



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

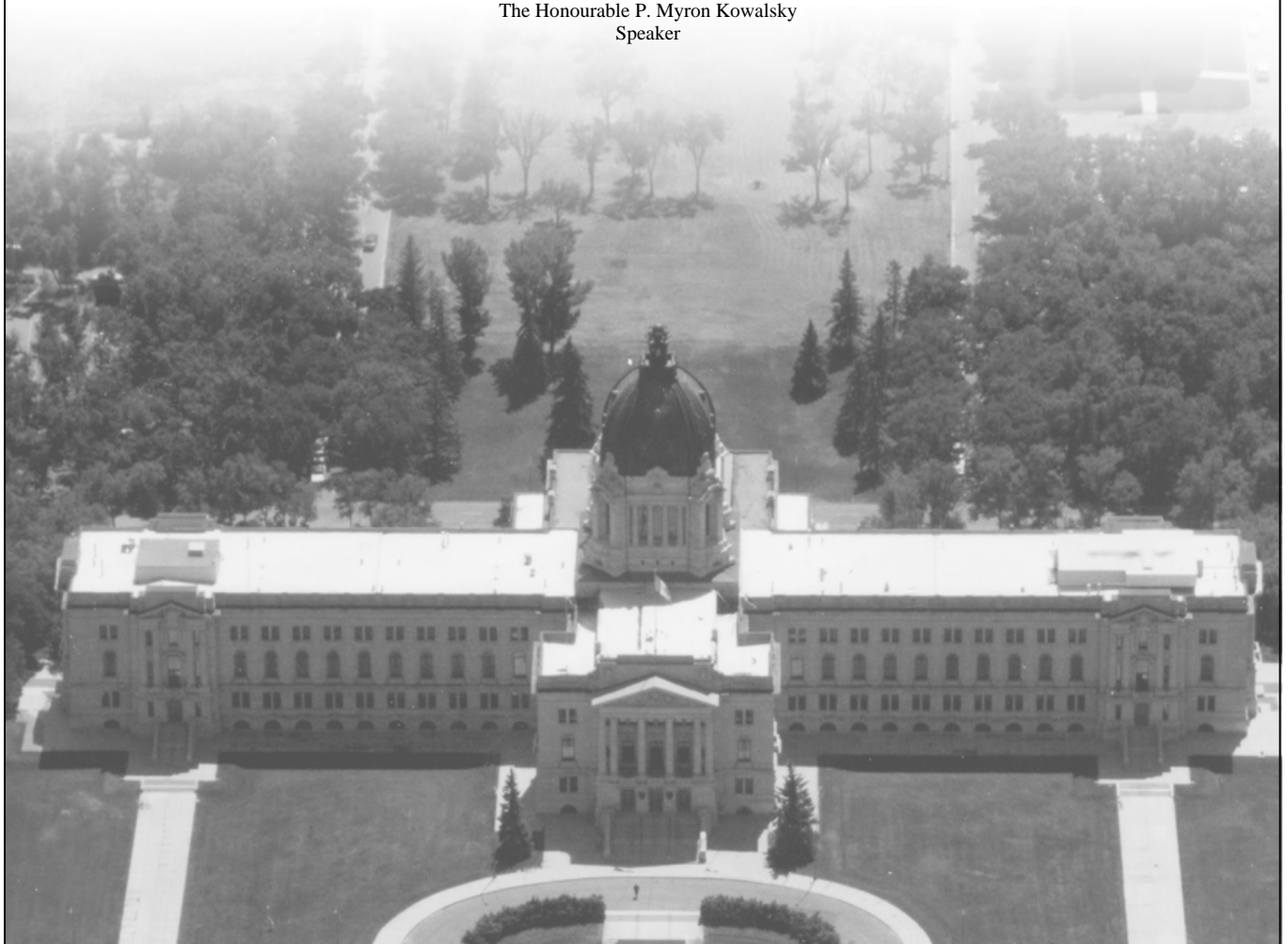
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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
Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Gantfoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, Hon. Glenn	NDP	Moose Jaw North
Hamilton, Doreen	NDP	Regina Wascana Plains
Harpauer, Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
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, Hon. 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, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney
Vacant		Martensville

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to present another petition to the Assembly today. And I will read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good folks from Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition regarding reimbursement of necessary costs related to the Bonderud trip to the Mayo Clinic. 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 reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and to improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this page of petitions is also signed by citizens from the community of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present on behalf of Doug Bonderud and the issue around medical costs. The prayer reads as follows without any other preamble. 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 reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from Martensville and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present on behalf of residents of Saskatoon. 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 actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and to improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

I present on their behalf, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of citizens also concerned with the need for out-of-country treatment cost coverage for the Bonderud family. 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 actions to reimburse the Bonderud family of out-of-country treatment costs and to improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to reimburse the out-of-country medical costs of Doug Bonderud. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Bonderud's surgery at the Mayo Clinic was deemed emergent and therefore should be covered under the Saskatchewan Health policies. The prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from the communities of Saskatoon, Warman, and Beechy. And I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to reimburse the Bonderud family of out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

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

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the onerous and punitive health care cost borne by the Bonderud family. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the cities of Saskatoon and Regina. I so present.

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

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to present a petition to reimburse the out-of-country medical costs of Doug Bonderud. 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 reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signators are all from the city of Regina.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join with my colleagues in reading a petition with citizens that are concerned when the Saskatchewan Health officials do not give all the information to critical patients. 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 actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Saskatoon and Humboldt. I so present.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition on behalf of people concerned about the emergency medical costs of Doug Bonderud. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens of Saskatoon. I so present. Thank you

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I again rise today to present a petition from citizens of Biggar who are concerned about possible loss of health care services. 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 Landis and district. I so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today on behalf of Crystal Bonderud, the Bonderud family, and residents across Saskatchewan. Doug and Crystal Bonderud were residents of the Saskatoon Silver Springs constituency. The prayer of the petition reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

The signatures today, Mr. Speaker, are from the constituencies

of Saskatoon Silver Springs, Saskatoon Eastview, and Saskatoon Centre. I so present.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition from people who are very upset with the NDP's [New Democratic Party] two tiered health system. 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 actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the good citizens of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the government's two-tier health system. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

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

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to rise in the Assembly today to present a petition to reimburse the out-of-country medical costs of Doug Bonderud. Mr. Speaker, 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 reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, amongst other communities, this one is signed by the good citizens of Kindersley. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for

Saskatoon Northwest.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to offer a petition on the premature death of Doug Bonderud who died of a treatable form of cancer. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatments costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all patients.

Signed by the good citizens of Saskatoon. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to rise in the House today to present yet another petition to cause the government the reimburse the out-of-country medical costs incurred by the family of Doug Bonderud. I'll read the prayer for relief, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Saskatoon. I so present on their behalf.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise with my colleagues today to present a petition to reimburse the out-of-country medical costs of Doug Bonderud:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to reimburse the Bonderud family for out-of-country treatment costs and improve the future communication and coordination of cancer services for all cancer patients.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people of Saskatoon and Regina. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order petitions tabled at the last sitting have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 15(7) are hereby read and received.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 20 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Community Resources: does the government have any plans to close the Valley View Centre in Moose Jaw?

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 20 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: does the Government of Saskatchewan have a formal investment strategy for the Fiscal Stabilization Fund? If so, what are the terms under which the fund will be invested? And what instruments will the fund invest in?

[13:45]

A further question, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 20 ask the government the following question:

Will the Fiscal Stabilization Fund be managed through in-house or external managers?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 20 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: will the Government of Saskatchewan place any restrictions on investments made by or on behalf of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 20 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: will the Government of Saskatchewan restrict investments made by, on, or on behalf of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund to Canadian investment interests, assets, investments, and equities?

And finally, Mr. Speaker.

To the Minister of Finance: what is the Government of Saskatchewan's expected annual rate of return on the Fiscal Stabilization Fund?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Government Insurance.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the Red Ribbon campaign, and today's the launch of that campaign. And in order to facilitate doing that, we are joined, Mr. Speaker, by a large number of guests who are seated in your gallery. I'd like to introduce them to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly.

The guests in your gallery are all involved with one of two organizations, the large bulk of them with the Students Against Drinking and Driving and then also by the SaskTel Pioneers who are a large and important support group for the Students Against Drinking and Driving.

I'd like to introduce the Students Against Drinking and Driving who are with us here. And I would ask that they would just simply give a wave so that they can be recognized. And we'll acknowledge them all when they've been introduced.

We have students here today from Luther College. And joining us are Meaghan Kimmie, Nikki Powers, Katelyn Perry, Courtney Gluck, Roxanne Lenton-Young, Kaleah Baker, Madison Dufault, Lindsay Harpauer, Haley Cattell, Jules Herney, Shelby Becker, Taryn Larson, Tasha Nidzielski.

And also they are joined with students from Sheldon-Williams who are here as well: Eve Reed, Katherine McCudden, and Sam Shannon.

Also we have two officials: the president of SADD [Students Against Drinking and Driving] Saskatchewan, Brooke Gloeckler — thanks, Brooke — and also the provincial director of SADD, Tim Spelliscy.

Joining them today, and having presented a cheque just a few moments ago to SADD on behalf of the SaskTel Pioneers, is Wayne Rutten.

Mr. Speaker, I know all hon. members recognize the great value to safety on the roads that Saskatchewan Students Against Drinking and Driving have played for the past 25 years now. They've made a difference. And these are young people who are committed to continuing to make a difference in their province, and I ask all hon. members to join in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister opposite in welcoming all the students from the Students Against Drinking and Driving program in Luther and Sheldon. We know there are many more students around the province that do great work in the SADD program.

I can tell you that in my previous life, when I used to work for the Saskatchewan Safety Council, I really got to understand and follow SADD quite closely as it worked out of our office under the direction of the first executive director for SADD, Mike Fedyk, who did just amazing work for that program to get it launched and have it really spread to become a provincial

organization which we know SADD is.

I also would like to, on behalf of the official opposition, compliment them on the work that they do because, when you're preventing collisions — and especially when you're preventing drinking and driving collisions — you don't really know how many you have prevented. It's a number that we just . . . We assume we've prevented however many, hundreds of collisions, but we don't know for sure. So even though you can't see the numbers tangibly, we know the work that you're doing is extremely valuable for our province. And we thank not only the group here in this gallery but members of SADD throughout the province.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce to you and through you in the Assembly the recipients of Foster Family Long Service Awards in fostering.

Mr. Speaker, in your gallery joining the Assembly today are a great, fantastic bunch of Saskatchewan people. I'd like to introduce them and give us a quick wave as I introduce them: Olaf and Hope Pedersen and two of their fine sons; Vera and Raymond Boisson; Rose Polsom; Anita and Richard Klochko; Gladys and Oliver Engel.

And with them, with the Saskatchewan Foster Family Association is Larry Evans and Shirley Laroque. As well from DCR [Department of Community Resources], our department, is Eva Carpenter and Dianne Shannon. And I'm sure I've got everybody on the list.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that both Larry and Shirley are from the Saskatchewan Foster Family Association and these are some of their members. And the SFFA [Saskatchewan Foster Family Association] are important members and partners who provide support services to foster families across the province. And I want to welcome all the recipients today and apologize to those . . . I may have missed a few.

Mr. Speaker, Deb Davies, who is the executive director of the SFFA, called my office on Friday to convey her apologies at not being able to join us today. She asked that I extend her personal appreciation to the foster families for their endless commitment to the children, to the youth in need of their care.

Mr. Speaker, I had the extreme pleasure of being part of the Foster Families Week kickoff event in Moose Jaw last month where I met some of the foster parents who are here today. I am very pleased and very humbled to have this opportunity to congratulate them again and those who are unable to join us today for their dedicated service to Saskatchewan. Thank you all for being here on National Child Day so that we can acknowledge your dedication, your love and compassion for Saskatchewan children and their families. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to welcome you to your Legislative Assembly. I had the opportunity to speak at your convention just held a little while ago. I enjoyed the day. I've met with many of you in your homes, heard your concerns and listened to you.

I just want to say that for people who are so unique to open their homes to children, children who need special care, not only do you open your homes. You open your families. You show these young children what a family environment can truly be like. But most importantly you open your hearts. You show them love, caring, and nurturing, and through that we know the benefits are done.

And when I was in school, they taught us three R's. And I want to tell you from this side of the House, we know the three R's — recognition for the work you've done, respect for the work you've done, and remuneration for the work you've done — are part of our hallmark and our care to you. On behalf of all people on this side of the House, bless you for what you do.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to have all members of the Assembly welcome some of my family and a few friends to the Assembly. Seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, on the right-hand side — and I'll ask them to give a little wave — first of all is my brother, Patrick Sonntag, and his wife, Rita, and their children Heather, Tamara, Peter, and Maria. And I'll just say a bit about the other two in a minute. They, along with their friends, were down taking part in the 2A provincial senior girls' volleyball in Quill Lake this past weekend. We've not got the final results, so they didn't quite finish in first place, but they do know they finished in the top six in the province, from the community of Goodsoil. So congratulations to them for that.

With them as well, Mr. Speaker, as part of the global partners exchange program is Kurumi Momotsu from Tanba, Japan. She'll be with my brother's family until the end of June of this year. She had time this morning or all of them had time this morning to visit a fair bit of the building, had a picture with the Premier, and got to see a number of the interesting sights in the building. And I know they enjoyed that.

Also along with them is Andrea Rogers who is down here as part of the volleyball as well but took a tour of the University of Regina this morning. She's very interested in attending university here in Regina next year and tells me that she enjoyed that very much as well. So please all members join me in welcoming my family and some of their friends to the Assembly here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the hon. members of this Assembly, it's my pleasure to introduce two guests from Weyburn. We have today Debra Button and accompanying her is her father Roy. Debra lives in Weyburn with her husband, Greg, and their son, Ryley. She's very active in the community of Weyburn. Her and Greg are foster parents.

And, Mr. Speaker, not only is Debra a constituent of mine, but I am now a constituent of hers as she was recently elected mayor of Weyburn. So I'd ask all members to welcome Debra and Roy to their Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a gentleman that's seated in your gallery. His name is Gerald Aalbers, and the Highways' minister may have seen his story on CTV's [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] national news program, W-FIVE, this past weekend because of the Highways minister's lack of due diligence cost Mr. Aalbers \$50,000 which the NDP government refused to reimburse him for.

Please join me in welcoming Mr. Aalbers to his Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to introduce someone special with the Luther College group in case every one didn't catch the name, I'm sure. And I know this is going to cost me supper when I say that my baby is in the gallery. So I know that's going to cost me supper, but my daughter Lindsay is with the group with SADD.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Huskies Capture the Mitchell Bowl

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They say that defence wins championships, and that was pretty evident this weekend for all of us who got to tune in and watch the Huskies play in Ottawa against the Ottawa U Gee-Gees and win the Mitchell Bowl.

Mr. Speaker, the Huskies' defence came up very, very big, time and time again. And we would be remiss if we didn't recognize people like Brian Guebert who is a defensive end not much taller than me — obviously stronger and more talented — but he played an excellent game. Gabe Mackesey, number 20; the safety, Dylan Barker, played an excellent game as well.

This is the third straight time that Brian Towriss and his

coaching staff have led the Huskies to the Vanier Cup. However there is a difference this time, Mr. Speaker. This time they're going to be playing in front of a home crowd at Griffiths Stadium.

Paul Woldu provided the spark the Dogs needed in the comeback victory. He returned an interception for 78 yards, I think, in the third quarter. Mr. Speaker, Mitchell Bowl MVP [most valuable player] Tyler O'Gorman also showed why he deserved to be selected at the game's MVP, especially towards the end of the game. He ran for two touchdowns in the final quarter to ensure that the Griffiths Stadium will be bursting at the seams next weekend.

I heard the Premier talking about the Huskies on the radio today and congratulating them. We'd ask that he doesn't talk about them too much because of the NDP's impact on football teams in our province, but we know he'll be at the game as well. And we're looking forward to being there to support the Huskies.

Laval hasn't lost very many games in the last number of years, but they lost last year in the Mitchell Bowl at Griffiths Stadium. And together with minus 18 degree temperatures and a great coaching staff and a great team, we think history is going to repeat itself. Go Dogs, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Recognition of Foster Families on National Child Day

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, today is National Child Day, and I want to take this opportunity to recognize the significant contributions foster parents make to Saskatchewan. Foster families cannot be thanked enough for the compassion and commitment they give to children and their families during times of need.

Mr. Speaker, the need for more foster families is ongoing, and in some cases increasing. As a result, there are some homes where there are more children than we would prefer. But the special people who accept additional children do so because of an emergency or to keep sisters and brothers together. And even though these homes are provided with additional supports to get them through a time of increased demand, they are being asked to go above and beyond what is expected of them.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, we need more foster homes. Community Resources and Saskatchewan Foster Families Association initiated public awareness campaigns and recruitment strategies this year that are making a difference. I thank the foster families we are recognizing today. They have been foster parents for 20 years or more, or they have received the Montgomery Award for excellence in fostering.

Mr. Speaker, these exceptional people serve as important role models for people who are considering becoming foster parents, and they serve as examples to all of us through the positive contributions they make to the children and families in their

communities who need help. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Canadian Western Agribition

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Western Agribition has opened its gates for the 36th edition of Agribition. Saskatchewan is a known leader in agriculture industry in areas that reign from agriculture innovation to livestock and crop production to the manufacturing and sales of agriculture equipment.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we know, Saskatchewan's economy is strongly attached to agriculture. So there is no doubt as to why Canadian Western Agribition has become a mainstay in Saskatchewan. With over 4,000 head of livestock and 450 tradeshow exhibits, Agribition has proven that it's one of the largest and best known agriculture marketplaces in the world.

The Canadian Western Agribition shows the true diversity in Western Canada's agriculture marketplace with livestock such as cattle, bison, horses, and goats — something my colleague from Cannington is very familiar with as he'll be taking part in a goat milking contest later this week — and also the tradeshow exhibits ranging from agribusiness and technology products and services to home and lifestyle products.

Mr. Speaker, Canadian Western Agribition annually attracts about 145,000 visitors to Regina, which includes visitors from outside of Canada. International attendance in 2006 is expected to resemble the 2005 turnout where nearly 400 international guests were registered, representing 46 countries and 17 American states. Congratulations to all those that volunteer their time to make Agribition such a true success it is.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Red Ribbon Campaign

Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today, as we've heard, is the first day of a week dedicated to making people aware of the devastating consequences of drinking and driving. The Students Against Drinking and Driving, SADD, has officially designated the week of November 20 to 26 for their annual Red Ribbon campaign.

Mr. Speaker, every year SADD chapters from across Saskatchewan distribute red ribbons throughout our communities as a visible reminder of the need to be safe while driving. Although SADD has made significant progress over the past number of years educating young people, there are those who still choose to put their lives and the lives of others at risk.

Mr. Speaker, SADD has played an important role in informing and educating people about the dangers of drinking and driving. These young people and their peers are among leaders in their

community. They share a deep passion for an issue that touches the lives of everyone, and we're very proud of you.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the contributions as well of the SaskTel Pioneers who since 1999 have generously donated 24,000 toward the purchase of red ribbons. I know all the members here will be receiving a red ribbon, and we thoroughly expect to see a sea of red out in the parking lot.

And on behalf of all the members, I want to thank SADD for providing each of us with the ribbons and for your commitment and your dedication to addressing the issue. Having lost an extended family member on graduation night through a drinking and driving incident and with a granddaughter who's 14, I appreciate everything you're doing. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Corrections to Premier's Statement

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you can tell there's an election coming and the NDP is getting desperate when you listen to some of the personal attacks and complete garbage coming from the members opposite, especially the Premier.

Last Thursday the Premier was talking about the Leader of the Opposition's meeting with the federal Minister of Finance. Here's what he said, and I quote:

I'm told there . . . [was] a meeting. I'm told the Leader of the Opposition went off to the Conservative Party fundraiser, and they got together over the cocktail hour . . . Over some Harvey Wallbangers or something and had a meeting.

I understand the Premier repeated that story at the NDP convention this last weekend, suggesting that the Leader of the Opposition and the federal Minister of Finance were drinking when they were supposed to be discussing equalization. Mr. Speaker, everything the Premier said is absolute nonsense.

The Leader of the Opposition did meet with the federal Finance minister to advance the province's call for a fair equalization deal, but there was no drinking during that meeting as the Premier is falsely suggesting in his cheap shots against not only the Leader of the Opposition, but also the federal Minister of Finance from whom he wants a better equalization deal.

And one more thing. The Leader of the Opposition did not attend the Conservative fundraiser. And you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because immediately after his meeting with the Finance minister, the Leader of the Opposition drove home to Swift Current to be with his daughter to celebrate her birthday.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Canadian Western Agribition

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This week Saskatchewan is hosting one of the premier agricultural shows in the world and one of the largest events held in Saskatchewan every year, the Canadian Western Agribition. With more than 145,000 visitors from around the world expected to visit the show over the next six days, the economic impacts on the city of Regina, on this region, and on the province as a whole are quite significant. In fact a recent study indicates that the show supports more than 1,000 jobs in the province and generates over \$16 million annually in provincial GDP [gross domestic product]. Agribition has also played a large role in raising Saskatchewan's profile within the international agricultural industry.

Mr. Speaker, Agribition is about making connections and forging relationships that will help grow and diversify agricultural industry in the future. Last year 47 nations and 17 US [United States] states registered at Agribition's international business centre. As the theme for this year's show indicates, Agribition really is A World of Opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make special note of the fact that, for the first time in three years, producers and animals from the United States are at the show.

My congratulations and thanks go to the board, management, and staff of Canadian Western Agribition, and to the many volunteers who have once again made this world-class event a great reality. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

New Democratic Party Convention

Ms. Harpauer: — Well, well, well, Mr. Speaker. It's great news this weekend for the Saskatchewan Party. The Premier is still leader of his party, and the NDP has stuck with its old name. Those two decisions have probably done more to boost the fortunes of the Saskatchewan Party since the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election.

The Premier spent much of his convention speech trying to convince delegates he's not old and tired, but bold and inspired. That kind of Dr. Seuss-Muhammad Ali speech may work on the converted, but it won't fool anyone else.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier also talked about all the work that he has left to do. Well the question is this. If you had hired a contractor to build a house 15 years ago and the work still hadn't been done, you'd probably get a new contractor, Mr. Speaker. What have these people been doing for the past 15 years?

The Premier also told his audience that he had been stranded in broken-down vans in more places than the Leader of the Opposition has ever visited. Well we have some advice for the Premier, Mr. Speaker. He should buy a new car. He tells his party that he knows a lot about the care and maintenance of old

things, and by looking across the way, I think he's right.

Let's review some of the very important resolutions considered by the NDP at their convention: a call for free spaying and neutering for family pets, a resolution to control the maximum amount of sugar in food, a call to work for a non-punitive approach to cannabis law including elimination of all penalties for personal cultivation. Mr. Speaker, maybe the Minister of Industry and Resources should try a little non-punitive therapy before he goes back on a radio talk show.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Screening and Treatment for Cancer

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in Canada. It's second only to lung cancer. We have public policy on smoking to reduce deaths caused because of lung cancer. An inexpensive screening program for colorectal cancer would reduce deaths by about 30 per cent. Will the minister commit today to funding a screening program for colorectal cancer to prevent deaths from this disease?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the content of the words that the member opposite is speaking. There's no doubt that screening programs can be very effective, Mr. Speaker. We currently in Saskatchewan handle our screening through physicians. We have been working with physicians and others with regards to further developing the screening program, Mr. Speaker. And certainly as we move forward into our budget process for next year, this is one of those issues that we will continue to be looking at.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, regardless of what the minister said, the reality is that people in this province are getting left behind. Here's what people are saying about this NDP government. In a recent news release by Barry Stein, the president of the Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada, here's what he has to say: "... Saskatchewan must now rethink its approach to colorectal cancer which in our opinion is neither compassionate nor responsible."

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: will he consider rethinking their position and put the resources in place — and not a lot of resources — to a dedicated screening program that could reduce fatalities by 30 per cent for the second most common type of cancer in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? Will he provide the resources to give the people of Saskatchewan the health care

they desire and deserve?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To show our commitment in this regard, Mr. Speaker, we currently fund the screening programs operated through physicians' offices, Mr. Speaker. We also have two population-based, organized screening programs, both operated by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency.

Mr. Speaker, the screening program for breast cancer was established in 1990 and has one of the highest participation rates in the country. The prevention program for cervical cancer was established in 2003 to promote participation in cervical screening. Mr. Speaker, screening programs can take a variety of forms. No province in Canada currently has an organized screening program for colorectal cancer. We are continuing to work, Mr. Speaker, with physicians and others in this field to develop the proper approach in this regard.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — This government's track record is a shortage of specialists which result in delayed diagnosis. Once people get into the system they have to wait three times the national average for a first visit to oncologist. Then once they start treatment they are forced to pay for their own drugs.

Avastin is a standard of care for colorectal cancer and this government is not funding it. This government is sitting on a mountain of money waiting to spend it on the next general election just for its own re-election purposes, when people are having to pay for Avastin out of their pocket. The government should be ashamed of itself.

In Newfoundland they can fund the drug. Why won't they get off the mountain of cash that it's got put away for its election purposes and start funding Avastin for people that need it in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite has used the phrase, standard of care, in the past. Of course, Mr. Speaker, no province in Canada has Avastin as a universal coverage in their drug plan, Mr. Speaker. It is not correct to say it is standard of care. It is not available in any province in Canada on a universal basis.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is very well-known as having one of the most comprehensive cancer care drug programs in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Cancer Advocacy Coalition in its report last year indicated that, of the 20 new drugs, Saskatchewan is one of the provinces with the most of the new drugs covered under our program, Mr. Speaker.

We will continue to work with the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency and others across Canada to ensure that cancer patients receive the drug care that we can afford.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

[14:15]

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, you would think that all the demonstrators outside the NDP convention this weekend would have made an impact on this government. But obviously not.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Premier speak after the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election how they've quit . . . they'd obviously lost touch and weren't listening to the people wanting to talk to them. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's not only happening in Weyburn-Big Muddy, it happened this weekend in Saskatoon at their own convention. Stories like Terry Rak and Doug Bonderud are becoming all too common.

Can the minister take a few million dollars out of a \$1 billion dollar slush fund this government has set up for its own political purposes? Can it take a few million dollars out of that slush fund and start doing the things that people are asking of them — funding the cancer drugs that they need in this province and covering for out-of-country care when they were misdiagnosed in this province, Mr. Speaker? Will this government commit to that today?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite must be aware — because I know he reads newspapers — that in fact, Mr. Speaker, all ministers of Health from across Canada are working on a national pharmaceutical strategy, one component of which, Mr. Speaker, is high-cost cancer drugs. Mr. Speaker, we all recognize, every provincial Health minister in Canada recognizes, Mr. Speaker, that new cancer drugs are coming on the market at increasingly increased costs and, Mr. Speaker, are becoming . . . it's becoming more and more important that we have a national drug program that addresses those programs.

Mr. Speaker, we are working together as provinces. Mr. Speaker, we are working together as provinces to address this issue. More importantly, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is working very closely with the four Western provinces, the three other Western provinces, and the province of Ontario, Mr. Speaker, to address this very specific issue.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian

Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Friends and family of Doug Bonderud went to the NDP convention this weekend. They didn't get any answers. Marj and Terry Rak went to the convention as well. They didn't get any answers.

Some of the members opposite had the courtesy to at least stop and listen, and I applaud them for that. But all too many of these members across the way blew past them like the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, like the member from Saskatoon Meewasin, like the member from Cumberland. The member from Saskatoon Nutana didn't even break stride but at least she had the nerve to go in the front door and at least go by these protesters. Whereas the other members couldn't, didn't have that common courtesy. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order please. Order please. Order please. Order. Order please. Order please. Members, on a point of order, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow has made a remark which was unparliamentary and which was heard by all in the House, and I would ask her at this time to rise and withdraw it unequivocally and apologize to the House.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my remarks and apologize to the House.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When will this government get its priorities straight? It's not about the re-election of the NDP government. It's about health care in Saskatchewan. When will they take the priorities straight and start funding the cancer care that we need in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite may be providing an introduction to some Sask Party video with regards to the NDP convention, Mr. Speaker, but I'll tell you this; I'll tell you this, Mr. Speaker. The commitment that this government has made to cancer care is unprecedented in Canada, Mr. Speaker. The commitment that we've made was just a few months ago in our provincial budget where we increased the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency's budget by seventeen and a half per cent, Mr. Speaker. And on average the increase in budget to the Saskatchewan cancer care's drug budget, Mr. Speaker, over the last five years, has averaged an increase of 22 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, we are very committed to cancer care in this province. We've demonstrated it by the money that we've put there, Mr. Speaker. We are continuing to work with the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency and we'll continue to provide good care for Saskatchewan cancer patients in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Foster Care Issues

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, finally the minister started to do the right thing earlier this year because of overcrowding in foster homes, and a recruitment campaign was begun. This was long awaited and much needed. But the minister has never reported to us whether he believes it was effective or that alternate methods that Community Resources should pursue in the recruitment of foster families.

Can the minister confirm here today that the actual total number of foster homes has increased from its base, plus the new families, as a result of this recruitment strategy?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Services.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker. I want to point out before I give the answer that, first of all, in Saskatoon alone, Mr. Speaker, we have seen a 41 per cent increase in terms of children needing foster care. In the city here, the local city alone, we've seen a 21 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker. There's no question that as of . . . in terms of us recognizing the child's need and recognizing child . . . [inaudible] . . . today that there's significant pressure being placed on the foster care system, Mr. Speaker, and it's something that all of Saskatchewan should know.

I want to point out, since the campaign began to recruit more foster families, Mr. Speaker, we've had a net gain of 50 more families. Even though the figure is 750 to 771, which only sees a net gain of 21 but, Mr. Speaker, we lost 30 families so we're actually starting from 720. We're now down to 771 so it has been a success and things are moving well, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — You know, Mr. Speaker, reading reports out of North Dakota with the meth epidemic there that we tried to raise in this House for two years, the greatest increase in North Dakota was a 23 per cent increase in foster families so the minister should have seen this coming.

Foster families provide a valuable service to this province. Sometimes they're the only parents the child knows and this can be a taxing ordeal, Mr. Speaker, especially when the NDP government has allowed the problems with overcrowding in many homes. This government has admitted that 10 per cent of all houses are overcrowded. Mr. Speaker, even one overcrowded house is too many. We know of cases in Saskatoon where there are in excess of 10 children in the house. Can the minister explain why he allows this problem to persist for so long and why foster families and kids are forced into this no win situation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, out of respect for some of the work being done by the Foster Families Association and some of the caring contributions of many foster families, I will be very succinct in my answer to that member. I will point out, Mr. Speaker, that in the case of overcrowding, the member is correct, that there is a 10 per cent of our homes that are being overcrowded. And, Mr. Speaker, there's no question that there are more children than we would prefer in some of these homes.

However, Mr. Speaker, I can report to the people of Saskatchewan that these homes are specialized, they're trained, and they're experienced. They receive extensive support and funding to ensure that there's care for additional children, Mr. Speaker. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, we also have dedicated staff that sometimes work with these homes on a daily basis. Nonetheless, as the Foster Families Association will indicate, there are more work to be done and we intend to work alongside of them, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of overcrowding is real and is difficult on foster families. Yet they have nowhere to turn if they need help. They have nowhere to go and get help. They're isolated, Mr. Speaker. What they require is respite care specific to foster families with their unique situations, somewhere to turn when times are tough and they need a helping hand and a time out.

If this minister won't do the right thing and fix the overcrowding situation, will he at least provide a decent, accessible respite care program specific to foster families?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, several members of the foster family community have expressed that concern to me, the fact that they do need more respite, Mr. Speaker, and it's one of the issues that I've asked the members to move forward and through the agenda with the Foster Families Association. And this minister, Mr. Speaker, has agreed to meet with the Foster Families Association four times a year as opposed to one. And the intent there is to reach out, Mr. Speaker, reach out to the foster families — not only thanking them but to respect them and also talk about ways in which we can support them better, Mr. Speaker.

It should also be pointed out that foster care programs in other provinces are experiencing similar issues as our province is, Mr. Speaker. Nonetheless this government certainly increased funding to foster care by close to two and a half million dollars last year for a total of \$21.3 million dedicated to the foster care family costs, Mr. Speaker.

No question we need more support, more knowledge about the . . . Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Police Staffing for Missing Persons Strategy

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, this NDP Justice minister said the safety of communities and ensuring police are better equipped to deal with missing persons was a top priority for his government. Yet a year later not one of the six RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officers has been hired and no date has been given when these officers will fill the positions outlined at the Justice minister's news conference last November.

Mr. Speaker, if this is truly a top priority for this NDP government, why haven't they hired these police officers?

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, the missing persons strategy had three components. One was increasing policing positions to both Regina and Saskatoon and six positions to the RCMP. I am pleased to advise the House that all the RCMP positions have been filled.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is, when were those positions filled? Constable Brad Kaeding of the RCMP said last week that the officers were identified but the positions were not yet filled. It's the difference between identifying a position or identifying an officer to fill a position and actually implementing and deploying that officer to fulfill that role.

So my question to the minister is, is Brad Kaeding wrong, or is he wrong and have those officers actually started to work on this project?

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — The six positions included two violent crime analysts. I'm not sure when they were filled. The historical crimes unit I understand was being . . . the cases were being handled by major crimes as they came up. I learned this in October, Mr. Speaker, and frankly was disappointed to learn that the positions had not been filled, was assured they would be filled in November, Mr. Speaker. And they were filled in November, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Even now I don't have a clear answer from this minister as to whether these people are actually identified, have specific names, ranks, serial numbers, and are they

actually working in the role for which they were assigned. He said that as of a year ago, they weren't filled. He says October and November he thought they were filled.

Are they working in there today? And on what date did those officers actually start working in that role?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — And again, Mr. Speaker, I understand that these are very specialized positions that need specialized people. I believed, I believed, Mr. Speaker, that the RCMP had filled these positions earlier than they had.

I am informed as of this weekend that all these positions are filled by people who have names and who will have ranks, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Fire Protection for Stony Rapids

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, near the end of June the communities of Stony Rapids and Black Lake had to be evacuated under emergency situations due to a forest fire that nearly burned down the community of Stony Rapids and threatened the community of Black Lake, Mr. Speaker. This forest fire started at least two weeks prior to it jumping the Fond du Lac River and threatening the community of Stony Rapids, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Environment. Why didn't that minister and his government protect the community of Stony Rapids?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:30]

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the answer to that question is that the fire service did protect the community of Stony Rapids. There were no structures lost, there were no lives lost in that community.

There was a fire that started 32 kilometres northwest of the village of Stony Rapids on June 3, and it was 12 miles outside of the response zone so it was monitored. It was monitored daily by air, and the conditions fluctuated between June 3 and June 22. And what happened is that there was a big wind that came up and when it got just over 20 kilometres away, it moved very quickly towards the village. At that point the reports came in and the response was provided according to the program we have.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, the minister said that the community was protected and there were no lives lost, and he's right. But that had nothing to do with that minister and his government. It had everything to do with the heroic efforts that the residents of that community put forward in averting a near catastrophe, Mr. Speaker.

They were faced with a raging inferno that advanced rapidly towards their community — jumped a wide river, the Fond du Lac River — and it was only through the extraordinary events of those residents that we didn't have a tragedy in that part of our province, Mr. Speaker. And all of this is because of that government's let-it-burn policy.

When the fire had started, as the minister said, in the driest area of the province between two communities and it got out of control . . . It could have been controlled much earlier, Mr. Speaker, and I've asked that minister: why didn't they control that fire earlier?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the province has a wildfire strategy which has been developed in line with the Canadian wildfire strategy which all provinces and territories are part of. And, Mr. Speaker, the policy that we have in this government is to protect people, to protect businesses and structures. And we have a very clear way of doing that.

At this time in June, as the member knows, there were a number of fires right across the North and the protection was allocated to protect some communities where the fires were burning right within these communities. When this fire started moving very quickly towards Stony Rapids, full deployment was made and Sask Environment personnel and equipment were used to help the local community keep the fire out of that town.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, the minister said that when the fire was threatening the community a full deployment of resources was made. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the helicopter that was there left the community and left that community unprotected, Mr. Speaker. The only people there were the residents and a small fire suppression crew, Mr. Speaker.

But during the height of the forest fires, Mr. Speaker, both the member from Athabasca — who coincidentally when he was minister of the Environment approved the new policy — and the Premier both said that this policy must be reviewed. It must be reviewed to make it more effective and to prevent future catastrophes, Mr. Speaker. My question to the minister is: has this firefighting policy been reviewed and, if so, what are the results of that review?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I invite that member to read the policy. In the policy it has an annual review where you review every fire that happens during that year and then update your policy. So, Mr. Speaker, this particular fire and all of the fires this summer are being reviewed as we speak, and it will be part of our plan as we look forward to next year.

Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure that we use our resources to protect our people, protect our communities, and protect the commercial structures. We have in our province a map of every structure in the North with a digital photograph. People know where these places are, and they make their plans to protect the fires based on that information, supplemented with satellite information which is recorded every 6 hours on a 24-hour basis.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Healthy Living Services.

National Drug and Addictions Awareness Week

Hon. Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed my pleasure to rise and inform the members of the legislature that this is national substance abuse week in Canada. Mr. Speaker, in keeping with recognizing this important week, a new advertising campaign aimed at young adults was launched today. The goal of the campaign is to raise awareness of the risks and consequences associated with excessive drinking as well as to promote the responsible use of alcohol, which is the most abused substance in Canada and in Saskatchewan.

The campaign will consist of television ads, restaurants and bar washroom posters, campus advertising, and entertainment newspapers. Mr. Speaker, this campaign will help educate people about the risks of drinking alcohol. We hope they will exercise moderation and think about the situation and consequences when choosing to have another drink.

In 2005 the provincial government launched Project Hope and made a commitment to educate young people and their families in Saskatchewan about substance abuse. This campaign assists in fulfilling that promise.

Mr. Speaker, the goal of our government is to build a better future and a better life for families and a bright future for our youth. By educating the young people of Saskatchewan about the effects of binge drinking and encouraging them to exercise moderation and make healthy choices, we are working to ensure that they grow up safe and healthy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to stand and respond to the ministerial statement just put forward.

The campaign to better educate people — and it's targeted, as the minister said, to the young people — regarding binge drinking, I think, is a very worthy goal. Not that I would be stereotyping, but it's rather interesting that it comes on Monday after the Grey Cup weekend in Winnipeg and some of the activities that take place there. But certainly any time that we can raise public awareness on responsible alcohol use and the consequences of alcohol use that isn't responsible.

It was interesting to have the group of Students Against Drinking and Driving here today. And that's been their whole mission . . . is to educate people on the effects of alcohol and driving. And this campaign certainly goes towards that — which we applaud — because again public education is how you prevent some of the horrific situations that we've seen on our streets and highways. And also in domestic disputes, quite often alcohol is a major contributing factor. So the more we can do to educate the public on this aspect, we think, the better off. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 35 — The Infrastructure Fund Act

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to move that Bill No. 35, The Infrastructure Fund Act be now introduced and read for a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 35, The Infrastructure Fund Act be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 36 — The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2)

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 36, The Income Tax Act, be now introduced and read for a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 36, The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2) be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Speaking Directly to Gallery Visitors

The Speaker: — Members, before orders of the day, I wish to bring to members' attention a point of order. Today during member statements, the member for Regina Rosemont was, in her remarks, speaking directly to the members of the gallery. That ought not to be done during member statements. I would ask all members to adhere to that ruling.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions number 51 through 54 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses for question 51 to 54 have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 30 — The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act, 2006

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act, 2006. This Act provides a framework for the self-governance of this group of professionals through the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association.

There are currently approximately 72 land surveyors and professional surveyors who are licensed members of the Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association. Membership has declined in recent years due to the retirement of many long-standing members. Levels of admissions to the association have remained steady but will not be sufficient to meet future Saskatchewan industry demand for surveying professionals.

Demand will increase because of retirement of many baby boomer members of the profession, coupled with the rapid growth of the Saskatchewan economy.

There are many students who are enrolled in surveying courses approved in the association's bylaws and who are interested in applying for membership as student land surveyors in the association. The Act however currently restricts admission to those applicants who have already completed a two-year course of study in surveying and mapping. The Saskatchewan Land Surveyors' Association views this requirement as being a barrier to qualified applicants who wish to become land surveyors in Saskatchewan.

So the proposed amendments will allow applicants who are studying toward the academic requirements for admission as a land surveyor-in-training, to be admitted as student land surveyors without the additional requirement of having to have already completed a two-year course in surveying and mapping.

This will also broaden the range of potential applicants for membership in the association, attract more individuals into the land surveying profession in Saskatchewan, and make the provisions regarding requirements for admission as a student land surveyor more consistent with similar legislation governing surveying professionals across Canada.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of An Act to amend The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Act.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Industry and Resources that Bill No. 30, The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act, 2006 be now read a second time. The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise and speak briefly on An Act to amend The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Act, 2006.

Mr. Speaker, I think the minister is quite correct in saying it is very important for the economic growth and well-being of the province that we make sure and do everything that we can to make sure that we have sufficient numbers of surveyors in order to allow for the staking out of lands and properties for the purpose of building the economy. Mr. Speaker, I understand that this request is in keeping with the wishes of the association in order to expand their membership to allow individuals to join the association who are, up till now, classified as student land surveyors.

We look forward to having the opportunity to speak with the surveyors to make sure that these amendments properly reflect the needs and desires of their association. And in order for that to be facilitated, at this time I move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Melfort that debate on second reading of Bill No. 30 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Bill No. 33 — The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Amendment Act, 2006

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I am pleased this afternoon to have the opportunity to speak about the proposed changes to the Act governing a very important Saskatchewan training institution. At the end of my remarks, I'll move second reading of the amendments of The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Act.

Our province is recognized for its highly skilled and dedicated workforce. We want to ensure that everyone has the training they require to participate in what is a most promising future in our province.

[14:45]

We're working hard to ensure Saskatchewan has the most accessible and affordable post-secondary education system in the country, and SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] is a major component of that system. But SIAST is much more than Saskatchewan's largest skills training institution. Its training activities go well beyond the borders of our province, and in fact SIAST delivers technical and vocational education and training services in more than 33 countries across the globe. It's been doing so for 15 years. The amended Act will reflect our current practice.

It is also important to refine SIAST governance practices, beginning with representation on the board of governors. Currently the student body is not represented by a student. The student body is represented by an alumni member. While that has been a positive contribution, we believe it's important to address current student issues.

Under the amended Act the board will now include one current SIAST student representative. The amended Act will formalize the current practice of requiring that board membership include representation from the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission and from our province's regional colleges.

Mr. Speaker, it's currently required that the SIAST board meet 10 times a year. Our research shows us that the best practices in terms of board governance indicates that eight times a year constitutes the best practice. The amended Act will reflect, recognize best practice. The Act will reflect the current practice of allowing the board to establish committees, and it will allow for the ratification of board committee minutes. Mr. Speaker, the amended Act will formalize the current practice of SIAST presenting a business plan and a budget to the minister every year.

The Act will reflect current governing legislation regarding the public employee benefits plan, and the current requirement for a five-year SIAST review is more frequent than the review requirements for most colleges and institutions. The amended Act will allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council to periodically appoint a review committee. The proposed wording

is similar to that in the apprenticeship and trade certification commission Act, and the current requirement that the review committee report within six months will be deleted. The reporting date will instead be reflected and specified by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Mr. Speaker, SIAST is a strong training institution and Saskatchewan's future success is dependent upon the strength of our training system. These legislative amendments will make a strong and responsive institution stronger. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move that the amendments to The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Act be now read a second time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment that Bill No. 33, The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Amendment Act, 2006 be now read a second time. The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to rise in the House to make comments on An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Act.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by making some favourable comments about SIAST. It's an institution that has got a long and interesting history in our province and, generally speaking, the services provided by that institution are very successful and should be recognized by all the citizens of the province.

Three of the four children in my own family have attended and are graduates of SIAST, and of my nephews and nieces, fully one-half of them either are attending SIAST now or are graduates of SIAST. So in our family there's certainly very good attendance and support and recognition of the value that SIAST provides.

I can also add that my understanding is, Mr. Speaker, that graduates of SIAST are sought out by employers, not just in Saskatchewan but elsewhere in the country, and have a very high success rate in obtaining employment and retaining that employment. And I think the instructors and senior management of SIAST should be made aware of the fact that that certainly has filtered through to the members of the legislature.

We've had the opportunity to very briefly review this piece of legislation and have some issues with some aspects of it. We note that there's no inclusion on the proposed changes to ensure that there's suitable Aboriginal representation on the SIAST board. Over the last number of years it's certainly been the desire of the Saskatchewan Party to try and ensure that First Nations and Aboriginal people are able to fully participate in our workforce and in our work environment, and courses and schools that are offered through SIAST would go a long ways to meet that need.

I'm also surprised and somewhat troubled to see that the statutory obligation on the minister to review SIAST's mandate at least once every five years has been dropped and it's now up

to the discretion of the minister to decide. For too long since I've been a member, I've heard members opposite say it's an independent institution; we don't want to get involved. And I'm hoping that if there's issues at SIAST that this isn't an excuse for them to say, we don't want to get involved. Once every five years is not a long time or terribly often to try and do that. And I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that it's an appropriate exercise of the advanced learning minister's obligation to try and review SIAST's mandate and determine if it's meeting it, and what are the changes that may be necessary by way of upgrades.

We're pleased to hear that they're looking at — and I believe it's probably come from the SIAST board — they want to change the number of meeting dates and things like that. I question the need to have some of those things in the legislation. On one side we hear the minister saying, we don't think we want to have the minister review the mandate. And on the other one we want to control exactly how many times a year the board meets because this complies with best practices.

Mr. Speaker, if the board is capable of going this extended period of time without a ministerial review, I would think it would be appropriate for them to determine how often they should meet. Best practices or various issues that may arise may want to change or increase or even decrease that.

Mr. Speaker, I would note as well that they're creating an annual business plan in addition to the annual budget — obviously something that current practice would indicate is a desirable and appropriate thing for all institutions to do. And perhaps that's something that should be included in some kind of an omnibus Bill that would affect all of the government institutions, not just SIAST. And it's something that we should, as citizens, look to when we want to ensure that our government institutions have the utmost in accountability, transparency, and give good value to the taxpayers of this province.

It goes without saying that the largest amount of SIAST's budget comes from the taxpayer — some from tuitions, of course, but to the extent it's largely funded by taxpayers' dollars, it's certainly the goal of the Saskatchewan Party to ensure that citizens of this province get the best value.

And I want to close, Mr. Speaker, by just commending the hard work that the staff and instructors do at the various SIAST campuses throughout the province. Mr. Speaker, I would like to move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Southeast that the debate on second reading of Bill No. 33 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment.

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

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave for

introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery this afternoon we are joined by Holly Hetherington from the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce and Larry Hubich, the president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour.

And they are here this afternoon to listen to the second reading speeches regarding the proposed new Saskatchewan Labour Market Commission. Mr. Speaker, what I can tell the Assembly is that both Mr. Hubich and Ms. Hetherington have been intimately involved in the legislation that we are going to have second reading on. And I want to thank them for the work that they've done on behalf of the business and labour community in this province in bringing this Act together, Mr. Speaker. So I'd like to welcome them to the Assembly and thank them for the work that business and labour have done to bring forward this piece of legislation.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Cypress Hills on his feet?

Mr. Elhard: — To introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the minister in welcoming our two guests who are here to view the introduction of this legislation today. I've had a chance to meet with both of them previously to discuss the legislation, to talk about some of the benefits of this particular exercise for the labour force development in this province, and I appreciate the time they've committed to this exercise. And I look forward to talking to them more as this Bill and the proceedings of this legislation works its way through the House.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 34 — The Labour Market Commission Act

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm extremely pleased to have the opportunity to speak about a proposed new Saskatchewan Labour Market Commission which really, Mr. Speaker, is a historic piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, our economy is booming. There are more jobs in Saskatchewan than ever before in our history. In fact there are more jobs than qualified people to fill them. That presents an unprecedented challenge and an unprecedented opportunity. Our government is committed to ensuring that all Saskatchewan residents benefit from our strong economy, especially our young people and disadvantaged people who are seeking career opportunities right here at home. Our entire society, our entire population needs to be included in building that strong future.

Critical policy decisions will be required. The challenges facing the province with regard to the labour market cannot be solved by the government alone. Our labour market partners are absolutely essential to coming up with workable and sustainable solutions and each of the partners has to have a strong sense of its role and responsibilities within the labour market. The Government of Saskatchewan has a strong record of engaging partners for critical policy decisions. The Saskatchewan Labour Market Commission is being created to bring together the appropriate sectors in responding to our province's changing economy and labour market. And, Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased and honoured that labour and business have worked with us in creating this historic commission.

Our labour market faces complex and urgent issues. The economy is booming and the baby boomers are retiring. And yet not everyone who could be involved in our labour market is participating. There are pockets of high unemployment in the midst of unprecedented opportunity. These issues and these challenges require a concerted effort by all partners — labour, business, First Nations and Métis organizations, and the training system, as well as our government.

And through this partnership the commission will help Saskatchewan people connect to the large and growing number of jobs that support our economy. The commission's mandate includes providing strategic advice to the minister on labour market issues, trends, and strategies. And the commission is to foster co-operation among business, labour, First Nations and Métis organizations, and institutions, and governments to develop strong labour market strategies, policies, and most of all, Mr. Speaker, solutions.

This Labour Market Commission will have the capacity to research and analyze labour market issues, trends, and strategies. It will communicate and consult with business, labour, government, First Nations and Métis organizations, and others on labour market issues.

The scope of the commission is province-wide. And the commission will establish linkages to regional and sectoral planning bodies and examine regional and sectoral labour market plans, ensuring that rural and northern Saskatchewan are included in labour market issues.

Mr. Speaker, there is great excitement about Saskatchewan's potential. There is great respect for our training system and its partners, and there is an assumption that the system as a whole is responsive to the needs of the province. It is the role and the mandate of the Saskatchewan Labour Market Commission to enable our labour market partners to work together and to advise government on the tools that we'll need to build a prosperous Saskatchewan for everybody.

I am confident the commission, with the leadership of Mr. Hubich from the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and Ms. Hetherington for the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, will help our province, Mr. Speaker, achieve our goal of making life better for today's families and building a future here for our youth.

Mr. Speaker, I move, with a great deal of pride, the Saskatchewan labour market commission Act, that it now be read a second time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment that Bill No. 34, The Labour Market Commission Act be now read a second time. The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to rise in the House and to make a few comments regarding The Labour Market Commission Act. I would like to start off by thanking Ms Hetherington and Mr. Hubich for their work on this.

I met Ms. Hetherington some years ago during my tenure at the Saskatoon school board and worked with her on a search for an executive at that time. And I was very supportive of the work that she had done at that time and felt that she was an incredibly competent person.

I have not yet met Mr. Hubich. And I may not agree with him on every issue, but I do have tremendous respect for the sincerity of his beliefs. And probably when it comes down to it, there is probably far more overlap in our positions than what some members might suggest. And I look forward to having discussions with him as this Bill works its way through the legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, it's difficult for the Saskatchewan Party to stand up and be critical of yet another Bill that has come forward as a result of Saskatchewan Party initiatives. This certainly sounds a lot like the Saskatchewan Party leader's booklet that came out earlier called Enterprise Saskatchewan, which outlines a consultative process to try and bring the province and the economy forward.

Enterprise Saskatchewan has a lot in common with the Labour Market Commission report. It talks about the necessity of a consultative process. It wants to go on to identify barriers to growth, plan for a strong infrastructure, and involve the labour force in developing a strategy for retention and recruitment of good labour in this province. Given the labour shortage that we have especially in areas of medical and health areas, we think this type of initiative is certainly worthwhile.

We note when we look at this legislation that there does not appear to be — and it's somewhat troubling — involvement from universities or from the regional economic development authorities. We assume that there may well have been some consideration given. And as the Bill progresses through, we are going to be asking those questions, and we presume that there may be some very valid reasons for that.

We note as well that within the mandate that was given this

piece of legislation, focus is limited to labour market issues. So we are very supportive of that because we recognize the valuable role that labour plays in this province and in our economy. But what we will be also looking for is companion legislation to be put forward by the government dealing with the rest of the economy, dealing with marketing, dealing with infrastructure, and dealing with the other issues that are very significant in moving the province forward. However this is a very significant and very important first step, and we look forward to working with this as this goes forward.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I felt was somewhat troubling was this Bill gives a mandate of the commission to provide advice to the Labour minister. During my brief tenure I have seen two different Labour ministers and frankly, Mr. Speaker, they need significantly more than advice. I think their political careers probably need advanced life support and help in a lot of other different ways. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I would move adjournment of debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Southeast that debate on second reading of Bill No. 34 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 4

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Higgins that **Bill No. 4 — The Education Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2)/Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation (n° 2)** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to speak on the adjourned debates on the Act to amend The Education Act from 1995. Mr. Speaker, the educational system in the community have undergone a tremendous amount of changes in the last couple of years. And this has indeed placed a lot of pressure on them in order to meet the challenges that are placed before school boards, and keeping in mind that the primary function is to make sure that the welfare of the children entrusted to their care, that their well-being and education is being properly looked after.

Madam Deputy Speaker, school trustees from across this province, public board members, and separate school board members have worked very diligently to make sure that the challenges of amalgamation have been done properly and that they have moved forward in a very constructive fashion. In this whole process there has been from time to time some issues that have come up that have actually placed some pressure on the relationship between the public and separate school trustees

about jurisdictional issues and procedural issues and things of that nature. And the Saskatchewan School Boards Association I think very appropriately and astutely struck a group within their board to deal with some of the issues that were being discussed and were creating friction for these two groups of people and, Madam Deputy Speaker, as a result of the work of these trustees — public and separate — these recommendations have come forward. There are several recommendations in this legislation that deal with the process of the formation of a separate school.

As we know, under the constitution there is the constitutional provision for the ability of the people in the communities representing a minority faith to form a separate school, and in the past they have had certain guidelines. They've been rather minimal in terms of direction as to how the exact process should occur. And as a result, there have been a number of instances where the process has not gone completely as would be desired and as expected.

And so these groups of trustees have come together and said, let's make sure that we have in place some policies that will give proper time and sufficient time for careful reassessment and careful consideration of all of the issues surrounding the formation of a separate school. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, they have placed these requirements into this legislation so that going forward from this point in time, there should be very little lack of clarity in terms of the proper process that's required in order for a separate school to be formed in the province. And I think that that is good news.

In this whole process when a group of people go through the process to consider formation of a separate school, there are a lot of issues that need to be considered, and there has to be sufficient time for consultation and consideration of all of these issues. And this legislation will provide for that framework.

The other component of this legislation that I think is worthy of note is that when the government embarked on this amalgamation process, one part of that process was the formation of local school advisory committees. And that I think is a very important linkage of the local community to the institution in their community, be it an elementary or a high school. And it allows for the public's input into the well-being and the excellent standards that a school would maintain, and it involves people from the community, people from the school itself, both professionals and students. And this is an advisory board to the school principal to make sure that the specific needs and desires of that local school community are being met.

In the original legislation there were some items that were omitted and the School Boards Association has pointed out a couple of these issues. And in these amendments there is clarification and the correction of some of the issues that were overlooked in the original legislation. And so insofar as that this is getting corrected as well, this is important legislation to consider.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the official opposition caucus took the opportunity to move forward the consultative process as quickly as possible in order to potentially accommodate the school boards' desire that this legislation be passed in a timely fashion. I had the opportunity to meet with the president of the School

Boards Association and the executive director to be briefed on the intent of this legislation before we even saw it in the House. We also had the opportunity . . . and we invited the School Boards Association to come to one of our caucus meetings to present the issues from their perspective. And we're very happy that they did it. It certainly made these issues much clearer to us.

And we also understand that in discussion that I've had with the minister, that the School Boards Association is going to be invited to present their position directly to the Standing Committee on Human Services in order to make sure that they have the opportunity to indicate on the official record that they are supportive of this legislation and that this legislation was drafted at their request.

And so, Madam Deputy Speaker, at this point I look forward to the presentation of the School Boards Association to the committee's meeting. I believe that's scheduled for later this day. And I look forward to the opportunity for them to present their perspectives on this and for committee members to direct questions to these officials and to have this legislation considered in a timely way. And I would recommend at this time that this Bill be now referred to committee.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Learning that Bill No. 4, The Education Amendment Act, 2006 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — I move that Bill No. 4, The Education Amendment Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Learning that Bill No. 4 be now referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 1

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Forbes that **Bill No. 1 — The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam

Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to enter into the debate on Bill No. 1, an Act to amend the Labour Standards Act.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the simple description of this Bill of course is to add an additional statutory holiday to the current number of holidays that exist within the province of Saskatchewan.

I think it's important for people to understand the relative position of Saskatchewan to other provinces, especially our three Western provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba. Madam Deputy Speaker, currently the province of Alberta recognizes nine statutory holidays. The province of British Columbia recognizes nine statutory holidays. The province of Saskatchewan recognizes nine statutory holidays, and the province of Manitoba recognizes seven statutory holidays. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, you can see that up until the introduction of this Bill, the province of Saskatchewan has been in a very similar position with our two neighbours to the West and in fact an additional day ahead of the province of Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, though, it's also wise for people to take a look at other clauses and other terms that can affect the number of days that a worker is entitled to as a paid holiday. And many provinces have additional days that are provided.

And I look at the province of Alberta, which recognizes a number of days like Boxing Day, Easter Monday in Alberta. Heritage Day by the way, Alberta Heritage Day in Alberta is in August. And many employers have those additional holidays within agreements. And the employees for those particular employers of course earn those statutory holidays in addition to the public holidays that I outlined.

[15:15]

Madam Deputy Speaker, it's also interesting to note that the province of Saskatchewan has lead in one other category, in terms of the number of weeks of vacation pay that an employee is entitled to in the province of Saskatchewan. We are the only province that has a three-week vacation. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that's interesting when you look at the whole, wide picture and say, well has that been a great benefit in increasing the labour force. And we're looking at a province right now, Madam Deputy Speaker, that has lost population. We continue to lose people on a regular basis. So I'm not sure that that was a circumstance that has retained workers and as a result we need to look at how the additional statutory holiday in fact is going to affect people.

This government, this NDP government has not put forward a youth and population growth strategy. And if you don't have growth, Madam Deputy Speaker, you can be in the same situation that we are in right now — a complex labour shortage where we're looking at a number of initiatives, some initiatives that the NDP already used from the Saskatchewan Party's *100 Ideas*, when we start to look at the suggestion about mandatory retirement and addressing that concern, when we start to look at the number of training seats that are needed to address the problem within the nursing profession. Those are ideas that should have been looked at a long time ago.

This government seems to act surprised when they hear about labour shortages in so many of the sectors. And I guess, Madam Deputy Speaker, when we hear from the people on the street regarding the addition of Family Day, there was a very positive reaction of course. People are excited about the fact that from New Year's Day until Easter — whenever Easter would occur — was usually a fairly lengthy period. And people reacted in a very positive way by saying that Family Day was a nice idea.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think what we have to look at is the whole job opportunity and job positions that are available in Saskatchewan. There's no question that jobs are important to the people that have them. But they're also very important in terms of who is actually paying for those jobs when we look at a combined strategy, as we heard discussed today in the legislature, where we heard that labour and business have been together developing a new strategy regarding a labour commission and ideas have been put forward.

And the question then, Madam Deputy Speaker, that has to be asked is, has there been consultation regarding the introduction of Family Day? As indicated, many people reacted that it would be a great idea. We know that of course as population in Saskatchewan has declined, a number of those people have moved elsewhere, many to the province of Alberta. And I know there are many members in this Assembly who have children who work in Alberta, me being one of those, Madam Deputy Speaker, as my daughter has just obtained employment in the city of Calgary. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, a Family Day will probably be a great idea for us to be able to enjoy visiting with our daughter who now is in Calgary. But the question that has to be asked is, what kind of consultation occurred?

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, not everyone is unanimous in suggesting that a Family Day was the correct introduction. I know that there are many people in business . . . and of course business owners are the ones that are going to be responsible for paying the additional costs. The Government of Saskatchewan will be responsible for paying additional costs. The regional health authorities will be responsible for paying additional costs. The school boards in this province will be responsible for paying the additional costs. And I'm wondering, Madam Deputy Speaker, on behalf of all of those people who sit on those boards is, was there consultation with those different boards to address the concerns that they had regarding the costs?

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Premier of the province has received a letter dated November 16 from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, and it's a letter addressed to the Premier that raises a number of concerns. And it's a long letter, and I'm just going to read into the record three of the concerns of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

First one says, and I quote, Madam Deputy Speaker:

The impact of closing on a day where the rest of the country is open. As many Saskatchewan firms do business all over the country and globe, it would be very difficult for some to close. Firms may risk losing sales if they are not open to their customers or, if they stay open, would face unhappy employees and increased costs.

So you can see, Madam Deputy Speaker, that business owners are concerned about the competitive nature of Saskatchewan. Are we competitive with the rest of the provinces in this country? Are we competitive with the rest of the states as we look at closing on a day in February?

And by the way, Madam Deputy Speaker, if there are people who are not aware of the proposed date, the third Monday, as indicated in Bill No. 1, third Monday of February will be now Family Day. So that is the date that people will be looking at.

Now one of the other paragraphs that was sent to the Premier is this, and I quote again:

Extra costs incurred by the provincial government — There will be extra costs for Saskatchewan's public sector as a result of another statutory holiday. For example, the City of Regina just announced it will cost \$550,000 in overtime pay and lost work. Most of it will be to pay overtime to police officers, firefighters and other city workers. CFIB would therefore like to know what additional costs will the provincial government incur as a result of a new statutory holiday?

So you can see, Madam Deputy Speaker, that very valid concerns are being raised. The city of Regina must have firefighters that are on duty. They must have police officers that are on duty. And of course their fiscal year has been established, and now we're starting to look at additional costs.

A third paragraph and a final paragraph that I'd like to read into the record, Madam Deputy Speaker, is this:

Over 64 per cent of Saskatchewan small business owners are concerned over the shortage of qualified labour. Business owners who are already struggling to find staff and who want to operate on 'Family Day' will now be scrambling to find workers.

So you can see, Madam Deputy Speaker, that businesses have some concerns, and they would like to have been consulted.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I had the opportunity to speak with a number of directors of boards of education who have expressed some concern over the matter that they have not been consulted. And it's pretty easy to understand why school boards would be facing a bit of a dilemma.

The Minister of Learning has set the school year for '06-07 at 197 school days. Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, school boards knew that before the beginning of this school term, and accordingly set the number of teaching days at 197. There are regulations regarding the break at Christmas and the break at Easter, but really from about August — middle of August — until June 30, there's quite a bit of flexibility in terms of the kind of school year that a board of education will set. Now they are compelled to set 197 days.

Now let's look at the scenario that will affect two different school divisions. One school division that has set the third Monday of February 2007 as a holiday, as a day when they are on a leave that has been already predetermined, well, Madam Deputy Speaker, there is no additional day of cost because that

day has been worked into the system. Schools are closed. So school bus drivers, teacher assistants, teachers are not . . . there won't be a concern.

But let's look at a second situation. Let's look at a school division who has declared the third Monday of February to be a professional development day. And usually professional development days — now that the school divisions have become extremely large — are in the larger centres, most often cities like Regina and Saskatoon. There are examples where school boards have already planned that professional day for Monday, the third Monday of February. They have booked speakers. They have put down down payments and actually spent money on speakers, and now there is going to be a situation where that is now going to be a statutory holiday. So we've heard from various people that are involved in the education community that the Minister of Learning is in fact contemplating changing the school year of '06-07 to 196 days to make sure that that accommodates that.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, the third situation develops is that when the day . . . The third Monday of February is actually a regular teaching day and now has to be a statutory holiday. Well I've already identified the problem with 197 days, and maybe the government solution is to change the school year to 196. But the other situation is there will be people that have to be paid. There are people like teacher assistants and school bus drivers whose year is set on a specific number of days, and that was predetermined long before this school year started.

So the question that has to be asked of the minister is, will there be additional compensation for school divisions, regional health authorities because as they have to have people employed on a stat holiday there are additional monies that will be awarded to each of these people?

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think you can see from the points that people have raised by calling us, there has not been, there has not been a lot of consultation on the introduction of Family Day.

While it is a . . . Is it a good idea for workers? I think we know that people who benefit from a long weekend they come back to work probably more rejuvenated, the ability to be a more productive worker, and as a result the holiday, the Family Day, is a good introduction. It's an introduction where again Saskatchewan will have 10 statutory holidays when our neighbours will not have as many. So that maybe will put us in a position that we will have a positive asset on our side, and maybe that will be able to contribute to additional workers coming back to this province.

But if the government believes that the addition of a stat holiday is a retention strategy or a recruitment strategy, I think you have to look at the additional costs that will be placed on school boards, will be placed on municipalities, will be placed on the regional health authorities. As I've indicated, Madam Deputy Speaker, the city of Regina suggests that it might cost as much as \$550,000 for that additional statutory holiday.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think you can see that the Act . . . While the actual terms of the Act are very straightforward, they're put forward to ensure that the third Monday in February

of each year is going to be a statutory holiday known as Family Day. I think you can see that for this first year, the year '07, there will be a number of difficulties, there will be a number of uncertainties, and that's what we're hearing from the people of Saskatchewan. They don't know what will in fact be a deciding factor for this government when they actually put in place the rules and regulations.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, this Bill will be moved forward to committee as the concept is there and employees across this province are going to look forward to Family Day. But most important, I think many parents will look forward to Family Day as well.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Labour that Bill No. 1, The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2006 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill No. 1, The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2006 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for Culture, Youth and Recreation that Bill No. 1, The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2006 be now referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 29

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Forbes that **Bill No. 29 – The Labour Standards Consequential Amendments Act, 2006/Loi de 2006 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Labour Standards Amendments Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. My remarks to this Bill will be much shorter than the previous remarks. Madam Deputy Speaker, Bill No. 29 is a consequential amendment Bill that is necessary as a result of the passing of Bill No. 1, the introduction of Family Day to The Labour Standards Amendments Act, and what it does is it

changes the specific Act, The Education Act, and adds the words Family Day to the statutory holidays that are already described. And in The Interpretation Act, 1995, it's also amended by adding the words Family Day.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, these are necessary housekeeping amendments, and we see no reason to not allow this Bill to proceed to committee.

[15:30]

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Labour that Bill No. 29, The Labour Standards Consequential Amendments Act, 2006 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill No. 29, The Labour Standards Consequential Amendments Act, 2006 be now referred as well to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for Culture, Youth, and Recreation that Bill No. 29, The Labour Standards Consequential Amendments Act, 2006 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 2

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Thomson that **Bill No. 2 — The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into the debate on an Act to amend the PST [provincial sales tax] Act. It's an Act that members on this side of the House call, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's about time Act. It's about time that the government did something in this. And we've been talking about it. Members on this side of the House have been talking about this for a number of years, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in order to fully understand . . . And I know that members opposite will appreciate the history of the PST in the

province and I know that they will listen closely when we talk about the history of the PST under this administration, Madam Deputy Speaker. In order to fully understand this Bill, we must look back to what happened at the last election. What happened when groups across the province during the election campaign asked to meet with Premier Calvert, asked for him to outline his policy on taxation across the province?

Madam Deputy Speaker, you know what happened? He didn't have time to meet with them. He didn't have time to meet with the chamber of commerce. He didn't have time to meet with businesses across the province. What he did instead was said, send me a letter and I'll respond back to it or I'll get back to you on it. So indeed, Madam Deputy Speaker, that's what business groups across the province did. That's what consumer groups across the province did. They asked the Premier to outline his policy in a very concise form on what he would do with taxes in general in Saskatchewan.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you know what the Premier's response, you know what the response on behalf of the NDP party was? No new taxes. Period. End of sentence. No new taxes. Madam Deputy Speaker, imagine their surprise — and I use the word, imagine — imagine their surprise when the first thing, the first financial matter that this government did after that election was to raise the PST, Madam Deputy Speaker. It was certainly a surprise for people. It wasn't only a surprise. It hit them hard. It hit them hard in the pocketbook. Not all of them were excited about having four more years of an NDP government. That's for sure, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, people across Saskatchewan, I think it's fair to say, have seen this pattern developing with this NDP government. They lower taxes before an election, and then they raise them following an election. Madam Deputy Speaker, all members of this House and most members across the province will remember those words by the member from Regina Douglas Park when he was asked during the election, what about your future plans? What did he say regarding the finances of the province? He said, elections aren't a time to talk about tax increases.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, we know why they weren't talking about it during the election because they knew then what they were going to do. And that's all they did for three years, Madam Deputy Speaker, was raise that PST. Three years of a tax increase that Saskatchewan people neither voted for or wanted, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Well what happened on this side of the House, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the Saskatchewan Party, the official opposition, we presented our alternatives. We said, keep your promises from the last election and reverse the unfair increase in the PST. Madam Deputy Speaker, we went farther. We told them to make sure that taxes in Saskatchewan were competitive across the board. Lower the corporate capital tax; lower business income taxes. Why, Madam Deputy Speaker? Because they were the highest in the country. And it was the right thing to do, the thing that had to be done.

Day after day members on this side of the House rose from their seats, talked about the need for competitive taxes. What did we hear from the other side? It just couldn't be done. It just

couldn't be done, Madam Deputy Speaker. Well we knew it was the right thing to do to propose those ideas.

In fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, we went farther. We proposed 100 new ideas for the new century. Every member of this House will remember that booklet that came out with 100 ideas from the official opposition. Madam Deputy Speaker, I am happy to report that on the latest count, 42 out of those 100 ideas have been implemented in some way.

And we know that it's . . . we know that the government is bereft of ideas, that they're lifting those ideas. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I can report to them that we'll have more ideas coming from them every day until the next election. Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . well it would be a refreshing change to have a new idea a day. Madam Deputy Speaker, members from the opposite side of the House, they chastise us for coming up with ideas. Madam Deputy Speaker, just wait till we become government and are able to implement those ideas directly instead of having to wait to filter it through an NDP government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it's also interesting to look at how this PST cut was done in the forum of this legislature. Was it done in the Throne Speech? Was it? I ask members . . . the surprise. We came into this House, we heard the Throne Speech, and two days later we hear that there's going to be a PST cut. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, why? Why did it have to be that way? Why wasn't a major change like that included in the Throne Speech?

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, we hear of this meeting in the middle of the night, on Monday night, where some mean polling information came in. Some very mean polling information. The Throne Speech was already written but the Minister of Finance had under his arm some pretty mean polling information. It showed the NDP dropping like a rock. He said something radical had to be done. Something had to be done to change the focus of this Throne Speech that obviously was going nowhere on its own, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I can just imagine the debate that went on, Madam Deputy Speaker, in that caucus. Those on the left saying, how can we ever lower taxes? What did we campaign on? The NDP pull out their ads from the last election and it'll show that they said it couldn't be done; that we couldn't have competitive taxes in Saskatchewan. So those on the left were very upset, those that happened to have their copies of the election platform of the NDP in the last election.

But those on the right said, look at the polls. What are we? We're 14, 19, 23 points behind the Saskatchewan Party so forget about what we said in the last election. That's what the NDP said. We've got to do what the Sask Party advocates because we've got to close that gap.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's very transparent and the minister used that word himself last week. People can see right through it. The NDP aren't doing that for the right reasons. They're doing it to try to close that gap. I'd say, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's too little too late.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan residents know the

NDP has a record of decreasing the PST before an election, increasing it after an election. However, Madam Deputy Speaker, what will be different this time around is they won't have an opportunity to increase it because they won't be in government after the next election, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Saskatchewan is indeed tired of the NDP's high taxation policy — highest taxes in the country for a large part of their term in office. It's about time that the NDP listen to the call of Saskatchewan Party and decrease the PST.

Now if we look at just this term in government, Madam Deputy Speaker, and what the impact the PST has had on the provincial treasury, they increased . . . they broke that promise. They increased the PST for a period of three years. For three years they got \$160 million per year extra revenue, which they broke their word to Saskatchewan people. That's almost \$500 million that they've taken from Saskatchewan people and that they broke their word on. Now yes, this PST decrease will create some tax savings but the net benefit, Madam Deputy Speaker, the net benefit to the treasury will still say that this NDP government took in more money than they gave back even by this desperate attempt to stop their sagging popularity in the polls.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as is often the case, the NDP managed to make mistakes even when they were doing the right thing. Many businesses have expressed frustration that that they have had to correct the PST for the remaining days of October because many invoices are billed on a monthly basis.

And I know that the Minister of Finance, I know the Minister of Finance is chirping from his seat. He's upset about that. I'm merely articulating some of the emails that we've received and I've been copied on, that he's received directly. I know he will not stand up in this House and talk about them, Madam Deputy Speaker, so I feel it's important that I do that.

Many businesses did not know about the PST cut and had to be informed by people purchasing products in their stores which raises the question, Madam Deputy Speaker — a question that has been asked many times in this House — how much consultation did this government actually do?

How much consultation did they do when they talk about nurses in Saskatchewan? We've heard about SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses]. My colleague from Indian Head-Milestone has mentioned it many times — zero consultation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we just heard an eloquent speech from the member from Canora-Pelly about the Family Day. How much consultation was done there? Zero, Madam Deputy Speaker

And now we've found out on this, an important financial matter for the province, how much consultation was done — precious little, Madam Deputy Speaker. More notice, I think it's fair to say, should have been given to businesses so they could make the necessary adjustments without facing much hassle and making changes to invoices at the last minute.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the NDP may think they're off the hook as far implementing or trying to correct a broken promise

from last time around but, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is the Boughen report, the Boughen Commission report. It's something that the government I think just wishes would go away. They've done very little with it. They haven't implemented it. Indeed, they ignored most of the commission's recommendations. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I just want to read for the record what the Boughen Commission report talked about as far as implementing changes to retail sales taxes or changes to property taxes.

It talks about the need for competitive property taxes in Saskatchewan, Madam Speaker. It talks about a single person with a \$35,000 income. In this day and age, it's quite modest. They would pay in retail sales tax, \$516, Madam Deputy Speaker; in property taxes, an average of \$1,800, Madam Deputy Speaker. If the government chose to consult with people across the province, they would know this information as well.

A dual income family — both people with a total income of \$50,000 — the retail sales tax that they pay in this province, \$803; the property tax, \$2,400, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's all here on page 124 of the Boughen Commission report.

You hear very little from the government about this report because they chose to ignore it. A lot of fine work was done by Ray Boughen, and he made recommendations. And I know he would be very frustrated in knowing that the government virtually ignored this report, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the lack of consultation that has taken place is something that's quite concerning. It's something that this government has been doing time and time again. It's something that concerns us. And I know it concerns groups across this province. I know that public policy would be better done if the government adopted a policy of consulting with individuals.

Madam Deputy Speaker, at this time I've had a chance to make some points. But far be it for members of this side of the House to stand in the way of this Bill, since many of us has been talking about it for a long period of time. I'd like to move that this Bill go to committee.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 2, The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2006 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I'm pleased to move that The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2006 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of

Finance that Bill No. 2, The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2006 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[15:45

Bill No. 16

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Thomson that **Bill No. 16 — The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to rise and join the debate to offer some few . . . a few brief comments regarding the Act to amend The Tobacco Tax Act, 1998. The purpose of this Bill is to increase the tax on tobacco to offset the decrease of the PST.

I understand that the tax will be increased to 18.3 cents from 17.5 cents on every cigarette or tobacco stick. It'll also increase the tax on every gram of tobacco, on other cigarettes and tobacco sticks, and we're not sure about the cigars though. I understand the tax will apply to tobacco in bulk form but not to cigars and maybe we can have that explained in committee.

The government certainly recognizes that . . . the problem in tobacco and in our society. We have to really denormalize the use of tobacco. And much work has been done by an all-party committee. I know members from this House were . . . played an important role in that committee and it extended beyond partisan lines. It's something that all of us are concerned about. We're concerned as parents. We're concerned as members of society to make sure that tobacco use doesn't indeed increase in our province.

In controlling tobacco use there's a number of factors that come into play. There's the packaging. There's indeed an education component; something I want to speak about a little bit more. But there's also the costs, the rate of taxation, and the overall costs that play a factor.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, we know that smoking has a huge health cost. It weighs heavily on Saskatchewan's public finances, on the health care system. It's costing millions and millions of dollars to Saskatchewan taxpayers. But despite knowing all the dangerous side effects of smoking, the government still manages to make a huge profit from tobacco. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I was quite surprised I guess to find out in the mid-year report which was tabled last week that the actual increase in tobacco revenues, it's gone up quite substantially.

The budget estimate was \$165,400,000. It actually went up by \$19 million from forecast to projection. So I would say that we're probably not doing as good a job as we could as far as ensuring that there . . . ensuring that people don't increase their use of tobacco. Now that's \$20 million increase — nothing to sneeze at, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, it's something that we have to work harder at.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have to make sure that this money is indeed not just a tax grab. It has to be something that has some focus to it. I would suggest that the government should target where this money goes to ensure that consumption actually does decrease.

I know we're making some efforts, and I've listened closely to the Minister of Health and other members talk about the progress that we are making. But we know that with some demographics in our province, we still have a ways to go — specifically the demographic of young women. Those between 18 and 25 years old, Madam Deputy Speaker, have seen an increase in the use of tobacco, and that's something that could be done.

With the extra revenues, I would say that public education and schools is a good way to direct the money. Classes to indeed help all individuals stop smoking would be something that should be done.

And I hear the minister offering some information from his seat on exactly the breakdown of the increased revenues. And I look forward to further conversations with him to talk about exactly where the \$185 million is going to go and where it's broken down.

Madam Deputy Speaker, at this time I'd move that this Bill go to committee.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 16, The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2006 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I would move Bill No. 16 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 16, The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2006 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This Bill stands referred to

the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Bill No. 17

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen that **Bill No. 17 — The Miscellaneous Statutes (Municipal Collection of Other Taxes) Amendment Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a great pleasure to rise in this Hon. Assembly to debate Bill 17, The miscellaneous statutes Act.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Bill appears at first blush to introduce new requirements of municipalities — very onerous requirements, Madam Deputy Speaker — and possibly puts in place new penalties for municipalities that decide not to pass property tax revenue on to school boards in a prompt manner.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, municipalities face the prospect of having to pay interest on any funds that are withheld from school boards or other taxation authorities. And this Bill appears to be a knee-jerk reaction to the tax revolt that took place in Saskatchewan last year, where over 100 RMs [rural municipality] refused to pass property taxes on to school boards promptly.

Madam Deputy Speaker, since this NDP government has failed utterly to address the education portion of property tax, last year many RMs felt that a tax revolt was their only option and their only way to bring this serious taxation inequity to the attention of this government. And in spite of the \$1 billion surplus — in windfall oil and gas revenue mostly — that this government sits on, they've been unable to provide anything more substantial than band-aid solutions for the real problem, the property tax situation as it relates to funding K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] education. And they now seem to feel that their best option is to legislate these RMs into ending their revolt or face financial penalties in the future, Madam Deputy Speaker, for any such behaviour.

Madam Deputy Speaker, municipalities will now be required to provide monthly financial statements to school boards that indicate the amount of funds that have been collected through property tax. And it makes me wonder, it makes me question, Madam Deputy Speaker, what is the cost of that and who's to cover that cost? Is this government going to reimburse RMs and other municipalities for additional costs incurred as a result of this Bill? Or will they have to go back once again to property taxpayers, who are the most overtaxed property taxpayers in North America, and recover those funds as well?

Also, Madam Deputy Speaker, this Bill contemplates changes that are somewhat more benign. For instance the Saskatchewan municipal hail insurance premiums will no longer be collected in the same manner as municipal taxes. And this is being blamed on the actions of some RMs which have lead to delays in payment of premiums to Saskatchewan Municipal Hail Insurance.

Through this Bill, the government would also be able to take further action toward municipal governments that withhold property tax monies from school boards. So not only would they charge interest on those funds payable to the school boards or taxing authorities, but the minister would also be able to reduce or withhold revenue-sharing grants to offending municipalities who tend to temporarily withhold tax revenues from school boards or other taxation authorities.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, it makes me wonder why this government — sitting on \$1 billion of windfall revenue, spending like drunken sailors on all sorts of things — will not address this, the most serious taxation issue in the province. Why not deal with the underlying and real issue which is the funding of K to 12 education and this government's abdication of their responsibility to directly fund that, Madam Deputy Speaker.

This NDP government would rather go to war with municipalities than spend any part of their \$1 billion windfall to solve the problem of education funding. And accordingly, Madam Deputy Speaker, I move to adjourn this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Thunder Creek has moved to adjourn the debate on this Bill. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt this motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 9

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 9 — The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to stand today to talk about Bill No. 9 which is An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to The Public Service Regulations, 1999.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Bill deals with the removal of mandatory requirement exemptions in The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code. Now we have been . . . the human rights committee have been saying this for a number of years, as we have also . . . is why do we have a mandatory retirement age? And I'm wondering, I'm wondering who this really applied to because we know, we know that there's an awful lot of occupations where there is no retirement age. Take members of this Assembly, there's no retirement age for members of this Assembly. Farmers, now we know an awful lot of farmers that go well beyond age 65. So I wonder who this Bill really, really was directed at.

But I can say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I have received calls since, I've been elected, on this particular legislation where you must retire at age 65. And we, from this side of the

House, have been saying that for some time that we should remove the clause that you have to retire at age 65. Now the government has now instituted this which is just another example of the NDP government using ideas from the Saskatchewan Party.

We heard earlier that there was up to 42, up to 42 of our ideas, that the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs commented on that have been adopted by the NDP government. This to me just clearly illustrates that they do not have any plan. They have no imagination so they're using our policies. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, as you can tell by the amount of spending that's going on from that side of the House, they're sure trying to buy votes. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, there's no way that they can buy imagination.

Now when I look at this Bill, amending the Act to remove the mandatory retirement age, I've always looked at it as an issue between the employer and the employee. If a person has the ability to do the job he or she is hired to do, then why would we have an age retirement on it? And that's why we have on this side of the House been saying for some time that age should not be a factor. Age should not be a factor in one's ability to do the job. It should be whether they are capable of doing the job. And if a person is capable of doing his or her job, then why would we let age be the sole deciding factor as to whether they would stay employed or not?

[16:00]

We can look at any number of professions and look at it in the context that . . . Can you imagine putting an age retirement on a sports player, for an example? Can you imagine a hockey player saying, oh we're going to have to retire you at age 35 because that's where your most productive career ends, is 35. Well we know that's not true because an individual can be in great physical condition, be a great hockey player, and why should he or she have to retire strictly because of age? There is absolutely no reason that that should happen.

So why should it happen in the workplace? We look at an individual that . . . We will use a doctor for example. And gosh we sure know we've got a shortage of doctors. Why would we as a legislative body put an age restriction on the retirement of nurses or doctors if they are physically capable of doing the job and mentally capable of doing the job? So it's nice to see that this Bill is removing the mandatory retirement age.

Another issue that I think needs to be addressed is in the Bill it states that the amendments will not come into force until one year after Royal Assent. Now I'm a little bit curious about this because what happens in the interim? We know that we have received calls, I have received calls from people that are retiring now. And I'm wondering if there is a period of a one-year grace. If somebody is forced to retire because of age within the next couple of months, is that going to be retroactive? Can they come back to work? Or is it just cut and dried — one year after Royal Assent? Anybody prior to that will have to be forced to retire and not be able to come back to work.

Well there again, they are being forced to retire because of age and not because their ability to do the job, and I do not think that is correct. I think this age restriction should have been out

of there some time ago, and it based on an employee-employer relationship. If they are capable of doing the job, they should be allowed to do the job. That should be between the two parties involved.

Now basing it solely on age to me is a violation of the human rights. In my mind it's a violation of the human rights because why would somebody in a legislative body say, this is your retirement age like it or not?

Now I've dealt with an age retirement situation when it comes to occupational qualifications. And I can understand in occupational qualifications. And I know it's quoted in the minister's talk about firefighters and policemen. I can understand that. But I also question why it isn't between an employer and employee there also because just because somebody hits the age wall does that mean that they're not capable of doing the job? And I don't believe that that is actually the case. So it's nice to see that this is being changed, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Now there's some that will say that this could be abused, that some people that . . . And I think I've heard some people talk about some people will stay on, they'll stay on just to increase their pension or to collect a paycheque. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, if one is a supervisor and an individual is not doing his or her job, why would you keep him on? It's taking it and putting it squarely on the hands of supervisors where it should be. It should be a supervisor's right to determine whether an individual can do the job, is capable of doing the job, and performing the job that he or she is hired to do. And if they're not doing that job, there should be repercussions. If they can do the job, then why is there an age barrier on it?

Madam Deputy Speaker, generally we're very, very supportive of this Bill, but I know I have an awful lot of colleagues that would like to speak to this Bill so at this time I'll adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Wood River has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 9, The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2006. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — The debate is adjourned.

Bill No. 8

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 8 – The Paramedics Act** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I am glad I get the opportunity just to say a few words on this Bill. We were still in the process of checking with concerned citizens across the province, but we understand that this Bill actually grants self-regulation to paramedics under the Saskatchewan College of Paramedics.

We also have understood that at some point through the making of this Bill, or the concerns about what is in this Bill, firefighters and actually other groups have had some concerns, and we will be checking to make sure that those concerns have been addressed. We will also consult with various groups across the province to address the changes that are in this Bill, but at first glance there does not seem to be all that many things that are actually wrong with it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister, when he spoke on this Bill, talked about the consultation and working closely with the Saskatchewan College of Paramedics, organizations that represent the firefighters' sector members, and regional health authorities to develop the Act. And this Act will actually regulate 1,800 emergency medical service personnel in the province of Saskatchewan. He also talked about Mr. Dale Backlin, chairman of the College of Paramedics having input into the Bill, and that's good to see that consultation has taken place.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Bill actually talks about the self-regulation that will give the Saskatchewan College of Paramedics the legal authority to register, license, and discipline emergency medical responders and all levels of emergency medical technicians. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think there's very little that we can find wrong but are waiting for more consultation and more feedback from the community in general, from the people that this Bill will affect out there.

I would like to say though also, Madam Deputy Speaker, that especially those of us in rural Saskatchewan, but actually across all of Saskatchewan whether you're urban or rural, owe a great deal to our paramedics and our EMTs [emergency medical technician] and emergency service workers for the work they do. Whether it's . . . In our case in the rural ridings, whether it's an agriculture accident or a traffic accident or whatever the case may be that we rely — in many cases because of distance from hospitals — we rely on these peoples for life-saving, and to actually address the problems that are caused by that. And we owe a great deal to these people.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, at this time being that we are waiting for some more feedback from the public, we would like to adjourn this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melville-Saltcoats that we adjourn debate on this Bill. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 24

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Higgins that **Bill No. 24 — The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2006/Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm

River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to get up today to talk about this Bill and make a few points on it. One of the ones I see that it talks about is dealing with liquor in provincial and regional parks which have become a problem unfortunately over the last number of years. More so in parks — provincial parks, regional parks — that are close to cities or ones that I guess over the years have been kind of designated by the kids as party campgrounds and quite a bit of damage has been done at that end of it.

Out in my constituency we're quite a ways from a major city so the regional parks, it hasn't been a problem out there. They've been lucky I guess and that the parks, the people who use them parks out there so far have treated them with respect at that point of it. I guess my point is with the regional parks is I'm hoping out in our area that they will consult with the people that are running them and the groups out there before they do put on maybe just a ban straight across. That maybe the people that are running the parks would request it, saying yes it is a problem, or we would like to have alcohol banned throughout or have a designated area.

So my point on that particular one would be that they would talk to the regional managers, regional parks, regional groups that run some of the parks out in my area. Some of them, I think, the Kinsmen run. One or two, there's service groups that run them. There's rec groups from towns that run them.

They put quite a bit of time and effort into it and quite a few people go to them. They go to them on the weekends and do quite a lot. They do a little fishing, a little boating, and sit around the campfire. And the odd time, yes, they like to have, you know, one or two beer there. So I hope that if there is a problem . . . If there isn't a problem in parks, and if the people that are running them request that they still have maybe alcohol in certain areas or that it be used in a way that doesn't affect your neighbour or that you're not having a loud, rowdy party at that end of it. I haven't talked to any of my regional parks that much lately this summer, but I know that it hasn't been a problem.

And I know I will talk to them about this particular Bill to see that if it . . . what their feeling is, the managers, if it has increased in problem over the last few years. Because I know we seem to hear the stories on long May weekend of the parks . . . certain parks that are, you know, quite a bit of damage is done out there. And that's a shame because these are beautiful, beautiful parks. People go, take their families there to enjoy them and at that end of it, you know, can't end up enjoying them. So if this anyway helps that, I mean, yes that is a good thing.

But I also hope that they consult with the groups and the managers and the people that are running them that it's . . . If they don't request it or if they say, yes we still allow some liquor in maybe a designated area. Have a little area for guys or people if they want to camp in this area, there is a little bit of alcohol you can take and maybe have one or two drinks there. You know, as long as you're not bothering anybody and have an alcohol-free area in that . . . I know that, I think, that some of my regional parks have already kind of brought that in and it's

worked very well kind of on a voluntary basis.

Another thing this Bill talks about is dealing with . . . the way that it deals with charitable organizations. And that affects my constituency a lot, Madam Deputy Speaker, because I have a numerous amount of towns and villages that are out there that the only way they seem to be able to support their recreation facilities is through their charitable organizations that run it, whether that be the Kinsmen or the Elks service groups or just a recreation board that has gotten together. And they do various fundraisers.

I was just at one on Saturday night. Bladworth, they had what they called Bladworth variety night where . . . put on local talent and that money is keeping the hall going. I think the heating bill alone per month in January coming up will be \$500 just to heat a hall in a small town of Bladworth. So that groups have been working quite diligently over the last number of years to keep their rinks open, their halls open, their Legions opened.

I was in Simpson for Remembrance Day and that was . . . They put on a very good service but it was also a very sad day for . . . the simple fact is that was their last service that . . . as a Legion. They were giving up their charter. You know one of the reasons they just said, you know, and actually they're small town. They just didn't have members. But they had their own Legion hall. They've had it since nineteen . . . I believe '69 and they just couldn't maintain it anymore. The cost of heating it, to looking after it, was just always onerous on them. They had lot of trouble raising money and their members rolled, and they said we . . . you know, that was our whole focus was just trying to raise money for this hall.

Now I know this particular Bill talks about bingos and that's one of the events that quite a few hold. The newest craze out there I guess is the Texas hold 'em craze and I think this allows for charitable organizations to run tournaments at that end of it. And that's popular. I've seen a couple, been to a couple. I know in the city up here to the casino, it's huge. I think they used to start with . . . When they first had them they used to get maybe 30, 40 people. Now I know . . . I think the tournaments are well over a hundred with waiting lists going on.

So it's a latest craze where there'd also be in the casinos, in the local bars, Internet, or just . . . if you're just at a Christmas party. A Christmas party, I imagine that there will be a deck of cards out before long and people will be playing it. So I think this allows it . . . that for people that charitable organizations are run . . . that run . . . that want to run a mock casino, stuff like that, or just throw a tournament on by themselves. I believe this allows for that. Which is good, because it's . . . as you need more ideas out there.

If you've been involved in rural Saskatchewan — small towns — I mean every town throws on an event, but I mean every few years you just have to change it. People like to have something different, whether it be a steak night . . . some clubs will throw that on. Some will have a gambling night, a casino night. Some will have a raffle. Some will throw bingos. They're always . . . groups are always looking out there for a new way to draw people out. The people like to come to something that's new, that's different. And Texas hold 'em, I think maybe some of the

charitable organizations will probably be throwing on a few tournaments at that end of it, and going to that of it.

I see it also deals with announcing a 25 cent grant for every dollar the groups and organizations raise through licensed bingos, break-open ticket sales, raffles, Monte Carlo, Texas hold'em tournaments. That's a good idea. It's one of the few good ideas the government has had.

[16:15]

I know that I've talked about that before that you should be dispensing money to these charitable organizations to help them run the halls and the rec boards and rinks. Because right about now is when I travel around usually on Friday, Saturday night I'll go to a different senior hockey game in my constituency. And that's, you know that's one of the biggest concerns right now in November and December and January is, how are we going to keep this rink open? As towns start amalgamating . . . Even just close to me Kenaston and Hanley amalgamated their senior team so that's a little less revenue for each rink now. You know they won't have as many home games in each rink.

And if you have artificial ice, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's a huge expense. Power, power is a huge expense out there to run artificial ice out there, at that end of it. And groups need any kind of a help they can to help keep these — whether it's halls, whether it's rinks, recreation facilities — open.

And any way the government can help them they should at that end of it because that's the backbone of rural Saskatchewan. It's the backbone of — even in the cities here — the recreation facilities. You know, I know that, I imagine it's quite costly to run them here in the cities.

And it's mostly groups and organizations and volunteers that are doing that out there. Any rink, any hall, whether it be in urban Saskatchewan or rural Saskatchewan probably was put up and run and still run by volunteer organizations. It's the parents that are running the kids for hockey and for soccer. And they're the ones that are doing the fundraisers even here in Regina, Saskatoon, and major cities as well as they do in the small cities. That's what's keeping the groups going and the funding that helps keep the kids be able to go to these sports facilities and other facilities, at that end of it.

So looking at this I don't see I have a lot of problem with it but I know I want to talk to my regional park about some of the issues I raised and also some of the charitable organizations, see how . . . what they feel like it, and I know our critic will be. And I know that, Madam Deputy Speaker, there's going to be other members that are going to want to possibly talk to this particular Bill so with that I'll adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Arm River-Watrous has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 3

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Thomson that **Bill No. 3 — The Fuel Tax Accountability Act** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is a pleasure this afternoon to rise and speak to Bill No. 3, An Act to amend The Financial Administration Act, 1993 to Introduce Fuel Tax Accountability and to make related amendments.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the intent of this Act appears on the surface pretty simple, pretty easy for everyone to accept. However when we look a little deeper into the Act and possibly the reason for its coming forward, I'd like to refer to one item . . . actually two items that were in the Throne Speech. The first one stated, and I quote, "During this Session, my government will deliver a multi-year strategy of road and rail, to build a transportation network that will serve the economy of today."

My question, Madam Deputy Speaker, is, what have we been doing for the last 15 years? Have we not had a multi-year strategy for road and rail, or have we just been going from day to day? Like that seems fairly basic that there would always be a multi-year strategy for road and rail in a province like this.

My second point from the Throne Speech refers more directly to this proposed legislation. And it states that "In this Session, legislation will be passed to dedicate every dollar of fuel tax collected from motorists towards the maintenance . . . of Saskatchewan's road networks."

That seems also, Madam Deputy Speaker, pretty straightforward. But when you look a little further into the Act, there is certainly a number of questions at least that I come up with.

In the first section, 18.1, it specifically excludes:

amounts received by the Government of Saskatchewan from the Government of Canada for the fiscal year for the purpose of constructing, operating, preserving or maintaining transportation systems and infrastructure for motor vehicles;

So my question, Madam Deputy Speaker, is, if these funds are not going to be used for the purpose of which they are intended in receipt from the federal government, then how are these funds going to be utilized?

The next question I had, Madam Deputy Speaker, was in talking. . . There's a few exclusions of revenues that need not be used for the road programs. The first and the third I don't have a problem with. They're respecting specific taxes that are collected for locomotive fuel and aviation fuel. But the second item indicates that what will be excluded, including "any tax that is collected for the fiscal year respecting propane."

Now my point on propane, Madam Deputy Speaker, is at the present time I don't think there is a lot of propane being utilized

for highway traffic. This was certainly not the case four or five years ago when the price of propane was substantially less than the price of gasoline, and there's no reason to believe that that same discrepancy could not occur again in which case a lot of propane may again be used for highway purposes. And yet the tax that's collected from the sale of that very propane is not going to be directed towards the purpose for which it is being collected. So to me that's a bit of a discrepancy.

Another item that I have a bit of a problem with is that another item that's excluded is — and this is 18.1(1)(b)(v):

any grant or other financial assistance that is made or provided for the fiscal year pursuant to an Act, that relates to encouraging the use of ethanol or other fuel alternatives and that is prescribed in the regulations.

My question, Madam Deputy Speaker, is: does that mean that for every dollar that is allocated to promote ethanol and biofuels is going to be excluded from the money that goes towards highways? It seems like it would be a double-edged sword. It means if we promote biofuels we are, by doing that, reducing the amount of money that we need for our highway programs for which the fuel is going to be used. So I think there's some problems in the wording or the intent of that part of this proposed Act.

I guess my only other concern is the purpose of the Act obviously . . . or appears to be to set aside more funds for our highway projects. Now whether that in fact is the case is not perfectly clear. My other point and my last point, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that it's not only the conditions of the highways that are deplorable in this province. It's also the condition of the roads in our rural municipalities and the streets in our cities. And to me this does not satisfy these problems in the least.

So with that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would move to adjourn debate on this Bill. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Cut Knife-Turtleford has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 3, The Fuel Tax Accountability Act. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 12

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen that **Bill No. 12 — The Planning and Development Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to get up and talk about this particular Bill. It's quite a hefty piece of legislation; there's quite a few pages on it. I haven't had the time to go through it at that end of it. But

anything that deals with . . . when it comes to planning and development, when it comes to cities and towns and rural, urban, northern, southern areas of the province, I can see where it would be extensive. But that particular . . . With that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I could see why it would interest every group out there.

This particular piece of legislation, I think, will need to be consulted with quite a bit because it will affect villages and towns, major cities, RMs. It will impact First Nations. It will impact . . . I think it even does some changes to the northern Act when it comes to that. So I think this particular piece of legislation will need to be consulted with and out there quite a bit.

When you talk to cities and towns in my constituency, I can relate to the planning and development, because just about any town that I talk to now, what they talk about right now is growth. They want to draw businesses. They want to know what's the best way to draw business in. A lot of towns have economic development officers. They've hired them. They've had a lot of . . . They've had meetings. And a lot of it deals with when you're bringing in a business there is . . . you're changing the face of the town, that you get into the planning and development end of it. It could be a small business which may not affect a town very much or it could be a huge plant.

Like in Wynyard, I have Lilydale's which has come there, has drawn a huge amount of workers to that area and helped that town in that area immensely at that end of it. But to bring a company in to that town that size probably would have had to do quite a bit of planning. A business of that size would have naturally would have . . . needs a huge water supply — a good water supply at that — and which Wynyard luckily had. But that also takes planning and it also takes development, at that end of it, and the foresight of the people in Wynyard to be able to plan and develop that. And also it would need to, when you . . . it would need to. . . the word I'm looking for is easements on land and at various . . . a huge tract of land at that, that the town would have to set aside as business development.

Now I've had a couple of smaller towns that did that now. They kind of zoned their area for business development that only businesses can set up on, which is a good idea. That was probably some of the things they've got from the residents in their town because everybody kind of, you know, when you get to town, everybody likes it. You live in town, you want it to be quiet. You don't want trucks rolling around. Or your kids are playing; you don't want them close to where there's an industrial site or industrial area.

So a lot of the towns are zoning and planning and developing industrial areas where they can set up, businesses can set it, set up there. And that's what businesses want too. They want an area that's . . . They don't want to be in the residential area. They want to be off to the side if they can. But they also want good roads in at that end of it, and good service for the area — whether it be water or sewer or whatever needs that they particularly need when they're setting up that business. And I don't know if this Bill deals a bit with that but when you talk about planning and development, that them issues naturally have to be raised of it.

Also when you're dealing with RMs, I know there's always quite a bit of talk about intensive livestock operations. Whenever an intensive livestock operation talks about moving into a particular RM, it always evokes feelings — some of it very passionate — people for and people against it. So that's where you need good planning and development. And RMs have, a lot of them are looking at passing certain pieces of legislation that follow it or zoning it in maybe part of the RM.

I know at our RM we have an intensive livestock operation that's west of our farm. And you start going west from us, I think the nearest town between Bladworth and Hawarden is something like 45 to 50 miles across country, about 40 miles I would say, across country. And in between that, very few farms if you get to western part of my constituency. You get to the . . . You start going east, there is farms. They'll seem to be a little smaller. But in the western area, a lot of cattle, livestock. Some of the farms are huge.

So they set up an intensive hog operation there and basically had no, no opposition at all. I mean, you know, because there wasn't, the nearest farm is like, you know, miles and miles away from it. And it worked very well for the operation. It worked very well for the RM. It brought in extra tax money at that end of it. It also helped employment for the local towns. There's probably about, right now, probably 12 people that are working, never mind the spinoff.

I know a small trucking outfit has sprung up from that that they haul the hogs once a week and moving them either from barn to barn or moving them to slaughter at that end of it. So he started with one truck and now I think he has about five or six trucks that are hauling. He's got local neighbours. They buy a one-ton and a trailer and they haul.

[16:30]

So it applies to employment and then you get the spinoff from the trucks, the maintenance, tires, whatever, you know. That's how business works. That's how business helps grow this province at that particular end of it.

So when you're looking at planning and development, any kind of a municipal Bill dealing with that, you should be looking at is this Bill going to help RMs? Is it going to help villages? Is it going to help towns? Is it going to help cities — Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw? Is it going to help them grow? That's what you have to be looking at with this particular piece of legislation . . . any legislation you're dealing with planning and development at that end of it, because it should allow for the growth, for aggressive growth or growth industries. It should be allowing for a city or village or town or RM to grow businesses. There shouldn't be any roadblocks with this particular piece of legislation.

I know our critic will be looking at it and I know we will be passing it out to numerous, numerous interest groups. Because like I say, this particular Bill, basically it will affect everybody from one corner of the province to the other at that end of it when you're talking about planning and development at that end of it.

In the past unfortunately this province hasn't had a very good

growth agenda. We haven't had a very good record of growing businesses especially in rural Saskatchewan. Even the cities haven't grown. I know Regina. . . Since I've been a kid coming up here it may have grown on the outside but basically it's more the doughnut effect. It's more people leaving the inner city moving to the out. It hasn't really grown in population — very little since probably over the last 40 years.

And the city, your capital city should probably have doubled in size I would say in 40 years. If you look at Calgary or Vancouver, Toronto, a lot of them cities over 40 years have doubled, doubled in size, a lot of them tripled. And I don't think there's many cities in Saskatchewan that can make that boast unfortunately.

And then that's sad because if you want to keep up your programs in here you need growth. And the only way you're going to get growth, Madam Deputy Speaker, is through business, is business bringing in people, business coming in. And with that comes jobs. And with the jobs come people and with that comes money and with that more jobs and a better way of life. And that's what this province unfortunately has been lacking over the last . . . Especially under this last . . . present government we had there's been very little growth.

In my constituency it's been nothing but shrinking at that end of it with businesses. Like I say every town in my area for say maybe except Dundurn, which has got a little bit of spinoff from Saskatoon as a bedroom community, is shrinking. Very little businesses coming here and a lot of it isn't because . . . It's not the fault of the small towns. A lot of it is the fault of the provincial government. A lot of the roadblocks said that tax is one, road infrastructure is another one. I've had businesses say, you know, I'd like to set up out there, but they say pfft, you know, we can't get our product in and out.

I'll use an example at Drake. They make . . . town of Drake and Bergen trailers. He said, we made trailers, he said. We're pulling two of them to Saskatoon. We got to Saskatoon and Regina, he said we had to repaint them. The highway was so bad that we had to repaint them. So now he says, we're loading them on a flatbed. That's an extra cost I would have if I wasn't set up in . . . if I was set up in Calgary or whatever or Saskatoon or Regina, he said. He said getting them . . . He said once I get to a major highway I'm all right, but he said getting out of Drake, down that highway, he said I was pitting up trailers. And you can't sell a brand new trailer with chip rocks on it. So that's just one example out there of where the government should be doing some planning and development when it comes to helping businesses grow.

I've got Highway 20 that are looking at a biodiesel plant and also looking at a feedlot combined, but they need a primary weight highway. They told me how much they lose on a secondary highway. If they set up . . . They did their business plan. I mean they're very sharp; they've gone through everything. And they've got it figured out, if they have to haul secondary weights compared to a feedlot and a biodiesel plant that's set up along a primary weight highway, what they're going to lose.

It was something like — I've got the figures — it was something like \$20 an animal or \$15 as they let it go finished at

that end of it. And he said, sure it doesn't sound like much per animal but you start sending out five semi loads a day and you start adding that up. He says, a lot of times that's our profit, profit margin at that end of it.

And so that's why a lot of towns, Deputy Speaker, are struggling out there with businesses coming in at that end of it. I would . . . When it comes to planning and development the towns have been I think bending over backwards trying to get businesses to come to Saskatchewan at that end of it. They've been basically doing whatever they can the last . . . since I've been elected and I know even before I've been elected. They've did whatever they could, whether they form committees, do anything to help rural Saskatchewan grow, the towns.

And anything the government can do could help it. I mention that's one of infrastructure and that when I've attended many meetings and road infrastructure comes up at every meeting. Because throughout my constituency, secondary highways are in very poor shape. It is some places on 15 Highway east, east of Kenaston . . . I've told the story in here about the lady coming from BC [British Columbia] that ended up in the ditch. But he says, people of Watrous say I can't haul stuff there. There's businesses, I can't haul stuff up and down there. I mean it's a muddy, gravel road. It's not even a good gravel road any more because it's so banged up and potted up. He says I can't even bring stuff down there any more, he said, so we're either bringing it way around which costs us way extra money.

So you get a business coming there. You got an entrepreneur that says, yes Watrous, be a nice place to set up. They've got a good water supply. Yes, we've got some workers there. And then he looks at the highway, and he says, but how am I going to get a . . . I got to bring in 10 semis a day, and I got to take it down this highway. He said, I can't do that, you know. So that's a strike against that town of Watrous or whether it be Wynyard, the same situation.

Many of my towns, if they're not on No. 11 Highway, have no roads whatsoever at that end of it. So you wonder how you can, Madam Deputy Speaker, grow these towns where they talk about planning and development at that end of it. And that's something they should be addressing, you know. It's all right to change the Act and that, but some days you're going to have to address your fundamental problem out there — one of them is infrastructure at that end of it — if you're going to grow this province.

Now I know this also is . . . I just read briefly the . . . because I think this is only the second time it's been up for adjourned debates on the minister's remarks. And it deals, talking about changing the northern Act, which I know very little about. So, you know, our critics like I say will have to be looking at that end of it.

But like I said, this particular piece of legislation affects . . . it's going to affect the whole province at the end of it. And I hope it affects the right way because a lot of times I can remember when the civics Act was brought in, I think there was problems with that particular piece of legislation and I think problems that we had started raising. But not so much us. It was problems that SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] had raised. And eventually, if I remember, that particular piece

of legislation was pulled, if I remember right, and then amended.

So with this particular Act too I'm hoping that they consulted with the groups out there because we will be too. And I hope that they will be consulting with them. And there is many groups out there because like I say this affects RMs right on up to your largest city and from one corner of the province to the other corner, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So with that, I will adjourn debate on this particular piece of legislation. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Arm River-Watrous has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 6

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Addley that **Bill No. 6 — The Youth Drug Detoxification and Stabilization Amendment Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. An Act to amend The Youth Drug Detoxification and Stabilization Act. This Act amends current legislation, and we think that's good. It strengthens numerous clauses and provides clarification to others. The role of the police officers dealing with youth is made clear. Youth rights are now made clear in the legislation, and confidentiality rights are also clearly stated.

On the surface, we like what this Bill is saying. It's got some meat to it and we're pleased with it, but we have some questions. We must know that it protects the most vulnerable of our society. These are our children and it can be anyone's child, including ours, and we must be very careful. Under the influence of drugs, youth cannot make the choice. The drug has control and they can't make those decisions. So this Bill addresses that and we're glad to see that.

We understand that involuntary care — taking these kids and locking them up — it's a very sensitive issue and you have to watch human rights and all. But I think it brings in the rights of parents and grandparents. There's concern with these children and up until now, they haven't been able to do what they know has to be done. So it's protecting these children.

This Bill also must be monitored very carefully. Because we're walking a fine line, you have to watch when that line is crossed. So we'd like to see that it's monitored and watched all the way along. Even once the Bill is passed, there must be check valves and safeties to make sure that they're looked after.

Youth are our future. They are our today, and we need to

protect them. I'd like to compare them to a new blooming flower that's very gentle and soft and hasn't been weathered and handled yet, and it can't take it and needs protection.

House now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:42.]

We're hoping that the government has consulted all of the stakeholders. This has been a weakness, we feel, of the other side. So we're asking them to please, please check with the stakeholders very carefully. It's a good Bill to start with, and we'd like to see more consultation on it. And at this time, I'd adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 7

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 7 — The Public Health Amendment Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member for Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. This Bill deals with public disclosure and health inspectors. And on the surface we're looking at this Bill, but we haven't had any feedback from our stakeholders yet. And once again we're very concerned whether consultation has been done. As we've discovered in some other Bills in the past, this consultation hasn't been done. And it is very important and we haven't had any confirmation from our stakeholders. So at this time we'd adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — The member for Batoche has moved that debate be adjourned on item no. 9, Bill No. 7. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — That is carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, in order to accommodate the works of the Standing Committee on Human Services, as well as the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure, I move that this House do now adjourn.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — The Government House Leader has moved that this House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — That is carried. This

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