



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

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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
Heppner, Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Higgins, Hon. Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kerpan, Allan	SP	Carrot River Valley
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Kowalsky, Hon. P. Myron	NDP	Prince Albert Carlton
Krawetz, Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lautermilch, Hon. Eldon	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
McCall, 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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to present a couple more pages of petitions signed by individuals from the Cypress Hills constituency concerned about the Shaunavon office of SaskPower and the likelihood that it will be closed at the end of this month. 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 keep the SaskPower office in Shaunavon open to provide full service to the community and surrounding areas.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, today's petitions are signed by individuals from the communities of Shaunavon, Eastend, Claydon, Frontier, Gull Lake, and other communities in the vicinity. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Eston, Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to maintain full service of the SaskPower office in Rosetown. This petition notes that if the office closes there will not be immediate receipt of payment for customers. Mr. 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 keep the SaskPower office in Rosetown open to provide full service to the community and surrounding areas.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, a number of signatures on this petition are from the communities of Rosetown and Fiske. And I am pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I again stand today with a petition of citizens that are concerned about Highway No. 5 as it prevents defensive driving due to it being too narrow. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Osler, Saskatoon, and St-Denis. I so present.

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

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I rise to present a petition on behalf of people from southeast Saskatchewan who are very concerned about the condition of Highway 18. 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 invest the needed money to repair and maintain Highway 18 so it can return to being a safe and economical route for Saskatchewan families and business.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens of Gladmar, Lake Alma, Regina, and Beaubier. I so present. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition for safer driving conditions on the Highway No. 3. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to resurface and properly maintain Highway No. 3 from Fairholme to Turtleford and the Livelong access road.

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

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

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

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present another petition on behalf of the 600 children under six years old and their parents in the Saskatoon Silver Springs constituency regarding a much needed elementary school in the Arbor Creek, Willowgrove area of Saskatoon. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

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

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

Today the petitioners live on Kenderdine Road, Guenter Crescent, and Kutz Crescent in northeast Saskatoon. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood

River.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise with a petition from citizens in the South that are very concerned about the hardships that can be caused if the lab in the Lafleche and District Health Centre is closed. 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 actions to ensure that lab services are continued at the Lafleche and District Health Centre.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the good citizens of Lafleche and Glentworth. I so present.

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

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the condition of our provincial highways. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to resurface and properly maintain Highway No. 3 from Fairholme to Turtleford and the Livelong access road.

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

Mr. Speaker, signatures to this petition are from Livelong and Turtleford. I so present.

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to read a petition from the citizens of Batoche that are concerned with the cellular service in their area. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide reliable cellular telephone service in regions encompassing the constituency of Batoche.

And as duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is signed by the good people from St. Brieux, Humboldt, Muenster, Colonsay, and Carrot River. I so present.

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

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the citizens of the town of Jansen, I'd like to present a petition calling on the government to upgrade Highway 20 to primary weight status:

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

In duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Thank you, 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 a petition dealing with highway weight status. 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 steps to ensure that Highway No. 20 be upgraded to primary weight status to ensure the economic viability in the surrounding areas.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by good citizens from Nokomis, Govan, Lockwood, and Strasbourg. This area is immediately southeast of my constituency of Saskatoon Southeast. I'm pleased to present this on their behalf. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

## PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — The Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy is recognized.

### Standing Committee on the Economy

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have been instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report Bill No. 5, The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2006 without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall Bill No. 5 be considered in Committee of the Whole?

The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

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

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill 5. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. When shall this Bill be read a third time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 5 — The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2006

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

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Industry and Resources that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — Third reading of this Bill.

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — The Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy is recognized.

#### Standing Committee on the Economy

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its seventh report.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Biggar:

That the seventh report of the Standing Committee on the Economy now be concurred in.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Regina Dewdney, seconded by the member for Biggar, that the seventh report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be now concurred in. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 35 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Learning: has the department recommended to school divisions that 160 schools be closed over the next two to three years?

Also, while I'm on my feet, a similar question:

To the Minister of Learning: has the department created a plan or strategy to close 160 schools over the next two to three years?

I so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### National Farm Safety Week

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, March 14 to 20 marks the 36th annual National Farm Safety Week. The Canada Safety Council's theme for this year is Farm Safety: The Reward is Worth the Effort.

Since farming and Saskatchewan go hand in hand, the message of Farm Safety Week is an important one. As many of us in this province are too well aware, farming is one the most dangerous occupations. Too many rural families in Saskatchewan have either lost loved ones or have a family member who has been seriously injured in a farming accident.

Mr. Speaker, many farming accidents are preventable. As the Canadian safety council rightly points out, National Farm Safety Week may only be seven days long, but farm safety should be carried out every day. With spring seeding on the horizon, it's important that all producers and their families and workers heed the important message of Farm Safety Week and remember that the reward is worth the effort.

[13:45]

I would invite all members of this Assembly to join me in thanking the many farm and safety associations who are working with the co-operation of producers to help decrease the number of farming accidents through their work during National Farm Safety Week and throughout the entire year.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Saskatoon Grandmothers for Grandmothers Organization

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On International Women's Day, March 8, I attended the fundraising dinner for Grandmothers for Grandmothers, or G to G as we call them in Saskatoon, of which I am a proud member. The money raised at the gathering and all the money raised by the G4G goes to the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

In March 2006 the Stephen Lewis Foundation launched a Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign to encourage awareness in Canada about African grandmothers and their struggle to secure a hopeful and healthy future for generations of children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS [human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency

syndrome] and to build solidarity between African and Canadian grandmothers in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Sharon Maher and Orla Lockerbie founded the G4G last year in Saskatoon, and the steady growth of the membership indicates the willingness of Saskatoon women to help out their counterparts in Africa.

Members of the Grandmothers for Grandmothers organization act as facilitators, motivating others to make donations. The support enables African grandmothers to develop income-generating activities to sustain themselves and to provide the basic necessities to the children in their care.

The Saskatoon G4G organizes four major fundraisers annually — a dinner on International Women's Day, a grandmothers tea in May, a garage sale working for Child and Youth Friendly Saskatoon in August, and coffee parties throughout the year.

Thank you to Reta Taylor and her dedicated group of volunteers who organized this very successful event.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Cumberland.

#### **Northern Youths Participate in Canada Winter Games**

**Hon. Ms. Beatty:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge four outstanding athletes from the North. These four youths have recently returned from Whitehorse after participating at the 2007 Canada Winter Games. They all say it was an awesome experience.

Zone 9 is the area of northern Saskatchewan that covers both the Athabasca and Cumberland constituencies. This year zone 9 sent four athletes to compete in cross-country skiing, hockey, and archery.

Haley Robinson and Keewatin Trottier of La Ronge participated in the cross-country ski portion of the events. Haley finished 45th of 53 participants, and Keewatin finished 31st out of a field of 48 skiers. Both represented zone 9 outstandingly.

Gaelan Patterson, originally from La Ronge, was a member of Team Saskatchewan in this year's hockey competitions, finished sixth place overall. Jonovan Kokan of La Loche was in the archery competition. During individual competition Jonovan finished ninth overall. In the team competitions he and his partner from Estevan secured a bronze medal for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the competition against other athletes at the Winter Games was challenging for these athletes, but they have all done an excellent job of representing the North and representing Saskatchewan. I ask all members to join me in congratulating Jonovan, Haley, Keewatin, and Gaelan for all the hard work they have done to get to this level of competition. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for

Rosetown-Elrose.

#### **Jim Kook Citizen of the Year Award**

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate Doug Ball from Outlook on receiving the Jim Kook Citizen of the Year Award. Each year the Outlook and District Chamber of Commerce chooses one outstanding citizen to be recognized for their community efforts.

Doug Ball has received this award for his continued commitment to Outlook, his home town of Conquest, and the surrounding municipalities. While in Conquest, Ball sat on the Conquest Community Centre board and was president of Conquest Minor Sports. He was also involved in municipal politics for six years and was a dedicated coach for minor and senior hockey clubs. In Outlook his community commitments continue with involvement in Outlook Minor Sports and other volunteer work.

However, it has been his continued commitment in making sure that Outlook is a good place to live that makes him worthy of this award. Doug has served as administrator for the Pioneer Home, the Outlook Hospital, the home care, and later as CEO [chief executive officer] of Midwest Health District. Doug Ball has been committed to ensuring a high level of quality health care for Outlook and district. He was a driving force in the initiative for approval and construction of a new integrated health centre in Outlook.

A more recent initiative for Doug is providing leadership for the west side irrigators as they press producers and governments to get on with expanding irrigation on the west side of the South Saskatchewan River.

Mr. Speaker, it is the dedication of community members such as Doug that make Saskatchewan a great place, and so I would like to thank Doug Ball for his continued commitment to his community, congratulate him on receiving this honourable award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

#### **Saskatchewan Youth Award**

**Ms. Morin:** — Mr. Speaker, in 2006 the Saskatchewan Youth Award was established to recognize young people who have made significant contributions to Saskatchewan through personal accomplishments. Citizens between the ages of 15 and 24 are eligible for the nomination, and these young people can be nominated for individual projects or achievements that they were involved in for up to one year prior to the nomination.

Criteria for the award are made up of a broad range of achievements and endeavours that include leadership, volunteerism, innovation, artistic or cultural accomplishments, academic excellence, athletics, and outstanding personal achievements. The nominations are then reviewed by an independent committee that will include members of the Saskatchewan Honours Advisory Council and the provincial

youth advisory committee, and they will recommend four to five individuals for the award. The deadline for nominations is Friday, March 16, 2007. Recipients and their family members will be invited to the annual gala presentation event where they will receive a specially designed youth award pin and a certificate signed by the Lieutenant Governor, the Premier, and the Provincial Secretary.

The Saskatchewan Youth Award is a way to honour Saskatchewan's youth for their commitment and dedication to this great province that we call Saskatchewan — the best place to live, work, and build a strong future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood River.

#### **Citizen's Response to Carriere Settlement**

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the government's disgraceful handling of the Murdoch Carriere affair has outraged people from across this province. I would like to share a letter that was published in the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* on March 10 of this year that gives voice to these sentiments of outrage. And, Mr. Speaker, I quote:

The provincial government pays a man out after he was convicted of an offence to women.

Legalities aside, what about ethics? Carriere was found guilty of assault. A group of men takes the hard-earned tax dollars of women and hands it to Carriere. I certainly do not believe it is OK to spend my tax contribution in this manner.

It is time for more women to become involved in running this province, contrary to what many would have you believe. I think Premier Calvert sent a wrong message with the settlement. This should have been fought in the courts.

We need a leader with backbone. It is time to say no more!

End of quote, Mr. Speaker, and it's signed by Diane Sawatzky of Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, as Ms. Sawatzky says, it is shameful that this government didn't have the backbone, the intestinal fortitude, or the courage to stand up for these women and fight Mr. Carriere in the courts. I thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

#### **Opposition Policy Development Process**

**Mr. Borgerson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, we were all a little confused and amused last session when the members of the opposition raised the topic of funding from tobacco companies in the House. Naturally people thought that they were being hypocritical since they received tobacco funds themselves, and started asking questions. It was then that the Leader of the

Opposition made his stunning announcement. He decreed that the Saskatchewan Party did not accept donations from the tobacco companies and that was his party's policy. Many were left to wonder, Mr. Speaker, what about the democratic process?

The situation became a little bit clearer at the Saskatchewan Party convention . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Order please. The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

**Mr. Borgerson:** — The situation became a little bit clearer at the Saskatchewan Party convention in February. Opposition members didn't worry themselves about the pesky details of a policy debate. They simply didn't debate any policy. So why bother discussing details when you have a leader able to make up a policy on a whim as part of his improvised Saskatchewan plan? If anything, a policy convention would only get in the way for the Leader of the Opposition. He needs the freedom to do and say whatever he thinks is necessary to get elected.

Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party has had a long tradition of allowing one member, one vote when it comes to the policy development process. Sometimes there are differences of opinion, but that's important to democracy.

The opposition believes in a one-member, one-vote system as well for policy development, Mr. Speaker. Only for them, the Leader of the Opposition is the one member who gets to vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

#### **Population and Education Policies**

**Mr. Wall:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning the people of the province woke up to screaming headlines that detail this government's woeful performance and record in the key area of population. Mr. Speaker, the statistics from yesterday show that under this Premier, we've lost a population roughly the size of the city of Weyburn, Mr. Speaker. The numbers show that Saskatchewan and only one other province, Newfoundland and Labrador, lost population.

Yesterday the minister responsible was quite cavalier in his attitude towards these numbers, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that, because of this government's record on depopulation, 50 schools are slated for closure in Saskatchewan. Fifty schools could well be closed by the end of the year.

My question to the Premier is this: in light of the fact it's his record on depopulation that's forcing the whole conversation of school closures, what leadership is his government prepared to show to make sure that these closures aren't short-sighted in terms of future opportunity and in terms of limiting bus rides for kids in the province of Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, for starters, this government has increased the funding to the foundation operating grant over the last 10 years by over \$200 million — 52 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and I would like to correct one thing for sure that the Leader of the Opposition said. Now he does a wonderful job exaggerating the facts and stretching the truth and putting some real scare tactics out and across the province. Mr. Speaker, there are 39 schools that are under review for closure and one school that is under review for grade discontinuance.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, in terms of scare tactics, frankly there is nothing in rural Saskatchewan as scary as the prospect of this NDP [New Democratic Party] government, Mr. Speaker. And the numbers bear it out from yesterday, the numbers that rural Saskatchewan is dealing with because of this Premier's extremely poor performance in growing the population at a time of economic opportunity. Fewer people are living in 9 out of 13 of our cities; fewer people living in 36 of our 45 towns; 39 — and those folks out there will say up to 50 and maybe more down the road — schools that are slated for closure.

The question to the Premier is this. We need his leadership. There are some alternatives, including designating schools of opportunity for those communities that could well be growing in the next while for whom a school closure would be short-sighted. We need some compassion from this government to ensure that there aren't 10-hour class and busing days from the government. We need to know that this government's providing leadership on alternative and complementary uses for school facilities. What is the Premier going to do on these issues, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, one thing that this Saskatchewan Party does is repackage policies that are already in place within the foundation operating grant and the province of Saskatchewan. Schools of necessity, isolated schools — that's a factor that has been in place for just about seven years, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, he stands here and says increase funding, do this, do something, do something. But what a person needs to do is really have a look at the Sask Party policy papers and little informational items they put out.

First off they talk about if they have the opportunity in government they will have a steady, gradual reduction in government spending and taxation, while maintaining a firm

commitment to balanced budgets. Well, Mr. Speaker, I ask myself, what are they going to take away? If they think there's so much waste in the system — they're going to skin us all back — what are they going to take away?

And, Mr. Speaker, when you look at their policy document, they are going to encourage increased co-operation between all publicly funded school systems in an . . .

**The Speaker:** — The minister's time has elapsed.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about what's in place now in terms of remote or isolated schools. What's in place now is not precluding the closure of schools across this province that parents and trustees agree could result in 10-hour days for kids between bus time and class time — 10 hours, Mr. Speaker. Whatever is in place now is clearly inadequate.

Will the government, will this NDP government show some leadership? It's its record on depopulation that is forcing these decisions to have to be made out in the country for these kids and these parents. Will they do the right thing; show some leadership with respect to the idea from our party on schools and necessity, schools of opportunity? And will they ensure there is a complete review of potential complementary uses for schools that they may remain open in some cases, Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, the easiest thing to do is stand up and criticize, but when you need to make tough decisions, those decisions are being made by this government, putting in place programs and processes that are appropriate for the education system in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, back to the Sask Party policy and they talk about encourage increased co-operation between all publicly funded school systems in an effort to streamline both systems and eliminate unnecessary and costly duplication. I think the Leader of the Opposition owes the people of this province an explanation about what his policies actually mean.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, that minister — if she chooses to run and then is, frankly, a little bit lucky in winning re-election — will have plenty of opportunity to ask questions from this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, in just a few more months.

Mr. Speaker, one area of complete control for the provincial



government is how the funding . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Order. The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the House Leader is yelling from the government side, well what does that mean, what I just said. What it means is that after the next election, that member, that current minister is going to be sitting on the opposition side of the House. That's what that means. That's what that means.

Mr. Speaker, one area, one area of control this government has is over how busing is funded. Right now Learning funds 100 per cent of busing. So you could see how there would be an automatic bias in the system for more busing and a less emphasis on class time.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier agree to at least review this policy of the government agreeing to fund 100 per cent of busing, thereby putting in place a bias for busing and far too long a class and school days for the kids of this province?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, there's a number of questions when it comes to the Sask Party educational policy. In the *Weyburn Review* in January of this year the member from Weyburn said, "I'm not a Catholic, but I believe when we take God out of the schools we are bringing in guns."

I'd like to know if the member from Saskatoon . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Minister of Learning.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party has a great deal of explaining to do when you see quotes like this in the *Weyburn Review* talking about ". . . when we take God out of the schools we are bringing in guns." What kind of a comment is that on the public school system of this province? It's appalling, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, that leader owes this province a bit more explanation on what his policy means. Streamlining both systems? Eliminate unnecessary and costly duplication? That member owes this province an explanation.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### **Government's Settlement with Complainants in the Carriere Case**

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, first Murdoch Carriere's victims were harassed and pressured in the workplace. Next, these women went through a lot in order to get the NDP government to listen to them. After all the victims went through, the NDP government pressured all nine women to sign a small settlement and told them that they had no other offer coming forward and that they had to sign it the very same day. To add even more pressure, the NDP government told the victims that all nine had

to sign the agreement or none of them would receive a penny.

Mr. Speaker, today these women can't even remember all of the details of what they had signed because the NDP government won't even give them a copy of the settlement agreement. Mr. Speaker, will you today allow these victims to get a copy of their own settlement? Will the minister table a copy of that settlement agreement today?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well the opposition continues desperately to confuse the issues quite deliberately, Mr. Speaker, but the facts are very clear. Did Mr. Carriere receive compensation for his actions? The answer is no. To suggest he was rewarded compensation for his actions is insensitive and outrageous. Was Mr. Carriere's hard drive erased? The answer is no, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, was there a gag order for the women when they settled? The answer is no.

What these members continue to do is to quite deliberately obfuscate the issues. There are two separate issues. There was the question of harassment, and there was the question of settlement with Mr. Carriere because we did not follow the proper procedure, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to hear the minister say that there is no gag order in place. Mr. Speaker, the minister advised the women to retain legal counsel in this matter. Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what has happened. Some of these women have retained legal counsel, and the lawyers representing them have asked for their legal file as well as the copy of the settlement signed by the victims.

The response from the original law firm that represented them is that it can't provide a copy of the settlement because the NDP government imposed trust conditions. Mr. Speaker, the law firm can't release the copy of the settlement, and I quote from their letter, "... without the prior written consent of the Government of Saskatchewan." And nothing would be released until, and I quote further, "... I receive authority to do so from the Government of Saskatchewan".

What kind of government won't even allow the women who signed the agreement to have a copy? What is the NDP government hiding in this document? Mr. Speaker, will the minister today stand in this House and allow the victims to have a copy of their own settlement? Will the minister provide that?

**The Speaker:** — The member's time is elapsed. The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am aware, Mr. Speaker, that there is legal counsel that has

requested a copy of the settlement, and the Department of Justice has been instructed to contact the nine people who were involved in this settlement to gain approval from the nine people because it was nine people that were involved. And if that is agreed to by the complainants, that copy of the settlement will certainly be made available to the legal counsel for the woman who has asked for it through her legal counsel.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the agreement that the minister is talking about is an agreement that affects each and every one of those women. To tie each and every one of those women to each other is not an acceptable position for that minister to take today.

Each one of those women has the right to their own settlement agreement. And for the minister to stand up now and require each of the nine to do it, is exactly the same position that she took when she forced those people to all accept the agreement on day one. It's a wrong thing to do then, and it is a wrong thing to do now. Those people are not all available today.

Will the minister stand in this House today and consent to each and every one of those women having agreement individually without having to get consent from the others? They don't know each other. There is not a reason in the world why they would have to contact each other, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, there were nine people that signed the agreement. There were nine individuals that signed the agreement. As I understand it, their names are contained upon . . . in the document their signatures are contained. As well, Mr. Speaker, their own private information is attached as an addendum to the agreement, Mr. Speaker.

I have said, and I've said it to the Department of Justice officials, that if we can get agreement from the nine that certainly that information can be available to the legal counsel of the one complainant that wishes to receive her copy of the settlement. But as I said before, the settlement is available in the original lawyer's office. The complainants are free to see the settlement information in the lawyer's office. And we certainly have instructed Justice to determine whether or not it is possible to provide the settlement agreement to the individuals but there is nine people's information contained . . .

**The Speaker:** — The member's time is elapsed. The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Most of us can't even understand the minister's talking about instructing Justice to release it. Then she's saying they're not going to release it. Mr. Speaker, I want to make it easy for the minister to do the right thing. All the NDP government has to do is provide its consent, and a copy of

the settlement will be given to the victims requesting it. Right now I am tabling a consent that either the minister can sign immediately or that the Premier can sign. All the minister has to do today is pick up a pen — and I've got one handy if the minister doesn't have it — all she has to do today is put her signature on that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the victims deserve a copy. Will this minister provide that today?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, what the Justice critic, who is a lawyer, is asking me to do is to consent to the distribution of individuals' private information. And I want to tell the Justice critic opposite, I will not sign that until I hear from the women, Mr. Speaker. And that is my legal obligation as a minister of the Crown.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Government's Settlement with Murdoch Carriere

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NDP has not been able to explain why the nine women received just \$15,000 each. And they have not been able to explain why Murdoch Carriere received \$275,000. This is an excessive payout even to someone with an exemplary record in the public service, let alone someone who has been fired for harassment and convicted of assault. \$275,000 represents well over three years of salary for Murdoch Carriere. The most that is usually paid out in severance is 18 months. So this is clearly not just a severance payout.

How did the NDP arrive at a \$275,000 payout for Murdoch Carriere?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order please. Minister of Public Service Commission.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Well I see the member opposite is taking his questions from the Mandryk article in the *Leader-Post*.

But what I will say — this to the member opposite, Mr. Speaker — is that I've already answered that question. I've already clearly indicated that Mr. Carriere had a number of issues that he launched in his action including defamation of character, including the fact that the Government of Saskatchewan did not fire him properly, that we did not follow due process. And as a

result of the settlement, all of those issues were addressed in the settlement, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, for three weeks now this NDP government has refused to tell the people of Saskatchewan why they paid Murdoch Carriere \$275,000. They're hiding the answers, Mr. Speaker. It must be hidden in their secret legal opinion that they refuse to show anyone.

Mr. Speaker, one interesting theory is that the NDP never legally fired Murdoch Carriere. That would explain why they paid him over three years of salary and allow him to top up his pension. Mr. Speaker, is that what the legal opinion says, that the NDP may have never technically fired Murdoch Carriere and therefore they owe him over three years of pay?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I do note that CanWest also settled to . . . *The StarPhoenix* settled with Mr. Carriere. I'm not familiar with how much they settled for, but I understand it is in the tens of thousands of dollars.

What I can say to the member opposite — and we certainly have said this in the legislature — that under The Public Service Act there is the role and function of the professional public service. They get to hire and fire. The elected set broad public policy. We do not get to hire and fire.

As I said, and the opposition agreed with the government at the time, that we fired him without following proper protocol, Mr. Speaker. Proper protocol is the deputy minister does the hiring and firing. And instruction was given from the Premier to the deputy minister. We did not follow due process. Did the members opposite agree at the time? Did their critic, Arlene Julé, say that if they were in government they'd help to pay for it? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister and the NDP can clear this up very easily by releasing the legal opinion. Then we would know exactly why they paid \$275,000 to a man who was fired for harassment and convicted of assault.

The Public Accounts document of 2001-2002 says Mr. Carriere was paid \$83,325. How did they arrive at a settlement of 275,000? Is it a legal opinion? Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan were forced to pay 275,000 to Murdoch Carriere. People of Saskatchewan paid for the NDP's secret legal opinion. The people of Saskatchewan deserve answers. Why doesn't the Premier show some leadership, show some

backbone, and release the secret legal opinion today?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, in April 2003, did we know that we would likely have to pay Murdoch Carriere money? The answer is yes. Did we tell the public we would likely have to pay? The answer is yes. And more importantly, did the members opposite support our decision to fire Murdoch Carriere? The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker. There is nothing more that one can say about this. Yes, yes, yes — this is old news, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to remind the minister about someone else who agreed with this position — her seatmate, the minister for Saskatoon Massey Place, who was then the minister of Justice. And he had this to say on April 3, 2003. And I quote from *Hansard*:

In the event that there is a lawsuit against the Government of Saskatchewan, it will be the position of the Government of Saskatchewan that the termination of Mr. Carriere was justified. We will defend that position vigorously in the courts.

Mr. Speaker, end of quote. Mr. Speaker, what happened? The NDP didn't defend their position vigorously in the courts. Instead they wrote Mr. Murdoch Carriere a big, fat cheque. Why? Obviously the answer is hidden in their secret legal opinion. Will the Premier come clean and release that legal opinion today?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — What's clear to me is that the members opposite, had they sat on this side of the bench . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Minister.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, what's really clear to me is that if those members were sitting on this side of the bench, they would have gone to court for politics only. They would have gone to court and cost taxpayers a lot more than \$275,000. They would have gone to court in opposition to what their own Justice officials would be telling them — that we were going to lose, Mr. Speaker. And their own Justice critic, who I think is a lawyer, has said and I quote, on April 21, 2006, and I quote:

Refusing to settle a lawsuit when the cost to taxpayers would have been much lower is patently unreasonable.

Which is it? Is it unreasonable then or is it unreasonable today,

Mr. Speaker?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to refer the minister again to a comment made by her seatmate on that very same day, April 3, 2003. And it says this:

Mr. Speaker, facts have become known related to this case this week that has brought a different result with respect to this case, as has been outlined in this House.

Then, Mr. Speaker, the minister goes on to say the quote that I read where he now says that we're going to vigorously fight this case in the courts, Mr. Speaker. So what has changed? What has changed from that position taken in 2003 to today? Well, Mr. Speaker, you know why people are so upset about this? Because the bad guy won and the NDP didn't even put up a fight. They just rolled over and gave him a cheque for \$275,000 based on some legal opinion that they won't even show anyone.

Mr. Speaker, if the NDP is so confident that they did the right thing, why won't the Premier release the secret legal opinion to the people of Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister for the Public Service Commission.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, I know about rollovers, Mr. Speaker, and I know who's rolled over, over there. They roll over every time Stephen Harper comes to town. They roll over and roll over the Canadian Wheat Board. They roll over on child daycare. They roll over on the labour market agreement. All they do is, Stephen Harper, Stephen Harper . . . and we know what they are.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just want to make this point. In 1990 . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order. I thank the members for their attention to the Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, in 1993 the government, the NDP government introduced into this legislature amendments to the occupational health and safety legislation where we put harassment into the occupational health and safety legislation.

And what did the members opposite do? They moved an amendment to get rid of it. Then they moved an amendment to water it down. Mr. Speaker, then they voted against the provision of occupational health and safety and harassment. So, Mr. Speaker, these people say they're the great defenders of women, but they opposed harassment in the occupational health and safety legislation.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 49 — The Mortgage Brokerages and Mortgage Administrators Act

**The Speaker:** — Order please. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 49, the mortgage brokers and mortgage administrators Act be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 49, the mortgage brokers and mortgage administrators 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:** — Motion is carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — First reading of this Bill.

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — The next sitting of the house, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Order please. Introduction of Bills.

### Bill No. 50 — The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2007

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to move first reading of Bill No. 50, The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2007.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 50, The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2007 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.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — First reading of this Bill.

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

### Bill No. 51 — The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2007

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to move first reading of Bill No. 51, The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2007.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 51, The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2007 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.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — 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.

**An Hon. Member:** — Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Not a point of order — a request for leave.

**The Speaker:** — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — That's the good way. That's the way to do it. Mr. Speaker, I think the House will recognize that there was a great deal of noise in the House when you called ministerial statements and then moved to orders of the day. And it was still difficult to hear and, because of that, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the House revert to permit ministerial statements.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has requested leave to revert to ministerial statements. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

### Expansion of Digital Cellular Coverage

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pride to inform the House of an announcement that was made earlier today that by the end of 2008 SaskTel will expand and improve digital cellular coverage to 39 more communities across the province, including eight previously unserved northern communities.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Mr. Speaker, those eight northern communities are Stanley Mission, Pelican Narrows, Sandy Bay, Chitek Lake, La Loche West, Pinehouse, Denare Beach, and Deschambault village.

Mr. Speaker, when this latest expansion is complete, over 96

per cent of Saskatchewan population will have access to SaskTel digital cellular service and SaskTel will have invested over \$122 million in its digital cellular network since 1998.

SaskTel already provides unmatched cellular coverage and exceptional call clarity, Mr. Speaker, not to mention award-winning customer service. For the past two years, J.D. Power and Associates, a global market research firm, has ranked SaskTel number one in customer satisfaction for contract wireless service in Canada.

This latest major expansion reinforces . . .

**The Speaker:** — Thank you. Members will come to order. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Learning. Continue.

**Hon. Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this latest major expansion reinforces SaskTel's unwavering commitment to the people of Saskatchewan, who can be very proud of the industry leadership demonstrated by their very own communications company.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend SaskTel and its employees for continuing to deliver first-rate digital cellular service to the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Speaking to the ministerial statement, the Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to respond for the first time as the official opposition critic responsible for SaskTel.

Mr. Speaker, it is good to see, it is good to see that SaskTel is providing Saskatchewan citizens with much needed cellphone service. You know, too often, Mr. Speaker, in the past we've had this NDP government spending tens of millions of dollars of taxpayers' dollars in out-of-province, money-losing ventures.

While many communities . . . And I mean, the minister has outlined 31 communities that will benefit. These 31 communities have been asking for years to have an improvement to their cell service, and this government has chosen to spend millions and millions of dollars of taxpayers' money outside of this province. Mr. Speaker, this is a positive move for those communities that are going to be receiving this type of service.

I note, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition has received letters from many parts of the provinces, from RMs [rural municipality], from small communities, asking for SaskTel and this government to address the needs of those people.

Mr. Speaker, money that could've been saved from projects like Navigata or Retx, could have been invested into Saskatchewan communities that would have made life better for so many Saskatchewan people.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, in rural Saskatchewan where great distances separate neighbour from neighbour, reliable cell service is necessary for doing business and staying in touch in an emergency. And, Mr. Speaker, with the disastrous state of the NDP highway system the likelihood of an accident is even greater and reliable cell service is that much more in need.

Mr. Speaker, I think many people in Saskatchewan will be thinking, why now? Why at this time? Well, Mr. Speaker, it's because there is a looming election in this province and the NDP will do anything to cling to power. While the Saskatchewan Party commends the hard work of everyone at SaskTel, this might be just one of those things. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Order please. Order please. Order.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 43 — The Payday Loans Act

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, before I make my remarks in respect to this second reading motion, I request leave to introduce guests.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Saskatoon Meewasin, Minister of Justice, has requested leave to make introductions. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice for introductions.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues in the House. I wish to present to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two special guests seated in your gallery. I'm pleased that they could be here today as I move second reading of an important piece of legislation, The Payday Loans Act.

Ruth Robinson is the past president of the Consumers' Association of Canada, Saskatchewan Branch. Ruth is a retired educator, a community activist, and volunteer. For more than 30 years she has dedicated herself to a range of issues including mental health issues, consumer rights, public safety, architectural heritage, education, women's issues, and her church. Ruth Robinson's awards and community contributions are too numerous to mention in their entirety but a few highlights include 2004 Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal recipient, 1992 Saskatoon Citizen of the Year, and Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal recipient.

I would also like to introduce Ann Marie Buchmann-Gerber. Ann Marie is the administrator of the Consumers' Association of Canada, Saskatchewan branch. Ann Marie came to Canada as a young adult from Switzerland and has made her home in Saskatchewan since 1972. She is also a well-known Saskatchewan artist, a founding member of the Saskatchewan Craft Council, and a former long-term member of the Mendel Art Gallery board.

Ruth and Ann Marie are accompanied today by one of my staff, Alaina Wartman, who has just returned to us after six months teaching abroad in China. I would like to take this opportunity to state for the record how happy I am to have such a bright, intelligent, and capable young woman back in my office and back in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

I ask all members to join me in welcoming these very special guests to the legislature, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave, I would like to introduce guests as well.

**The Speaker:** — Leave granted.

**Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister on welcoming Ruth Robinson. I had the occasion of meeting her last year when we were passing our consumer protection piece of legislation through, the first time we went through the committee process dealing with fitness facilities, etc. And the hard work of the consumers' association and of Ms. Robinson was very much appreciated and welcomed by the committee.

On a personal note, Ms. Buchmann-Gerber is somebody that I know well from the time we both spent on the Mendel Gallery board and extremely pleased to see her in the legislature today, and pleased to see that she's being active in the consumers' association. I would like to welcome both of those members.

And while I'm on my feet as well, I would certainly welcome the Justice minister's new staff member, and as much as I want to wish her well, I hope that her career is relatively short-lived with that particular minister.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome them all to the House. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 43 — The Payday Loans Act

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Payday Loans Act. Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to establish a comprehensive

framework for the regulation of payday lenders. A payday loan is a short-term loan for a relatively small amount to be repaid at the time of the borrower's next payday.

In the last decade, the payday lending industry has grown substantially. Payday lending is currently one of the fastest-growing industries in Canada. There are approximately 1,350 retail outlets. It is estimated the industry lends \$1.7 billion or more to about 2 million Canadians each year. Payday loans are a very expensive way for consumers to meet their temporary credit needs. However, the tremendous expansion of the industry demonstrates that there is a demand for these short-term loans.

A number of concerns have been raised about practices in the payday loan industry. Some of these concerns include the high cost of payday loans, inadequate disclosure of costs and terms, excessive fees charged for the rollover of payday loans, and unfair debt collection practices. Mr. Speaker, this Bill is designed to balance the need for short-term credit with effective borrower protections.

Currently section 347 of the Criminal Code of Canada establishes maximum interest rates that can be charged on loans in Canada and makes it a criminal offence to charge more than 60 per cent interest per year. For the past number of years the federal, provincial, and territorial consumer ministers have been collaborating and consulting with stakeholder and consumer groups regarding the regulation of the payday lending industry.

Based on this, the federal government has introduced amendments to section 347 of the Criminal Code. If passed, those amendments will allow the provinces and territories to set limits on the cost of payday loans as part of a comprehensive framework for the regulation of payday lenders.

Mr. Speaker, today's Bill will prohibit a payday lender from charging or receiving any amount or fee that is not provided for in the Act or regulations. It will allow regulation to be made setting maximum limits on the costs associated with payday loans. The Bill provides a borrower with the right to refund of all monies paid in excess of the amounts or fees permitted to be charged in the Act or regulations.

The Bill requires payday lenders to be licensed and requires a separate licence for each location from which a payday lender carries on business. It provides the borrower may cancel a payday loan before the end of the business day following the date the loan was made. The Bill also provides the borrower may cancel a payday loan at any time if he or she was not properly notified of this cancellation right.

This Bill includes disclosure requirements to ensure that borrowers are able to make informed decisions in respect of payday loans. It also provides a number of additional protections for borrowers including prohibiting payday lenders from having more than one payday loan with the same borrower at the same time, taking any security in respect of payday loans, requesting or requiring a borrower to make an assignment of wages in relation to a payday loan, and making a payday loan contingent on the purchase of another product or service.

The proposed legislation allows regulations to be made setting

limits in the amount a payday lender can loan based on the borrower's net pay. Payday lenders will also be required to comply with the collection practice prohibitions set out in The Collection Agents Act.

To ensure that payday lenders have the resources to meet their obligations, the Bill will also allow regulations to be established setting capital requirements for licensees and allow the director to require payday lenders to file financial security. Finally, Mr. Speaker, this Bill includes investigation and enforcement provisions to ensure compliance with the legislation.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, this Bill will allow for the effective regulation of the payday lending industry and provide protection for borrowers who use payday loans.

Mr. Speaker, we've consulted with members of the payday lending industry and consumer groups. I appreciate the time, effort, and co-operation these stakeholders have contributed to the development of this Bill. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of The Payday Loans Act.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The minister has moved second reading of The Payday Loans Act, Bill No. 43. I recognize the member from Melfort.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's with pleasure that I rise to speak briefly today in response to the minister's outlining for second readings of the details of Bill No. 43, The Payday Loans Act.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for this piece of legislation because I certainly believe that in principle it provides an absolute necessity to protect consumers from irresponsible situations that they may find themselves in when they require short-term credit around payday.

I've heard from many, many people over the years that they have only a 28-day cheque and a 31-day month and quite often they get into credit squeezes near the end of the month before payday. And unfortunately some of these individuals are actually taken a fair bit of advantage of because of their precarious situation. Madam Deputy Speaker, I think it's very important that this industry, as it has grown, is also regulated so that it provides reasonable safeguards and protections for consumers against excessive amounts of interest rates and loan conditions.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that our Justice critic is going to want to meet with and consult with various consumer groups. And I am pleased to see in the news release and the coverage in the media that the Canadian Payday Loans Association has come out in favour of this legislation, and I think that is a very responsible position for them to take. I know our critic is going to want to discuss this with this association and other consumer associations to make sure that all of the clauses of this Bill — and there are very numerous and technical requirements to the Bill including the reference to regulations — are complete. And in order for that to happen, I would move to adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Melfort 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. 44 — The Class Actions Amendment Act, 2007/  
Loi de 2007 modifiant la Loi sur les recours collectifs**

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

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Class Actions Amendment Act, 2007. Class actions deal with situations where the relief sought is the result of mass injuries. This might be mass products liability in relation to brand name pharmaceuticals or misrepresentation to prospective investors or mass environmental injury such as chemical spills or contaminated water.

Class actions legislation allows consumers and other plaintiffs to launch a class action in situations where they would be discouraged from pursuing individual claims because of the cost of doing so.

Saskatchewan passed The Class Actions Act in 2001 to allow class actions in the province. That Act sets out the procedure and rules for starting and conducting a class action. The Saskatchewan Act was modelled on the Uniform Class Proceedings Act adopted in 1996. The Uniform Law Conference recommended that legislation should be consistent across the country because many of the situations that give rise to class actions will not be limited to one province, but will give rise to claims in several jurisdictions.

Multi-jurisdictional class actions refers to class actions that include class members who do not reside in a certified jurisdiction. Given the broad availability of class actions in Canada, it is possible that overlapping multi-jurisdictional class actions concerning the same or similar subject matter could be commenced in several different Canadian jurisdictions. As a result, potential class members may find themselves presumptively included in more than one class action in more than one jurisdiction, and consequently subject to conflicting determinations. Further, defendants and class counsel may be faced with uncertainty as to the size and composition of the class. In addition it may be difficult in determining with certainty which class members will be bound by which decisions.

The proposed amendments to the Act modify the existing class action certification process to resolve the problem of multiplicity in multi-jurisdictional class actions.

The current Saskatchewan Act is based on the uniform Act which proposed an opt-out model of class proceedings for residents and an opt-in model for non-residents of the province. This means that persons who match the characteristics of the classes set on the class action court certification order are, if residents, members of the class until they opt out of the proceeding, and if not residents, not members unless they opt in.

Not all the provinces follow the Uniform Law Conference's 1996 model respecting residents and non-residents. Currently Ontario and Manitoba have a complete opt-out model in their class actions legislation so that class actions in those provinces are binding on the class of people no matter where they reside.

The Uniform Law Conference of Canada in 2004 established a national class actions project and the committee on national class and related interjurisdictional issues to prepare a report on issues related to national and multi-jurisdictional class actions. In 2006 the committee recommended amendments to the Uniform Class Proceedings Act to allow courts to certify on an opt-out basis a class that includes class members residing outside the jurisdiction. It also recommended that current rules governing jurisdiction be changed to resolve conflicts between potentially competing class actions, and that a central class action registry be developed.

The proposed legislation is based on a Uniform Law Conference draft. The Bill provides that class action commenced in Saskatchewan automatically includes non-Saskatchewan residents as class members, and provide that these members can opt out of a multi-jurisdictional class action. The amendments reflect the recommendation that an opt-out mechanism be adopted for a class that includes class members residing outside the jurisdiction.

[14:45]

One of the biggest challenges with respect to multi-jurisdictional class actions concerns accessibility to information. To address this concern the Bill requires that a person who commences a class action in Saskatchewan give notice of the application to the plaintiff in a class action elsewhere in Canada that involves the same or similar subject matter.

To facilitate the provision of the notice, the Uniform Law Conference has recommended that a Canadian class proceeding registry be established as a searchable electronic database of class actions. This registry would be operated by an appropriate national body.

Counsel applying for certification of an action would be responsible for providing the relevant information at the time a statement of claim is filed, and for updating the information on certification and when material events occur.

The Canadian Bar Association has established a class actions registry. In an effort to reduce the problems caused by overlapping multi-jurisdictional class actions, a new provision assists both the certifying court and a subsequent court in determining whether a related class action in another jurisdiction may be the most suitable forum.

This provision sets out the following objectives the judge must be guided by in the determination as to which jurisdiction would be the most suitable forum: the interests of all the parties, the ends of justice, avoidance of irreconcilable judgments, and judicial economy. The legislation provides the criteria that a court has to consider in making this determination.

Finally, the amendments provide that a court considering



certification has the flexibility to consider a range of orders and not simply whether or not to certify a multi-jurisdictional class action. For example, they may also refuse to certify a portion of the proposed class who may be included within a pending or proposed class action in another jurisdiction.

The advantage of the proposed approach is that it prevents a multiplicity of actions — that is the same issue being dealt with by class actions in different jurisdictions.

An action that applies to and binds members of the class, regardless of where they live, can be commenced in Saskatchewan. The current provision results in actions where class members live in many jurisdictions being started in other provinces. The change will mean that there is no disadvantage to plaintiffs and defendants if the action is started in Saskatchewan.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of An Act to amend The Class Actions Act.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved second reading of Bill No. 44, The Class Actions Amendment Act. I recognize the member for Melfort.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and speak briefly on Bill No. 44, The Class Actions Amendment Act.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I understand that the structure for this legislation came under the auspices of the Uniform Law Conference drafts which provide some guidance in terms of making sure legislation is similar in all of the jurisdictions, I suspect, in North America. And certainly this is a piece of legislation that appears to be worthwhile and likely to be supported.

I understand that the thrust of this legislation is to insert a multi-jurisdictional class of, a common class action that will facilitate interjurisdictional types of class actions that are not available to us at this time.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that any moves that can be taken in order to streamline the law process and to make redress for Saskatchewan residents more attainable is a worthwhile piece of legislation.

Listening to the outline of the Justice minister, it would seem to me that there are a number of organizations in the law community that are going to be very interested in commenting on this draft legislation. And I know our Justice critic is going to endeavour to contact them and to solicit their response and their comments on this legislation to ensure that in the drafting of it nothing has been missed or overseen.

So in order for that discussion to happen between these law organizations and our Justice critic, at this time I would move to adjourn debate.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### 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:** — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to get up to speak on this particular Bill on the paramedics. I'm sure members on both sides of the House realize how important and the huge contribution that emergency workers do. And there's paramedics, emergency personnel, ambulance drivers, nurses, doctors — how important they are if anybody's ever been involved in an accident. Especially in . . . You take in rural Saskatchewan where you have huge distances, and your nearest hospital might be many, many miles away. You realize how important that these crews and the services that they provide throughout the province of Saskatchewan is very, very huge. I take my hat off to the people that do that work, that provide that emergency services out there throughout the province of Saskatchewan. They've provided very, very excellent service over a number of years.

And it's nothing more terrifying if you've ever been involved in an accident or even come upon an accident on No. 11 Highway, is a very well-travelled highway. And quite often, you know, even driving you'll see cars in the ditch. And just coming back from Saskatoon, I think two weeks ago, I passed two cars that were just . . . accidents that had just happened. The ambulance had just pulled up to one, and the emergency service had just pulled up to the other one. So you stop and you want to make sure that you can help whenever you can, and you know that the people that are involved are quite relieved that they can be there that fast.

Dealing with that . . . [inaudible] . . . I'll talk a little bit about emergency response out of Davidson who . . . they did excellent work there. Some of the things that they've raised with me over the number of years, Madam Deputy Speaker, is being, No. 11 is being a highway that's getting busier and busier and busier all the time, I think 70 per cent of their calls aren't what you would call local calls. And that's originally what they were set up for, was to service the surrounding community in the area. But 70 per cent of the calls now are dealt with people travelling on No. 11 Highway. They get the accidents especially with . . . it seems like the last number of years there's been a lot of ice on the highways, I don't know, just maybe just due to the certain conditions we've had over the last few years — a lot of accidents and a lot of people travelling at that end of it.

And they found it's very, very hard on a small service in Davidson to be servicing that, and they felt that they're not adequately provided money or funding for that. In fact you

can't put funding in for an accident call if it's out of your local area. There's a fund there but usually time to get it . . . you apply for it at the end of the year, and most of the time the fund is empty, so you're only paid out on a percentage. So most of the time, they only get paid maybe 40, 50, 60 per cent of what they normally should be getting for the calls out of it.

And it can be very expensive considering that it's a community that are raising the money for the jaws of life, for the emergency trucks, for the firefighters out there. It's local communities that are raising . . . and getting very little help from the government at that end. I know that they've applied for funding for jaws of life up and down the line.

In fact I think Kenaston just got theirs. They had to buy a used one at a sale, you know. And they, you know, being that they're situated on a very busy highway, No. 11, I find that a little disconcerting that the only, that the only way they could raise funding was to go to an auction sale and buy a used one. I feel that, you know, this government could possibly provide them with a new jaws of life considering that the busyness and the amount of accidents that are up on No. 11 Highway.

I know I met with the health district — we'd met with them a couple months ago — and the calls they . . . Every year they do an assessment of the calls, Madam Deputy Speaker. And every year they're going up in my area on No. 11 Highway as being one of the most busiest highways in Saskatchewan. And every year they go up. This year they're predicted to go up by at least 60 more calls than the paramedics, the firefighters, emergency crews are going to have to make on that, just out of Davidson, just going up by 60 calls. And he says, you know, that's putting a strain on our workers.

We've only got . . . In ambulance drivers, I think they only have two full-time ones right now, and then you have a part-time. Part-time are only getting paid \$4 an hour when they're on call. And he said it's been very hard to retain drivers in rural Saskatchewan.

He said a lot of times we go out on a call, we don't have a back-up ambulance, and a lot of times we'll have to go to another town, as Imperial, to pick up . . . or Craik or Kenaston. And basically we don't have another ambulance service in our area. We'll have to then use Outlook or maybe even Rosetown as a back-up call-in. And then you're looking at possibly, you know, an hour, hour and a half for an ambulance call.

I was hoping this government would pay more attention to providing more money and more services out there in rural Saskatchewan when it comes to, especially, paramedics. It seems like we've become a more and more mobile people. We seem to be on the road a lot more, travelling a lot more, which people do. Over the number of years, it's become very mobile out in my constituency. And unfortunately we have to because you're looking at schools . . . Right now, if they get some of the school closures, they could be looking at busing 45 minutes, taking busloads of kids down roads that sometimes aren't that great a shape.

You know, the people out there, that's the only service they have for emergency service, is the paramedics that are located in centres such as Davidson and Imperial and Outlook. They

service a huge area. Three towns like that service a huge area. We're talking like many, many miles at that. And that's the only service we have out there in rural Saskatchewan.

If you're involved in an accident, that's the only help you're going to get. And they provide excellent help, but I think they need more help from this government. They need more equipment, and they need more personnel out there because nothing's more frightening than if you have a loved one involved in an accident and you're sitting, waiting on a paramedic, knowing that they're 40, 45 minutes; the closest centre is maybe 40, 45 minutes away at that.

I know that our Health critic at times has talked about different solutions. And one of them was that what Alberta uses, is a helicopter to transport emergency accident victims. And I think we have to have an open mind when it comes to health care throughout the province of Saskatchewan. Any way that we can help groups such as paramedics at that . . . with this particular piece of legislation that deals with paramedics and some of their issues that they've raised with us over the years. They've raised them with the government on it.

You know, I think some of them deals with . . . they would like to be a little more self-regulatory. They would like to be a little more . . . look after, a little more of their administration, a little more of the regulations. And I think that's a very good idea. With that we need to be supporting them kind of workers as much as we can, Madam Deputy Speaker because they provide a very excellent service out there in rural Saskatchewan at that. And paramedics all over, all over Saskatchewan, whether it's urban and whether it's rural, they provide a very excellent service.

I mean they're the front-line workers. When there's an accident, those are the first people that you call when you're involved in accidents, first people that cross your mind. And they're there. They are the ones that have to use the jaws of life. They're the ones that have to get the people out, put them on, load them the proper way to make sure that they make it to the hospital alive while working on them all the way while they're being transported to a hospital, at that end of it.

I know that they talk about having the same standards of training for all service providers working in the area. And that, I think, is very important, Madam Deputy Speaker, because they need adequate training. They need to be trained properly out there because people's lives are depending on what they're doing out there, and the service that they're providing, and the care when they're first on an accident scene at that. So I know that they're asking for as much possible training as they can possibly get. I know the paramedics in my constituency are willing to take any kind of training that the government will provide, and trying to do anything to get as much training as possibly, as they possibly can.

Because I mean, their main focus is to, out there, Madam Deputy Speaker, is to save lives. That's their one goal when they joined that. They want to help people at that end of it. I know that some of the concerns that were raised in my area was that some of the people just wanted to come out; they wanted to get more on-the-job training when they came out there. And they found that sometimes they're restricted with some of the

health districts a little bit at that end of it.

Also some of the people that actually work in the health centre, they would like to be able to be on call. They're at the health centre anyways. They're right there where the ambulance is being loaded, the paramedics are leaving. Some of their jobs aren't critical that they can leave their job. And that makes it . . . and I'm hoping some of the health districts will look at that, being a little more flexible. Because when you're on calls as a paramedic in rural Saskatchewan — that's one of them — your employer has . . . you have to find a flexible employer that will let you leave your job on a second's notice, that you're just gone like that. When the call comes in, you're out that door.

And unfortunately in rural . . . [inaudible] . . . most employers are like that but unfortunately rural Saskatchewan, size of the towns, it's hard. There isn't that many jobs out there. There's not that many jobs in rural Saskatchewan that you can just walk out the door that fast, that quick at that end of it. But any employers out there are trying to accommodate that.

[15:00]

And I know I'm hoping that the health districts will look at it because I know there's been some people that — working in long-term care, some in administration there — that say yes, we, you know, we could leave our job here and we're right here on the centre where the ambulance is leaving that we could be ready to go. And I know that was an issue, that just having the people, finding the people to work out in rural Saskatchewan is getting to be unfortunately more and more of a challenge at that end of it.

So I know this government has to do more work. Whether it's this government or when we're government in the short number of months, we have to be out there working to ensure that the paramedics are getting the proper funding and the proper training to provide the service out there to rural Saskatchewan that they're going to need in the upcoming years. And we're going to be relying more and more on paramedics.

And out our way, we've had to because, under this present government, they've closed 52 hospitals. There is no, basically, hospital service at all out in my constituencies, you know, very little hospital care. It's basically paramedics get you to the bigger centres at that end of it, at that. So under this government, with the closure of hospitals, they should be putting more money and looking after the paramedics because they're the ones that are out there on the front line that are going to . . . out there. That's the only help the people have out there in my constituency.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, with that, I would . . . I know that some more . . . these are some of the issues raised. And I know that this being a very important Bill. And dealing with paramedics, I know quite a few members, I think, still want to make some points on it. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I will adjourn debate on this particular Bill.

**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. 31

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 31 — The Regional Health Services Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2)** 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 an honour to rise in this Assembly to debate Bill 31, An Act to amend The Regional Health Services Act.

As I understand it, Madam Deputy Speaker, this Bill is all about formalizing provisions for services by affiliate-type health care organizations, such as ambulance services, which are not so-called designated health organizations under the Act.

And I recognize, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the Provincial Auditor has suggested that it would be proper to enter into some sort of formal agreement, service agreements with this type of health care providers, many of which are contracted services. And I would agree at least in principle, Madam Deputy Speaker, that that is appropriate and proper. The devil may be in the details. That's my concern with this Bill, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I understand formal agreements would ensure that standards are met, outline responsibilities, and ensure that Saskatchewan Health is accountable for the actions of the contractors that it deals with. In this respect, Madam Deputy Speaker, this type of agreements are overdue.

The Provincial Auditor has asked that RHAs [regional health authority] comply with this recommendation for many years. And so it is appropriate that we see a Bill in front of us, the details of which may need some work.

We've found that . . . You know, as an official opposition, part of our duty is to consult with the stakeholders in these situations. And as a result of those consultations, we've discovered that the Saskatchewan emergency measures services association, SEMSA [Saskatchewan Emergency Medical Services Association] has some concerns with this Bill. And we understand that negotiations are . . . and at least discussions are ongoing and that's great. We would expect however that some agreement would be arrived at between the parties before passage of this Bill, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And given this government's history with The Ambulance Act where it failed to duly consult with ambulance operators, it seems appropriate that the discussions continue and that an agreement be arrived at.

SEMSA's concerns are threefold. Number one, they are concerned about the provision that allows for one year's notice

that can be given without cause. That's a major concern to operators and a serious impediment for them to secure financing. Bankers would obviously see that there's no long-term business plan to warrant a loan. And it certainly affects the establishment of these businesses and the expansion of them and long-term planning within those businesses.

Their second concern, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that once notice is served to terminate a contract, there are provisions for the RHA [regional health authority] to buy out the operator at so-called fair market value. However ambulance operators suggest that with only one-year contracts in place, the fair market value of their business is greatly diminished.

And thirdly, Madam Deputy Speaker, the third concern on this Bill is that this provision gives 14 days notice to remedy any service disputes, followed by cessation of payment. And that's a serious problem for these people as well. Operators feel that there needs to be a longer period to resolve disputes.

And you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, we understand that discussions are moving ahead and that work is in progress, but we expect that those discussions should bear fruit and an agreement should be arrived at before any serious attempt is made to pass this Bill. And accordingly, Madam Deputy Speaker, I move to adjourn this item until such time as stakeholders have been consulted and accommodated in that fashion. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Thunder Creek has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 31. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 28

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen that **Bill No. 28 — The Cities Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2)** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. When you get up to talk on The Cities Amendment Act, it's funny. My constituency is about 4,500 square miles, and I don't have a city in it. And I think it's due, unfortunately, to this present government that nothing's growing out there in rural Saskatchewan. I should have some cities by now.

You know, over the number of years there should have been cities like, or towns like Watrous and Wynyard, they should be the size of small cities right now. You know, if they'd have been in Alberta they'd be the size of a small city right now, growing. Instead if you checked the latest census population you know they're just barely hanging on or shrinking. In fact most of my towns under this present government have shrunk, especially the RMs [rural municipalities]. You know, if you've check the RMs they've all shrunk under the watch of this NDP

government, but with that.

Dealing with this particular Bill No. 28, The Cities Amendment Act, going through it here I can see where the cities would want to have a little more power when they're governing and not to be always be looking over the shoulder or having almost like Big Brother running them.

I'm surprised at some of the things that they've had to come to the legislature or come to the government if they want to change things. I think at one time it was if you wanted to change your street address — not street address, change the name of a street — I think it had to actually go through the legislature or through the minister. I shouldn't say through the legislature. It had to go through the minister for his approval to change the name of a street at that. I don't know where the government always thought that they had to take the powers away from some of these cities.

Like I say we've met with big-city mayors over a number of years and they say, you know, their jurisdiction has changed over a number of years. They're looking after so much more now than just at one time a mayor, the council, just looked after infrastructure, just looked after streets. Now they have to provide . . . They're into health care, providing that for citizens. They're into providing affordable housing for their citizens. They're into recreation events and facilities and sporting events and numerous things that one time that was basically just the role of the government.

And you know at one time towns, cities, or villages, you know they just, their role was just to, you know, provide sewer and water, garbage removal. But now as you talk to the cities you know they're into much more. Transit is to be a huge problem as most cities are facing the movement of people throughout the city. And I know our cities you don't notice it quite as much, but yet at 5 o'clock, and 8 o'clock in the morning, and 5 in the afternoon, you know it's busy on your major streets and it's getting close to being a traffic jam. Saskatoon right now is in the boom of a mini-boom.

You look at the way Alberta is growing and some of the problems that their cities are facing. The cities are growing so huge there that the infrastructure is having a hard time following and growing with them. So I could see where they need more, you know, more resources or more freedom to act quickly on things as they grow and the cities are growing very fast throughout Canada.

And unfortunately, they're not growing as fast here in Saskatchewan as they should under this present government but with a change in government I believe that they will start to grow a lot faster and a lot quicker over the next number of years. For, you know, this province has a huge, huge potential which all the province is going to enjoy — the cities and rural Saskatchewan. All it needs is the right government.

So I could see where the cities want to be a little more independent, want to have a little more flexibility in taxation, a little more flexibility in some of the rules and regulations and financing and dealing with the present government. I know when we'd met with big-city mayors, you know, they'd made some very, very valid points on the future of their cities. And

they're concerned of a lot of the issues that they have to face.

And one of them is, you know, like you say, some of the issues that they've had to take over, downloading from this present government. I can relate to that as being a councillor even in our small little town. The downloading that's come from this provincial government, when I was a councillor I think we were getting around \$13,000 in grant money coming back and when I left we were down to below 6, I think. And if I talked to the present mayor now, we're at 5, almost \$4,000.

And yet this government keeps bringing in new rules and regulations for safety and they keep passing that on. One of them is water testing. I mean, it's good. It needs to be done but the towns have to pay for it, you know. The government wants that test sent in every week, but you also better send a cheque with it every week too along with it. You pay for it.

You have to pay to meet all the rules and regulations. There's very little help coming from this government to any town, village, city. So I can see why the cities are getting very frustrated with this present government. And they raised that with us.

We met with them and they are frustrated with this government and so are their citizens, Madam Deputy Speaker. It showed in the last two by-elections; the one just outside of Saskatoon which is Martensville, Warman, two major towns in that constituency, very close to Saskatoon. I mean, probably some day they may even be joined. Basically the people that live in Warman or Martensville, they work in the city. They moved out of the city. They're working there. You could class them as urban.

And the talk when I was there door knocking was, you know, they weren't happy with this present government and a lot of it dealt with the way that they were being treated in the cities, that they felt that this government was not providing fair funding to their cities, to the RMs, to the small towns — weren't basically picking up their share. This government is dealing with more money. It is dealing with a little bit of a mini-boom. Are the citizens of Saskatchewan any better? No they're not. When I go door to door that's one of the questions I ask. Do you think you're any better than you were five years ago? And the answer I always got was no, no I'm not; if anything, I think things are worse out there.

That's what we were getting at the doorstep. We got that in Weyburn. We got that in the by-election in Martensville. And it translated into the way the people voted and it's going to translate into the way they vote this fall when the election's going to be called in October probably of this fall coming up.

[15:15]

It's going to translate into that, Madam Deputy Speaker, because the people of the cities are dissatisfied with rural Saskatchewan at that end of it. They're, I mean, they're . . . Sorry, they're dissatisfied with this government along with rural Saskatchewan. And that's going to translate into votes for our party, the party that only really cares about people, only cares about people in cities, cares about people in rural Saskatchewan. They're actually trying to . . . They know that

we're the only party that's probably going to help them out there. They're not happy with what's been happening with this present government over the last number of years at that end of it.

And one of it is cities amendment Act . This was driven, I would imagine, from the big cities' mayors. They've driven this, which is good. They know that they need changes. One of them is they have to provide a lot of health care. They're providing some of the clinics out in their cities. Their citizens are looking to them to provide some of this stuff because they're not getting it from their government. You have long waiting lists. Very hard to get into a hospital right now. They're looking for them to provide little clinics, little health clinics.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I'd ask that the member would speak to the amendment before the Assembly within The Cities Act.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Sorry about that, Madam Deputy Speaker, but when I start talking about this government I guess I digress into all the problems that it's presented over it. But I will get back to The Cities Amendment Act. At that, I apologize to the legislature for straying from this particular Bill at that end of it.

But dealing with the legislation before this with The Cities Amendment Act, I would just . . . bringing forth some of the reasons why this particular piece of legislation is on here because it was brought forward by the cities — that they felt they're not being treated fairly by this government. And when I met with them, that is what they told me — that they feel they're not being treated fairly by this government. That was their exact words. And that is why this piece of legislation is on here. So I was just giving, Madam Deputy Speaker, and to the House, some of the reasons why this particular piece of legislation was brought forward at that end of it.

Dealing with some of the issues, some of it's taxation. They're looking for more, being able to have more freedom to tax their citizens to provide some of these services that aren't being provided by this present government any more. They need more funding to provide some of these services. So that some of them is looking at more share of a gas tax, of a hotel tax, of part of the oil and gas revenue.

I know that on this side we've talked about, as the province booms, as the economy does good, as more money comes in to the coffers, we've made the statement, our leader Brad Wall has made the statement that we would share that. We would share revenue sharing as things go up. And if revenues go down, well then so does your revenue sharing with it. But if revenues are going up, we share them with municipalities.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I know the member's enthusiasm to speak about cities in general, and The Cities Act in general. I believe that has been debated before the Assembly. There are certain amendments here within the Bill that we would ask the member to address in speaking to the amendments before the House.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Dealing with the amendments, you know, this government didn't do its homework again, didn't deal with the cities at that . . . That's why some of the amendments had to come. They didn't do the

legislation right the first time at that end of it, and that's why some of these amendments, some of it deals with the general legislation of the taxation at that.

But getting back to this government did not do its homework. And that is why this particular Act is being amended right now and before the legislature at that, dealing with some of the amendments. And some of it, you know, talks about, allow city to finance public improvements in a designated area. You know, being allowed the freedom to be able to . . . that's what some of these amendments deal with, Madam Deputy Speaker, at that end of it.

So when I talk about taxation, it's dealing here with some of the amendments at that end of it. But that is some of the reasons why this Bill was here. And the main reason why the amendments are here, because the government didn't do its homework again. It did not consult with them and I think that was raised last session or the session before that — that it was not, did not do its particular homework.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, with that, I know that there's a few other members who want to raise some points, so I will adjourn debate on Bill 28, The Cities Amendment Act.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 28, The Cities Amendment Act. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the 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:** — Recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is a pleasure to speak on Bill No. 9, the Human Rights Code amendment Act. And of course the reason why it's a pleasure to speak on this Bill is because it's an idea that was generated by the Saskatchewan Party and copied by the NDP. And it's always more fun to talk about your own ideas than have to criticize the weak legislation that comes from the NDP.

There's several reasons, Madam Speaker, why we can support this legislation, but I want to talk about two ideas. And I think the Justice minister has forgotten that the Saskatchewan Party suggested this in its *100 Ideas* a year or so ago. Obviously one of his staffers must have found the idea and maybe passed it on to the minister, and the minister didn't even realize it was a Sask Party idea. I'm not sure what the problem is.

But I think, Madam Speaker, the reason why we are debating this Bill today — which is a Saskatchewan Party idea — is because the NDP is so low in the polls. In fact I saw a national poll that showed the NDP were in third place in Saskatchewan

and Manitoba. And we've just gone through two by-elections, Madam Speaker, where the NDP were either third or a whisker away from being in third place.

So hence they have to bring forward some good legislation to try to blunt some of the criticism and lack of support they're experiencing. And thus we have Saskatchewan Party idea . . . and I can't remember what number it is, Madam Speaker, but the Saskatchewan Party idea, 1 of 100, that says that we should discontinue the mandatory retirement age of 65 in the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Madam Speaker, I want to talk about two reasons why this is a piece of legislation that I will support. First of all, Madam Speaker, I support human rights. And, Madam Speaker, I support the right of people to work regardless of their age.

Now it may come as a bit of a shock for some of the NDP members that there are actually people who like to work. And actually, Madam Speaker, there are people who like to continue to work, and they don't just look forward to the day that they are 65 and can grab their retirement slip and enjoy their pension. I think that might be the mindset of the NDP — do as little as possible, quit as soon as you can, get as big a pension as you possibly can, and live a life of luxury.

And actually, Madam Speaker, we've seen some of the retired NDPers. When they do retire from Saskatchewan, they can't wait to get out of the province. And of course they spend these retirement dollars in Alberta or in Victoria or — who knows? — maybe the Turks and Caicos Islands. I'm not sure, Madam Speaker, where all these NDPers go, but obviously if you're not interested in working and you don't believe in the right to work, you're just happy to support mandatory retirement. Obviously the lack of support for the NDP has caused them to change their mind.

Now, Madam Speaker, my father always said that he would rather wear out than rust out — and I kind of like that statement — and he worked as long as he could. Now he could do that because he was self-employed. There was no regulation telling him that when he reached 65 years of age, he had to hang up his work clothes and put on his retirement garb and take it easy. And he enjoyed work, Madam Speaker. And he worked as long as he could into his 70s before he actually slowed down and he left the farm.

And that's of course the case for all self-employed people. There's no mandatory retirement age for them. And there are people in many professions that aren't self-employed where there isn't a mandatory retirement. So what we have without this legislation of course is discrimination. We have some people who are forced to retire at a certain age and others that can continue to work, and that inequity is not acceptable. And so therefore it's very easy to support a piece of legislation that would end the discrimination against people who pass the mandatory retirement age and still want to work.

There's nothing in this Bill . . . Of course there's nothing but age that impedes employment. If there are other circumstances like health requirements or whatever, you know, for people who fly airplanes and drive buses, that's a whole different matter. But nobody should be impeded from working on the basis of

their age and their age alone.

Madam Speaker, another, of course, issue of human rights is the fact that many women leave the workforce for a few years to raise children. The number of women who leave the workforce to raise children is significant. And if mandatory retirement is in place when they rejoin the workforce, oftentimes they are discriminated against and don't have the same access to pension and other benefits that they would have had they been able to remain in the workforce without interruption. And so therefore it's easy to support this legislation on that basis.

And again this is another issue where we've seen the NDP fall short. They have come up short in supporting women's rights and in protecting women. We've seen that in the Murdoch Carriere case, just blatant disregard for women's rights and the protection of women.

So I'm happy to be coming from a different point of view and supporting this legislation because it is friendly to women in the workplace and others who, for reasons often beyond their control, have to leave the workforce for a period of time, could be to care for the elderly parents or it could be because of health reasons. And of course that's not even a gender issue. That could be male or female that have to leave the workplace because of interruptions in their work because of health. And obviously this legislation provides them with the human rights that they deserve.

Now the other issue of course that I think . . . The other qualification that makes this legislation supportable and the reason why it was a good Saskatchewan Party idea in the first place is that we are faced in Saskatchewan with a labour shortage. I happen to be right in the middle of the baby boom generation. All those of you who are a few years older or a few years younger than me are baby boomers. And we're the majority. We're a disproportional amount of the workforce, and we're reaching retirement age.

And we're already seeing, Madam Speaker, not only in Alberta and Ontario where they have stronger economies because of a non-NDP government, but even here in NDP Saskatchewan with a much weaker economy, we're seeing a labour shortage. We're seeing it in the case of health care professionals because of lack of foresight by the NDP to train health care professionals. We have to encourage health care professionals to stay in their profession longer than might otherwise be the case, particularly if there was a mandatory retirement clause in their particular profession.

So, Madam Speaker, the short-sightedness of the NDP and the way they have governed the province of Saskatchewan is another reason why we should pass Bill No. 9 and discontinue the mandatory retirement age and in fact strengthen the Human Rights Code with this amendment.

Madam Speaker, one question that I would have for the minister and any members opposite who could answer that is, why does this Act only come into force on its first anniversary? There are already people that have contacted us and they're concerned, Madam Speaker, because in this interim of a year from when this legislation is passed until it comes into effect, they will be forced to retire. If it's a good idea, why isn't it a good idea to

implement sooner?

This isn't a surprise. This legislation has been passed in other jurisdictions. And of course it's been discussed in Saskatchewan. People know it's coming. People know that both the governing party and the official opposition are speaking in favour of the legislation, so why should it take an entire year to come into force? What's the reason of putting some people at a disadvantage for a whole extra 12 months? Certainly it could be done sooner. Why doesn't the NDP become a little more aggressive, a little more positive? Why don't they get their act together? Why don't they in fact do a little bit of work and make this thing work sooner? It's just a matter of changing the last clause of the Bill so that it comes into effect on proclamation or at some time in the near future rather than the distant future.

One good thing, Madam Speaker, about the fact that this Bill will come into effect on the first anniversary of its passing is of course that the Saskatchewan Party will then be the government. And obviously the Saskatchewan Party will get the credit for this legislation, which it should because it was a Saskatchewan Party idea in the first place.

So, Madam Speaker, let's call a good idea a good idea. But let's also be clear about where the idea came from. And, Madam Speaker, I think some other people, particularly at least on this side, want to speak to this particular Bill, so at this time I would ask that we adjourn debate.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[15:30]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Rosetown-Elrose has asked to move to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

#### **Bill No. 14**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 14 — The Environmental Management and Protection Amendment Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to rise in the House today to enter into the debate with regards to The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2002.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I've had the opportunity to look at some of the significant portions of this Bill, and it deals with the government's obligation to acquire permits and to register on land so that landowners know how things are going to be affected. And when I look back at the government's record in some of these things, it's somewhat problematic and certainly troubling. They do not have a good record on environmental

management.

And strangely enough, for people on this side of the House to be quoting David Suzuki, not only does Saskatchewan have the . . . According to David Suzuki, Saskatchewan not only has the highest emissions of greenhouse gases, but it has also the highest level of increase in emissions. And while that doesn't directly affect the things that this Bill is going to address, it's certainly an indication of how poorly this government deals with environmental matters and how little that they can be trusted to deal with . . . or how little they should be trusted as stewards of the environment.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Bill will require some significant consultation from SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], the chamber of commerce, and the various businesses that have to deal with the government entities.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I always have approached this type of thing where the government is introducing Bills under the auspices of it being a mere housekeeping thing . . . This one deals with regulatory process, who's required to obtain permits, how do permits affect land that's adjacent to or on where these works are to be done. So it will be with a significant amount of care that we want to proceed with this Bill, Madam Deputy Speaker. And we'll certainly want to ensure that the consultation that we have is done in a meaningful manner and that we invite those people to make representation to the various committees as this Bill proceeds through.

Having said that, Madam Deputy Speaker, we're prepared now to allow this Bill to go to committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of the Environment that Bill No. 14, the environmental management and protection amendment 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.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — Second reading of this Bill.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that the Bill No. 14, The Environmental Management and Protection Amendment Act, 2006 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 14, The Environmental Management and Protection 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. 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 Saskatoon Silver Springs.

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to join into the debate on Bill No. 3, an Act to amend The Financial Administration Act. It's a theme that we've been seeing in this legislative session. I would say it goes back to about a year ago or so when the budget was delivered, and we've seen some Sask Party ideas adopted by this government. They clearly ran out of their own ideas a long, long time ago. And they made the decision as they were dropping in the polls that it's time to address some Saskatchewan Party ideas.

This is legislation that makes sense. It mandates that taxes be spent on what they were actually collected for. It's something that we've been talking about in the Saskatchewan Party for a long period of time. And I know that the members opposite, they sometimes dispute that, but I just happen to, I just happen to have with me today a copy of the *100 Ideas*, the 100 ideas that the Sask Party presented to get Saskatchewan ready for the next 100 years, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And I bet, just by that alone, you will know when this was presented to this legislature and to this House, to the people of Saskatchewan — in the spring of 2005. Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, 100 ideas that were well thought out . . . They weren't just ideas that came from people on this side of the House. We actually consulted with individuals across Saskatchewan to come up with 100 ideas.

The need, the need was there, Madam Deputy Speaker, because at the time a reporter asked the House Leader at the time, is there anything that stands out in this legislative session. And he says, and I quote, "Nothing really comes to mind." That was from February 25, 2005. So being a responsible opposition, we felt that it was incumbent upon us to fill that vacuum, to come up with these ideas, and to bring them to this Legislative Assembly.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I know members opposite, some of them probably have copies of this very document that I'm quoting from in their desk. If they would like to turn to item no. 33 — because this pertains specifically to this legislation — and I quote, Madam Deputy Speaker: "Commit all provincial fuel tax revenue as a minimum annual investment in provincial and municipal transportation construction and renewal."

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — A good idea, Madam Deputy Speaker. Idea no. 33 out of 100 that were presented . . . and presented. And I know it's not the only one that was adopted by members opposite. They've worked their way through I think a colleague



of mine says about 39 of them, so there's 61 more to go. And I'm sure that members opposite are thankful for that because they will have very little time left to come up with legislation to ensure that the whole program is adopted.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this legislation is something that is long overdue but, you know, when we look at the financial numbers that are in place right now, the government still has a ways to go. If we look at the third quarter report and the money that was collected from fuel in the province, \$376 million and about 85 additional million dollars comes through from the federal government. So we're talking about 450, \$460 million that should be the budget of the Department of Highways.

Now when we look at what money is spent by that department, it totals up to about \$410 million, which is a significant amount of money, and it's something that's necessary. But when we see big announcements that are made by members opposite — you know, they're dreaming a little bit thinking that they will have the opportunity to enact legislation from 10 years from now — we see that \$410 million of the budget now just with an inflationary index of 2 to 3 per cent, we would be at \$500 million a year just with the legislation that's in place now, the money that's put forward right now.

They have a long way to go, but this legislation is a step in the right direction. It will ensure that they at least take the time to look at the numbers, and the Finance minister when he delivers his budget will have to follow this legislation. If not, members here or members across, people across the Saskatchewan will ensure that they hold him to account for not following his own legislation even though it originally came from the Saskatchewan Party. We congratulate the minister for taking the time to look through our document, to pick some of those that they could adopt, and to bring this legislation forward.

There's a lot more to be said on this legislation; the details go on and on. It's just that it's too bad that it took the government this long to adopt this legislation. It's something that I think a new government maybe back in the 1990s would have had the forethought to implement. But that being said, it took them a long, long time to do it, and it sure is something that we support at this time. But we will also — and I caution the members opposite — we will be holding them to account to ensure that every dollar collected from taxes will indeed go back into the infrastructure that is so badly needed in this province.

And I would encourage the members opposite that, you know, item no. 33 here, that this idea was adopted, and there's other ideas that were adopted as well. And I think that it's important that the government take the time to look through this document and make sure that they do things like item no. 68, "Establish set provincial election dates every four years." That's something that Saskatchewan people are looking for.

Item no. 96, it's similar to no. 93 . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. We're talking about a specific Bill before the Assembly.

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. As item no. 33 says we should "Commit all provincial fuel tax revenue as a minimum annual investment in provincial and

municipal transportation construction and renewal."

And that's the very Bill that we're talking about today. And I would say that it's time for this Bill to go to committee so the government can have more time to adopt other ideas, like idea no. 9: "Establish a Children's Hospital in Saskatoon utilizing an existing acute care facility."

Again, it's our role as government . . . as opposition — I may be foreshadowing there — but it's our role as opposition to come forward with these ideas. And we will at this time, at this time we will allow the government to put this Bill to committee so they do have the time, so they do have the time to look at other ideas. And you know, thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. That's all I have at this time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 3, The Fuel Tax Accountability Act 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.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — 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, although it's no. 33 on the opposition's list, I would move that Bill No. 3 be moved to the Committee on the Economy.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 3, The Fuel Tax Accountability Act 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 Cannington.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, this Act is an interesting amalgamation of various Acts that deal with somewhat a similar issue, which is property taxation. But it comes under a number of different headings or a number of different statutes, such as The Cities Act, The Municipalities Act, the northern municipal Act, etc., Madam Deputy Speaker. And they are all being lumped together in this particular piece of legislation in sort of a

mini-omnibus Bill to deal with some changes that the government is making in a band-aid-like manner to try and correct a problem that has existed in the collection of property taxes because the government doesn't want to actually deal with the problem of property taxes.

So they're trying to put forward miniscule measures to deal with the symptoms of the problem rather than actually dealing with the problem, the problem itself, which is that education property taxes are too high. In Saskatchewan we have the highest education property taxes in the Dominion of Canada.

**An Hon. Member:** — Bar none.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Bar none as my colleague says, Madam Deputy Chair. And yet this government, rather than deal with that particular issue — even though the person they look up to for their entire inspiration, Tommy Douglas, said about 50 years ago that property taxes for education were too high in the province of Saskatchewan — this government continues to do nothing about reducing those property taxes. Instead, puts in place measures like this miscellaneous statutes (municipal collection of other taxes) Act to try and band-aid over the problem.

[15:45]

So what is this Act doing? This Act is telling municipalities that if you don't collect the taxes, if you don't remit the taxes in a timely fashion, you're going to have to pay interest on those taxes that you have not either collected or remitted to the other institution involved in the tax collection.

So this is directing and forcing the municipalities, the cities, the northern municipalities to continue to collect the education property taxes for the school boards and remit that in the manner prescribed by the government. If they fail to do that, they are going to be charged interest on the money or — I shouldn't say or because it's not an option — it also could mean that any provincial grants going to that city or municipality would be cancelled and would not be remitted to the municipality. I know of a number of municipalities across the province that would look at that as being a benefit, Madam Deputy Speaker. They would gladly make that trade-off.

You know, even the city of Regina, Madam Deputy Speaker, has been coming to this legislature for approximately 15 years asking this government to increase the amount of grants in lieu that it receives from the Crown corporations, from the government for the buildings that it owns and operates in Regina but that it doesn't pay property taxes on and just simply the transfers to municipalities that have been greatly reduced since this government came to power.

They dramatically reduced those grants, have slowly increased them up a little bit, but I think the last time the cities were in they were looking for somewhere in the neighbourhood of 12 to \$20 million. I think it was 20 million, and the government finally gave them 12 million in transfers to all of the cities in the province, Madam Deputy Speaker. And they were looking for something in the neighbourhood, I believe, of 9 to \$10 million for grants in lieu based on the buildings and the properties that the government operates in Regina and they

received, I believe, it was about 6 million.

So even in the city of Regina or the city of Saskatoon, they might look at that as not being that harsh of a penalty.

I do know that across rural Saskatchewan a good many of the RMs would not look at that as a harsh penalty in the sense that if they got to retain those dollars they had collected and forego any grants because this government gives very, very few grants . . . And the fact is even the school boards in my area, the previous minister of Education, the current Minister of Finance, changed the whole school structure, forced school boards to amalgamate into 12 or 13 school boards with the excuse that it was going to save money and it was going to get rid of zero grant boards.

Well in talking to the boards today they say that there is no savings to be had. And at least in our area, Madam Deputy Speaker, next year our board will again be a zero grant board. They will receive no funding from the provincial government for education, yet our property taxes across the division, Madam Deputy Speaker, have risen dramatically in some of the areas. So what the minister said, when he said that there was going to be a cost reduction, didn't occur. And so it falls back to the property taxes, which this statute is dealing with, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Although I have to say I'm amazed that one small school division in northern Saskatchewan — which would be into the northern municipal district — when asked in committee why that individual school board was not being amalgamated into the Northern Lights School Board, the minister said, well I guess there's no savings. So in one small school board with about 500 students, with all of the attendant bureaucracy, there was no savings to be had. And yet across the province in the other school divisions, the minister was saying that there was savings to be had. I think there was something hugely inconsistent with that argument, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And anybody who's interested just has to look at the list of the school boards in northern Saskatchewan. There's one that stands out as being inconsistent with the other in that area, Madam Deputy Speaker. And that inconsistency does not lie with the Northern Lights School Division.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Act goes on to tell councils how they can collect their taxes. And it goes on to tell them, explain to them in those circumstances where tax collection may be abated, where there may be discounts, where the tax collection may be falling into arrears, what needs to happen.

My question will be, Madam Deputy Speaker, is what happens in those cases that a piece of property falls into arrears? Is it incumbent on the city or the municipality that is currently in the . . . collects the taxes, do they still have to remit that tax to the school board even though it was never collected? Or if they don't submit that tax to the school board, are they charged interest on the uncollectable taxes?

Because when you look across my constituency and most of rural Saskatchewan, and I suspect a fair number of pieces of property even in the urban centres, it's not possible to collect taxes on those properties. So while those taxes are in arrears,

they are in an uncollectible position.

I recollect before I was elected, I had an opportunity to work with the school board on some of the issues dealing with education, and we had a chance to review the budgets. And the entire reserve of that particular school division, which looked like a significant amount of money, was actually uncollectible taxes on properties that . . . in some cases property taxes hadn't been collected there, not for years, Madam Deputy Speaker, but rather decades.

You know, when I look down the list of communities that used to exist in my constituency, in which there is still properties there, some of those have been turned over to the local municipality in lieu of taxes but yet there is still a number of properties in those areas that have taxes.

I look at like a community like Winlaw, south of Gainsborough. Winlaw has one building left. It has a United Church, which I believe they hold a service in once a year. And one historical note with the community of Winlaw, when the survey came through — the border survey in I believe 1874 — they actually stopped and overnighted at Winlaw. And when they had the re-enactment here about 10 years ago; they stopped and again overnighted at Winlaw.

So Winlaw is a historical community in my constituency. It has property on the books as far as the tax rolls are concerned, and yet I doubt very much that many, if any, of those properties are currently paying taxes.

I guess there is one other piece of property in the community of Winlaw that is certainly of interest to the residents of that area and that's the cemetery. Because I know they go down and they make sure that the grounds in that cemetery are properly looked after throughout the summertime, that the fences are fixed, and that the grass is cut.

So you look at those properties in the community of Winlaw, and the collection of the taxes, Madam Deputy Speaker, in there. And how does that either . . . I don't know that it was ever an incorporated hamlet, so it's probably part of the municipality. How do they collect the taxes and remit those taxes that have not been collected to the school board?

Now I read in the Act that if there is going to be any cancellation of taxes, if there's going to be any refunds or reductions in arrears, that the councils — either the city council or the municipal council or the northern municipal council — have to go to the other taxing authority which is the school board, have to go to the school board to get an agreement for each of these properties.

So in the case of Winlaw, as an example, they live on the very, very, very southeast corner of the province. They are about two miles from the Manitoba border and would maybe be ten miles, if that — probably not even that far — from the US [United States] border, and yet they're going to have to . . . the council there is going to have to travel to Weyburn to make a submission to get the school board to agree to allow for the writeoff of these arrears or the cancellation of the taxes.

So are they going to have to do that, Madam Deputy Speaker, in

every case for every property? Are they going to have to go to the school board to make a submission for each and every one of these properties? It doesn't say how this is to happen, Madam Deputy Speaker. It doesn't explain who pays the costs for these calculations, for the meetings if meetings are needed, for the approvals of the forms if that's needed.

One of the other aspects of this Bill that the Act talks about is that a report, a financial report has to be submitted by each city or each municipality by the 10th day of each month. So the municipal manager, the city manager is going to have to prepare a document, a financial document, every month not to be submitted to his or her council; they're going to have to prepare this document to be submitted to the school board.

Now I know in my area a lot of the councils don't meet necessarily within the first 10 days of the month. They meet throughout the month. And so the manager is going to have to submit a report to the school board which has not yet even been seen by the council for whom he or she works, is going to have to submit a document that has not had the approval of that council to the school board. So where does the authorities lie? Where does the responsibilities lie to ensure that that council has approved of those reports? They could approve them a month later but they've already been submitted.

So I think, in this particular area, the government is pushing this too far and too soon. They should have been at least giving the councils and the city councils, either the city or municipal councils, the opportunity to meet and to review and approve that report before it's submitted to another agency. Clearly, I would believe that's within their jurisdiction to manage their affairs properly in that manner, and the government is denying them that opportunity. And there are . . . If they fail to do so there are consequences. In fact the consequences are that the minister can establish regulations on how to do this and how the taxes are going to be taken from the collection agency which is the city or municipality and transmitted to the city.

One of the other areas, Madam Deputy Speaker, which is being changed in this Bill also deals with municipal hail insurance. It's setting out how Municipal Hail, which is owned and controlled by the rural municipalities, will deal with the submissions of their premiums to the insurance agency. So it's how the premiums collected by the rural municipality will be submitted to their own incorporated insurance agency, Municipal Hail. And the government is intervening and setting the financial terms and the discount terms which can be applied to those funds.

In every one of these cases, both on the school board side and on the Municipal Hail side, those entities have a long history of how much discount is utilized every year. They know that historically a certain percentage of the taxes are paid in September and October and November and December, and how many are not paid at all or fall into arrears. So they've built that into their budget process. They know that those things are historically going to happen.

What happened here in the recent couple of years is that I believe over 100 municipalities, in an attempt to get the government's attention to the huge burden of education property taxes, refused to remit the education property taxes by

January 1 which is when the taxes become due. Not that the individual landowner hadn't necessarily paid those taxes — they had probably in most cases paid them in the proper manner in the proper time and received, if there were any discounts to be received, had received those discounts — but that the municipalities had not remitted them in the normal fashion that they had previously been doing say 10 or 20 years ago. To make a point, they did it differently.

And the result of which is this piece of legislation with the government coming down with the heavy hammer of government and the courts to force the issue, going through various gyrations and contortions on this piece of legislation dealing with three different Acts to try and force their will on the municipalities to not complain so much and not emphasize the issue of property taxes so much.

[16:00]

And I don't think that they're going to be successful in this. I mean people are very inventive. And every time the government has changed the rules — and I know that since I've been in here dealing with property taxes, the government has made at least two previous changes to the municipal Acts in the collection of school taxes by the municipalities. And this is the third iteration of those gyrations, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I'm sure that there are a number of inventive people who are in the process of being forced to collect taxes for the school boards, and they will find, if they desire, other means by which to make their unhappiness known to this government about the level of property taxes that are being collected.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I only commented on one of those small communities in my constituency that has property that would potentially fall under this piece of legislation and the arrears and the failure to pay taxes. You know, I've got communities like Souris Flats and Alcott and Fertile and Nottingham and Auburnton, and I've just covered, you know, not even three municipalities in mentioning that, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And a good many of these communities actually had people living in those communities when this government took over. And most of them or a good many of them are no longer there. And fact is, Alcott, the railroad used to go there when this government first got elected and they pulled up the tracks since then, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So that explains how much interest and concern that this government has had for the people of rural Saskatchewan. And yet in the community of Alcott, in all likelihood, there are still individual names on various parcels of property within that old hamlet that have not been turned over to the municipality for the tax arrears. And so they will still now have to go to the school board in Weyburn to get approval to either write off those arrears or make some other arrangements.

You know, you take a look at a place where I went to school as a young guy only five or six years ago, Madam Deputy Speaker. I took my grade 1 and 2, I took up to grade 8 there, Madam Deputy Speaker — the community of Cantal. The community of Cantal, Madam Deputy Speaker, has a church. It has a parsonage in which nobody lives anymore, and it has one

farmyard. But I know that, when I was there, there were four families living there. There was a store there. There was a gas station. And so those pieces of property are owned by somebody. Now whether they've been turned over to RM 32 or not, I don't know. But in all likelihood, if they have not been turned over, those families that were living there are long gone. I know that some of them are deceased. And so who would be paying those taxes? In all likelihood no one is paying the taxes on those properties and so they're in arrears.

Now when RM 32 is asked by the southeast school board to remit the taxes for those properties, what are they going to do? You know, they're not collecting any money. So do they have to turn around and stroke the cheque to the school board for that amount of money and try and collect it from somebody who . . . they don't even know where they live? Or do they have to drive to Weyburn and sit down with the school board there and . . . trying to strike an agreement to cancel those taxes or to just leave them sitting on the books as arrears? Or how do they do that, Madam Deputy Speaker?

So I think this Bill adds a huge amount of cost both to the municipalities, the cities, the rural municipalities, and the northern municipalities in administration, in reporting, in reaching agreements, and it's going to cause problems as well for the school boards because they're going to have the stacks of paper coming . . . these reports coming in every month.

I think in my area, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have 12 municipalities and 30-some existing communities that are either towns or villages or hamlets, Madam Deputy Speaker. So right there you've got about 50 reports a month that the school board is going to have to be filing from all of these different entities.

And what are they going to do with them all? I mean the government across the way likes to think of themselves as being ecologically sensitive — the green government. How many trees are we going to have to cut down in this province just to fill the demands for this government's financial reports to the school boards?

Madam Deputy Speaker, Madam Deputy Speaker, this government is using this tool to duck and to avoid the real issue which is that Minister of Finance's failure to deal with the education property tax issue in this province . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Finance has had a couple of opportunities now — he will soon have another opportunity — to correct the situation of the high education property taxes.

I mean I can remember years ago his party talking about the need to go to 40 per cent property taxes and 60 per cent government. Well unfortunately, Madam Deputy Speaker, they have gone the other way and the education property taxes continue to increase while the government's percentage portion continues to reduce. And all the changes that they made, all the changes with the amalgamations haven't fixed that problem, Madam Deputy Speaker. In fact is they even had the Boughen report that was to try and deal with property taxes, which is what this piece of legislation is trying to deal with, but the Boughen report presented solutions where this piece of

legislation is simply a band-aid on top of . . . to disguise the problem.

The Minister of Finance said that the Boughen Commission called for an increase in property taxes. It did indeed. Not property taxes — education taxes, sales tax. Sorry, it was sales tax. And so what did the minister do? He listened to that portion of the Boughen Commission and threw out the rest. He raised the taxes and left the education property tax the same, which in fact ended up costing ratepayers more because now they had to pay more PST [provincial sales tax] on all of their purchases at the school boards. So in the end of the day it ended up costing people more money. The government collected and they threw out the rest of the Boughen report other than that small piece they wanted to . . . which was increase taxes.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, when you talk to people around Saskatchewan and particular in rural Saskatchewan — and being a rural representative, I hear it mentioned a number of times in my constituency — that, Madam Deputy Speaker, that if the school boards want to keep raising their property taxes because the minister opposite is not funding them properly, that they should start collecting their own taxes. That the municipalities are tired of getting all the flak that, the municipalities are tired of hearing the flak of having their administrators berated because of the high tax load when the property tax payers come in to pay those taxes. Their suggestion is that if the school boards want to operate in this manner, then they should collect their own taxes and face the wrath of the taxpayers themselves rather than downloading that on to the municipalities.

Now if that was to happen there would be additional costs certainly involved in that. It's not necessarily all that efficient but I think it would give some personal satisfaction to the municipalities that they no longer have to face the wrath of the ratepayers when they have no control over that situation, when they have no control over the established level of those taxes and the mill rates.

And a mill rate is, basically what it is . . . One of the former ministers of Education didn't understand what a mill rate was. Well a mill rate is one one-thousandth of the entire value of the property. So if you have a mill rate of 10, that's 10 one-thousandths of the value of that property . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. My colleague points out that 10 one-thousandths would equal one one-hundredth. And that is indeed correct. And obviously that member has been a beneficiary of the education system of Saskatchewan because he's very quick on the math.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe that there are a number of issues here that this government needs to address, that has failed to address on the property tax issue, that they need further time to consider this issue. And while I have a good many other names on my list of communities that I know that are affected, I also have my grid road map that lists a good number of communities here such as Willmar and Browning and Forget and Dumas and Kelso and Walpole and Ryerson and Handsworth — just to name a few — that could potentially have properties that are in arrears.

I would like to give some opportunity to some of my other

colleagues to enter into this debate at a later date. Therefore I would move adjournment of debate.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member for Cannington 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. 33

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Atkinson that **Bill No. 33 — The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Amendment Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a privilege for me to stand and participate in the debate here this afternoon, particularly on this piece of legislation because it pertains to SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], the technical and vocational institution that people of Saskatchewan are so familiar with and proud of and who look to this particular institution to provide the vast majority of technical people who are trained in the province.

The institution known as SIAST now was known by the names of the individual campuses around the province previously. And I guess that was my first introduction to SIAST, when the campus in Moose Jaw was still known as Palliser.

And a friend I met in Calgary, working there one summer, was a recent graduate of that school's program in geotechnical engineering. He had come to Calgary and had got a job even in those days which would . . . well I don't know if I dare say. I think it was back about 1965. He came to Calgary with his certificate in hand and had a job in the engineering profession in virtually no time at all. And his skills were such, as a result of his training at that time, that he was readily picked up and assigned to virtually a supervisory position in no time and was one of the individuals who oversaw the geotechnical engineering aspects of the new University of Lethbridge when it was being built a few years later.

So the quality of training at SIAST has been well-founded, well-recognized by industry and other business leaders for a long time.

And for that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think a lot of the credit needs to go to not just the administrative people who built the organization over the years and who look after the day-to-day operations of the schools — various campuses now — but to the instructors who give yeoman service to the training of young people in such a wide variety of technical and vocational areas that we're all familiar with as part of the SIAST mandate.

And of course we need to recognize the students who attend

SIAST. The quality of young people coming out of our schools in Saskatchewan who regularly apply to SIAST, who wait faithfully in spite of long waiting lists to get into the programs at SIAST, who commit their time and their energy to succeeding in their programs, and who come out and contribute their capability, their knowledge, and their desire to the success of a career and which in turn contributes significantly to the economy of this province. So SIAST's place in the educational and economic history of this province is pretty prevalent and well-regarded.

And I think, Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the privileges of speaking to this particular piece of legislation is to be able to say again how important that particular institution is, not just to the current crop of young people in the province, but how important its role has been in educating young people in years past — considerable years past — and how we expect it to contribute in even greater ways in the years ahead as we move forward in this province in a more dynamic and exciting way.

Not all of SIAST's experience however has been without some criticism or some controversy. There have been issues in the recent past, particularly pertaining to waiting lists and the extensive number of years that some of the young people were being asked to wait in terms of achieving admittance to various programs. And that was particularly acute in medical programs — medical technology programs, dental assistants programs, x-ray technician programs; those types of programs.

And if you'll recall, Madam Deputy Speaker, it became such an issue about two and a half years ago that we were bringing cases of individual students to the legislature, individuals who were being asked to wait as much as 10 years in one instance and ridiculously as long as 16 years in another specific instance. And the reason that I'm reminded of that is that one of the individuals who was on that 10-year waiting list was from the constituency of Cypress Hills.

[16:15]

Madam Deputy Speaker, this particular piece of legislation, while it doesn't borrow directly from the Saskatchewan Party policy book — which is one of the few that we've talked about in Bills and other pieces of legislation before us here — this one does recognize some existing realities and instead of being really forward looking, what it does is tries to clean up some existing arrangements that have been undertaken at SIAST as a matter of their regular governance procedures. And this legislation in particular addresses a few areas where SIAST had actually moved ahead of where they were expected to be by legislation in terms of how they conducted their affairs. And this legislation recognizes that reality and addresses it in a number of ways.

I will talk about that a little later on. But one of the first things, Madam Deputy Speaker, that caught my eye when this particular piece of legislation came to us was, early on in the amendment it talks about SIAST being able to deliver programs in Saskatchewan and elsewhere. And I guess it's common knowledge that SIAST has some flexibility in that regard. And I assume that individuals would know that SIAST could work co-operatively with other institutions around the province and maybe even on occasion outside the province.

But I wasn't aware, and I don't think many people in the province who are familiar with SIAST's mandate would recognize that over the last number of years — I think the last 15 years or so — SIAST has actually been delivering technical and vocational education programs and training services in some 33 countries around the world. I don't know if any of my colleagues were aware of that. I'm not sure that many people who follow post-secondary educational issues in the province were aware of that, unless of course they were among the faculty, staff, the students, and graduates who were the beneficiaries of this international effort by SIAST.

I noticed, and I found this rather curious, that in the explanation given as part of these changes being introduced as part of this particular piece of legislation, that it says these activities provide international working opportunities for these various individuals, and kind of stops there.

And while I suppose that providing those opportunities for the individuals involved is laudable and is even acceptable in some respects, I'm surprised that the explanatory notes didn't speak more specifically and directly to the fact that these programs are being undertaken for humanitarian purposes, for reasons of helping impoverished third world countries improve the circumstances of their people. That they're being undertaken to help other people; that they're being undertaken to improve the lives of people who might otherwise not benefit from clean water or electricity or maybe even the delivery of telephone services, maybe road construction.

Whatever the programs might be that SIAST is taking to these international countries has got to be of benefit to those recipients in at least as great a measure as it is to the people who are providing the capability, or I think that we would see this whole exercise as one-sided and really only clearly of benefit to our own people.

And I think the real purpose of this type of activity internationally is to benefit those who receive the added capabilities of SIAST professionals, as instructors or as graduates, and some of the students and staff that also attend.

So having made that comment, I think that if we've got that capability in the province to better the lives of people around the world, we need to be continuing that effort; undertaking regular excursions to countries where we can in effect be a very positive influence and provide needed services. But if we're only doing it for our benefit, that would be a mistake. And I don't want to read too much into it but I found the explanation of this particular provision a little remiss in detail and its application.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as we go through this particular piece of legislation, one of the issues that is addressed is the composition of the board of SIAST. We have provision in the legislation now that SIAST's board can be a minimum of 10 persons, as many as 20, and that these people are appointed by order in council. But we are providing in this particular amendment to the Act an opportunity for three different appointments to the board that have not been recognized previously.

And I suppose the most significant of these particular

appointees will be now the appointee that is recommended as a student representative to the board of governors.

The tradition of post-secondary institutions — particularly at the university level for at least 30 years or more now — has been to have a student representative at that very senior level of governance. And I'm surprised that this kind of representation has not occurred previously on the SIAST board.

I had representation made to me by a member of the student government at one of the SIAST campuses, some time ago, complaining about this and saying that they had urged that this now become part of the governance structure. And I'm glad to see that the government has responded to that requirement and that desire of students to have at least one SIAST student as a member of the board. I think it's a move that is appropriate and much past due, and I think the student body will appreciate the fact that they are going to be given this opportunity.

I guess the fact that there are so many separate campuses for SIAST, having just one representative on the board might be a bit problematic, but nevertheless this is certainly an improvement over what existed previously.

We also are going to see the addition of one member from the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission as part of the board at SIAST, and again I think that that's an idea that is probably appropriate and again past due.

As we know the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission plays a very important role in preparing qualified technicians for various industries in our economy. And because SIAST is the training ground, the academic opportunity for most of the people who end up in the apprenticeship program, it's appropriate that the commission should play a role in the decision-making capacity of SIAST's board. And so again I think this is a good measure.

We also see that one member from a regional college's board will participate through appointment on the SIAST board of governors. And this I think is an indication that the government is aware that there is more requirement for interaction and complementary training opportunities between SIAST and the regional colleges that are sprinkled throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

And we have, you know, a whole number of regional colleges in the province but just one representative will now be sitting on the board. Again it's a tentative first step, an appropriate first step, but again they might have some concerns about the limitation of their representation given the number of regional college campuses there are around the province. However you know I think it's important that we make these steps, that we make these first steps and see how they work and look at the benefits to the structure of SIAST and the ability of SIAST to work co-operatively with other institutions and other players with whom they partner on a variety of training programs throughout the communities of the province.

One of the other areas that we need to look at are the changes to the governance and reporting structures of the board as they are addressed in this particular piece of legislation. The new Act requires that the SIAST board hold eight meetings per year, as

opposed to the 10 per year that are now in effect. And I think the changes reflect, as has been indicated by the explanatory notes, the best practices of governance that is accepted in the business world today and in the academic world as well.

I know that when you're sitting as a member of a board — this is a pretty significant board; it has a large budget to deal with, a lot of people are involved, a lot of issues, many campuses and so forth — it's tempting, I suppose, to meet more often than less. However 10 meetings a year is a pretty onerous requirement. And even though there is some opportunity for expenses to be recovered by the members of the board, a meeting every month on a required basis would be seen as pretty onerous. And it might be enough to discourage some very suitable candidates for these positions from taking on that role if they are asked to do so.

And so I think we're seeing boards of this type and boards in voluntary agencies generally reducing the numbers of meetings per year to address that minimum requirement of their membership because we have found in boards that I have participated on in years past, we've found that sometimes less meetings can be more productive meetings. And you can actually get a much better job out of the volunteers — you can get more effectiveness out of them and a greater willingness to participate — if the obligations on their time are a little less than 10 meetings per year or one per month, as the case may be. So moving the requirement for meetings to eight from the current 10 is again another appropriate measure that is reflected in this particular piece of legislation.

A couple of other changes that do come into effect as a result of this is the ratification of committee meeting minutes. Now as I understand it, the meetings are minuted. The board will have an opportunity to ratify those minutes at the subsequent board meeting, and then the ratified minutes will be forwarded to the minister. And interestingly enough, that's written into the Act as a requirement now, but that's what SIAST has been doing for the last number of years. So this change really only reflects the current practice of the SIAST board.

And the other thing that is similar is the requirement in this legislation for the SIAST board not to just produce a budget for the millions of dollars they are going to spend every year, but they actually are being required to present a business plan. Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, when I saw that in this piece of legislation, I was kind of surprised because I was almost certain that an institution of the size and capacity and professionalism of SIAST would have been doing that. And when I read the explanatory notes, it said that this has been a practice of SIAST since the fiscal year 1999-2000.

So in effect we've had SIAST presenting, or preparing a budget, rather, and a business plan and presenting it to the minister for the last seven years, and the legislation is just catching up to that reality. So I think that too is appropriate, and it's also an appropriate recognition of the kind of governance that the SIAST board has been moving toward for some time.

We've got one other situation in this particular piece of legislation where a new provision will enable the board of SIAST to establish committees in addition to the existing executive committee. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, anybody

with experience on boards will know that when you have the kinds of budgets, the huge inflow and outflow of dollars, the obligation to provide thorough oversight — a duty of care, as you might say, of these institutions — having committees other than the executive committee to do the work is not only appropriate; it's absolutely necessary. There is so much legality, so much paperwork, so many requirements of these boards and agencies now that having one committee oversee it all and attend to the details would be just too onerous for anybody. And it's not uncommon now in these kind of instances, these types of circumstances, to have three or four committees operating on any given board.

[16:30]

An audit committee is almost required these days because of financial issues that attend the expense associated with operating these large boards. And I guess we could name three or four different types of committees, but certainly having that ability now, that capability as a result of this legislation is appropriate in the face of the requirements of good governance. And we would respect and appreciate this being included in this particular piece of legislation.

The next item I'd like to deal with this afternoon as part of Bill 33, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the issue of mandated review. As I understand it, SIAST legislation has up to this point required a mandatory review every five years. And I think that this has been seen in the past as an appropriate measure, and I do understand that that might be a time frame that is pretty restrictive when you compare it to other post-secondary institutions. This is not as common now as it maybe once was. And the provision in the legislation is going to be changed so that the review of the mandate of SIAST will be undertaken at the call of the minister, at the discretion of the minister; that if there does not seem to be any issues regarding the operation and the programming and the activities at SIAST, there is no automatic requirement for a review.

If however something comes up, some issue arises that is problematic for the operation of the institution, for the people of the province, for any number of reasons the minister can move to call a review and undertake a study of the mandate and report back to the minister.

Now previously the report had been required within a six-month time frame, and that now also is being removed as part of this legislation and will be extended at the minister's discretion, basically, to allow for a longer reporting period in the hopes, I assume, ostensibly with the hope of getting a better report.

And if that in fact is the case, I suppose that is acceptable. But I'm not necessarily convinced that giving them a longer period of time to study the mandate will produce better results. It might in fact give a minister an opportunity to obfuscate or skate around the issues or hide behind the review that is underway without addressing the problem. So I am unconvinced that the changing of that particular review period and the reporting period is necessarily going to be good. But I think we will wait to see how that unfolds and whether or not changes should be made in the future to address that particular issue.

We don't see, Madam Deputy Speaker, a lot of problem with the changes being introduced with this piece of legislation. We think by and large they're appropriate and, in several instances, they're certainly overdue. And as I indicated in many instances, the changes just reflect the current reality, the practices of governance that exist today at SIAST.

So having recognized that reality, I think the government moved appropriately with this particular piece of legislation. And having indicated that, I would say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the official opposition Saskatchewan Party is prepared to move this particular Bill to committee.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Thank you. The question before the Assembly is Bill No. 33, The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Amendment Act, and that it now be read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt . . . ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — Second reading of this Bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the minister of Post-Secondary Education And Skills Training.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — I move that Bill No. 33, An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 33, The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Amendment Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

### Bill No. 30

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

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



**Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's my privilege to rise in the debate today. I've heard my two colleagues that have preceded me today, and I want to commend them on their brevity, and unfortunately I won't be quite as brief as they are. I've got some considerable comments to make on this Bill, and we'll probably not be able to compress them as much as they have. I'm not quite as succinct as they have demonstrated in the past. So given the hour of the day, I have some concern as to whether we'll be able to get finished today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I'll certainly work towards that end.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill allows for a relaxation of some of the requirements to become a licensed land surveyor. What it does in summary, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is it allows for the two years of academic requirements to be done at the same time as the practise component of the training. So in summary a person would in effect be like an apprentice rather than completing their schooling first and going on with an internship afterwards.

The idea for this came from the land surveyors themselves who recognized that they have a shortage of people practising in that profession. And what they're trying to do is bridge the process to allow more people to enter into the profession without going to school, and it recognizes the significant out-migration of young people and professionals in this province.

Had the members opposite addressed that earlier and been somewhat more focused on employment, out-migration, and the issues with the citizens in this province over the last decade or more, we wouldn't be facing this type of an issue.

Having said that, you know, this is a good idea. It recognizes something that takes place in a lot of other trades and professions. And what's somewhat distressing for me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this is an idea that came from the trade. It was not an idea that came from the members opposite or came from anyone in government, and it's a common sense idea. Why wouldn't you let somebody work in a trade under the supervision of somebody that is an experienced, licensed professional; learn both on the job and do the academic work as well. It's common sense. It makes it equivalent to an apprenticeship or some kind of a training program. And considering that the idea came from there I would have thought the members opposite, when they received that idea, they would have thought whoa, what a clever idea. We should look at this with a variety of other trades and professions similar to an apprenticeship or some other, you know, any kind of medical profession or anything else.

We've got significant labour shortage with trained professionals. In our province right now there are only 72 licensed surveyors left in the province right now. Many of them are aging baby boomers and will want to withdraw from the workforce so in theory this addresses some of them.

But, Deputy Speaker, we should be looking at that in the context of a number of other trades and professions. And frankly I'm somewhat disappointed and discouraged that the members opposite hadn't put that forward in the context of other professions and other trades.

We are losing people for out-migration. We should also be

looking at methods of bringing people into the province through in-migration from other jurisdictions. We should be looking at how we standardize professional requirements and criteria to try and improve people as they come into the province. And there's not a reason in the world why we couldn't do on-the-job training as we have in this one.

We also want to deal with new immigrants to Canada and could be dealt with in a similar fashion, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think it would be only common sense that the model that they propose for this profession be one that we should look at in a number of other professions and trades as well, and I want to encourage government to try and address that on a long-term basis as well.

We've also seen some opposition by the members opposite to the TILMA [Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement] agreement which would allow for the flow between our jurisdictions of trained professionals. If we have a competitive tax environment and if we have a good standard of living and a number of good qualities that this province has to offer, once we replace the members opposite I think we can have agreements with other jurisdictions that it would allow for the flow of workers to our province.

Because I think once the members opposite have been moved out of their positions, they may be part of the out-migration out of the province. But that would leave room for other people to move into the province, positive people that would want to do something to add to the economy, grow the economy, grow the province, because our province is a wonderful province that has enormous potential. That is something that's happening in spite of and not because of this NDP government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So we want to ensure that that happens.

The land surveyors Act is a small amendment to one piece of legislation that it would allow one profession to try and retain and attract some young people. Let's start looking at it in the context of what happens if the myriad of other professions and other trades across this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . I know as I look at the time of the day and look at the members opposite, I don't see them taking a lot of notes because of the comments that I'm making. So what I probably will have to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is when *Hansard* comes out I should probably mail a copy of it to each one of them so that they will have the opportunity to review and analyze it. I know that *Hansard* is available online for each and every one of them, but I suspect that when we make comments here they don't spend nearly enough time looking at them.

Although I know from some of the things they did and they certainly look at some of the proposals that we put forward and they're certainly not adverse to borrowing some of the good ideas. I heard the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs speaking earlier about the 100 good ideas, and one of the 100 good ideas would be things that we would find similar to the land surveyors Act to allow for the free trade of employment and labour to flow in and out of our province, because more of it will flow in with the new government than certainly will flow out, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So having said all of that, I want to put the members . . . I want them to be watching their mailboxes for when I send over that

copy of *Hansard* for them to read. I'll certainly include some of the other things in *Hansard* that were provided by the member from Cypress Hills, the member from Cannington, and the member from Silver Springs because it was one of the afternoons in this House where I thought there was a lot of very valuable information that the members opposite could benefit from. And I would certainly want them to have their own copy of it if they would like to, you know, have discussion or further information provided to them. We'd certainly be glad to sit down with them and give them a bit of guidance and direction. Certainly between now and the election we want them to govern as well as they possibly can during that period of time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill could certainly be moved to committee at this time. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble):** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Industry and Resources that Bill No. 30, The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble):** — That is agreed. It's carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — Second reading of this Bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble):** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Minister of Industry and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill No. 30, The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act, 2006 be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble):** — It has been moved by the Minister of Industry and Resources that Bill No. 30, The Land Surveyors and Professional Surveyors Amendment Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt this motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble):** — That is carried. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. Thank you.

[16:45]

### Bill No. 37

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 37 — The Court of Appeal Amendment Act, 2006/Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur la Cour d'appel** be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble):** — I recognize the hon. member for Moosomin.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, mister deputy deputy speaker. It's a pleasure to stand in the Assembly today to speak to Bill No. 37, The Court of Appeal Amendment Act. I note, mister deputy deputy speaker — and you probably note as well — that this is actually a fairly short Act, however it has some fairly significant implications in the province of Saskatchewan.

When the Minister of Justice gave his second reading speech, it's probably one of the shortest ones he ever made in the Assembly in regards — a second reading speech — to a Bill before the House. But he pointed out the fact that they've decided that maybe the province at this time doesn't need a Court of Appeal that composes nine judges. Maybe they'll just reduce it by two, to seven judges, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now one might argue, well that maybe is not a bad thing.

However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about reducing the Court of Appeal, I think there is an issue that we certainly are aware of, that came to light yesterday and certainly has hit the papers, hit the headlines in the province of Saskatchewan — and not just Saskatchewan, but across the nation — when we talk about population and the Stats Canada report that was just released yesterday, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And this report, we're very well aware of the fact that across Canada every province increased in population size. In some provinces it increased quite dramatically. And no doubt we all expected that the province of Alberta would dramatically increase in population.

And when you look at this Bill before us, the minister's own comments were, given the size of the province of Saskatchewan or the population of Saskatchewan, that maybe the current Court of Appeal of nine members was not necessary. And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the part that bothers me in relation to the Stats Canada report that came out is, if you will, a very negative view as to the ability of the province of Saskatchewan to grow.

And when I say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't say that in view of the fact that we're anticipating that as population grows we're going to need a larger Court of Appeal or need the Court of Appeal as it currently exists today. I believe every effort should be made as we see population growth coming into the province of Saskatchewan, which we hope will come, which we look forward to coming in, because a population that is actually lower than it was in 1976 isn't something to brag about. And I believe the statement by the minister in regards to the legislation and why we should possibly reduce the Court of Appeal from nine members down to seven kind of leaves a negative message in the public's mind, in the fact that we do not have the ability to grow this province.

And I think we were all disturbed by the numbers that came out yesterday in regards to the population of this province. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think what we would like to see, we would like to see growth in the province. We would like to see this province grow substantially. And when I say we're talking of growing the province, I'm not necessarily talking about the fact that maybe the minister should have been expanding the court. I'm not saying that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What I'm saying is it's very interesting that the government would choose

this time to send that negative message rather than focusing on the fact of growing the province of Saskatchewan.

And how do we grow this province? We don't necessarily grow the province by growing the Court of Appeal. There's no doubt that's just a no-brainer. But we grow the province by creating a positive economic influence in the province that encourages people to look at Saskatchewan as a place to come home to.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just got off the phone this afternoon with a former resident, a young gentleman who is currently employed in the province of Alberta. And he indicated to me that he would certainly like to come back to the province of Saskatchewan and raised some questions which I will be raising with the appropriate minister down the road. But I think that is part of growing our province.

So does it impact the Court of Appeal? Does it suggest that the population loss . . . because of population loss we should reduce the number of members on the Court of Appeal? Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we need to broaden our horizons. We need to look in a much broader focus at the province of Saskatchewan and the potential we have in this province. We're all aware of, and as everyone in this Assembly is . . . I'm certainly including the members from Saskatoon as well. And in fact probably the members from Saskatoon would be even more aware of the fact of population growth as I noticed Saskatoon is one of the cities that experienced a significant growth.

One of the problems I think though, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about reducing the Court of Appeal is the fact that does that reduce the ability of people who may find themselves or individuals or corporations of having to deal with the court by reducing it from nine members to seven members. Does that indicate, does that indicate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that's the reason why we should reduce that Court of Appeal?

I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we should be very somewhat careful before we move forward to reduce services that are currently in place. And I know that we have . . . over the past number of years there's been significant complaints about the number of cases that continue to come before the courts and that end up, Mr. Deputy Speaker, being delayed because of the reductions on the bench and not enough individuals on the bench and court times to deal with matters in an appropriate time period, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I guess that's one of the major concerns that I have with this piece of legislation.

The other major concern, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well, is I find it very interesting that the government would move forward with a recommendation of this nature, especially at a time when it appears that this government has lost its way. This government has lost its vision for the province. This government has become somewhat tired and old and may not have the influence that . . . down the road as members of the Court of Appeal retire and the replacements are brought forward.

And I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there is a process that's followed. But I'm also aware of the fact that there is a committee in the province of Saskatchewan that gives recommendations, and I believe government as well has given

. . . asked for some suggestions or ideas that they would have in regards to individuals that would be appropriate to sit on the bench, and then a decision is made at the federal level as to who sits on that court.

And one is asking, was the minister concerned that this current government may not have that ability to offer some encouragement in regards to certain members? That's a good question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that's a question, I think, that many people would be asking right now. When you're coming to what may be your final moments in office, why then make such a significant change? And that I think may be part of what's leading to what is actually a fairly short and brief piece of legislation.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know there are . . . While the legislation is fairly short and straightforward and direct, there certainly is a lot that can be tied into this short piece of legislation. And I know that other members would like to enter into the debate as well and raise some of the concerns that I haven't had the opportunity to raise at this time. But at this time I would move to adjourn debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble):** — The member for Moosomin has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 37. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt that motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble):** — That's carried.

### Bill No. 38

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 38 — The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2)** be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble):** — I recognize the hon. member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour today to stand and give my view and points of interest on The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2006. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe the purpose of this Bill is to put new bodies of land into habitat protection in order to replace the land that was taken out of the 2005 amendment to the same Act.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in regards to The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act, I remember, I believe it was in the mid '80s when this Act was introduced and at that time I believe it was known as the critical habitat wildlife land. Then sometime later it was changed.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why was this wildlife habitat protection land introduced back in the '80s? Well it was good reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There was a group of people. There was a biologist, there was the wildlife federation was very involved in this Act, SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management] officials, government officials, a lot of Environment people were also involved in this Act. And why did they bring forth this Act at that time? The critical wildlife habitat Act was the preservation of wildlife, and also

the land which the wildlife was on.

I know there was many hours spent, countless hours looking at different parcels of land all over Saskatchewan, into where this land needed to be protected for, and why it was protected. And I remember at that time I was a member of the Witchehan Wildlife Federation and when this came to be we had many meetings in regarding this, and we thought it was a great idea. The government of the day finally had put aside some land for wildlife and for environment, which we needed. And there was good reason.

Over time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that has changed. As you know, in I believe it was 2001-2002, it was estimates and I was doing estimates with the minister then. And I don't recall who the minister was. But I mentioned about the critical habitat wildlife land and how many acres at that time was in the Act. And it was resounding that the minister at that time said that there was something like 776,000 acres that had been removed.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, nobody to then had heard of that land being removed — nobody. And I remember getting a phone call from the wildlife federation saying, what kind of an answer was that? Is that true? Is there 776,000 acres being taken out, and if so, why?

So I posed questions as why it was taken out. And there was different reasons, but one of the main reasons was to satisfy TLE [treaty land entitlement] claims. And we know at that time we needed to satisfy treaty land entitlements. But the amount of land coming out at that present time with not a whisper to anybody in the province . . . And the wildlife federation and many people in the province of Saskatchewan were very uptight and very upset as to why this was happening. And the government never even whispered a word to anybody regarding it.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when that took place there was lots of criticism as why it's doing it. And I just want to go down the road a little bit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in some of the problems that contributed to having some of this land under the critical habitat wildlife plan removed and the problems that have mushroomed from that. And farmers especially, private landowners are feeling the brunt of this decision made some time ago.

And I'm going to give you a good example, and that's in an area just south of my hometown of Spiritwood. That area has an abundance of critical, or at that time critical habitat wildlife land, and now it's been changed to wildlife habitat protection land. Now there was a parcel of land there — it was many quarters — that was under that jurisdiction, and it was sold or transferred. I shouldn't say sold. It was transferred to satisfy a TLE claim.

Now to most hunters, wildlife people, they know that this land is protection land for the animals. Now in that protected area there was elk; there was deer; there was moose. There was also predator animals, predator animals like wolves, cougars, coyotes, whatever. One goes hand in hand. Where the animals are, that's where the predators are. But the issue with that is it was protected land, and that's where those animals stayed.

Now the land has been transferred to settle TLE. And now with hunting pressures on that said land where it was protected for those animals, those animals have now moved from that area, and they've come out to the farm land. And this is the real problem that we have in the area now. The privately owned farmers that have crops, bales, or whatever are experiencing great amount of damage done to their feed and to their land by these wild animals. Why? Because that land was transferred over, and it's driven the animals out of that area into the private land.

So now the farmers not only contribute with the animal damage from the wildlife on that land, but they're also contributing to the problems with the predators that come with those animals to this private land.

And I remember just last year having meetings with the new Minister of Environment regarding the predator problem. And we had meetings in Shellbrook. We had meetings in Mayfair. And I have to admit they were good meetings. The people of the area were complaining about a predator problem where the wolves, the cougars, the coyotes were killing livestock.

Now last year there wasn't a lot of snow, and so when these wild animals come to this area and start feeding on the land, the bales and whatever have you, the predators follow. But last year being that there wasn't a lot of snow, the wild animals found it a lot easier to feed on domestic animals and that's why the numbers of domestic animals were substantially higher than any other year.

This year there's a lot of snow out there. Those same animals are still there. They're still doing the same damage. But at least some of the changes made by the Environment in regards to the predator problems as a result from the wildlife land, critical habitat wildlife land, they've been directed. And some of those problems have gone away.

But the main point of my talk, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the fact that when biologists, environmentalists, wildlife federation members years ago decided to look at this land and keep it for the preservation of wildlife and wildlife habitat, it was good reason to keep it like that. But over time that has changed. And now, Madam Deputy Speaker, the animals have come out and they're causing supreme problems.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I see my time is running out and I definitely want to continue next time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It now being 5 o'clock, I would move that this House does stand adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]



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