP, Mr. Michael Burgess of the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association. With Mr. Burgess today are members of the PCAP board, Ms. Karyn Scalisc, Mr. Orin Balas . . . oh sorry. I should just say Karyn is the manager, Orin Balas is with the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association. Mr. Joel Peterson of Ducks Unlimited, Mr. Michael Champion of the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan Inc., Mr. Jordan Ignatiuk of the

Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ms. Tara Sample of Nature Saskatchewan, Ms. Jessica Clay of the First Nations Agriculture Council of Saskatchewan Inc., Mr. Hugh Cook of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, Mr. Rick West of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ms. Mary Brick of Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, Mr. Greg Riemer of Saskatchewan Environment, Mr. Tom Harrison of Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, Ms. Hélène Careau of SaskPower, Ms. Chris Nykoluk of the Society for Rangeland Management, Northern Great Plains Section and Prairie-Parkland Chapter. And finally, Mr. Michel Tremblay representing Saskatchewan Forage Council.

Madam Speaker, I would ask all my colleagues in the Assembly to welcome all of the representatives of the prairie conservation action plan to our Assembly today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I want to join with the minister this morning in welcoming the prairie conservation action plan delegates to the Assembly today and wish them the very best and ask all to join with us in welcoming them again.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Madam Deputy Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly, I want to introduce in the west gallery some very special guests that have come here this morning to see us. They are from the Father Vachon School in Saskatoon in the constituency of Saskatoon Fairview. They are 62 grade 7 and 8 students. Their teachers are Mr. Chaisson, Mr. Pritchard, and Mrs. Jasper.

Madam Deputy Speaker, some of the best fun nights I've had, they have been at Father Vachon School in there. So I want to welcome them and ask all the members to welcome these special visitors to our Assembly. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Reflecting on Mother's Day

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, this coming Sunday we will again take a moment to honour our mothers as we celebrate Mother's Day. I trust however, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this is not the only day when we pause to reflect on the gift of our mothers. And I might add if it wasn't for mothers, many of us wouldn't be sitting here today. I'm certain that everyone in this room has fond memories of coming home from a tough day at school.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as we think about mothers and we look around the room and we must pause to also be mindful of the fact that many mothers across this province put up with a lot. And for that we say thank you. They put up with pranks. They put up with issues of where we haven't been, as individuals haven't listened very carefully. But, you know, we all have fond memories of our mothers.

I remember coming home — and many members will probably reflect on this — coming home from school and walking into the house or running into the house and to the smell of fresh baking, dinner on the stove, and your mother welcoming you and wanting to know how your day went. And then reminding you that there were chores to do before dinner but also saying before you go out to do your chores, have a fresh bun and a glass of milk.

Madam Deputy Speaker, mothers are very special people. We want to take this moment to just say thank you to all of the mothers across our province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[10:30]

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. Honoré de Balzac once wrote, “A mother who is really a mother is never free.” It is important for us to remember this, Mr. Speaker, as we approach Mother's Day.

This Sunday is a day set aside for those women in our lives that affect us most — our mothers. There is only one official day every year by which we try to show appreciation for the mothers who have dedicated their lives to us, their children.

Mr. Speaker, for the first years of our lives mother may be the only word that we can say. In truth, no matter where we go or who we become, our mothers are never very far from our thoughts. We carry their lessons with us. They nurture and guide us always.

Mr. Speaker, mothers are those women in society who do not occupy a single role; they occupy all roles. A mother is at once a sage, teacher, cheerleader, seamstress, carpenter, horticulturalist, rocket scientist, but, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is not all.

As Ann Taylor once wrote, mothers are also routinely physicians, and I quote:

Who ran to help me when I fell,
And who would some pretty story tell,
Or who would kiss the place to make it well?
My Mother.

Mr. Speaker, may all mothers have a very happy Mother's Day.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Women Entrepreneurs Week

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. May 8 to 14 is Women Entrepreneurs Week in Saskatchewan. This week was designated to mark the specific contributions of women in business to the economy of our province.

As can be evidenced in our educational institutions and in our workforces, women are taking more prominent positions in Saskatchewan professions and in Saskatchewan businesses. Thanks to the many positive role models that have become their own boss in the past few decades, more and more women are choosing to venture out on their own and become independent business women.

And just last week, Madam Deputy Speaker, at the Women of Distinction Awards and dinner here in Regina, we saw the successes of many women in the Regina area. And prior to that I witnessed the Women of Today Awards in Estevan, where we celebrated the achievements of many of our role models from that community.

And just in our province alone, women entrepreneurs have created in excess of 600 full-time jobs for Saskatchewan people. Madam Deputy Speaker, we should all be thankful for the hard work and dedication of all our women entrepreneurs in this province. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Licensed Practical Nurses Day

Ms. Junor: — Thank you. Madam Deputy Speaker, tomorrow, May 13, is Licensed Practical Nurses Day. LPNs play an important and valued role on our health care teams. We are fortunate in Saskatchewan to have highly skilled practical nurses, committed to providing the best possible care to their patients. I know all members will join me in acknowledging their achievements. LPNs are devoted and dedicated to the people who need their expertise and compassion, and the people of Saskatchewan trust them and hold them in high esteem.

Madam Deputy Speaker, earlier this week we recognized May 8 to 19 as national nurses' week. As I acknowledged then, nurses, like many other health care providers, are currently in short supply around the world. Here in Saskatchewan we are addressing this issue in our *Working Together: Saskatchewan's Health Workforce Action Plan* released this past December. The strategy is a comprehensive, detailed plan designed to improve health care in Saskatchewan by keeping and attracting health care professionals, and was developed in consultation with nursing organizations and other health provider groups. Already our workforce action plan is recognized as a national standard and is being praised for its innovative health care planning.

Madam Deputy Speaker, on behalf of this government and all Saskatchewan residents, I'd like to thank all licensed practical nurses for their commitment to high-quality nursing care. We value the contribution they make and join them in celebrating this special day.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Celebrating Thorrablót

Ms. Draude: — Thank you. Saskatchewan people of Icelandic descent have not forgotten their ancestors' heritage, and recently held a 25th anniversary of Thorrablót. Thorrablót is a major occasion in Iceland with Icelanders attending many fantastic celebrations. In Saskatchewan it includes a buffet dinner, Icelandic desserts, a short cultural program, dancing, visiting, and another lunch of Icelandic food.

The Vatnabyggð Club was formed May 13, 1981. In June of that year . . . and became a chapter of the Icelandic National League. Vatnabyggð, which means lake settlements, were chosen to represent the whole settlement area from Dafoe to Foam Lake along Highway 16 and north and south of Highway No. 35.

The 25th anniversary event which was held in Wynyard saw more than 180 attendees from the area as well as from Kelliher, Yorkton, Melville, Simpson, Warman, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, Regina, Manitoba, Calgary, Ontario, and Brazil.

As part of the celebration, Örn Jónsson, consul for Iceland in Saskatchewan, attended and commented that Vatnabyggð is now a must destination for Icelandic visitors. Also in attendance for the first time was Iceland's ambassador to Canada, Markús Örn Antonsson, and his wife, Steinunn, who at the end of the tour commented, "I've seen many signs of Icelandic successes in this new country."

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask this Assembly to join with me in congratulating the Vatnabyggð Icelanders on their 25th anniversary Thorrablót.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Women Entrepreneurs Week

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, May 8 to 14 is Women Entrepreneurs Week here in Saskatchewan, a time set aside to recognize the very significant contributions that business and professional women make to the province's economy. Madam Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan's economy is driven in no small measure by the vision, drive, hard work, and innovation of women entrepreneurs. Last year women entrepreneurs owned and operated approximately one-third of all Saskatchewan businesses.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan is a non-profit organization with almost 800 members across the province. Last year alone this organization responded to over 2,300 enquiries and almost 70,000 visits to its website.

Since its inception, Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan has

provided more than \$12 million in loans to help women start, expand, or purchase existing businesses in the province and has leveraged over \$9 million more. This financing has helped provide business advice, mentoring, and training opportunities, and, Madam Deputy Speaker, it has helped businesswomen create more than 640 full-time jobs right here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this week provides us with the opportunity to celebrate the commitment and achievements of Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan. I ask all members to join me in saluting their contributions to the province and the valuable programs that Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan provides. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Wood River.

Government's Advertising Campaign

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Madam Deputy Speaker, a couple of days ago the NDP [New Democratic Party] government launched an advertising campaign to promote the fact that they finally adopted the Saskatchewan Party plan to reduce business taxes, not a bad idea really since the ads are going to be run in other provinces and since they don't feature the Minister of Finance in his leadership bid.

But once again the NDP managed to screw it up. If you go to their website, thinksask.ca, there's a video featuring various people talking about doing business in Saskatchewan. Strangely, one of the spokespeople in the video is from Weyerhaeuser. That's the same Weyerhaeuser that just shut down its mill in Prince Albert and put hundreds of people out of work. And on top of that, the Weyerhaeuser spokesman featured in the ad is now retired and living in BC [British Columbia]. Madam Deputy Speaker, this makes about as much sense as getting Henry Burris to make a recruitment video for the Riders.

Madam Deputy Speaker, just to recap: Weyerhaeuser closed down its plant in Saskatchewan, laid off hundreds of workers, and its spokesman moved to BC. Is this really the best example the NDP could find of company doing business in NDP Saskatchewan? Madam Deputy Speaker, just another example of the NDP government has a distinct lack of credibility.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Availability of Intensive Care in Saskatoon Hospitals

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I read with concern this morning about the story of Lana Van Elsacker. She was sent by air ambulance to Calgary due to the possibility of a premature labour. Lana spent a week in the hospital in Calgary before being discharged. She was still and is

still pregnant. This woman was flown to Calgary by air ambulance but offered no way to get to back home. Doctors in Calgary didn't want her to drive back home in case she went into labour. Lana had to hitch a ride with her relatives to get back home.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government always talks about no one being left behind. How come Lana was left behind?

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. I read the same article this morning in the newspaper that the member refers to. I might say that I have no other information about this case other than that newspaper article. The family did not contact us. The Saskatoon Health Region has in fact made themselves available to the family should they wish to discuss the circumstances that the young woman found herself in. Madam Deputy Speaker, to my knowledge to this point, the family has not yet taken up the offer to speak with the quality care coordinator. But that offer still stands.

Madam Deputy Speaker, medical decisions are being made in intensive care units around this province every single day. Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm sorry that the woman and her family are frustrated with the circumstances. But I'm very pleased, Madam Speaker, that we have processes in place . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you. This woman was left in the lurch out of this province with no way to get home. Hers is not an isolated case however. In fact it appears that it's starting to become a pattern with this NDP government.

According to the Saskatoon Health District, since January, seven expectant mothers have been flown out of Saskatoon to hospitals in Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Regina. Clearly we have a serious problem here that this Health minister has not addressed. Expectant mothers should be able to receive emergency treatment in our largest city in times of need.

Mr. Speaker, how come this minister has not funded the expansion of the neonatal intensive care unit in the Saskatoon hospital?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. As I was saying earlier before I ran out of time, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm very pleased that the system is designed to ensure that the care of people who are in intensive care circumstances are being dealt with, that we have the policies in place, the guidelines in place to protect the safety of individuals like the mother and the yet-to-be-born child.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan Health and the Saskatoon Health Region have been working on plans with

regards to the neonatal intensive care unit for quite some time. This week, this week, Madam Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan Health has received requests to review the plans that have been developed by the Saskatoon Health Region.

Madam Deputy Speaker, every time we've brought forward plans for funding in this House, under the budget, the members of the Sask Party opposite have voted against it. We continue to support programs that are necessary in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The CEO [chief executive officer] of the Saskatoon Health District has been complaining about this issue for months. Maura Davies said that this unit is too small and outmoded for the number of sick babies and the modern equipment needed to deal with their issues. Pregnant women are being forced to leave the province because this NDP government is not funding health care properly.

Mr. Speaker, why is the largest health district in the province being forced to deal with outdated, cramped facilities when, Madam Deputy Speaker, more is needed in that district?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. The member opposite has forgotten a couple of things. Number one, Saskatchewan also takes care of people from Alberta, Manitoba, and British Columbia when they have overcapacity problems and their people need to be taken care of. We have reciprocal agreements with the other provinces, and we share the capacities that we have when we have it, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Secondly, the member opposite forgets the commitments that have been made and delivered in the Saskatoon Health Region recently: the opening of the Irene and Les Dubé cancer care centre at City Hospital; the brand new cataract catheterization lab at Royal University Hospital; the opening of the brand new West Winds Primary care centre in Saskatoon's west side; and yesterday, Madam Deputy Speaker, \$2.3 million linear accelerator Saskatchewan cancer care centre in Saskatoon, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Minister of Health is hollering from his seat, why didn't we support the budget?

Madam Deputy Speaker, when it takes \$500,000 to promote his leadership campaign, this opposition will vote against that budget every single time. Madam Deputy Speaker, it costs

\$700,000 to do the renovations that this hospital needs. But unfortunately . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. Other members will have an opportunity to enter debate. I ask all hon. members to respect the member on his feet. The member for Indian Head-Milestone.

[10:45]

Mr. McMorris: — Madam Deputy Speaker, it costs \$700,000 to have a properly equipped and enough space for a neonatal unit in Saskatoon. But unfortunately that Finance minister finds it more important for self-promotion than the care of infants in our province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — I find that appalling. When will this government put its priorities straight, quit advertising his leadership campaign, and fund hospitals in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. Interesting debate taking place in the House right now, Madam Deputy Speaker. We have the single largest capital budget for health in many, many years — a 20 per cent increase, a 20 per cent increase in capital funding over last year. Madam Deputy Speaker, that's going to fund enhancements all over this province: new hospitals in Swift Current, continuing funding in Humboldt, continuing funding in Preeceville, continuing funding in other locations across this province, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And indeed that party, the Saskatchewan Party, and that member did not support any one of them at the time the budget was brought down, Madam Deputy Speaker. We will continue our commitments on capital and supporting Saskatchewan people. Madam Deputy Speaker, I encourage the members opposite to reconsider their votes and support 10 per cent increases overall in health care.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Disposal of Biomedical Waste

Mr. Hart: — Madam Deputy Speaker, earlier this week the Minister of the Environment indicated that or said that he was aware of biomedical waste being found in the Saskatoon landfill. The minister indicated that a couple of bags of sharps and some blood products had been found.

Madam Deputy Speaker, can the Minister of Environment tell this Assembly what follow-up he has done in this case?

The Deputy Speaker: — Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. This matter has been dealt with by the officials in the Saskatoon area. It relates to some of the disposal of medical waste from the Saskatoon area. It's been looked at and being dealt with by Saskatchewan Environment, by the Saskatchewan health region, and by the waste disposal companies that are involved with providing the proper placement of these particular items.

And there was a particular issue as it relates to a couple of bags of medical waste and that particular issue is being dealt with.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Madam Deputy Speaker, biomedical wastes are classified under the environmental protection Act as hazardous wastes. They pose a threat to those people who handle them, those people who find them. The minister has not told us if he knows where the wastes originated from, what they're doing to find out where they came from. He's leaving it up to private companies to deal with it.

Has he provided any directions to prevent this occurring in the future? And has he given any directions as to . . . and is he looking at improving the system in this province whereby we deal with biomedical wastes?

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The province of Saskatchewan has a committee of people who look at the overall disposal of biomedical waste across the province, and they are continuing to work and develop. There are procedures that are set out. There are regulations about how biomedical waste should be dealt with. And many times that also fits in with some of the waste management companies which have policies themselves as to how they dispose of biomedical waste.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is an area where Saskatchewan Environment, working together with Saskatchewan Health and with some municipalities and private companies, has been and continues to provide a very safe way of disposing of biomedical waste.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Madam Deputy Speaker, this is not the first occurrence of biomedical wastes ending up in the landfill site. Back in the year 2000, such wastes were found in the Regina landfill site. Now we hear about biomedical wastes ending up in the Saskatoon landfill sites. These are the two cases that we know about. The question is, how many more incidents like this are happening that we don't know about?

Madam Deputy Speaker, last year when that minister was the Minister of Health, he had an opportunity to move Saskatchewan to lead the world in dealing with biomedical

waste. There's a business right here in Regina that has cutting-edge technology. And all they asked the minister to do is provide them with the opportunity to do a test run on their machine that uses ozone to neutralize biomedical waste.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, that minister did nothing to move this along. Now we have an incident of biomedical waste ending up in the Saskatoon landfill sites. How many more incidents like this do we need to occur before that minister actually does something to deal with this situation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. As minister of Health, I'm very aware of the proposal that the member has been talking about. I know that it has been reviewed by various officials within the Government of Saskatchewan and also within various municipalities and as it relates to a number of the waste disposal companies. I encourage that member to encourage the business involved to make sure he continues to work with the appropriate people to try to make sure that if his product will fit within a Saskatchewan situation, it can be done that way.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have a plan for Saskatchewan that involves Saskatchewan Environment and Saskatchewan Health, municipalities, and the various private waste disposal companies in this province. And we are going to continue to work to make sure we have the best disposal for all types of waste within our province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Tracking Children's School Attendance

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, earlier this week the Saskatchewan Party brought up the distressing issue of children not in school. According to the minister, right now there are 1,500 children not in school in the city of Saskatoon. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, if there are 1,500 children out of school just in Saskatoon, there must be a similar number in Regina. This number gets higher and higher when you look at it province-wide, Madam Deputy Speaker.

To the minister: how many years has the department known about this incredibly high number of children not in school?

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Learning.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Madam Deputy Speaker, this number is an estimate, and while the estimate runs from 1,000 to 1,500, the member of course is using the high end of the estimate. We're dealing with early statistics, and we are working on a pilot project that is in place in the city of Saskatoon.

We hope to have, by this fall, the program to be province-wide. We will have more accurate numbers, more definite numbers at that time. Currently we're working on issues of including all

schools. The program is working well, and we expect to have more definite numbers later this fall.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, the question was, how many years had she known about the problem?

The minister admitted, after the opposition raised this issue, that a tracking program had been in place for some years. The minister has known that 1,500 children, and by some estimates it's substantially higher than that . . . that they have known that this problem exists.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the NDP believes that no child should be left behind. But unfortunately, Madam Deputy Speaker, these children are being left behind. Madam Deputy Speaker, what is this minister going to do to address the problem of children not in school? What is she going to do to make sure that no child is left behind?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Learning.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan and the Department of Learning has been working on this the last number of years.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite stands up and talks with some shock and dismay that this is the number of children that the estimate . . . estimation of number of children that are out of the school system. I would ask the member opposite, what did he do when he was the Chair of the Saskatoon School Division? Nothing.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are looking at this problem. We are working with the school divisions to put a program in place that will track children, and we are seeing good results initially. And we expect to have the program province-wide this fall.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, when I was on the school board, this issue was raised with the Department of Learning. The Saskatoon Public School Board continues to raise this issue with the Department of Learning so that they can develop the appropriate tracking model to ensure that this model, that this number does not continue, Madam Deputy Speaker.

How many years has this minister known about it? And for how many years has this minister chose to do nothing about it? Is this minister intervening in any way to ensure that these children get back into school? Is she developing any kind of a program to ensure that these children are not left behind, Madam Deputy Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Learning.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, while the member opposite was writing letters, this Department of Learning and this government was taking action.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Whether it's community schools, alternative schools, putting in place pre-kindergarten programs, supports for parents, support for learners that need special attention, Madam Deputy Speaker, we've gone beyond writing letters, and we are putting action and programs in place.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd like to quote from the Learning minister's scum earlier this week. Here is her answer when a reporter asked, what can be done to address this? Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, her answer was, "Not much at this time."

Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister says that nothing can be done. But in reality, her NDP government can certainly do something. They can at least tell us how many kids are not in school, and not sweep this problem under the rug. We are dealing with children, our most precious resource here. We don't have the luxury of time to wait and see.

Madam Deputy Speaker, will this minister do something about this distressing issue? Will she commit to maintaining a comprehensive database identifying these children? Will she commit today to a program that will get these children back into school? Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Learning.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Madam Deputy Speaker, we have done a great deal of work on a system that will track students, but there are many issues. Keeping a database isn't the only solution. We need to build strong relationships with children, with families to make sure those supports are in place, and there is a connection to learning and a connection to the education system.

Madam Deputy Speaker, community schools, pre-kindergarten programs — which are very important — and also the early learning and child care program. We had a substantial plan which the federal government pulled out funding on. And this provincial government has made the intention known. We will continue on with our plan, and we will continue to build those connections and those bridges to families and to young students so that connection to education and learning begins early in their life.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Moosomin.

Child Hunger and Poverty

Mr. Toth: — Madam Deputy Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Services. According to the Canadian Association of Food Banks' annual hunger count, food bank in this province is up six one-half per cent. The report, Madam Deputy Speaker, also indicated that over 11,000 children were members of families that relied on food banks regularly for their food requirements.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this NDP government once promised to eliminate food banks. That hasn't happened. In fact child hunger is more serious today than it ever was. Madam Deputy Speaker, question to the minister is this: why are hungry children being left behind by this NDP government?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The only question that I have for the opposition that cry every now and then . . . First of all, there's been dramatic improvements. We know that the use of the food bank in Saskatoon is down in April. We know that we have the largest increase in social service support systems ever in the history of this government and this province. And, Mr. Speaker, no matter how many crocodile tears are being shown across the way, they voted against that budget.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, this NDP party at one time said they would eliminate food banks. This NDP government said that they would eliminate hunger in the province of Saskatchewan.

However, Madam Deputy Speaker, Wayne Hellquist is the Chair of the Canadian Association of Food Banks. He happens to be also the CEO of the Regina District Food Bank . . .

[11:00]

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. The member should not need to be raising his voice to place the question; he's close to the Speaker. I would ask all members to allow him to deliver the question. Thank you.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, Mr. Hellquist is also the CEO of the Regina District Food Bank and he says, and I quote: "Children are taking the brunt of our inability to tackle issues of hunger, housing, transportation, and decent family support, including wages and social assistance."

Madam Deputy Speaker, to the minister, the question is this: why is this minister failing to improve the lives of hungry children in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, we have done a tremendous amount of good work. We recognize the value of the food bank and what a lot of people need to understand is that food banks nowadays play a variety of roles. And as well, Mr. Speaker, we have also . . . trying to make sure we have a variety of support programs out there to help the families in Saskatchewan. We have done a tremendous amount of work.

This budget alone, Madam Deputy Speaker, has done a lot to recognize the deficiencies in Saskatchewan and addressing child hunger and poverty overall. We have made very, very good progress. And I would add again, Madam Deputy Speaker, all the progress that we have identified — everything from the rental supplement to the extra help for all the food banks that are out there and recognizing their role. And we'll continue working away and meeting some of the other needs that are out there to help the families.

All this work being done and all the improvements being made, that member and that party opposite voted against that budget. That is why, Madam Deputy Speaker, they have no credibility on any front.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Finance likes to boast about his first budget. However that budget cut over \$6 million from the child tax benefit. Madam Deputy Speaker, that money was supposed to help low-income families and children. At a time when the federal government is increasing its share of funding to low-income children, this NDP government is clawing back that contribution.

Madam Deputy Speaker, how can he can say no child is left behind when that NDP government is clawing back \$6 million that should have gone to hungry children in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister Responsible for Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Madam Deputy Speaker, it sounds a bit silly coming from that opposition when they talked about, several years ago under their former leader, that their solution to helping the poor people of . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. I ask that the member posing the question be heard. I would ask the same be given respect to the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I'll point out that that issue coming from that member, when several years under the old leader, their plan for the Department of Community Resources is a \$50 million cut, Madam Deputy Speaker — \$50 million they're going to take

off, rip out of the poor people's budget, out of the handicapped people's budget, and many other budgets. And that member was supportive of that motion that the Sask Party had several years ago.

We are not going to claw back any child care benefits. We're going to backfill every program that we speak about. We're going to backfill that support for the poor people that the families need in this province. And we're going to put our money where our mouth is, unlike that opposition opposite, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, in the Finance minister's own budgetary documents, the Saskatchewan child benefit is moving down from 7.9 million to 1.8. That's a \$6 million reduction, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when Mr. Hellquist says that there's child hunger problems in the province of Saskatchewan . . . food banks have not disappeared. Exactly, Madam Deputy Speaker, what is this government doing to address the issues of hungry children in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Madam Deputy Speaker, we as a government recognize that as the child tax benefit program came into effect that the people of Saskatchewan have more room to provide more support services to the people that are living in poverty and the children that are suffering.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we're going to continue working very hard to meet some of that needs. This Premier and this government speaks of no one left behind on the path to opportunity. We are going to work hard to achieve that, Madam Deputy Speaker. And furthermore as you go along look at their history, look at their history. They proposed a \$50 million cut. They proposed a different solution that are going to cost the people of Saskatchewan more money and hurt the people in poverty more. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, every time we make improvements, whether its a rental supplement program or whether it's recognizing people with disabilities, cognitive disabilities — we're recognizing them as well — every time we try and move forward, they vote against the budget that does that.

So the question that I have is, all these questions, why do you vote against progress and why do you provide alternative plans that hurt the people of Saskatchewan more?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Government House

Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I request leave of the House to move to government business.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation, the Government House Leader, has asked for leave to go to government orders. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Deputy Clerk: — Committee of Finance.

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

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Agriculture and Food Vote 1

Subvote (AG01)

The Deputy Chair: — Members of the committee, we're dealing with the estimates for the Department of Agriculture and Food this morning. And I'd like to welcome the officials here from that department and recognize the minister to introduce his officials and, if you wish, make some opening remarks. So I recognize the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. The officials that are accompanying me here today are Deputy Minister Doug Matthies, who is immediately to my right. Behind me is Hal Cushon, assistant deputy minister. And in the empty chair is Jacquie Gibney . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . She's not going to be here today? Okay. Oh I've got a revised list. Thank you.

Rick Burton is seated in the back, director of policy branch. Stan Benjamin, in the last row, is general manager of the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation. Beside Stan in the back row — two behind me — is Karen Aulie, director of corporate services branch. And in the back row, on the far side, we have Shawn Jaques, manager of customer service for Crop Insurance Corporation. We have, next to him, Dave Boehm, director of financial programs branch. And next to him is John Babcock, acting director of the irrigation development branch, and Rick Ashton is acting director of lands branch. Thank you very much.

And basically, we're ready for the questions. The officials are well-prepared, as I believe we are, and we're looking forward to an informative time together.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the hon. member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I just

want to take the opportunity to welcome the minister's officials here this morning. And being that we have a number of people that want to get in and ask questions, I'd like to pass to my colleague this morning to start off the questioning.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I think I just have one or two questions for the minister. I'm sure, Mr. Minister, you are aware that just two or three weeks ago there was a public meeting held in Conquest regarding the west side irrigation project, which has been on the drawing board for 30 years now. I think the plan was discontinued, if I remember correctly, in 1972, so that would be over 30 years.

There is renewed interest. There is a west side irrigators project, been re-established, chaired by Doug Ball, the former CEO of the Midwest Health District. There is support from the local municipalities. I think five local RMs [rural municipality] are involved. They have provided funding for an initial study to renew the west side irrigation project. I believe, if I remember correctly, that study cost \$200,000. The initial report, or the report of that initial study is back and it's positive.

At the meeting, the producers and community leaders . . . And there were the mayors of Rosetown and Outlook at this meeting, as well as the RMs being represented, as well as leaders in the irrigation industry. There were provincial officials there; no elected members, but provincial officials there. There were some federal officials there; again, no federal elected members.

The unanimous decision of that meeting of almost 300 people was to continue to take the next step, which is a major engineering study of the project, likely to cost in the neighbourhood of, I believe, \$2 million. The traditional cost sharing arrangements for these projects are that the local communities raise 10 per cent. And then there is a formula between the federal government and the provincial government to share the remaining cost of such a study.

I don't know, Mr. Minister, if the federal government is prepared to live up to their end of the bargain. I'll certainly be asking federal MPs [Member of Parliament] if they would be willing to do that.

But I just want to know whether the province is willing to do their share in traditional cost sharing arrangements to carry out this major engineering study for the west side irrigation project.

[11:15]

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you. I appreciate the member's question in this very important area where we see tremendous potential for growth and certainly for production of higher-value crops.

Now we've been doing a lot of work with the irrigation committees, as you're aware of, and we've also been in discussion with the federal government. We are well aware that investment in this area will be important, and we're certainly prepared to carry a portion of that investment.

What we are not clear on to this point, as the member I see is also, hasn't heard from his federal colleagues, that what we're not aware of is how much the federal government is willing to commit to this. But I think in the discussions that we've been having, a recognition that this is one of those areas where there is good growth potential.

And we'll be working out . . . We've got five different studies going on. We'll be looking at priority areas of the five studies, and we will be discussing with the federal government levels of support that would be appropriate, federal-provincial levels of support, and how that will break out. But we do see it as key in terms of helping agriculture in Saskatchewan become more profitable.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Can I just presume upon you to be a little more concise. Are you saying in that answer that if the local area raises the traditional amount of funding required for this major engineering study, if the federal government agrees to fund the traditional amount that federal governments under previous arrangements have funded, are you saying that the province is supportive of the study continuing and that the province would therefore also be a partner in this project and fund their fair share as has been determined by precedents in similar projects in the past? I just want to know whether you're on board or you're not or you're not sure.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Well to date, as I indicated, there are five studies that are going on. And funding for those studies has been jointly provided through the Canada-Saskatchewan water supply expansion program and we continue to support the work that's going on in those. I think the member will be aware that we put \$5.2 million in the agriculture budget to pick this up. It's a new part of our Agriculture and Food area. But we're deeply engaged at this point. And we will be, in terms of financing, further financing of projects, we will be negotiating.

We're not acknowledging or accepting any past parameters about how that financing will work out. But I need to note that the five districts — Lucky Lake Irrigation District is one — there's about 9,124 acres of existing irrigation. And the studies identified an additional 11,000 acres of potential infill and expansion and the Riverhurst irrigation district which is looking at another approximately 11,000 acres for its infill and expansion, South Sask River irrigation district which is looking at about 10,000 acres, and the west side project which you indicated identified 370,000-plus acres of new irrigation development plus industrial, wildlife, municipal, and recreational opportunities.

The fifth project that we've been supporting and providing funds for in the study is the Qu'Appelle south project regional water supply study from Qu'Appelle dam to Moose Jaw area. And the preliminary estimates there indicate about 200,000-plus acres of irrigable soils are contained in the study area.

So we're well under way in terms of our joint work with the irrigation districts and with the federal government. And, as I say, we've been there in terms of provision of funding in the studies. We've got a budget allocation that will enable us to keep in at this point and we will be negotiating what levels of joint funding we'll have in moving forward.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, I appreciate that answer and I was aware that there were other groups. But could you specifically respond as to your position on the west side irrigation project which is considerably the largest project and which is the one that is really on the front burner?

Either the major engineering study is going to be done or it's not. Could you just assure me so I can assure my constituents that in fact if the traditional funding arrangements can be put in place — that is the cost share between the federal government and the province, along traditional lines under the program you mentioned as well as funding from the local area — whether in fact your department would use those funds allocated in this year's budget to proceed with that study.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you. And I appreciate the member would like to be able to provide that information to constituents, and I'd actually like to be able to give you those numbers as well. But we're very cognizant of the importance of each of the five. Size isn't the only factor here because each of them are important to their area. So we want to get . . . All of those reports are not in yet either, by the way, and we want to get all the reports in so we can work on the priorities, make sure that we have the highest priority areas identified.

And I will say again that in terms of levels of funding we know that there have been certain levels of funding that have been carried by different levels of government and the districts in the past, and on a go-forward basis we will be negotiating. We know that any of these developments are very costly and resources are precious and scarce, not only at this level but in discussions with the federal minister we know that there are going to be challenges there as well for him to meet all the demands that will be in front of him.

So I can only say that we'll be negotiating on moving forward but we do see the importance. We'll be working with all districts to set the priorities and we'll be providing a level of funding there.

The Deputy Chair: — I recognize the hon. member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair to the minister, Crown lease fees on Crown land, lease fees on Crown land took a dramatic jump this year. Could you maybe just explain how much they've gone up? And I understand that it's by formula but maybe you could just elaborate on that.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Well first of all I appreciate the member noting that there is a relatively complex formula. One of the factors in that formula is of course the price of beef, and so we saw significant drops when the price of beef was down.

And the total increase this year would be about 37.3 per cent, and again it's based on a formula. When the prices are down, the cost for the rental will go down. When the prices of beef are up, the cost will go up. So 37.3 per cent increase.

And I think it's also important to note that along with the increase that we also provide some things as a Crown lessor to the lessees that they would not get in their private rentals. First

of all, we've done a survey around the province, and significantly generally our rates are below what private rentals are.

Also where there are leases for oil and gas, we do provide — though minimal — we do provide some of the oil and gas lease funding to the lessee as well . . . or the lessor, pardon me. And again, in private operations that doesn't happen. The lessor generally retains all of the funding for the lease.

So generally, increase of 37.3 based on the price of beef. Secondly, we do provide generally the lowest rentals in the province. Thirdly, we also provide some benefits as a lessor.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Then to follow up because we've had some concern, lessees out there that are questioning why, you know, there was such a dramatic increase this year. And one of the questions . . . They've said they thought that the formula worked on a five-year average. Is that part of the formula? Can you tell me?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — No, those who thought that it was a five-year average are not accurate. They don't have accurate information. It is an annual adjustment, and it is based on the last year's calf prices. Calf prices have gone up with BSE [bovine spongiform encephalopathy] basically not being so much an issue for beef and therefore the prices go up on an annual base based on that price.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chair, I guess the concern that a number of farmers out there have is that, as you've said and stated correctly is calf prices have rebounded and recovered back from when BSE first hit Canada and our prices for cattle of all kinds dropped.

Calf prices have recovered but our cow prices and our bull prices . . . which I would think would somehow come into the formula for leased land because you know, they're a big part of what farmers and ranchers out there are renting land for. The purpose of pasturing is for cows and bulls. And they certainly haven't recovered. In fact they're at just a terrible low yet, and it doesn't look like they're going to in the near future recover until the border opens up for animals of all age. So is that taken into consideration, or is it strictly on calf prices?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — I would say from my assessment of how the formula is put together that it is very fair, that the cull cow prices are also included as one of the factors in setting the final price. So overall our formula does try and take in the whole gamut of animals that will be on pasture.

And we also, I think as I've indicated, relative to private rentals, we're below what those rates are. So overall I think we do provide a very fair package, given the complex formula that factors in all of those elements.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Then a following question I guess. And the question would be that as soon as the BSE hit, the following year I would presume that leases then dropped quite dramatically because this is quite a dramatic increase. Can you tell me what the drop in the lease fees were shortly — I guess the following year — after the BSE hit and our prices dropped.

[11:30]

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — From 2003, the changes . . . and I have the rent per annum is from — I don't have the averages — but the rent went from five fourteen down to three eighty-one, and '06 back up to five twenty-three. And that's per animal unit.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. So I guess that's really why the concern seems to be with a number of producers out there that rent Crown land . . . is that we went from a high to a low to back up to a high within a three-year period, but only one year actually that rent had dropped dramatically, and now we're right back up again so . . .

Mr. Minister, I want to go on with a different issue this morning. And I've had this concern brought to me a number of times with the annual crop weather-based insurance. The one problem we've had . . . and I believe you're aware of this one. My colleague from Cut Knife-Turtleford I believe had wrote you a letter about the Glaslyn weather station and the problem they had there where the recorded temperature for a certain night was 1.9 degrees. Every farmer in the area knew that it froze. It was common knowledge out there that frost had hit, and yet the recorded temperature that night — which would affect the insurance that they thought they had — was still 1.9 degrees.

Mr. Minister, I believe you had responded to this letter, but since that time have we done anything to address this issue and the problem with the differential temperatures that are coming out of areas such as the Glaslyn area?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you. I'd like to just conclude noting I started at '03, the year BSE was in. I'd like to just note that it's actually gone from 2001 where the price per animal unit was six twenty-eight. So you can see that it was quite a dramatic drop down to the three eighty-one. And we're starting to move back up again based on the prices formula. So I think overall I would have to say that I believe this is a very fair program that does provide deep support for our producers.

With regard to the weather-based crop insurance, we're very, very careful when people are signing on. This is in some senses an easily understood program. But we're very careful to remind people that there are only a certain number of weather stations; that the payouts will be based on the information at those weather stations.

And we have increased those over three years. There are no increases this year. But we now have 129 different weather stations across the province. And we think that with the information that's provided for those who are signing on, there really shouldn't be any question about where, within the area if there's a variation because everybody that signs on to a weather-based program should know that it is the temperature at the station. With all the factors that change, have temperature variables across the province, that it's the temperature at the station that is the one that applies for the program. And I think that's spelled out very, very clearly in the information that anybody joining the program would get.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I guess to me it just seemed odd. And I've had this brought to my attention on a

number of other cases. And I think we all realize . . . I know, I believe it's in my colleague from Moosomin's area, in Broadview, always has a lower temperature. It doesn't matter when frost hits; it seems Broadview is one of the areas that always is one, two, sometimes three degrees colder than everywhere else. So having said that, if some of these weather stations are in areas that possibly don't go as low, I think we're going to get kind of a skewed temperature recording that may dramatically affect a number of these people.

And I think some of the concerns I've had were followed up on the August 20 frost that we had a couple of years ago where pretty well every farmer in the province was . . . their crops were damaged by it. And should you have been caught in one of these situations and be in this program where the recorded temperature was not near what you had had actually on your farm, it could certainly affect your bottom line when it come to qualifying for a payout. So that was my concern, Mr. Minister.

Due to the fact that we only have so many minutes this morning to talk, Mr. Minister, I just want to get into the \$1.5 billion, Mr. Minister, that the federal government has come out with. And maybe if you could give me kind of a breakdown in your understanding how . . . You know, we know there's \$1 billion dollars more in one part and half a billion in the other. If you could kind of give me a breakdown and information. Have you received information of how this money is going to be put out there and how much is coming for Saskatchewan and things like that, Mr. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — If I might, I would again like to respond to the concluding statements around crop insurance because the assessment is done every year as to how the program is applying. And as indicated, there were three years of increases in the number of stations. And we're trying to get a handle on how many do we need overall, what's the right number, is the location the right location, do we need to adjust location? Challenging questions, but certainly they are being reviewed regularly.

And I would just also note for the member that Crop Insurance would advise most producers, rather than just signing on to something like the weather-based program, that an all-peril is really a better business risk. But each producer has to manage their business risk as they choose, and so we provide a variety of different programs. And weather-based is just one of those.

And on to the question of federal funding and allocation of the \$1.5 billion, any discussions that we've had with the federal government at this point have been quite general. And we've got a sense of where some of the funding is going to go.

When we talk with our provincial counterparts, we hear some significant numbers for how for example the CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] inventory valuation adjustments, the two-price inventory change adjustments are going to work out for Saskatchewan. By our estimate, it could be somewhere between 3 and 400 million. And this is with — I'll be very clear — this is with vague information that's been provided by the federal government to date.

And I talked with the Alberta minister yesterday, and they're estimating somewhere in the neighbourhood of over \$400

million there because, on a two-price inventory valuation, going back to 2003, with their larger cattle herd, it will have a significant impact.

So you can already see, with Saskatchewan and Alberta, we're looking at almost 800 million of the 1.5 billion taken up just to do the retroactive pay on inventory valuation.

But that said, the breakdown that we get are that — and again this has been very, very general — that there will be funding for some type of cover crop program to help deal with areas where there has been flooding. There will be separate disaster program. And we're hearing this morning some more information about how that may roll out, but we do not have solid detail provided.

Our department is speaking with the federal department to try and make sure what's clear there. We have no indication at all of the level of funding around biofuels. So biofuels are identified as one of the other areas. Science research development, that area has also been targeted as one that will receive a portion of the 1.5 billion new spending. And the whole area of market development — which for a province like ours that does so much export — is very, very essential; there'll be some funding for market development as well. So those would be the key areas that have been outlined for us.

But as I say, there is a real scarcity of detail. And we're working every day with the federal department to try and get more detail and be able to lay that out.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And I guess we'll all be waiting, especially our farmers and ranchers out there, to see just how this money is going to trickle down. And hopefully our Saskatchewan producers get their fair share of it. As we both know, I don't think it's news to either one of us, the tremendous amount of hurt out there.

And with some of the clawbacks that have been called where they want the cheque back . . . I think the federal government putting that on hold, it doesn't help the farmer really. But it certainly would help his mind be a little bit at ease that he doesn't have to try and find a way to pay that back. The stress that that adds to farmers out there right now, as we're fully aware of, is dramatic.

So, Mr. Minister, I don't mean to jump all over the place, but we have had questions and — due to the time limits — we have. Can the minister explain how crop insurance claims for wildlife damage are assessed and the levels of coverage that are available for wildlife damage?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Member will know that it is a federal-provincial program. The compensation is paid at 80 per cent of the calculated loss with \$100-minimum claim, and compensation is paid on the grade of the crop at the time of the harvest.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Minister, as I said, I don't want to jump all over the place, but I have to. In your remarks a few minutes ago, we were talking about how this money was going to trickle down and if . . . you know, what you knew. Did we hear you say, Mr. Minister, that the disaster money . . . Just the

Porcupine people is the ones I'm worried about, or not worried specifically just for them but everybody, but their concern seems to be front and centre. Was there any explanation that you had how that part of the province was going to be dealt with? Were they going to be dealt with individually out there, separate from the other money that's coming down the pipe?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — We have had many discussions with the federal government on this front and both at the ministerial level and with representatives from Porcupine. And though we understand today that there will be a separate program to address that particular situation, there have been discussions about . . . will we have then an ongoing separate disaster program? It'll be separate from Crop Insurance; will it use the data from Crop Insurance to help provide parameters for payout?

All of that has been under discussion, but we are waiting for the federal government to get back to us. We have certainly pressed to try and get information. It is my hope that we will have, by as early as next week, that we will have a definitive program laid out.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Minister. Minister, and if we would ask one thing is if you would let us know when you find out because the member from Kelvington-Wadena is very interested in her constituents so . . . And at this time, Mr. Minister, I'll pass over to my colleague.

[11:45]

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Minister, my questions concern The Farm Land Security Act and the Farm Land Security Board. Is it true that the moratorium concerning Ducks Unlimited has been lifted, and they're allowed to purchase land again in the province?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Yes, the moratorium has been lifted out. Ducks Unlimited is now able to purchase, but there are parameters set out by regulation which limit the extent of purchase over a given time and over a particular region as well.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you. Mr. Chair, to the minister: would you have with you today the statistics about how many exemptions have been granted to foreigners to purchase marginal farm land in the province? And if you have it, for the last three years?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — No, I appreciate the question though. It does affect our rural landscape. It is for the Minister of Justice and the Farm Land Security Board does come under the Department of Justice.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you. I'll just pursue it a little bit more if you can shed some light on it. My concern is that constituents that I have . . . is that he has a game farm — whether that's relevant or not, I believe it's elk that he has — on marginal land. He has a potential buyer, a purchaser which is from the United States, a US citizen. And they . . . Well the bureaucracy behind the application to get an exemption is part of his concern, but through hearsay he has heard that there have been

exemptions granted for similar types of situations. And it's kind of who knows who and some people get in and some people don't.

And that's the concern that I'm raising. Are there exemptions being granted to any foreigner, whether from the United States or elsewhere in the world, to buy farm land in Saskatchewan whether it's marginal land or for game farming or any other purpose?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you. I think again I'll make note that the Farm Land Security Board and its work is under the Department of Justice. But what I can tell the member is that it is clearly understood that the Farm Land Security Board would receive applications for exemptions and they deal with them on a case-by-case basis. There are guidelines by which they make their decisions, and those really are the processes by which anyone wanting an exemption would have to face.

Clearly I would say that it is not, in any way that I have heard, seen any evidence, that it would be based on a who knows who. It is a quasi-judicial board that really does take a look at the facts and makes its decision based on those.

The Chair: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Chair. To the minister and to his officials, with the BSE program the province came out with a ruminant program. And a question was raised from a couple who happened to have a flock of sheep and they were concerned with the way the count was taken in their case. And I'm wondering. A number of issues arose. They felt that the count hadn't been adequately counted, and as a result they were short some of the funds they felt were rightfully theirs.

Mr. Minister, what would be the proper procedure to make application to address this issue and who would be the best person to contact in regards to the program?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — If there is an ongoing issue . . . Just to note that during the active period there was a producer panel that looked at appeals that were brought forward. Anybody could bring forward an appeal on the process, if they had administrative concerns, and it would be decided by a producer panel.

Because basically the program is finished, the panel is not today constituted. But if you have a constituent who still has a concern, if they want to appeal, if they would bring that, send it to the department, we can reconstitute the appeal board to look at the situation. Thank you.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I'll follow up with that and get that information to your office and through you to the department.

Mr. Minister, with the ongoing issues surrounding agriculture and the costs that are incurred and the low commodity prices, there have been a number of questions, and of course we know of the problems that CAIS has. And I understand that the federal government has certainly been looking at some changes and some changes that they feel that would at least address some of the concerns.

And, Mr. Minister, I'm not sure if you were in Yorkton when Blair Harris made his presentation but he talked about the agricultural stabilization program and inventories. And I've heard that the federal government is certainly looking at this and looking at correcting the problems around the inventory program.

However, Madam Chairman, to the minister, I want to go a little bit beyond that as well. Recently I believe, Mr. Minister, you received a email from a gentlemen, Scott Norton, who sat down with some producers and put forward a number of ideas in regards to agriculture and how we address the long-term issue regarding overproduction and the costs that are incurred as a result of the overproduction, the low commodity prices. And Mr. Norton came up with some suggestions. One was taking land out of production.

I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, has your department looked at these suggestions and whether or not your department has some suggestions and comments to Mr. Norton and agriculture producers who have been trying to get their heads around how we address low commodity prices.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — I just say to the member that there have been over the years many attempts at trying to push the market and try to get some correction in prices by doing set-asides. One of the challenges where we're dealing with such a vast world market is that Canada could probably today withdraw much of our production and it would not have a significant world impact in terms of price. Now we've had some breakdown on numbers. It would have minimal impact for a short period but when land is brought into production, it would not hold.

Secondly, the bigger problem is that by taking our land out of production and not putting the goods on the market, is we basically lose market share. And there are certainly competitors out there who are looking to take over some of the traditional markets that Canada has held. And we have seen in some of the bilateral agreements that have been made already that there has been some of what has been traditionally seen as our market, for example Moroccan durum that the United States, through bilateral agreement, has basically scooped that market.

So we don't, in our analysis to date, we don't see any productive results of taking land out of production on a temporary base to try and manipulate market price. It looks like it would be more costly overall to producers and to Canada's place in the world market.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, of the Canadian production, what amount of our production would we actually consume domestically?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — On a provincial base we export about 75 per cent of what we produce. We produce annually somewhere in the neighbourhood of 26 to 27 million metric tons of grains and oilseeds. We export out of Saskatchewan about 75 per cent of that. On a national base about 45 per cent would be consumed in Canada and the bulk then would be exported beyond our national borders. And that's of the total Canadian production.

Mr. Toth: — Madam Chair, thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I appreciate that because I kind of sense that's where we might be. And I guess the question has been raised, is there a potential at least at the domestic level to . . . and I'm not sure if it's the wheat growers or APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan] had — when they were selling the bread — I think they talked about adding 5 cents a loaf and putting that into a fund that would go directly to producers.

And I guess the question arises many times, if we were to have an additional cost on food commodities that would go directly into a pot that would be distributed to producers, whether or not that might be an option of addressing this issue rather than always going to government and coming out with interim crisis payments to address producer needs.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Such a program would have to be done nationally, and we've seen no . . . any indication at all from the federal government that there is an interest in engaging in that type of program, where you'd have a dedicated tax on food that would be returned to producers.

Provincially I think it's important to note that our focus has been on value-added, and over the last 10 years we've seen a doubling of the amount of primary product that is processed in Saskatchewan. And certainly the work that has been going on over this last year in particular, we're seeing some greater significant potential for even more rapid growth in processing of primary product here in the province. And probably over the next few months we'll be hearing a number of announcements about new developments in that area which are going to be helpful in terms of where our product is going, how it's being used. And eventually those announcements and those changes, in terms of more processing here in the province, will have an impact on the price of the product.

We've seen significant changes. Today I think we're at in the US about probably 15 per cent — a little above 15 per cent — of the corn is now going into ethanol production. Within a very short order that's going to be at about 25 per cent of the corn crop. And 60 per cent of rapeseed oil — high-quality rapeseed food oil — in Europe is going into biodiesel production there.

And so as some of these very high-quality goods are taken out of the food market for energy production, looking at basic economic laws that seem to have some validity over the decades, with the increase in demand we should see a corresponding increase in price for the product.

But our major focus today, rather than trying to create another way of taxing and then applying that funding back, our major focus is trying to increase the value-add and we are working with the federal government on that front as well. And we're looking forward to, with mandates being established for biofuels federally, we're looking forward to working with them, taking what we have already done here on the ethanol side, and expanding operations so that we will see more domestic processing of our goods here. I think that will only be good news for producers in the province.

[12:00]

Mr. Toth: — Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr.

Minister, I note the time but one final comment. I think just this past, in fact, just a couple days ago the inventories of crops still on the farm came out. And those inventories certainly don't speak well or don't bode well for producers when we see some of the commodities already in the bin are more than what we would naturally produce a year or actually market. So it's certainly going to create a problem.

And I don't disagree with you in the fact that down the road as we move further into ethanol and biodiesel, we'll remove some of those commodities out of the food chain which may impact . . . Especially if the Americans get into more ethanol. And I'm told when they get into full-scale production that maybe most of their corn may actually move into ethanol production because it's a commodity that really works well in ethanol.

So I guess the question, Mr. Minister, in your discussions with the federal minister, and the debate that's certainly ongoing as producers get into the field and try to anticipate where they might be this fall, is what may be in the pipe or coming down the pipe to address some of the financial problems that are facing producers today.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Well with reports on world conditions, recognizing that always the markets shift depending on if there are problems in a particular area — and we are hearing of some areas where there are problems — it is our estimation that if those things prove out, that there will be more demand and that that demand should help clear some of the inventory, hopefully a significant portion of the inventory that is held right now.

On top of that we are still of course waiting to know what's going to happen in terms of market development which the federal government has said they are going to be putting extra emphasis on. We want to see those markets open up to help with our development. Thank you.

The Chair: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you. Madam Chair, with leave to introduce guests.

The Chair: — The member has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. The member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Borgerson: — Madam Chair, I'd like to introduce two guests who've just arrived in the Speaker's gallery, two friends from Saskatchewan Rivers. I'd like to introduce Donna Kingfisher, who I first met when I was working at the SUNTEP [Saskatchewan urban native teacher education program] program and Donna was working for the Prince Albert Grand Council as the post-secondary education coordinator. She is now a councillor for Sturgeon Lake First Nation and very actively involved in doing good work for her community there.

And with Donna is her daughter Rane. Rane is now just on the

verge of graduating from Wild Rose School, which is a rural school in Sask Rivers constituency. She's getting ready for her graduation and will be moving on to Carlton Comprehensive High School in Prince Albert. And this is Rane's first visit to the legislature and I think and hope that she might be interested enough to some day take a seat in this place. So I ask members to welcome them here to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Agriculture and Food Vote 1

Subvote (AG01)

The Chair: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Madam Chair. I would move that the committee report progress on the estimates for the Department of Agriculture and Food and then proceed to Health estimates.

The Chair: — The House Leader has asked to report progress on Ag and Food and move to Department of Health. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

General Revenue Fund Health Vote 32

Subvote (HE01)

The Chair: — The next item before the committee would be the Department of Health, vote 32, found on page 81 in your Estimates book. And I would ask the minister now to introduce his officials. We welcome you to committee.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I have with me today as we are doing Committee of Finance, Health estimates, I have with me today Max Hendricks, assistant deputy minister; Lauren Donnelly, assistant deputy minister; Roger Carriere, executive director, community care branch; Ron Knaus, director, workforce planning branch; and Ted Warawa, executive director, finance and administration branch.

I also have sitting behind us, George Peters, the executive director, population Health branch; Kevin Wilson, executive director, drug plan and extended benefits branch; Bert Linklater, executive director, regional accountability branch; Carol Chernick-Smith, director, regional policy branch; June Schultz, director, medical services branch; and Leslie Grob, assistant to the deputy minister.

I am prepared for questions now, Madam Chair.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Madam Chair and thank you to the minister and all of the officials for being here on this Friday afternoon. We don't a lot of time left; we only have, I guess, 55 minutes or 50 minutes, so I'm not going to spend probably a lot of time in any one area. I'll probably be bouncing around quite a bit, and I have other colleagues that want to ask some questions — so quick to the questions.

I was talking to a physician graduate from Saskatoon the last couple of days; his name is Mike Chater. He's from Nova Scotia originally. He's taken his last four years of medical training here in Saskatchewan. He's talked to the department, I believe. He's talked to the deputy minister. He sent a letter to the minister on May 4, so a couple of weeks ago, regarding the fact that he wants to do some residency here in the province, and that is not working out.

He's looking to get into the specialty that he is . . . And he's not set on one specific specialty. I think he has some options. But he's looking at going out of the province because of not being able to find a spot here in Saskatchewan. I think it's a shame that we've spent four years, you know, with education on this person and then that he travels out of the province. He's not interested in family medicine but other specialties.

And so I just ask if the minister could comment on this. I know he's talked to the Dean of Medicine in Saskatoon. And there just seems to be a bit of an issue there that he's kind of falling through the cracks. And it would be a shame to lose someone like this.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much for the question. In the preamble the member opposite talked about the short period of time we have and the, you know, quick get to the questions. And some questions don't have a quick answer to them. I will not purposely delay in the answer, but I do want to ensure that we put on the record that which needs to be on the record.

In this case indeed, we have an individual that's participated in a process for matching for residency positions in the province. The CARMS [Canadian resident matching service] program is a program that was designed to provide fair and equitable access to individuals taking up specialties. This process has been in place for some time. The process works by choosing a specialty and finding a match, and like so many of our other labour-force development programs and education programs, they're tied to the, for lack of a better word, labour-force development needs as we go out.

This individual chose in the first round of CARMS, specialties that, for lack of a better word, one would say are oversubscribed or there were no matches found. As a result he has suggested that we change the CARMS process to assist him to go into a residency position that meets some of his needs. This is something that complicates the fair and equitable access to residency positions for all of those others in the province who might find themselves in a similar situation.

There are other alternatives, and he has chosen to discuss with the College of Medicine. He's discussed issues with the deputy

minister of Health. We are all working with him to try and find the best circumstances that would allow him to remain in the province.

Individuals at the end of the day still make their own decisions as to where they will end up in the system and in their careers. There's individual choice obviously that we support, but we'd like him to consider remaining in the province just as much as the member opposite would.

There are choices. CARMS has second rounds. He can apply under the second round for a match, or indeed he can be choosing something else. The member opposite said he's interested in not any one specific specialty. There are other options available to him. We will continue to talk to him. We'll continue to work with him, but I do not believe that changing the CARMS program to assist him personally is the only answer in this case.

Mr. McMorris: — Just one supplement question on this issue. Just after talking to him he seemed to . . . He gave me the impression or he was saying that graduates, or as you're going through graduate studies, they need to start streaming quite early — two to three years before they get to graduation. And I know he was in one, in neurosurgery I believe it was, and then after a couple of years realized that probably isn't the area that he should be in and decided to pursue another specialty. And the problem is, is that you kind of fall behind everybody else that just continues on one stream. Would that be fair? Is that maybe an issue, or a problem with the CARM's process, that if you don't follow along with your initial stream, that you tend to get left behind?

[12:15]

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I think I can be fairly brief with this answer. For all intents and purposes, there's a mixed bag here. I can say that no, the process that the member opposite outlined should not necessarily affect the outcome. All people in this position have a core program, and out of that core program they then go into a rotation in which they will indeed look at different specialties, get exposed to different specialties. And it's out of that that they then make their choices going forward.

He may have been exposed to and have an interest in neurosurgery to begin with through the rotation, but his ultimate choice as I understand it was first plastic surgery and secondly general surgery, both very competitive — a large number of individuals seeking matches. As a result if we were to change the program to allow him to have a position in plastic surgery or general surgery, then of course we are providing an unfair access to people who otherwise knew that in the competitive circumstances, they chose not to go there but chose a different specialty. This would be unfair to others to do that. So we just have to go through the normal processes, keep talking to them, keep working through the circumstances without changes to the core program. And hopefully he will be in a position to make a decision to work within the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I would just . . . I guess I'm going to move on to another subject. But before I do I would just recommend to the department to do as much as you can to keep our physicians, trained physicians, in the province

because, I mean, we've certainly invested.

And he's willing, more than willing to sign a contract and stay in this province. He loves the province. He doesn't want to have to leave the province. But I guess if the suitable matches aren't available, he's left with no other option. So I'd call on the department to keep in touch with him and do what you can to . . . And I realize, you know, sometimes it's hard to make exceptions. But we certainly would like to keep our physicians, trained physicians, in our province.

I wanted to talk a little bit about the SAIL [Saskatchewan Aids to Independent Living] program, Aids to Independent Living. I know whenever we have Health estimates and I have all the officials here with all their binders, I want to make sure I can try and at least ask a couple questions in each area because it can be a long day just sitting back there I'm sure. But regarding the Aids to Independent Living, and I had a chance to talk with the voices for people living with disabilities. And they had a few concerns regarding that.

Now my first question will be on the individualized funding program that was put in place a couple years ago. The fact that there's only 50 people, I believe, on individualized funding right now, that's about the same as when the program, you know, shortly after it was implemented. And the question is, why is that not growing? Why are we not expanding that program? Because it seems like, you know, as it was explained to me, a very worthwhile program.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much for that question. There may be some confusion amongst some of the people that the member opposite is talking about, has been talking to. Actually there's 64 individuals currently on that program. That's a 28 per cent increase over last year, so the program is growing.

It's a program that essentially is personal choice. People can be on it or they receive their care stuff through the regional health authorities. Some people find it more convenient or acceptable under the RHAs [regional health authority] and other people under this program for greater independence. We originally anticipated this program may be subscribed to 100 people. So there is room for growth should the personal choice option be exercised by individuals.

Mr. McMorris: — Just a follow-up then. How are people informed that they have that option available to them? Is there some sort of a process that people that are needing assistance are informed to know whether that's available?

And my second question — and I just have to step out for a second — but my second question is regarding SAIL and the issuing of living assistance aids, be it wheelchairs or bars in bathrooms or whatever that is. When that material is given out, is it tracked, and how much comes back when they're done using it or whatever the situation might happen? Because it seems like, I mean this material is not . . . these living assistance aids are maybe not inexpensive. There's a lot going out. How much is coming back so that they can be reused, i.e., a wheelchair? You know a person is in a wheelchair for a couple of years and then for whatever reason may not need it. Does that wheelchair come back to SAIL? So those are my two

questions.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I assume I have to speak loudly so the member can hear the answer to this question having, as he said, stepped out. For the record, the member's first question had to do with awareness. How do people know about the program? And essentially the program that the member opposite is referring to is a part of the home care assessment process. And when people come in for their assessment interview, it's a relatively straightforward matter of information being provided, discussions taking place, assessments being made, discussed, and moved along. So really it's a straightforward process. It involves people who really are in a position to take advantage of the program.

Secondly, under the individual aids provided for independent living, under the program, the question was, how much of the equipment comes back? And he suggested wheelchairs for example. Most of the equipment under the program is provided through the Abilities Council. The Abilities Council maintains an inventory system. Certainly they track the equipment that is provided. A lot of the, for lack of a better word, equipment that's provided under the program are actually disposables, and there's no expectation that they come back. But in terms of things like crutches and wheelchairs — specific to the member's question — indeed there's an inventory kept. The Abilities Council knows where the equipment is and what the expected return is.

Certainly — and I don't have any numbers on this — certainly there is equipment that does not find its way back. The Abilities Council has made provisions for some equipment that doesn't come back. And in some cases I believe there are even some deposits required — for crutches, for example — to provide some incentive to return the equipment. I can't say how much does not come back, which was the specific question, but the Abilities Council is managing this program, I would argue, extremely well.

The Chair: — The member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Minister, I've got a number of areas as well I want to delve into a bit, first of all, a question regarding positions in the province and those who have come from out of province, out of country. And the question has come, regards to bringing family members into the country. And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, whether there's a policy within the department to assist these doctors in understanding the process and helping them through the process, and indeed moving the process forward in regards to bringing family members to the country.

[12:30]

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — In answering the member's question, I have a bit of a question which he may respond to in any case. Defining family, I've got . . . I can provide some answer in general. Are we talking family outside of spouses and children? Are we just talking spouses and children? Because I'm not aware of significant challenges regarding spouses and children. Visas being granted by the federal government for example, in most cases, include families and children.

That having been said, there are a number of things that are occurring within the province. Number one, the province has invested recently in our expansion of our immigrant nominee program. Our immigrant nominee program is something that assists in a speedy . . . working more quickly through the federal process of immigration. Obviously anyone coming into Canada is subject to federal rules and regulations on immigration. And Saskatchewan's nominee program assists in expediting that process. But more importantly, at the end of last year the province of Saskatchewan and the federal government entered into an agreement to assist internationally educated health professionals to transition into the province once we knew that they were coming.

So what's involved in that transition? There is a program, jointly funded by the federal and provincial government to assist in that transition. Maybe if the member has some specific questions, we might be able to address this more specifically.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Minister. The two cases that actually were brought to my attention was one of a situation where the doctor was trying to get a spouse and children in. I believe they are currently here, but they ran into a number of snags. The second one is in regards to parents and bringing parents in to be close to families. So you can get back to me if you have further comments in that regard.

I'd like to move on to another area. I received a letter recently from a gentleman who has been dealing with the issue of cancer and underwent the stem cell transplant program, and comments very highly and indicates that his doctor told him that this was the only reasonable avenue to continue life and an acceptable lifestyle. In other words, "the transplant saved and extended my life."

So he has written in support of a recent article that was printed in the *Leader-Post* on March 10 regarding an external review funded by the province that recommended that we need to upgrade our stem cell research program in the province of Saskatchewan. And I understand from the article that last year 18 patients were referred out of province. To date we've already spent \$2.8 million sending patients out of province because of the fact that it appears we have more need than we have the ability. And I wonder, Mr. Minister, what the department is doing to address this issue as presented by the review panel.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much for the question. The member does cite a review that's been done and some of the resources that have been assigned to the stem cell program. The province has been committed to and continues to be committed to the stem cell program and welcomes the results of the review.

The review indicated a preference for doing more of the work in province as opposed to out of the province. As a result of the review, the cancer agency and the people in Saskatoon and Regina have been asked to pull together a work plan so that we can determine how best to do that. The department is supportive of their efforts in doing so. We are currently, as the member pointed out, doing out-of-province referrals. There are dollars available in that out-of-province referral program.

When the work plans from the agency have been prepared,

evaluated, and recommendations made for moving forward, the department would see no difficulty whatsoever utilizing dollars that are available in our out-of-province expenditures, move them in the province and do more of that work internally. So we're very supportive of the recommendation out of the review. We're currently working on ways to be successful in more work being done inside the province.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, the other question that arises from this is not just what is the department doing in responding . . . And part of the response, I guess, would be the recruitment and retention of physicians within the program. And I think we're aware in this Assembly that we currently have a member of the Assembly who is actually in need of the transplant program and maybe possibly currently going through it. So it's not just whether it's members of the Assembly. It's members of the general public. It's certainly an issue that we need to look at very carefully.

And so I guess, Mr. Minister, you indicated that you've asked for a plan of action. And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if you can indicate when you expect that plan of action to be brought forward and how the department will respond and how quickly can we be assured that this program will continue to function and in fact be improved upon?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — A couple of things that I can say in response to the member's question in this regard. The first one I think is the most important, and that is we don't need to complete the work plan to begin work on the recruitment and retention efforts and in preparing for the results of the work plan to be in place. The second thing is the work plan is primarily interested in the ability to finance the activity that will take place. And we're quite prepared to act on that very quickly once the work plan is developed.

There currently are two stem cell hematologists in place in Saskatoon. The region is currently recruiting to add to that number. We would anticipate one position in the fairly near future. The second one, more a secondary position, may take a little longer to put in place. But that having been said, the recruitment efforts are currently under way to speed up the process. Secondly, the work plan development, we will be able to respond to it quite quickly once the work being done there is completed.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, I'd like to move on to another area. What is the criteria in the province to set up a renal dialysis unit in a community?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — I don't have the exact criteria handy. And perhaps if someone finds it for me while I'm sort of developing the answer to your question, they can hand me the specific criteria because it is fairly specific.

I am very excited about the expansion of the renal dialysis program in the province. A few years ago the renal dialysis was delivered only in Saskatoon and Regina. We created a integrated renal program steering committee that was put together to assist with the expansion of the program to satellite locations.

[12:45]

And in a very short period of time the program has expanded to include all regional hospitals in the province — the six regional hospitals that exist — and includes expansion to one district hospital which is in Tisdale. Most recently, we've expanded the delivery of service in Tisdale and we've expanded the overall program to be delivered in Estevan. So the current dollars for expansion in this year allow us to go to Estevan and to provide some additional service in Tisdale.

So now we've got the provincial hospitals in Saskatoon and Regina, the regional hospitals across the province, and one district hospital currently in place. The advice that we get for the expansion of the program —and of course the expansion will continue . . .

The steering committee evaluates the needs for this expansion based on a number of things — the criteria that the member opposite is asking — and it would include a number of things. Off the top of my head: the number of people in an area, the distance from which they are from their current renal dialysis site, the ability of an area to support or develop the support mechanisms for that site.

We are currently challenged because of the shortage that we've talked about in this Chamber about nurses. We are currently challenged to be able to staff sites. We do know that for example the development of the program in Estevan has been delayed by a couple of months as a result of staffing requirements. We know that an expansion that is necessary, that could occur in North Battleford is also subject to staffing circumstances in that area.

So the criteria for expansion, continued expansion of the program, involves a number of things, not the least of which is the ability of the system to be able to ensure that it operates sustainably for many years into the future.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister, as you're no doubt aware by now, a group of individuals, First Nations leaders, community leaders, health leaders in the Broadview area have been doing a significant amount of work.

Currently there are 22 people in that area that are travelling to other centres for their dialysis needs. And it just so happens if you look at the geography, Broadview happens to be right on the outside edge. It's almost equal distance to Yorkton, Estevan, even to Regina for a lot of these patients which becomes a costly factor to them.

And, Mr. Minister, as of today my understanding is they haven't really been given a lot of support in the work and efforts they've been doing. Mr. Minister, can you indicate whether or not this is an area that would be looked at very seriously in view of the ongoing issues around dialysis, a need for dialysis, and especially in regards to the First Nations support in that area and the need they have in their community?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Again I appreciate the member's question in this regard. And as I indicated earlier, the province is very excited about and committed to an expansion of the renal dialysis program. There is no doubt that people are better served being able to do that dialysis closer to home than they have been just with service in Saskatoon and Regina.

The steering committee has had representation from the Broadview area, and actually the Broadview area people have expanded their sort of circle of influence considerably beyond the approach to the steering committee. The Broadview people have approached other communities for support. They've approached the regional health authority for support, and of course they've even approached my office.

The last meeting I had with regards to the Broadview site, specific to First Nations issues, was yesterday as a matter of fact. I had a meeting with the Chief of Sakimay and Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and others on this issue.

The steering committee has recommended, based on the criteria, that the next sites for expansion in the province, based on similar concerns raised by the people in Broadview, would include Meadow Lake and La Ronge, the people who have significant number of individuals requiring dialysis and who have considerable distances to travel for that dialysis service. And indeed we do have other areas of the province that are expressing some similar concerns.

The people of Broadview are very vocal. They are also doing some very good work in bringing the issues to the attention of the committee. But we have the committee to assess the needs across the province and to make recommendations based on the ability of the system to respond and on a prioritization of requirements based on the criteria that's in place.

So at this point in time the dialysis program is continuing to expand. The steering committee is in place to review the recommendations coming forward. The expansion this year includes a site in Estevan — a complete site from the ground up. And at this point in time the next priority is the community of Meadow Lake.

I simply say to the people in Broadview, continue to do the work that you're doing. And continue to work within the health region and the steering committee to fit this into the priority process.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you. We'll try and squeeze a couple more questions in here. I see the keeper of time has just moved to his chair which is always kind of scary.

I do have one question on what is the average for a return for pathology reports being sent to a lab and back. What is the department's kind of targeted time for reports to get back to the physician and then to the patient?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — The member asked a simple question that requires a little bit of thought and maybe a little longer answer. And I apologize for this.

The issue is primarily one dealt with by the regions. That having been said, there is a laboratory quality assurance program operated by the College of Physicians and Surgeons with a grant from Saskatchewan Health. The purpose of the quality assurance program, the mandate essentially is to ensure that the laboratory work meets quality standards, and of course

that includes that the results are provided in a timely manner.

Now inside the health regions of course the turnaround time on lab tests would depend on what type of test is being asked. In the operating room for example, cancer, you might be able to turn around in a couple of hours. For other tests it might be a couple of days or a couple of weeks depending on what the physician is looking for and what would be considered a timely manner.

The health regions would monitor this, and if they found that there was something that was out of order they would act on it. But we're very pleased about the quality assurance program that's currently in place.

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

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

The Deputy Chair: — The Government House Leader has moved that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt that motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair: — That is carried.

[The Deputy Speaker resumed the Chair.]

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

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm instructed by the committee to report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has asked to report progress, and asked for leave to sit again. When shall the committee sit again? I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — Next sitting of the House. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Madam Deputy Speaker, with a wish for everybody who is or attached to a mother that it'll be a wonderful Mother's Day weekend, I move this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — I thank all members for their wonderful co-operation this week, and wish for Mr. Speaker a healthy next week. This House does now stand adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:58.]

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