



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

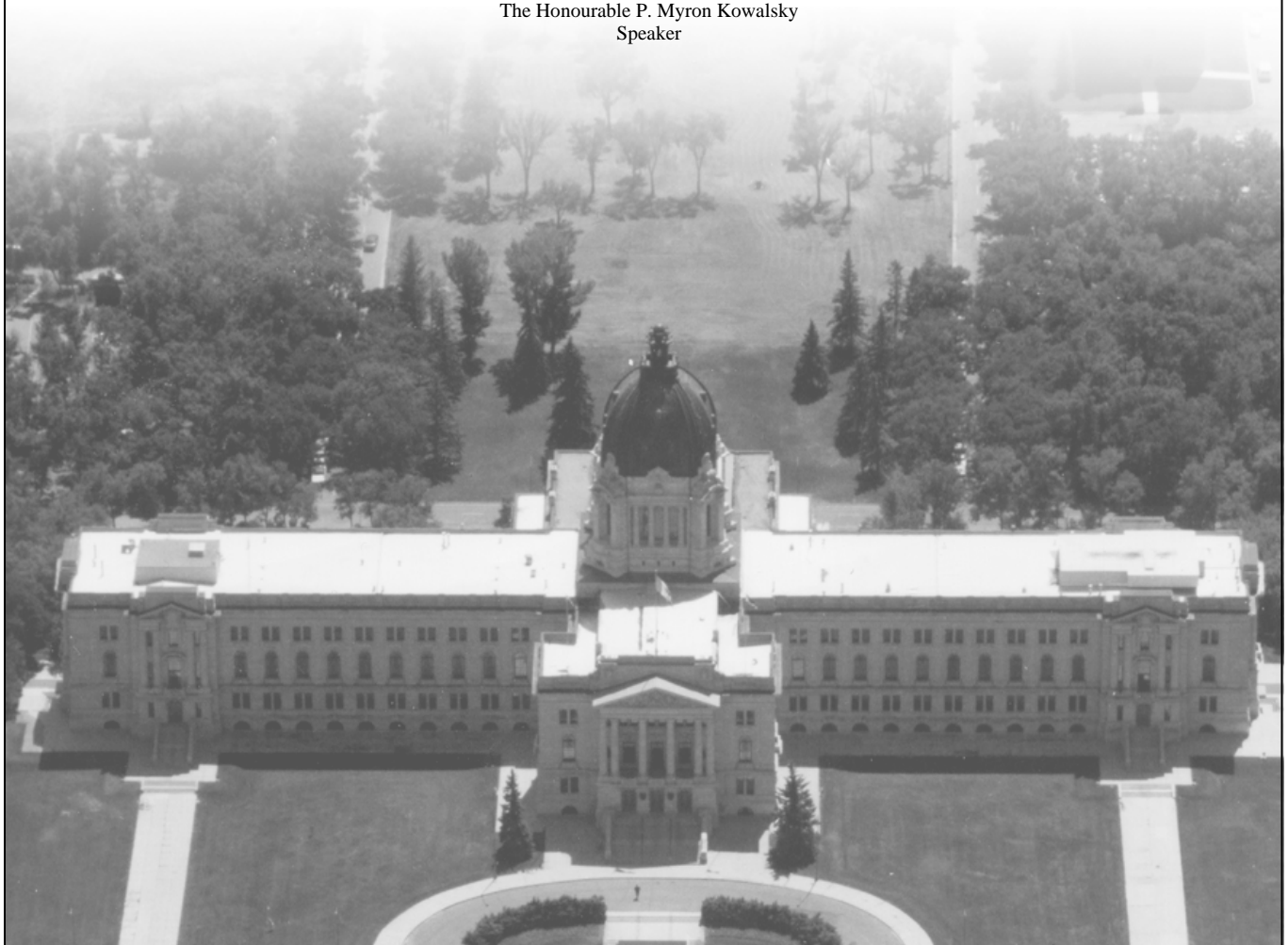
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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.]

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

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I have a petition to present today in regards to the drug Avastin, 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 action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

The petitions today are signed by the good folks of the communities of Grenfell, Wolseley, and Sintaluta. I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Today I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents that belong to my colleague and other of my colleagues around the province concerning the dialysis unit request for the Broadview Union Hospital. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement a strategy that will see a dialysis unit placed in the Broadview Union Hospital.

As in duty bound, your petitions will ever pray.

Madam Deputy Speaker, today's three pages of petitions are signed by individuals from the communities of Regina, Broadview, Cowessess, Humboldt, Fleming, Saskatchewan; and Regina. I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to rise on behalf of people who are concerned about Highway No. 310:

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

The people that have signed this petition are from Wadena,

Wynyard, and Kuroki. I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a petition from harrowed drivers over the narrow Highway No. 5. Madam Speaker, the prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade and widen Highway 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

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

Madam Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from the communities of Bruno, Saskatoon, and Rosetown, as well as Kelvington. And I am pleased to present it on their behalf.

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

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

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

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

Madam Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals all from the community of Carnduff. I so present.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of constituents who are very concerned with this government's addiction to gravel. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade and maintain Highway 22, so it can return to being a safe and economical route for Earl Grey area families and businesses.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Madam Deputy Speaker, come from the communities of Earl Grey and Southey. I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Again I rise today with petitions of citizens that are concerned of the safety of Highway No. 5. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

And to demonstrate what an important east-west corridor that this is for our province, the signatures, Madam Deputy Speaker, are from Foam Lake; Cudworth; Saskatoon; Blaine Lake; Melfort; Naicam; Humboldt; Bruno; Preeceville; Muenster; Watson; Clavet; Englefeld; Airdrie, Alberta; Calgary, Alberta; Edmonton, Alberta; and Renver, Manitoba. I so present.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Today I rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens of this province who are very concerned about this government's two tiered health system. And the prayer reads:

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

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

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is signed by citizens of Carievale, Lampman, Carnduff, and Glen Ewen. I so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce another petition from the citizens of Wilkie who are concerned about their reduction 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 Wilkie Health Centre and special care home 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 Wilkie and district. I so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise today to present another petition on behalf of the 600 children under six years old and their parents that live in the Arbor Creek area of Saskatoon needing a much-needed elementary school in that area. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement an allocation of financial resources this year to build an elementary school in Arbor Creek.

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

The petitioners today come from Chotem Crescent, Peters Cove, and Kenderdine Road in northeast Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the government's handling of the health care 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 action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, signatures to this petition are from Wolseley, Broadview, and Grenfell. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens calling on that Highway 15 from the junction from Highway 11 east to junction of Highway No. 2 to be repaired and resurfaced:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that this portion of Highway 15 be repaired and resurfaced immediately to remove the safety hazard to all motorists who rely on this vital road for transportation and economic purposes.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I have a petition today from citizens concerned with the government's failure to fund the cancer drug Avastin. The prayer reads as follows:

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

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

Madam Deputy Speaker, this particular petition is signed by citizens from the towns of both Wilcox and the city of Regina. I so present.

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

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

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

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

From the good people of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise today with a petition regarding the widening of Highway No. 5, a highway which passes through my constituency of Saskatoon Southeast. I will read the prayer for relief:

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

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

Madam Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Saskatoon, Quill Lake, Humboldt, and among them they include a former NDP [New Democratic Party] MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] candidate.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, I have another petition urging this government to fix Highway 36. And I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to invest the needed money to repair and maintain Highway 36.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by the good people of Coronach. And I so present.

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I have a petition to present on behalf of constituents from Carnduff. The petition reads:

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

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

These petitioners, Madam Deputy Speaker, come from the

communities of Carnduff, Carievale, and Gainsborough. I so present.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to present a petition today on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are very concerned about the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to continue to actively and strongly support the position that it is the right of all western Canadian farmers to decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, not the federal cabinet.

Madam Speaker, I proudly present this petition on behalf of various Saskatchewan citizens.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, I too am pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are very concerned about the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to continue to actively and strongly support the position that it is the right of all western Canadian farmers to decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, not the federal cabinet.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I so present, Madam Deputy Speaker.

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.

[13:45]

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Ms. Harpauer: — I give notice that I shall on day no. 24 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: in the Kindersley area, is SaskPower conducting conversion of oil wells from natural gas to electricity? And, if so, is there an associated fee and what is that fee?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for

Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 24 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Culture, Youth and Rec: which persons or companies received contracts from the department to provide advertising or marketing research services for the fiscal year 2006-2007?

I have a similar question back to year 2001-2002.

I have a written question. I shall on day no. 24 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation: what was the total number of dollars received by each advertising or marketing research firm contracted for services for the fiscal year 2006-2007, back to the year 2001-2002?

And my last question. I give notice I shall on day no. 24 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Culture, Youth and Rec: how many firms submitted a proposal the last time the department's advertising contract was tendered?

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 24 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskWater: for the following land description, the northwest quarter of 18-2-8 west of the second, when was the fence completed? Was the project tendered and, if so, who won the contract and what was the cost of materials and labour? And furthermore were the labour and material paid for separately?

Thank you.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 24 ask the government the following question:

To the Premier: which person or companies received contracts from Executive Council to provide advertising or marketing research for the year 2006?

I have similar questions for the years 2005 and 2004.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I further give notice that I shall on day no. 24 ask the government the following question:

To the Premier: what is the criteria used by Executive Council when choosing a tender for advertising and/or marketing research services?

Madam Deputy Speaker, I further give notice that I shall on day no. 24 ask the government the following question:

To the Premier: what was the total number of dollars Executive Council spent on advertising and marketing research services for the year 2006?

I have similar questions for the years 2005 and 2004. Thank you.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I have a number of questions to present today. I give notice that I shall on day no. 24 ask the government the following questions:

To the Minister of Health: what was the number of long-term care beds in the Keewatin Yatthé Region for the years 2002, 2003?

I have similar questions for the following years up to 2005-2006. And I also have questions regarding this very same thing regarding the Kelsey Trail Health Authority as well as Sun Country Health Authority for the respective years.

I also give notice that I shall on day no. 24 ask the government the following questions:

How many people are currently waiting or on the waiting list for long-term care in the Cypress Health Region?

I have the similar question for all the health regions in the province, be it Five Hills, Saskatoon, or Kelsey Trail.

I so present. And while I'm on my feet, Madam Deputy Speaker, I also have questions to the Minister of Health. I give notice that shall on day no. 24 ask the government the following questions:

To the Minister of Health: when did the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency submit a proposal to Sask Health for a provincial colorectal screening program?

I have a number of questions regarding the colorectal screening program that the minister has mused about that we have raised in this House. I have a number of questions regarding that and so, Madam Deputy Speaker, instead of reading all the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well I certainly can read all the questions if that's what it would take, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I shall give notice to the government that on day 24 I shall ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: has the government funded a study to determine the benefits of a provincial colorectal screening program?

I shall give notice on day no. 24 that I shall ask the government the following question:

When does the government intend to implement the recommendations from the Canadian Cancer Society on a

provincial colorectal screening program?

I shall give notice that on day no. 24 I should ask the government the following question:

When did the Canadian Cancer Society ask the government to consider a colorectal screening program?

I shall give notice on day no. 24 and ask the government the following question:

Who are the members of the expert panel that is examining how a colorectal cancer screening program would work?

I shall give notice on day no. 24 and ask the government the following question:

What is the mandate of the expert panel that is examining how a colorectal cancer screening program would work?

I shall give notice on day no. 24, ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: how many times has the expert panel that is examining how a colorectal screening program would work, have they met?

I shall give notice on day no. 24, ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: can you please provide a copy of the minutes from all the meetings held by the expert panel that is examining how a colorectal cancer screening program would work?

And I give notice that on day no. 24 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: when is the expert panel that is examining how a colorectal screening program would work expected to release its findings?

Those are the questions that I have on the colorectal program. And I'm glad that the members are starting to listen now because I certainly have a number of other questions that if they so choose, I could read through.

And the question is: and I shall give notice that day no. 24 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: what was the total number of acute care beds occupied by patients that were waiting for placement in a long-term care facility in Cypress Hills region for the years 2002-2003 following through to the year 2004-2005, 2005-2006?

But not only for that health authority. I have the same questions for each and every health authority for those same respective years. And I'm glad the government is listening now. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 24 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: does the federal government's decision to allow seniors couples to split income for the purposes of calculating federal income tax affect provincial income taxes in any way? If so, how?

I give notice that I shall on day no. 24 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: does the provincial government intend to allow seniors couples to split pension income for the purposes of calculating their provincial income tax? If not, what problems will this cause in terms of tax filing for the Saskatchewan seniors as Saskatchewan income tax is currently based on the federal rules for calculating taxable income?

Another question:

To the Minister of Finance: how much would it cost the Saskatchewan government to allow seniors couples to split income in the calculation of Saskatchewan income tax?

Again a further question:

To the Minister of Finance: how much would it cost the Saskatchewan government to allow senior couples to split all of their taxable income in the calculation of Saskatchewan income tax?

And one final question, Madam Deputy Speaker:

To the Minister of Finance: how much would it cost the Saskatchewan government to allow income splitting for all Saskatchewan couples for the purposes of calculating provincial income tax?

I so present.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. Today we're joined in the Speaker's gallery with 19 members of the public service in the province of Saskatchewan. They come from departments of Advanced Education and Employment; Agriculture and Food; Community Resources; Corrections and Public Safety; Culture, Youth and Recreation; Environment; Health; Learning; and the Legislative Assembly.

Madam Deputy Speaker, they're here for the day. They've had a chance, as I understand it, to tour the building. They've gotten some historic information about the legislature. They've been to the Legislative Library. They're going to meet with the member of the opposition and myself about the public service. As well,

they'll be meeting with the Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, included in this group is Reiko Nakatsuchi, who is a international student from Japan who's presently doing a Master of Public Administration at the University of Regina, and she is here as a intern to the deputy minister of Advanced Education and Employment, Bonnie Durnford. And Reiko has been to my office many, many times and I know that she really is enjoying her time in Canada and plans to return with all of her skills to Japan.

So I would ask all members of the Assembly to welcome these public servants to our Assembly and in particular welcome Reiko to Saskatchewan and our Assembly. Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, it's my privilege to also join with the members opposite in welcoming the civil servants to the House today. It's, I think, a valuable process for them to come through the legislature and to see the operation of the legislature, in the same fashion it will be for members to enjoy working with these people through the rest of the year. Having the people come here, they get a sense of what goes on here and what our needs are.

I look forward to meeting with those individuals later on in the afternoon. I want to welcome them to what is their legislature and would like to also join with the minister opposite in welcoming Reiko as well. Thank you, Madam.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Swift Current.

Vanier Cup in Saskatoon

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Well last week, Saskatoon was shining and so was the entire province. And it wasn't just the sunny day that many of us enjoyed at Griffiths Stadium for the Vanier Cup; it was the entire week. The week that began with the coaches' press conference when Coach Towriss and Coach Constantin talked a little bit about the football game coming up on Saturday. And then an amazing awards gala at TCU Place, Madam Deputy Speaker, that was very, very well attended, and where Teale Orban of the Regina Rams was nominated for the Hec Crichton and Jordan Rempel of the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] Huskies was nominated for offensive lineman of the year.

Later that night, it was Great Big Sea at the field house. I think 3,500 people packed the field house and enjoyed a great night there. The next day, the Russ Jackson luncheon was held. And there were awards given out honouring volunteers, assistant coaches, the coach of the year and, of course, academic excellence amongst the CIS [Canadian Interuniversity Sport]

football players. And that night, the Road Hammers culminated another great night of entertainment at the field house.

Then it was time for the big game on Saturday, Madam Deputy Speaker, and while we all wish the result would have been a little bit differently, it was an amazing thing to see 12 to 13,000 people enjoying the game. It was a little chilly there to be sure, but people enjoyed the warmth of the crowd. And it was a sunny day, and it was great football although, as I say, we wish the result would have been a little bit differently.

So we do congratulate the Rouge et Or of Laval on their win. We congratulate the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] Huskies who against many, many odds got there in the first place. We congratulate them. To Hugh Vassos and the host team, the volunteers — hundreds of them — well done, you made Saskatchewan proud.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Madam Deputy Speaker, the Huskies football program is undoubtedly one of the strongest in Canadian interuniversity sport. Since 1989, the Huskies have been to the Vanier Cup nine times and have won the coveted national championship three times. So while it was a bitter day in Saskatoon on Saturday, both in terms of temperatures and in terms of the hopes of Saskatoon Huskie football players and fans, it was still a Vanier Cup for Huskies and for the people of Saskatchewan to be proud of.

Madam Deputy Speaker, although the outcome on the field was not the one that we were all hoping for, Madam Deputy Speaker, this was a Vanier Cup to be remembered. This was the first Vanier Cup held outside the province of Ontario, and it was the first Vanier Cup that had been sold out with nearly 13,000 football fans coming out to battle the minus 23, 25 degree for over five hours.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the entire weekend was filled with activities which gave this year's Vanier Cup an amazing festival atmosphere. It also provided a unique opportunity for Huskie alumni to gather and celebrate in true Huskie football tradition and to cheer on the 2006 team.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank the organizers and volunteers for this really outstanding Vanier Cup weekend. It was truly an amazing football weekend which could have only taken place in Saskatchewan. I ask all members to join me in congratulating all the players and coaches of the 2006 Huskie football team on another great season. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member for Moosomin.

Moosomin Moose Make a Million

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

Deputy Speaker, I believe the headline in the recent *Moosomin Spectator* says it all. It says, “Moose make it a million.” It goes on to say:

The Moosomin Moose have done it again. For the fourth time, the Moose have taken to the ice and raised more money for the integrated health care facility than anyone would have thought possible.

The 30-hour Moose Game held Nov. 3 and 4 raised \$150,000, pushing the total raised directly through the four games to more than \$655,000.

Including the indirect fundraising . . . the Moose are being credited with raising \$1 million for the integrated health care facility.

[Former mayor of Moosomin] Mayor Don Bradley praised the Moose for their efforts, and also thanked surrounding communities for working together to make the new facility a reality.

[14:00]

He said:

“The real winners in this thing are the people of the area.” . . . “It’s been a pleasure to work with the mayors and councils of our neighboring communities. [And] This wouldn’t have happened if we hadn’t sat down together and said, ‘let’s make . . . [it] work.’”

And make it work, they have. The Moosomin integrated health care facility is currently under construction on the east side of Moosomin. The 85-bed integrated facility will replace Moosomin Union Hospital, Moosomin nursing home, and Eastern Saskatchewan Pioneer Lodge.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think a big hand of congratulations goes to the Moose, all the volunteers who participated in this tremendous fundraising event. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the Deputy Premier, the member for Yorkton.

Ukrainian Canadian Congress Honours Two Yorkton-Area Women

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, Ukrainian-Canadians have played a vital role in helping to build our country, build our province, and build our communities. The Saskatchewan provincial section of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress recently held its 12th annual Nation Building & Community Recognition Awards.

People of Ukrainian descent have strong roots in the Yorkton region, and that’s why I’m happy to rise today to congratulate two of my constituents who have received awards — Evelyn Hull and Taisa Trischuk.

Willowbrook’s Evelyn Hull, who works at the Yorkton Regional Health Care Centre, received a Leadership Award for her devotion to the preservation and development of Ukrainian culture. She co-founded the Willowbrook and district Veselka dance club and taught young students about pysanka, Ukrainian tradition in decorating eggs. She has been active in the parish council at St. Mary’s Ukrainian Catholic Church of Beaverdale.

Yorkton’s Taisa Trischuk received the Youth Achievement Award. Her interests in Ukrainian and other forms of dance led her to travel around the world, including Brazil and Holland. She has also been active in the Red Cross, Kids Help Phone line, the Terry Fox Run, and she’s now a student of the University of Saskatchewan.

I ask all members to join with me in congratulating the important contributions that Ukrainian descent have made here in Saskatchewan and to help me congratulate both Evelyn and Taisa for their achievements. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Weyburn Army Cadet Takes Part in Mont Blanc Expedition

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, the army cadets have a long tradition in Weyburn, dating back to 1914. And this year one cadet added to the proud tradition of 2302 Weyburn Legion Cadet Corps. Madam Deputy Speaker, this past September, 17-year-old Anthony Thompson of Weyburn took part in the annual Army Cadet international expedition. This year’s trek was the Tour du Mont Blanc, an eight-day hiking expedition around Mont Blanc, the highest peak in Western Europe.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Anthony’s trip took him first to Halifax, then to London, and then parts of Italy, Switzerland, and France. Anthony’s colleagues in the Army Cadets and indeed the people of Weyburn take pride in this accomplishment as Anthony was one of only 16 cadets across Canada who were selected for this trip, and the only cadet from Saskatchewan to take part — something which gives Anthony a lot of pride.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Anthony is a fifth-year cadet. Anthony was selected in part after he placed second provincially on this year’s National Star Certification exam. Madam Deputy Speaker, for a young man who had never been further east than Winnipeg, the Tour du Mont Blanc was certainly an incredible experience for Anthony.

Anthony entered the cadets to learn more about the military. His experiences have led him to decide to continue on with a military career after he completes his education. Madam Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the people of Weyburn Big-Muddy, I offer my congratulations to Anthony on this worthy accomplishment. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Alumni Crowning Achievement Award

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Elaine McNeil has distinguished herself in Saskatchewan through her commitment to education, her professional dedication, and her compassion for people around the world. For these reasons, she has recently been awarded an Alumni Crowning Achievement Award by the University of Regina.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Elaine began her career in international development as a volunteer nurse in Malawi, Africa. When she returned to Canada, she enrolled in the U of R's [University of Regina] Faculty of Education where she earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree while raising five children with her husband, Will. Madam Deputy Speaker, Elaine eventually began working as an international project coordinator for SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] and has worked tirelessly to raise the profile of international development. She has been instrumental in creating co-operative relationships between Canadian institutions and developing countries around the world.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Elaine and I go way back, as we are both alumni of St. Paul's School of Nursing. We also share a passion for Africa, not only for its many social and political problems, but for its unique opportunities in partnership and friendship. In January, Elaine is off to Africa again to continue her work.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd like to invite all members to join with me in congratulating Elaine McNeil on her selection for an Alumni Crowning Achievement Award. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Cuts to Literacy Programs

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have repeatedly heard this NDP government take cheap shots at the Saskatchewan Party for federal cuts to literacy programming. We've heard the member from Regina Coronation Park talk about how these cuts to literacy amounted to the Saskatchewan Party standing against Saskatchewan people.

The member from Regina Walsh Acres has criticized these cuts, yet ironically she had her own problems reading the history of the new Coca-Cola.

Even the Minister of Finance has accused the opposition of wanting to cut literacy programs, but the truth is, Mr. Speaker, cutting funds to literacy programs is an idea that belongs to him and him alone. The NDP has tried to gloss over their own hypocritical record of cuts to regional library services while pointing the finger at the federal government. The NDP government has downloaded the cost of maintaining these regional libraries and the service that they provide on our

municipal governments.

Mr. Speaker, it was this NDP government that cut \$74,610 from the Chinook Regional Library, 83,888 from Lakeland, 34,327 from Palliser, 37,942 from Parkland, 114,215 from Southeast, 102,816 from Wapiti, and 101,156 from Wheatland. Mr. Speaker, once again we have another example where the members like to play the blame game, but when it comes to their own responsibilities, they're all talk and no action.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Temporary Closures of Rural Hospitals

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Michelle Yaremchuk is a nurse in Endeavour who works at the Preeceville Hospital. Preeceville Hospital has been closed for the last three weeks. Well last week her son dislocated his hip while at school in Preeceville and was taken for a 30-minute drive by ambulance to Canora. The doctor in Canora wanted to admit her son for observation but had to send him home because all the beds were full because of the closures of the Preeceville and Kamsack hospitals. All the beds were full in Canora, Mr. Speaker.

And we're hearing stories of that here in Regina. When there already is a bed shortage in Regina, some of these closures are affecting what the hospitals in Regina can do. Madam Deputy Speaker, when a hospital closes, the whole system is affected.

You know, we mentioned an idea about a hospital hotline a couple of weeks ago thinking that as a joke it couldn't be that bad. But unfortunately, Madam Deputy Speaker, reality is out there. It is that bad.

Madam Deputy Speaker, will the minister live up to the government's promise to provide primary health care within a 30-minute drive of residents in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. And again I remind the member opposite, the media, and the members of the Saskatchewan public that indeed when Saskatchewan hospitals are closed in circumstances like this, these are temporary closures. They are temporary closures that have been called by the regional health authorities who have the responsibility for day-to-day operations of the health system. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, these closures are meant to ensure the safety and security of the patients within the region.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are a number of areas in Saskatchewan where physicians or nurses have been very difficult to recruit. We now have in place a recruitment agency, Madam Deputy Speaker, to assist the regions in their recruitment efforts. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, we also have

a locum program that's in place, Madam Deputy Speaker, to again assist regional health authorities to manage difficult situations like the ones in Preeceville.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Our health care system is so fragile right now that even the temporary departure of a doctor to do some exams will shut down a hospital in rural Saskatchewan. The minister announced this morning about some initiative for foreign-trained doctors, Madam Deputy Speaker, but that would do nothing when it comes to recruiting teachers or faculty to train some of these foreign-trained doctors if they have trouble.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there's no funding for more faculty for the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] College of Medicine. This is the only college of medicine in North America that was on a probationary licence just a few years ago because of lack of funding by this NDP government. Can the minister please explain how his announcement today of 115,000 is going to solve the problem that his government has put us in in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. The member opposite is so busy looking for negative news that I'm surprised that he has found some positive news. We are very excited about the announcement today, Madam Deputy Speaker. This is very positive news and I'm glad the members opposite have recognized it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the step that was taken today, primarily by the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education and Employment, signed an agreement with the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Madam Deputy Speaker, to ensure that there is assistance provided to international medical graduates, Madam Deputy Speaker. Fifty-three per cent of physicians in Saskatchewan are trained outside of Canada, Madam Deputy Speaker. This is a very important initiative for the people of Saskatchewan, to ensure that those internationally educated physicians are able to qualify to work in this province. Madam Deputy Speaker, we are very excited about this initiative.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Madam Deputy Speaker, people at the news conference today met his announcement with real mixed emotions. There were few details and certainly not enough money to address the issue that is facing Saskatchewan people across the province.

Just like the nursing shortage, the Saskatchewan Party has

called on this NDP government to address the problem and we've been saying the same thing regarding the doctor shortage. And finally, Madam Deputy Speaker, in an announcement today, they acknowledge that we've got a huge problem regarding rural Saskatchewan retaining physicians, Madam Deputy Speaker. It only is after the Saskatchewan Party pulls this government kicking and screaming before they'll start to address the issues.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the reality is is when a physician leaves in rural Saskatchewan, the hospital has to close. He talks about locums. That certainly isn't enough to fill a demand in rural Saskatchewan. We've seen it in Canora, Preeceville, Kamsack, Spiritwood, Big River, Shellbrook, Bengough . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — . . . the question, please.

Mr. McMorris: — Coronach, Vanguard — so many hospitals, Madam Deputy Speaker.

When will the minister start following through with their commitment and guaranteeing health care within a 30-minute drive for Saskatchewan students?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. And again, every facility that the member opposite mentions was indeed a temporary closure managed for the safety and security of individuals within the system.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, the members opposite continually argue that this is a problem that can be solved instantaneously; that, with a snap of our fingers, we can have more doctors working within this province. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is certainly not the case and it does require an intensive approach towards recruitment and retention — something that we've been working on since 2001, Madam Deputy Speaker, with additional resources that we've been able to obtain because the provincial economy is doing better than it was previously.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is not a case that's isolated to Saskatchewan. I pull a news article out of Alberta, Madam Deputy Speaker, where hospitals have temporarily closed in St. Albert and Grande Prairie, and in the capital health region of Edmonton where there are 300 shortages of doctors.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Madam Deputy Speaker, we have been calling on this government to deal with this issue for eight years. It's not just the last couple of days or the last couple of weeks with all these hospital closures. We've been calling on the government to deal with the RN [registered nurse] shortage, to deal with the doctor shortage for eight years. And finally, they're starting to throw a little bit of money out which won't even come close to addressing the real problem, Madam Deputy Speaker.

[14:15]

When we look at the next couple of weeks when more people are out on the highways because of the holiday season, when there's an influx of people coming into this province to visit their family — all the people that have left this province — Madam Deputy Speaker, where there are highways are being taxed because of poor road conditions, there's going to be a huge pressure on the hospital facilities throughout the province, not just in Regina and Saskatoon.

Can the minister please tell this Assembly what other rural hospitals will be closing in Saskatchewan that the public of Saskatchewan should know about in the next few weeks?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I think if we look at *Hansard* over the last little while, they've been talking about this for first four years, then five years, then seven years, and now today it's eight years, Madam Deputy Speaker. We don't know at all how long they've been talking about it, Madam Deputy Speaker, because they change their story every week.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Alberta Medical Association says they have a shortage of doctors and that the hospital closures in Alberta are going to continue because of a continuing shortage of doctors in the province of Alberta.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is a Canada-wide challenge to the health care system to be able to ensure that there are enough professionals working within the system to keep all of the facilities open.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have put this year alone an extra 300-plus millions of dollars into the health care system, Madam Deputy Speaker, 150 million of that for health care providers alone, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, we've just heard from my colleague, the member from Indian Head-Milestone, talking about the domino effect that happens when rural hospitals close.

And the minister's talking about Alberta. Well they now have a population of over 3 million, and in my constituency, Madam Deputy Speaker, we're facing the same challenges. Broadview Hospital will be closed from December 11 to January 12. That's over an entire month, Madam Deputy Speaker. And again it's because of a lack of doctors.

Madam Deputy Speaker, can the minister explain what he is doing to prevent the same thing from happening in my constituency as we see happening across rural Saskatchewan, and can he assure Saskatchewan people that they will not be

facing overcrowded and overpressured hospitals this hospital season?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. And indeed the Broadview situation is another one of those situations whereby it is recognized that it's a doctor shortage but, Madam Deputy Speaker, this is indeed a unique situation in Broadview where the two physicians, the two physicians, Madam Deputy Speaker, in Broadview have indicated that they needed to be away for personal reasons at exactly the same period of time, Madam Deputy Speaker. Very unique circumstances, Madam Deputy Speaker.

This has nothing to do in Broadview with a shortage of doctors. It has to do with the unique circumstances of the two physicians that are working within that particular facility. Madam Deputy Speaker, they have announced that they need to be away during this period of time preceding Christmas. Normally, Madam Deputy Speaker, the locum program kicks in and assists with this. Madam Deputy Speaker, the locum program is overtaxed at the Christmas season.

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, that is indeed the problem. This government has not fulfilled its commitment to even have the locums available to address the needs when Broadview faces a situation of this nature.

And maybe I need to refresh the Health minister's memory on how many hospitals have had temporary closures or continue to remain closed. There has been Kamsack, Canora, Big River, Arcola, Spiritwood, Bengough, Coronach, Preeceville, Shellbrook, Central Butte, Vanguard, and now Broadview. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, how many more communities are facing this challenge? That's quite a list, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, can the minister explain what specific steps he is taking to assure Saskatchewan families that rural hospitals will not be closed during this holiday season?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. As I had indicated earlier, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have a number of programs that are specifically designed to assist regional health authorities in managing the professionals within their employ or with whom they have contracts. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, one of those programs is the locum program which the member opposite talked about.

They ask me, how is it working for you, Madam Deputy Speaker. They ask me, how's it working? Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, the locum program is being used in the Broadview area. A locum has been secured to operate at the Broadview Hospital for part of the period of time whereby the two doctors

have indicated they will be away. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, additional nursing staff have been hired to help with diagnostics during this entire period of time. Madam Deputy Speaker, this is an important, important time for the people of Broadview and they need to continue to work with the regional health authority to ensure that those who need care are treated in a safe and secure manner.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Toth: — Madam Deputy Speaker, we're speaking of a whole month and there's a locum for four days in that whole period. This government, Madam Deputy Speaker, made a promise to the people of Saskatchewan. It promised that every citizen would be able to access health care within 30 minutes of their home and now we are seeing this promise, like many others, vanish.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what this government doesn't seem to understand is health care in rural Saskatchewan is failing. We've seen how the domino effect has played out in Canora-Pelly with overcrowded hospitals.

Madam Deputy Speaker, can the minister guarantee Saskatchewan families that their hospitals will not be overcrowded because of closures, and then can he explain why he is going back on his government's promise?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. The member opposite, like his colleague, the critic for Health, is constantly looking for the negative news across the province. And indeed there are challenges, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we are addressing, Madam Deputy Speaker, with all the resources we have available to us.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, there are other regional health authorities and other communities that are having great success, Madam Deputy Speaker, in securing locums and in recruiting. Why, right here in my hand, Madam Deputy Speaker, from the *Wadena News* in early November, just a couple of weeks ago, what's the headline? "Good news," Madam Deputy Speaker, "Community elated about the recruitment of doctor."

Madam Deputy Speaker, the regional health authorities across this province this year alone have recruited an additional 140 new doctors into this province, Madam Deputy Speaker. And they put them to work. We still have challenges in various communities, Madam . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Cellular Service in Middle Lake Area

Mr. Kirsch: — Madam Deputy Speaker, last fall Alex

Dobrohoczki, a Middle Lake area farmer, got trapped between his swather and his tractor. He was fortunate that someone driving down the highway noticed and stopped to help. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, when the good Samaritan went to call 911, she couldn't get a cell signal and had to drive some distance to the man's farm to place the call — despite the fact that Middle Lake is right, smack in the middle of an area that is supposed to receive full cell service, that wasn't the case.

Following the incident, SaskTel said it was going to make improvements to this service. Madam Deputy Speaker, can the Minister Responsible for SaskTel tell this Assembly what has been done since the accident to improve cell service in the Middle Lake area?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskTel.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, what I will say to the members opposite is that SaskTel has been expanding its cellular service to many areas of the province. We have wider coverage in the province of Saskatchewan than any other cell service deliverers. SaskTel cellular service is now available to 95 per cent of Saskatchewan's population.

Mr. Speaker, SaskTel's number one priority is to provide service, top quality service to the people of Saskatchewan and it will continue to do so, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Madam Deputy Speaker, that coverage might be 95 per cent on the map, but how about actual coverage? Middle Lake is home to a retirement community. Many seniors carry cellphones. School buses in the area were also recently ordered to purchase cellphones for improved safety in times of emergency.

A couple of weeks ago there was an incredible snowstorm in the Middle Lake area. During that storm an elderly man got stranded but couldn't get cell signal to call for help, and he ended up walking some distance with his cane to find help. A school bus also got stuck in the middle of the storm. It was the same sad story — no cell signal.

Mr. Speaker, if Manitoba's telephone system can provide cell service to coverage 97 per cent of the province, why can't SaskTel do the same? Mr. Speaker, when will this government address the lack of cell service in and around the community of Middle Lake?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Madam Deputy Speaker, we all know that SaskTel has the widest coverage in the . . . covering the province of Saskatchewan than any other cell service deliverer in Saskatchewan. Madam Deputy Speaker, priority one for SaskTel is to provide the best services at a competitive cost to the citizens of Saskatchewan, and we'll continue to do that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, just the other day there was a report from J.D. Power and Associates that talked about SaskTel Mobility ranked highest . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I'm asking the member to come to order. The question has been placed by his colleague. Will you allow the minister now to respond.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Madam Deputy Speaker, the J.D. Power and Associates report rated SaskTel Mobility. It ranked highest in satisfying Canadian wireless service customers.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, we'll continue to provide good services to the people of Saskatchewan, providing expansion when and where possible.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Recruitment of Police Officers

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, on March 20 of this year the Justice minister said the promise made by his party in 1999 to increase the number of police officers in Saskatchewan by 200 had been fulfilled. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, he was wrong then and he's wrong now.

The latest number from Statistics Canada's police administration survey show that there are only 100 new police officers this year compared to 1999.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this NDP government is fond of broken promises and half measures. Why has this minister failed once again to deliver on this province to the people of Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker, the member opposite said at one point in discussion about how many police officers there were in this province that his caucus could not count to 200. And he delegated, he delegated this count to the Saskatchewan Federation of Police Officers. He said that the minister should spend more time with them because they knew how many officers there were. I think the member from Saskatoon Southeast should check with the Federation of Police Officers. He will find that their position is that that promise has been kept, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I have checked with the Federation of Saskatchewan Police Officers. They tell me they don't believe the promise has been kept either. Madam Deputy Speaker, in 1999 there were 1,930 police officers in Saskatchewan. That's according to Statistics Canada. Today there are 2,030. Over the past year the net increase in officers was 19. This is an extremely poor performance on behalf of the

Minister of Justice. Can he tell us when he plans to live up to that election promise of 1999 or will we simply assume that it will never be fulfilled, Madam Deputy Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Madam Speaker, pre police promise in the year 1998 to 1999, which is the year that the members opposite like to start off with, 13 police officers were added by the province of Saskatchewan — 13 municipal police officers. By the end of 2006-2007, this fiscal year, the 200 police officers will have been added per the commitment — 54 municipal, 136 to the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], 10 to safer communities and neighbourhoods. In addition 14 police officers for gang suppression, 8 police officers for missing persons, 6 more drug enforcement officers under Project Hope for a total of 241 police officers, Madam Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, it's like an income and an expense statement. Some officers come in every year and some officers go out every year and you've got to look at the net number, not simply what you add. This is a promise that this Justice minister has failed to act on. A year after announcing more officers for the missing persons task force, there were still vacant spots. The minister expressed his frustration and disappointment, then the jobs were filled. Madam Speaker, why doesn't this minister do his job, express his frustration and disappointment on this issue as well, then maybe we'll get the 200 officers that were promised in 1999?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:30]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Well, Madam Speaker, I did express my disappointment with the RCMP for not filling some of the missing persons positions — four of them — or the historic analyst positions, Madam Speaker. But since 1999, since 1999 this government has increased funding for police services by more than \$45 million. Before I communicate any disappointment on the part of the members opposite, I would like to know from the member from Saskatoon Southeast what he thinks the police are spending the \$45 million on.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, it's my hope that the police services in this province are spending that money on salaries, police cars, training, and the things that they're supposed to spend it on. But what that minister has to do is do an accurate count of the number of officers in this province. And I challenge him to stand in the House today and tell us the

number of police officers that were in this province in 1990, 2000, or in any other year, what the full-time equivalents were. Because I'll tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, he is not capable of answering that question in any year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Well well, Madam Speaker, the question's been asked in estimates. I expect it might even be asked in estimates again. We're quite capable of answering it. If I had time I could read the three- or four-page response that we sent to the Human Services Committee last time this question was asked, going detail year by year by year by year. The fact is, Madam Speaker, that the commitment has been more than completed. We are now in excess of 240 police officers added since 1999. These are officers that are doing important work — serious crimes, gang suppression, missing persons. And the 241 officers did not include the five officers recently added by the provincial government in the area of child sexual exploitation, to the RCMP, to the municipal police forces. We are doing good work. We are doing focused work and we take crime seriously, unlike the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip, the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Madam Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the government I would table responses to written questions no. 119 to 149 inclusive.

The Deputy Speaker: — The answers to written questions 119 to 149 inclusive have been tabled.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 35

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Thomson that **Bill No. 35 — The Infrastructure Fund Act** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise today and take part in the discussion on Bill No. 35, An Act to establish the Saskatchewan Infrastructure Fund.

A number of my colleagues have already spoken on this Bill, and I had an opportunity to speak with the minister last week on the Bill. And although it was no surprise, it was very frustrating to learn that this government has introduced the Bill and has actually committed to spending amounts of \$100 million and

has yet to set the criteria of this fund.

It has been said by many people in this House and outside the House that the \$100 million is this government's election slush fund. They'll have an opportunity to go willy-nilly around the province and give the money out to whoever has applied for a proposal, but more importantly in an area where they believe they can win a seat or hold on to a seat.

In a committee meeting the other night, I had the opportunity to ask the minister about the criteria, and he admitted that there was no criteria developed for this fund yet. We have \$20 million to be spent between now and the end of March, and there is no guidelines. There's no form. There's no application form ready to be sent out to people. There is no discussion on how the merits of a proposal will be determined. There's no discussion on who will be on the board and how the commitment will actually be determined.

The minister did acknowledge that they would entertain applications from people who had already started a project, in other words somebody who was pre-committed by spending some money on some infrastructure in their area before this fund was announced. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, we on this side of the House are always a little leery of accepting what this government has to say when we know very well that this is meant for one purpose and one purpose only, and that's to ensure that they can give money out to communities who may ask for it, and there will be a photo op at the end of the day by a minister.

One of the communities just on the border of my constituency is Tisdale. And last summer the Premier had an opportunity to attend a function out in Tisdale and made an announcement about his frustration that this community had applied for three different . . . had applied three different applications to . . . for funding for the town that had received no money. And so they had managed to come up with a cheque for that community, for Tisdale, the day the Premier was there.

To me this was just an opportunity to ensure that when the Premier and this government goes out to a community they have a cheque to hand to them. So it makes them feel good even if it doesn't particularly make the people who have worked hard to get the tax dollars into the hand of this government, maybe it doesn't make them feel better.

The \$100 million was announced about the time that the \$880 million slush fund was announced. And it's always a question on this side of the House as to how the government will determine how much money they're going to throw into their slush fund or into their Infrastructure Fund. How do they determine how much money is required?

The minister acknowledged that there was a huge shortfall in facilities in sports, recreation, and culture, and on this side of the House we're quite aware of it. Most of us live in small communities where in 1967, or our centennial year, there was rinks built right across Saskatchewan when the province was actually booming and bustling and we had people in small communities. And I can tell you my hometown, Madam Deputy Speaker, now has a rink that is sitting empty. Not only is there not enough people to actually have the hockey teams that we

need and the skating rinks . . . the people that need the skating facilities, but they can't afford some of the infrastructure needs, the actual maintenance and upkeep of the building.

The one thing that this, the government has not acknowledged in this, by this Bill is the high cost of SaskPower and SaskEnergy that has a huge impact on the feasibility and the sustainability of some of these rinks. We need to ensure that not only will the building be there but that the funds will be there to actually run it as well.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in my community we've had a number of places that have spent a lot of time and effort gaining money to build places like the swimming pool in Kelvington and in Porcupine Plain and in Wadena. The Foam Lake community hall, it was a tremendous amount of work went in a community effort to pay for these buildings, and they did it without any help from the government at all. They're wondering why they put all their money into . . . the sweat and tears it took to build their infrastructure, and now the government has determined it's okay to put taxpayers' money into another community.

There are issues in Saskatchewan that are affecting people. I don't want to downplay the importance of sports and culture in Saskatchewan. We all know it is a vital part of making a full and whole community, but we have to ask what the government's responsibility is. They are challenged and charged with the responsibility of spending the taxpayers' dollars that come into this legislature, into this provincial government. And we know that the government's responsibility first and foremost are health and education and infrastructure and a safety net.

Everyday when we stand in the House and we look at the issues that are brought forward by the opposition — issues like health that we've talked about many times in the House, the education issues that are discussed — and there always appears to be not enough money for the basics that we need in Saskatchewan.

We have other issues like cellular service; my colleague from Batoche talked about that today. And Batoche isn't the only area that doesn't have cell service. It's important, not only for a business, but it's important for safety and for ensuring that our young people have the same benefits as people right outside the province.

We need more money for workers to deal with provincial disaster assistance. Some of my town still don't have the 2005 claims paid from the government, and there is still more needed for the 2006.

We don't have high-speed Internet in many parts of rural Saskatchewan. In fact I believe the Wheat Pool stepped up to the plate not too long ago and provided high-speed Internet to customers even though the government has decided that rural Saskatchewan doesn't need it, that's it's not important.

We have the highways, like Highway 310 and Highway 49, that are in terrible shape. And the government has spent some money on it this year, but we should add the weather conditions and the traffic has now taken the highways back to the shape they were in this spring. In fact many of the people living along these highways are saying — you know what? — the highway

is going to be in as bad a shape if not worse next spring than it was this spring.

The government doesn't have funding for programs like Teen Challenge. It doesn't have funding for brush removal, for flood prevention. It doesn't have money for beaver control to prevent flooding. But now we have a government that's decided they're going to spend \$100 million at their will to communities that apply in a form that as yet has not been laid out by the government.

Mr. Speaker, there has been 38,000 people left the province in the last five years — 38,000 people since this Premier took power, in fact 17,000 in the last couple of years. These people are not going to come back again unless there is some real opportunity that shows that there's some longevity in their life here in Saskatchewan. I know that the rinks and the cultural facilities are important, but there has to be an economic reason for them to come here. They have to have good paying jobs. They have to be able to ensure that their children will have a school to go to, that their community will have a health care centre, and that they can get to these facilities on decent roads. In our province our infrastructure is in tough shape, and the hospitals that are still open are in desperate need of personnel to ensure that the people receive the coverage or the health care that they need.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have to ensure that this government spends the money — this \$100 million that they brought in through the hard work of taxpayers in this province — in a way that will benefit everybody in the province, not just the people that this government has determined should benefit. It's not an opportunity . . . this is not government money to determine where it should be spent. This government should not be allowed to be picking winners and losers with this fund. This fund has to be . . . If the government has decided they're going to spend \$100 million, we have to be able to feel secure that it's going to be given to everyone, that it's not just going to be given to people in a community where there's a chance that they can win the seat in the next . . . [inaudible] . . . election.

We've heard this so many times when we've talked to people around the province. People are doubting it. They're doubting how this government will actually spend the money. We have the mayors in communities right around Saskatchewan are saying, I doubt if we're going to see it. I doubt if we're going to see this money because — you know what? — the seats are probably as secure as any seats out here. The government isn't going to win back farmers in rural Saskatchewan — rural Saskatchewan period — by introducing a \$100 million fund to put up an arena. What they're asking for is this government to give them a livelihood and a chance to ensure that Saskatchewan will grow and the potential will be there in the future.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, there's a lot of people that are wanting to talk to us about this issue. It's one that we understand is a government priority, and for us we want to ensure that it's something where all the people in Saskatchewan can benefit, where everybody'll have the same opportunity. We want to see the criteria laid out. We want to see an application form. We want to know who's going to be on the decision-making board. We want to know if . . . We want to be

ensured that people who have pre-committed some facility will still have an opportunity. And as such, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to adjourn debate on this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Government House Leader, the member from Moose Jaw North.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, in order to facilitate the good work 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.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Government House Leader has now moved the House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House does now stand adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:45.]

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