



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky
 Premier — Hon. Lorne Calvert
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Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
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Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
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Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
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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
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Thomson, Hon. Andrew	NDP	Regina South
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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 Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege again this afternoon to present a petition to the Assembly in regards to the needs of individuals on dialysis in the Broadview area and the wish to have a dialysis unit placed in the hospital to address the high costs that people on dialysis face as they travel for services. And I read the prayer:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitions I present today are signed by folks from the communities of Regina, Moosomin, Broadview, Cowessess. I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to present a petition brought to my office by individuals from the constituency of Cypress Hills concerned about the closure last week of the SaskPower office in the town of Shaunavon. 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 four pages of petitions are signed by individuals from the communities of Shaunavon, Admiral, Frontier, and Eastend. I so present.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions to present today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to ensure that the Maryfield School remains open.

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

This petition comes from the good people of Fairlight and Maryfield. I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition of people who want to drive Highway 5 and survive and arrive alive. 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 upgrade and widen Highway No. 5 from Humboldt to Saskatoon.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, I believe these signatures are from the city of Saskatoon, and I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the dangerous practice of transferring patients from one ambulance to another on the highway. 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 cease the transfer of patients from one ambulance to another while en route.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals all from the communities of Chaplin, Central Butte, and Herbert. I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have a petition of citizens concerned with the closure of a SaskPower office. 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 keep the SaskPower office in Rosetown open to provide full service to the community and the surrounding areas.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are all from the good town of Rosetown.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to read another petition from citizens opposed to possible reductions of health care services in Biggar. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon.

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again I rise with a petition from citizens that are extremely concerned that the withdrawal of lab services at the Lafleche and District Health Centre would cause undue hardships to residents, particularly seniors. And I'll read the prayer for relief:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that you 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 citizens throughout southern Saskatchewan that would be affected by such a closure. 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 and especially the Southwest that are concerned with the government's handling of the rural school closures. And as in duty bound, your ... I'll read the prayer first of all:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause government to take necessary actions to ensure that the Limerick School remains open.

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

Mr. Speaker, signatures of this petition are from Limerick. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to read a petition concerning the conditions of Highway 368 starting four miles south of Lake Lenore to four miles south of St. Brieux which has endangered the safety of drivers and harms economic growth in area. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take

immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 368 in order to address safety and economic concerns.

And is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, it is signed by the good people of Lake Lenore and St. Brieux. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to maintain the Department of Highways section shop in Watrous:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from Watrous, Imperial, and Govan. I so present.

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.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy: does SaskEnergy allow other companies to utilize the billing distribution network for advertisement purposes? And if so, what financial remuneration does SaskEnergy receive for this service?

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskTel: how many local phone customers has SaskTel gained in Saskatoon since Shaw cable introduced its own local phone service?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskTel: how many local phone customers has SaskTel lost in Saskatoon since Shaw cable introduced its own local phone service?

Mr. Speaker, I also give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskTel: how many local phone customers has SaskTel gained in Regina since Access Communications introduced its own local phone service?

And, Mr. Speaker, the final question, I give notice that I shall on day no. 46 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskTel: how many local phone customers has SaskTel lost in Regina since Access Communications introduced its own local phone service?

I so present.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and, through you, to all members of the Assembly several folks in the west gallery who are here to observe second reading of The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2007, an Act which will provide civilian job protection for Canadian Forces reservists here in Saskatchewan.

So we are joined today — and if I could ask the folks just to give a wave when I say your name — Frank and Joan Simpson. Frank is the provincial president of the Saskatchewan Command of the Royal Canadian Legion. Retired Brigadier General Cliff Walker of the Canadian Forces Liaison Council; Lieutenant Vaughn Scofield, the provincial Chair of the Canadian Forces Liaison Council; Major Brad Hrycyna, commanding officer of the Saskatchewan Dragoons. Sergeant Tim Huckle and his wife, Maria, Tim is a member of the Saskatchewan Dragoons who is preparing to depart for Afghanistan; Sergeant James Richards who is also preparing to depart for Afghanistan with the Saskatchewan Dragoons; and Dave Barth and Derek Schmidt both former members of the Dragoons and members of the committee to support Canadian Forces reservists.

The members of the committee to support Canadian Forces reservists — the Canadian Forces Liaison Council, the Royal Canadian Legion — have been instrumental in bringing the idea of job protection for Canadian Forces reservists to Saskatchewan. And it's been my pleasure to work with them over the last couple of months. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their legislature. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to too join with the Minister of Labour on behalf of the official opposition and recognize the guests that are in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, in late November 2006, the Office of the Official Opposition received a letter regarding the idea of protecting Canadian Armed Forces reservists' jobs in legislation for when they train or volunteer for tours of duty. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party fully supports that type of legislation, and I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming these fine people to their Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, along with my colleagues and the minister, I'd like to welcome members from the committee here today. There's a number of friends of mine in the audience that I would like to just acknowledge. Brigadier General Walker, we've had an association for a number of years, as well as Vaughn. Major Brad is a long-time acquaintance.

But I'd like to really introduce Tim and Maria. We go back actually a number of years, Mr. Speaker. Tim's father and I used to fly together.

So I'd like to welcome all the rest of the members of the committee to the Assembly, to their Assembly, and please join me in welcoming them here.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As some of my colleagues may have noticed, I have some friends in the west gallery, and I'd be extremely pleased to introduce them to you and to all members of the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, we have joining us today the Montessori School of Regina, the grade one and kindergartens.

And I had a little, a very brief discussion with them early on and told them that I would read, since it's not a big group, all of their names into *Hansard* where it would be recorded forever and will share that with them then in the next couple of days. So joining us today are teachers: Mrs. Joyce Van Bendegem, Ms. Flaman.

Students Mira Cappello, Roan Carter, Christain Enmark, Alexander Husain, Maria Husain, Justin Jeon, Harrison Lars-Hansen, Skylar Moen, Spencer Prost, Kanyyn Rogers, Sydney Runge, Mayson Sonntag — some would recognize that name — Avram Tcherni, Ryan Gailing.

And parents Mike Cappello; Virginia Wilkinson, some would recognize that name; and Meika Sonntag, some would recognize that name; and Amanda Carter; Don Capewell; and also my office staff person from here in Regina, Deanna

Obleman. And I hope I've not missed anybody.

I certainly welcome them here today, and I know they'll be meeting with myself and I think actually the Premier just a little bit later for a picture as well. So I hope you enjoy the proceedings, and we'll see all of you in a few minutes. Please join me in welcoming them to the Assembly here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you, to the rest of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce 13 grade 8 students from the great school of Milestone. They travelled in the half hour to be part of the session and view part of the session. I think it's significant. They're joined with their teacher, Mr. Hawkins.

And many times when we see school groups come to the Assembly, they have many, many different chaperones along accompanying them. But I know from experience that the students in Milestone High School are so well mannered and so well behaved that they don't need a number of chaperones. And as I say, I know that from experience.

I also want to just make special recognition of Mr. Hawkins who does just an absolutely great job at the school. He's been involved and knows as much about the parliamentary system, the British parliamentary system, as I think probably any of us in here do. He's had the Speaker come to the school and do a mock parliamentary session, as well as he's been part of the Social Sciences Teachers' Institute that we are having at our Assembly. They're not in the gallery today, but they were here yesterday and will be here again tomorrow. So he's taken part in that and has a great understanding which I think only benefits all the students, especially in the Milestone High School.

So I look forward to meeting them after question period and answering any of the questions that they may have. I'd like all members to join me in welcoming them here. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

Spring Fling Fundraising Event

Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, a number of my colleagues and I attended Spring Fling, the Regina and District Association for Community Living annual fundraising event.

Since 1952 the association has been working hard on behalf of children with intellectual disabilities and their families, providing information and support and advocating for positive and meaningful change. The focus of the Association for Community Living is making the dreams of people with intellectual disabilities come true and ensuring that they can participate fully as valued citizens in the community.

Funds raised on Saturday will go to supporting ongoing services and programs such as Best Buddies, a program that matches university students with adults who have a disability and creates opportunities for friendships to grow; and the Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network that assists families to plan a safe and secure future for their relative with a disability.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the sponsors, volunteers, and organizing committee of 2007 Spring Fling for a wonderful evening. The Danakas family was honoured as founding sponsor of Spring Fling and I want to recognize Mia, John, Voula, and the late Peter Danakas today. And I also want to acknowledge everyone associated with the Regina and District Association of Community Living for their ongoing work and dedication on behalf of those with intellectual disabilities. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

University of Saskatchewan Celebrates 100 Years

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today, April 3, marks the 100th anniversary since the passage by this legislature of the university Act and the 100th birthday of the University of Saskatchewan.

The university Act itself made no mention of a location for the new university, and much debate about where to put it ensued. Although Regina promised 1,000 acres of free land for the university, it was ultimately the city of Saskatoon that was awarded the facility on April 7, 1909.

According to Saskatchewan historian Bill Waiser, one Saskatoon MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] sent a telegram home that day that said quote, "Everything OK. Got university, will be home tomorrow." One foreign visitor to the city in 1913 said this about the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], quote:

The University of Saskatchewan is the most startling thing I saw in the West . . . It is a massive group of fine buildings so obviously built to last for five or six hundred years.

Over the last 100 years the U of S has become one of the nation's finest post-secondary institutions. Under the leadership of President Peter MacKinnon, the university is keenly aware of its place in today's global economy. It looks to the future and has embraced innovation.

This special day is being commemorated with celebrations on campus and across the province, the launch of a new postage stamp by Canada Post featuring the College Building and the release of the U of S centennial lily. I would like to ask all members of this Assembly to join me in wishing the U of S happy 100th anniversary.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian

Head-Milestone.

Supporting Parkinson's Disease Research

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. April is Parkinson's Awareness Month and I would like to make this Assembly aware of an event that took place in the Queen City over the weekend.

The Saskatchewan Parkinson's Foundation 14th annual Curling Classic for Parkinson's. The curling took place at the Callie curling club, and there were also live and silent auctions on Friday night at the Victoria Club.

Mr. Speaker, Phyllis Fox, mother of Canadian actor, Michael J. Fox, came to Regina to help out the cause and participate in the celebrity curling match that included members of the Saskatchewan Roughriders, Regina mayor, Pat Fiacco, and several members of the city's media.

All the money raised from this weekend's events goes towards the research of two University of Saskatchewan neurologists, Dr. Ali Rajput and his son, Dr. Alex Rajput, who are world renowned for their research in Parkinson's disease. Mr. Speaker, the generosity of the people in Regina and area, combined with the hard work and dedication of countless volunteers, meant that a total of \$63,000 were raised for research into Parkinson's disease.

I would like to make particular mention of the Victoria Club here in Regina, Mr. Speaker, with their generosity towards this worthwhile event. In addition to putting on what I heard was a spectacular event on Friday, the Victoria Club also donated \$10,000 to the cause. I would like to ask all members of this Assembly to congratulate all that were involved.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Youth Salute 2007

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For well over a decade Larry Raynard and Joanna Kirsch of Focus 91 Photography here in Regina have been spearheading Youth Salute, a community project to recognize some of Regina's finest high school students.

Mr. Speaker, Youth Salute 2007 showcases 75 very talented high school students — five from each public and Catholic high school as well as Luther — who give back to their community through their schools, churches, musical associations, sports associations, and community organizations.

An exhibition consisting of portraits and biographies of each of the students being recognized is currently underway at the Regina City Hall and in coming months will move to other locations throughout the city.

I had the privilege of attending the Youth Salute 2007 awards ceremony a few days ago. Mr. Speaker, the five students from Scott Collegiate in the fair constituency of Regina

Elphinstone-Centre constituency who are being recognized by the Youth Salute project are Kevin Bear, Jane Kard, Cassidy McFadzean, Keith Nay, and Tasha Pelletier. I want to congratulate each of them. This honour speaks directly to their personal integrity and their outstanding commitment and contribution to the community, as it does for each of the 75 individuals that were selected.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank this year's sponsors of Youth Salute 2007, and in particular I want to acknowledge Larry Raynard and Joanna Kirsch for excellent ongoing commitment to this very tremendous program. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Oungre Memorial Park Fundraiser

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, the member from Weyburn Big-Muddy, along with my husband and I, attended the 16th annual Dr. Brown fundraising supper and auction held in the Communiplex at Oungre Memorial Park. Mr. Speaker, after a delicious steak supper, the bidding got underway on around 100 items in the live auction. There was also approximately 100 items in the silent auction.

Mr. Speaker, this park has experienced many trials in the past, but 18 months ago the community feared the park would close because of increased power and energy costs. But of course the community was not about to let that happen and came up with innovative ways to keep their park open, and they continue to work tirelessly in that regard.

Hats off to the community of Oungre and surrounding areas, to the planners, the volunteers, donors, buyers, and everyone who attended this event. Special thanks to Kevin Lackey of Lackey Auction in Weyburn who, for the 16th year, donated his auction services. Of course Kevin is well known in the Estevan and Weyburn area for his generosity at charitable and community events such as this. Kevin also has the knack of being so entertaining while auctioning that one loses track of how much money you're actually spending.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage all members to visit Oungre Park. It is the hub of that community, and I ask all members to join me in saluting the community of Oungre on a job well done. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Opinions on Equalization

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is what Prince Albert's Member of Parliament had to say about the topic of equalization when he was in opposition, quote, "The equalization formula that we have has totally shafted the province of Saskatchewan from every standpoint." And then he

went on to say quote, “The Conservative Party has clear-cut policies on this matter.”

Well the Conservatives certainly do have clear-cut policies. They clear cut literacy programs. They clear cut Kyoto. They clear cut child care, and they clear cut equalization. Brian Fitzpatrick may have believed what he had said at the time, Mr. Speaker. After all he went as far as to write a letter to Stephen Harper, basically begging the Prime Minister to keep his promise to the people of Saskatchewan and to our Premier. We all know how that turned out, Mr. Speaker.

To quote a popular radio talk show host in this province, quote, “Turns out a Conservative campaign promise and a quarter will buy you a phone call.”

And what about the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker? Their failure to even allow us to debate a motion calling for Saskatchewan’s federal Conservative MPs [Member of Parliament] to vote against the federal budget clearly shows them once again siding with their federal cousins against the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

Saskatchewan Party Nomination for Regina Dewdney

Mr. Stewart: — Well, well, well, more good news for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Last night I had the pleasure of attending the Saskatchewan Party nomination for the next member of the Legislative Assembly for the Regina Dewdney constituency.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Stewart: — After a hard fought but collegial race between three successful and well-established Regina professionals, the day was won by Mr. Don Saelhof, a professional and lifetime Saskatchewan resident with a track record of innovation and positive change in Regina and the province.

Don’s background includes the following and much more: founder and principal of Aurora Consulting Inc., a business services provider to Regina area businesses since 1992; chairman and CEO [chief executive officer] of BTC bioenergy inc.; a member of the University of Regina senate since 2004; member and executive in various industry and trade organizations including Western Canadian Agribition, Crop Protection Institute of Canada, and the Saskatchewan biodiesel task force; provincial director, Regina branch president, and over 30 years as a member and director of his professional association, the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists.

Mr. Speaker, Don’s skill set and work ethic will be a welcome relief for the good voters of Regina Dewdney.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Management of Harassment Complaints

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the numerous harassment complaints against Murdoch Carriere were never investigated until 2002. We’ve asked this NDP [New Democratic Party] government on numerous occasions, how long were they sweeping this under the rug? How many previous harassment complaints were never investigated? And when was the first sexual harassment complaint against Murdoch Carriere brought forward? Mr. Speaker, will the minister finally answer that question today? When did the women start making sexual harassment complaints against Murdoch Carriere, and how many complaints were brought forward that were never investigated?

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I understand that a formal complaint was lodged by the women in September 2002. The way process works is Mr. Carriere was removed from the workplace. He was placed on a leave of absence with pay. On February 12, after the deputy minister dealt with Mr. Carriere in terms of discipline, he was demoted three pay grades. He was transferred to Regina. And his income was red circled and he was placed on a leave without pay for three months. That was the discipline that was meted out to Mr. Carriere. As you know, the legislature became aware of the situation on I believe it was April 1, and on April 2, 2003, Mr. Carriere was dismissed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has received a signed statement from a woman who used to work in the Environment department in Regina. She reports a number of incidents involving Murdoch Carriere. The first one happened in 1994. She said she was called into a meeting with Murdoch Carriere and then she said, and I quote:

Not having any reason to distrust Mr. Carriere, I concurred. Mr. Carriere was hiding behind the door and he jumped out and grabbed me and kissed me directly on the mouth. When he removed his lips, he said “just wanted you to know what brown lips taste like.”

Mr. Speaker, this incident way back in 1994 was reported to Murdoch Carriere’s superiors. Why was it ignored by your government?

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I’ve clearly indicated to the member opposite that there is a process for people to go through when they believe that they are facing harassment in

the workplace. And they are protected under the occupational health and safety legislation.

I will say to the member opposite that we have clearly changed the process for situations such as this. We have clarified that there is absolutely zero tolerance for any type of workplace harassment. We've said in serious cases of harassment the permanent head must consult a panel of peers and provide a comprehensive written report.

The Public Service Commission now keeps records to ensure that harassment cases with similar circumstances will result in similar discipline. Periodic reports are provided to the Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission and in the most serious cases, Mr. Speaker, people will be terminated.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, this woman's statement goes on to detail how the incident was handled by this government. She says, and I quote:

Later that day, I went in to our Deputy Minister and informed him of the situation. [And] the . . . reaction was "oh, that's just Murdoch." When I had time to think about the situation more thoroughly and to recover from the shock . . . I told my supervisor. [And] his reaction was basically the same — [oh] ". . . that's just Murdoch."

Needless to say, my anger, my confusion and my fears were not taken seriously.

Mr. Speaker, how can the NDP government claim to have a zero tolerance harassment policy when serious allegations like that are just laughed off?

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, as the member may know, the procedures for harassment have been clarified significantly since April 2003. I have a copy of the harassment resource manual that employers or managers are to certainly follow. It's very clear, Mr. Speaker, I think the member is talking about some time ago. I don't condone any kind of behaviour such as that that is reflected in the member's question, but I will say to the member opposite that we have a significant change in the procedure that is used by the public service. I will also say that a lot of work has been done with employees throughout the public service so that they understand the process, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, this woman reported a very serious allegation of sexual harassment to her supervisor and to her deputy minister. She told them that Murdoch Carriere called

her into a private office. He jumped out from behind a door and he kissed her on the mouth. Didn't her supervisor and her deputy minister, even in those days, have an obligation to immediately investigate this obligation? Why wasn't it done even then?

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — As the member will know — and I have said this in the legislature before — it was not until 1993 that this Legislative Assembly introduced an amendment to the occupational health and safety legislation where harassment was an issue under the occupational health and safety legislation. The member will know that the member from Cannington moved an amendment to delete harassment as a provision. And then the member will know that their predecessors voted against changes to the occupational health and safety legislation. Up until 1993, Mr. Speaker, workers had no rights when it came to harassment in the workplace, but we've come a long way since 1993. It is now 2007. Four years ago this policy was changed to significantly improve the process under which the public service must adhere to when it comes to workplace harassment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, by doing nothing the government was approving of Murdoch Carriere's behaviour and putting other women in jeopardy. Mr. Speaker, this woman reports of a second incident in 1997. In 1997, Mr. Speaker, she says that following a meeting, and I'm quoting now:

I proceeded to the cloakroom which is part of the meeting room on the second floor. Unknown to me, Murdoch remained behind. He grabbed me around the chest and I pushed him [I pushed him] away.

Mr. Speaker, this incident happened in 1997, and it was also reported to the woman's superiors. Why was that incident never investigated?

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say this, and of course I will say this very clearly, that we are absolutely on record as being opposed to any kind of workplace harassment that takes place. Whether it is personal harassment, whether it is harassment based on the way a person looks, any kind of harassment is unacceptable in 2007, Mr. Speaker.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we have come some distance in this province when it comes to harassment in the workplace, both in the private sector and the public sector. Workers simply don't have to put up with this. They are protected in occupational health and safety legislation. They are protected by the Human Rights Code. And, Mr. Speaker, every manager that works in the public service now knows what the procedure is when it comes to workplace harassment, and they must act, Mr.

Speaker. And if they don't act, there are serious consequences.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, her statement goes on to say, and I quote:

I reported this incident to my supervisor. I know to this day that no conversation ever took place between Murdoch and my supervisor. I became very vocal in the Deputy Minister's office but no one would admit that what Carriere did was wrong.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP claims to have a zero tolerance harassment policy. But this woman reported two allegations of sexual harassment to her supervisor in 1994 and in 1997, and both of them were ignored. What is the NDP government doing today to find out why these serious allegations were ignored even then?

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I have said to the member opposite that it is unacceptable in this province that workplace harassment allegations go unanswered by managers that work in the public service. It's unacceptable.

Now we have, I believe, significantly amended the policy. There is zero tolerance for harassment.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we need to look at, certainly in occupational health and safety legislation, is a better definition of harassment. And I guess I would ask the members opposite: if this legislature was to include an amendment to the occupational health and safety legislation in this session of the legislature, where we cover the waterfront when it comes to harassment, I'd be interested in knowing whether the members opposite would support those amendments to further protect workers in the workplace all across Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I know what women in Saskatchewan know right now. They know there's something seriously wrong when for years and years women were ignored. In the meantime their harasser got \$275,000 as a payoff from the NDP government.

The supervisors who ignored this situation and the serious allegations have never faced any type of disciplinary action. What is the government doing to investigate why these allegations were ignored for so many years, or are they just going to sweep it under the rug again?

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I will say to the member that she raises some very specific concerns. I would be interested in having the member share with me the detail around this. And we can look into this, Mr. Speaker. I can give that assurance to the member.

I would say this: that we have settled with Mr. Carriere in terms of past issues around his firing. I would want to be very careful as I pursue this not to create other issues that may lead to further statements of claim from Mr. Carriere.

So I will undertake to the member, if she can share the information with me, to examine this situation very carefully to see whether there needs to be some action taken inside the Department of the Environment. And I guess that's all I can say to the member.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I want to read another part of the woman's statement. I quote:

I wish to take this opportunity to apologize to the victims involved at this stage. Because of my fear and weakness, I was unable to pursue this further.

Mr. Speaker, I want the people to imagine this. The woman who was herself a victim of harassment feels she has to apologize to other victims. She feels guilty because she couldn't do more to stop the harassment before other women were victimized.

Mr. Speaker, she went to her ADM [assistant deputy minister]; she went to her deputy minister — and she was ignored. What is the NDP government doing to find out how Murdoch Carriere's harassment could go on for so long and hurt so many women?

[14:15]

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's clear from what the member has provided us in terms of this legislature that this woman whose letter she reads feels guilty that she didn't pursue this. And, Mr. Speaker, no one should have to feel guilty about working in a workplace where there is behaviour that is totally unacceptable. If what the woman says is accurate, Mr. Speaker, I will say this. I made a commitment to the member opposite. I will look into this.

But I will say this to the member. There may be a need to significantly improve occupational health and safety legislation when it comes to the definition of harassment in order that all workers in this province are protected, very tightly protected. And, I guess, I would ask the member opposite, given that we have this new process for legislation, would she agree to some amendments to the legislation that would significantly improve workers' rights in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, what women in this province — in fact, everybody in this province — needs to know is not what the minister knows. We want to know how much she cares about it. That's what we need to know.

Certain individuals [and I'm quoting again] may feel that I have nothing to complain about . . . But the fact that this individual felt he could invade my person . . . in this way and get away with it . . . is beyond my comprehension.

Mr. Speaker, that speaks volumes about how a woman feels when she's a victim of sexual harassment. It's an invasion and it's a violation and you never get over it. And what's worse, this woman and many others were violated again when their allegations were ignored and when this NDP government paid their harasser.

Mr. Speaker, ignoring harassment complaints is in itself a violation of the harassment policy. What is the NDP government doing to find out why the incidents were ignored for so long?

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I have said to the member I'm going to look into this. But I will say this, that we need to seriously consider as members of this legislature amendments to the occupational health and safety legislation in order to protect workers against what I call personal harassment.

And I ask the member opposite — and I think it's a very good question, given the process in terms of legislature — if we were to introduce some amendments to the legislation, could we get them through in this session of the legislature to give workers further protection? I think that's an important question for all members of the legislature because I think we may need to do that in order to ensure that workers are really protected against workplaces where harassment is taking place, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, here's how the woman concludes her letter:

I know what the victims are feeling. I know the character of this individual. I know that what he did is wrong, but most of all . . . I know that Justice will be served in the end.

Mr. Speaker, that's what she wrote in February 2003. Today she does not feel that justice was served in the end. The bad guy won. Mr. Speaker, the man who was fired for harassment and convicted of assault got \$275,000 from the government. And nothing has been done about the people who looked the other

way and said, that's just Murdoch.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister really believe that this situation was handled correctly by her government?

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I will say again, as soon as it became clear the nature of the allegations, the minister, the former minister of the Public Service Commission recommended to the Premier that he be fired. And as you know, that occurred. He was fired.

Now he was, I will say this, and I think we have said this numerous times, that there were a number of issues around his firing because proper process was not used. Now I think it's an important question for the members opposite. I think that we can significantly improve our occupational health and safety legislation when it comes to harassment.

Now we've got a new process where we introduce the Bills in the fall and we undertake to complete the amendments in the spring. Will the members opposite support significant improvements to the occupational health and safety legislation that will further protect people against personal harassment? Because that's very important to workers in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, the minister spoke about bringing forward new legislation and bringing forward amendments and all the things that she might do for people in the future. I don't think any woman, any person in this province can feel confident until they can look back and say the government was willing to deal with the situation that was the problem in the first place.

So let's hear how this member, how this government is going to deal with what did happen. What was the process and how did they deal with the people that ignored that situation for so many years? Then we can talk about what can happen tomorrow.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I guess I'm not clear what the member's position is, Mr. Speaker. But I will say this, that workers in this province since 1993 have had the right to be protected from harassment in the workplace.

Now harassment is defined. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we need to significantly improve the definition of what constitutes harassment in the workplace, Mr. Speaker. And I believe that there needs to be some amendments to the occupational health and safety legislation to protect workers not only in the public sector but also in the private sector as well because workplace harassment takes place everywhere, both in the private and the public sector, Mr. Speaker, and workers need to be protected.

So I ask the member again; it's an important question: if we introduce amendments to the occupational health and safety legislation during this session of the legislature, will those members support it?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for the past few days we now have pretty compelling evidence that serious harassment complaints were ignored dating all the way back to 1994.

Saskatchewan people are wondering, how could this happen? How can we ensure that it never happens again? This is why the Saskatchewan Party has been calling on the government to allow an investigation by an all-party committee. The Public Service Commission falls under the Crown and Central Agencies Committee. If the NDP is truly serious about stopping harassment in the workplace, will it allow an investigation by the Crown and Central Agencies Committee to find out why these allegations were ignored for so many years, and to make sure it never happens again?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm really pleased to see the deputy leader for the Saskatchewan Party is on his feet today because I think that we have on many occasions during this session of the legislature responded to the issues that have been identified by the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that we need to significantly improve our occupational health and safety legislation in terms of how we define harassment and the procedures that are used to investigate harassment so that all workers have protection in the province. We have, we have protection, Mr. Speaker, but I believe it could be strengthened. And I guess I ask the members opposite once again, given it's the deputy leader, will the opposition support amendments to the occupational health and safety legislation that would significantly improve workers' rights under the anti-harassment provisions of that legislation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we hear from the minister that in 1993, the legislation . . .

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the legislation introduced in 1993. We have now heard from this lady that two incidents — 1994 and 1997 — went ignored. They were ignored by the NDP. There were serious harassment

complaints against Murdoch Carriere and those harassment complaints were ignored. The question is, why did that happen, Mr. Speaker? Did that put other women in jeopardy because this NDP government chose to ignore those complaints with legislation that was already in place?

They agreed to pay Murdoch Carriere \$275,000 for harassment. He was convicted of assault, Mr. Speaker. That's the part that this government does not understand. Those are some of the questions that need to be answered.

In 1998 the NDP allowed that kind of inquiry to take place into the Channel Lake scandal. Why won't the NDP allow a similar investigation into the Murdoch Carriere scandal?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, in 1993 we were the first jurisdiction in North America that included harassment as a protected right under the occupational health and safety legislation — the first jurisdiction in Canada. Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of that.

Now I will say to the members opposite, I believe that we can significantly improve the legislation certainly by changes to the definition of how harassment is defined and some of the processes around harassment provisions in the legislation. What I ask the member: it is now 14 years later. They voted against it in 1993. It's now 14 years later. If we introduce an amendment that significantly strengthens the legislation and strengthens workers' rights, will they vote for it, 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, here's really what happened. This government touts its legislation that they put in place in 2003. It took 10 years . . . From 1993, sorry. It took 10 years before a group of women, nine women had to band together to put forward their concerns. And it wasn't until the Gillies report was leaked that this government finally recognized that there was a problem.

Mr. Speaker, there's a big difference between the NDP and the Saskatchewan Party. And I want to tell you that the Saskatchewan Party would not have paid Murdoch Carriere \$275,000. We would have fought Murdoch Carriere in court.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Like it was suggested by the Minister of Industry, we would have been defending the women against Murdoch Carriere. And the Saskatchewan Party would allow a complete review of this entire process instead of writing a big fat cheque, which is the NDP's approach.

Mr. Speaker, why won't the NDP allow an all-party committee to review the Murdoch Carriere scandal? What are you hiding?

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, if we had followed their advice, their counsel in 1993, workers would have no protection against harassment. And in fact, these women could have been fired, Mr. Speaker, if we followed their advice.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have said very clearly that it is quite clear that we need to strengthen the occupational health and safety legislation when it comes to harassment provisions. These members opposite voted against it in 1993, and in fact moved to delete harassment under the legislation, the member from Cannington.

I guess I ask the members again, if we are to introduce some significant amendments to the legislation that further protect workers and further define the definition, will those members opposite vote in favour of the legislation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order please.

[14:30]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 60 — The Revenue and Financial Services Amendment Act, 2007

The Speaker: — Order, order please. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 60, The Revenue and Financial Services Amendment Act, 2007 be now introduced and read for a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No 60, The Revenue and Financial Services Amendment Act, 2007 be now introduced and read for a the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt this 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.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I hereby inform the

Assembly that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Nancy Heppner, the member for Martensville and as a member now for Martensville. I hereby table the return of the writ.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government I'll be tabling responses to written questions 922 to 963 inclusive. Thank you.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 992 through to 963 inclusive have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 54 — The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2007

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2007 and will formally move second reading of this legislation at the end of my remarks.

This amendment — based on an idea from the Nova Scotia legislature, brought to Saskatchewan by the committee to support Canadian Forces reservists, the Canadian Forces liaison council, and the Royal Canadian Legion — will ensure that Saskatchewan workers who volunteer with the Canadian Forces reserves will be able to fulfill their reserve commitment without fear of losing their job.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is renowned for its volunteerism. The strength, commitment, and number of our volunteers are one of the things that set this province apart from the rest of Canada. This NDP government knows the important role volunteers play in making our province the best place in Canada to live, work, and raise a family.

Because we value the service of volunteers to our communities, the service that the members of the Canadian Forces reserves provide to our country, we are amending the labour standards of this province to provide job protection for Saskatchewan reservists who take a leave from their place of employment in order to fulfill their responsibilities with the Canadian Forces.

Now when a citizen of this province volunteers to work on behalf of his or her fellow Canadians to ensure peace and security abroad, they deserve to know that their jobs are waiting for them when they get home. When these Saskatchewan reservists are called to fight floods, fires, or other disasters in Canada, we have a responsibility to ensure that they can do so without the fear of losing their job.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this job protection will create more than just peace of mind. As Sergeant Tim Huckle and Sergeant James Richards of the committee to support Canadian Forces reservists point out in a letter sent to me in November, they say, and I quote:

Many reservists are young and in the prime earning years. Employment protection legislation may encourage young reservists to stay in Saskatchewan and to return to Saskatchewan following a military deployment. Such legislation may also attract other reservists to our province for military as well as civilian employment.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I couldn't have said it better myself. Mr. Speaker, this is the right thing to do. And it's one of the many things that this Premier and this NDP government are doing to make life better for reservists, their families, and all Saskatchewan people.

In addition to introducing this amendment, I'm also pleased to announce that we will be consulting to find similar protections that may be appropriate for reservists who are post-secondary students.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the idea of job protection for reservists was first raised by the NDP in Nova Scotia. It is an area though where all political parties across Canada are finding common ground, and it is my pleasure to give second reading to an amendment that I know all members of this Assembly will support.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of Bill No. 54, The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2007. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Labour that Bill No. 54, The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2007 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? The Chair recognizes the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand today and talk about Bill No. 54.

It's ironic that the minister would get up and talk about how it was an NDP idea and how it was their idea because I think, if you look at the evolution of what's happened in this province, it was some of the reservists that actually approached us and talked about this particular Bill. And we had worked on a private member's Bill to introduce it into legislation. Then all of a sudden, the light comes on with members opposite, and they say we had better do this because this sounds like it's the right thing to do.

So now we have a government across the way that is trying to take credit for it where — believe it or not — the credit actually lies with the people that are sitting up in the gallery today, Mr. Speaker. It's the reservists, the Legion, former reservists, former members of the military, people that are very involved with the military . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I ask the member to continue

with his remarks but to not involve anybody in the gallery into the debate.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is people like the reservists. It is people like former members. It is people like members that are very concerned about the military. It is people like the Legion folks that are very, very concerned about our young people that are reservists and volunteer for duty and are unable to retain their position if they volunteer and are away for a period of time.

This Bill — as again I will reiterate one more time — that the NDP wish to take credit for it, they should take no credit at all. Let's put the credit where the credit is due, is with those people that actively come forward with the idea that this should happen in this province.

I very much agree with the Bill and the legislation, Mr. Speaker. We look at job protection. We have political people that have job protection. Members of this Assembly have job protection when they're elected. Some of them when they get unelected, they will go back or have the opportunity to go back to their former positions, some I hope sooner than others but . . . And now what we've done, we've got men and women, men and women that volunteer for the Canadian forces, reservists, or actually in any capacity, and we are chastising them for their regular job.

So why would we not offer job protection for these men and women? This has been done in other jurisdictions and other countries. Mr. Speaker, it's only fair that we do it here. Now it seems ironic again, when I relate back to the political people that can have job protection, and yet people that put their life on the line for protection of our rights and freedoms, that we would not offer them the same degree of job protection.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House fully, fully support the direction that this legislation is intended to go. I guess the only problem that I have with this so far is much of the meat of the Bill is prescribed in regulation and that hasn't been published yet. Only time will tell when the regulations come out if it will be strong enough to ensure, to ensure that a reservist who volunteers to serve in our Armed Forces, through training or a tour of duty, will have job protection. And I want to repeat that. This will come in in regulation, and the regulations must be strong enough to ensure that these members will have job protection.

And it's funny, the member for Moose Jaw North is laughing about it. But it's Moose Jaw that has a strong military presence, and he has a tendency to laugh about it.

Mr. Speaker, I know businesses, I know businesses have a propensity to allow members of the reserve to take leave, take a leave of absence. However, however this does not guarantee them job protection. Most of the business are very, very pleased to let reservists go on a period of leave or extended leave without any legislation or regulation and allow them to come back to work. But legislation that enables them to guarantee job protection and guarantee seniority is very, very important, Mr. Speaker.

I think who really deserves the credit, I'll say again, is the

people that were involved — the reservists, the Legion people, the retired reservists, the people that have been very much involved with the military over the years — and I would like to commend them for the introduction of this Bill. We'll have to wait now to see what the regulation does provide. And if the regulation provides enough meat, substantive meat in regulation to allow for job protection, we'll be very, very pleased with this Bill.

So that being said, Mr. Speaker, one more time, I'd like to commend the individuals that were involved in putting this forward. And because there are people that wish to speak to this, and there's still some input coming from other jurisdictions, I think we should adjourn debate on this Bill at this time.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. It has been moved by the member for Wood River . . . Order please, members. Order. It has been moved by the member for Wood River that debate on second reading of Bill No. 54 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Bill No. 56 — The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2007

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. At the conclusion of my remarks I will be moving second reading of Bill No. 56, The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2007.

Mr. Speaker, The Municipalities Act came into force on January 1, 2006. It provides municipalities with the broad powers necessary to deal with matters that are of a local nature. What we have heard from the municipal sector is that they want more flexibility, greater autonomy, and less provincial management in a number of areas. I believe this Act moves us in this direction.

The Municipalities Act is also helping to modernize the relationship between the province and municipalities and, I believe, provide citizens with better, more accountable local government. As such, we continue to work with municipal leaders to improve this legislation, and the amendments presented today are a result of ongoing consultation with the municipalities since the Act has been implemented.

Mr. Speaker, you will see similarities between the amendments to this Act and those that we introduced in the fall of 2006 to The Cities Act. Today's amendments ensure that we treat matters of a comparable nature in a consistent and fair way among the municipalities and cities.

This Bill addresses some significant issues. It responds directly to requests from the municipal sector and the municipal liability review committee to update and enhance the statutory liability provisions in the Act, and to keep these provisions consistent

with The Cities Act.

It introduces policy amendments that municipalities and stakeholders have requested to improve the effectiveness of the Act. It clarifies the wording of certain provisions identified by the cities, municipalities, Government Relations, and Corrections and Public Safety. And it makes clear that municipalities may make reports to the public regarding theft or fraudulent diversion of municipal funds and property.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments I believe will serve to strengthen the legislation.

I want to take just a few moments, Mr. Speaker, to highlight the more significant changes that the Bill proposes. Of particular note are the amendments related to municipal liability. In recent years, Saskatchewan's municipalities have brought forward issues with respect to the scope and nature of the liability protection that is afforded to municipal corporations under Saskatchewan's municipal statutes.

[14:45]

To look at these matters further, a working group of officials from Government Relations, Saskatchewan Justice, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, and the city solicitors from the four major cities began work on the review in late 2004 and continued through the first six months of 2005.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say this Bill addresses all of the review committee's recommendations. These amendments will provide municipalities with a level of protection from liability that is equivalent to or consistent with the protection afforded to the provincial government and its Crown corporations and to municipalities in other provinces and territories across Canada. The provisions will also address a number of long-standing issues and provide support for other provincial and department initiatives directed towards improving the financial sustainability and quality of service in our community. The same amendments have been proposed for The Cities Act.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank the members of the review committee for its excellent work and diligence that have led to these provisions in the Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill also seeks to address other issues that municipalities have encountered as they have implemented the Act. An example includes provisions that currently allow a council to reimburse either a councillor or a mayor for legal or other costs if a citizen is unsuccessful with an application to have him or her disqualified. Mr. Speaker, all of the stakeholders agree that the existing provision is unclear. If an elected person can be reimbursed, then why not a citizen? That is a matter of fairness. The proposed amendment would extend council's discretionary authority to also reimburse the legal or other costs of a citizen where there is a successful application to have a member of council disqualified for reasons approved by the courts. This amendment is proposed both for The Cities Act and The Municipalities Act.

Mr. Speaker, some might think that this amendment could increase the number of trivial actions against council members.

However I would like to assure that the grounds for disqualification are specifically set out in the Act and are limited to significant issues like becoming ineligible to hold office for being convicted of a criminal offence. A judge would have to determine that grounds exist in the first place for disqualification to occur.

Mr. Speaker, we believe this amendment makes government more accountable and supports the ability of electors to bring forward legitimate actions and allows council the discretion to recognize those individuals.

In another area we have made amendments, Mr. Speaker, that allows municipalities to use tax increment financing. This tool will allow municipalities to finance public improvements in a designated area by the increase in property taxes generated by private development. Using this tool may help to encourage development in areas where development might not otherwise occur. Mr. Speaker, while The Municipalities Act already provides flexibility and autonomy, its taxation provisions were largely carried forward from previous legislation. We believe that in areas such as assessment, taxation, and local election procedures, legislation needs to be as clear and specific as possible.

This new authority will help municipalities with another way to address their infrastructure challenges. In this instance we have included regulation-making authority because tax increment financing is new to Saskatchewan and refinements may be necessary in the context of practical application.

Mr. Speaker, as I've already stated, we recognize that municipalities or municipal governments are often in the best position to make local decisions for the benefit of their residents. In support of this, some of the amendments proposed provide greater flexibility for municipalities to respond to existing and future needs of their communities in innovative ways.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this Bill includes some minor housekeeping amendments that are intended to clarify the intent of the legislation or improve the wording or practical application of the various provisions.

Mr. Speaker, this package of amendments was developed in consultation with a working group of municipal representatives. I would like to take this opportunity again to thank the municipal representatives who provided their professional experience, advice, and time to help refine the legislation that will help improve Saskatchewan people's lives.

Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the important place the municipalities have in our province's future and we want to continue working with municipal leaders to build a quality of life we desire, and provide a future for our working families and young people. Today's amended Act is just one step in this direction.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 56, The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2007.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 56, The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2007 be now read a second time. The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise this afternoon and speak briefly on Bill No. 56, An Act to amend The Municipalities Act for our consideration.

Mr. Speaker, the minister acknowledged and thanked in particular the members of the municipal authorities who participated with the government in the drafting of this legislation. And I would like to join my voice in thanking those individuals as well. Certainly on an ongoing basis it's very important for our legislature to make sure that we are keeping our legislation up to date and meeting the needs of those constituent agencies that serve so tremendous and important a critical purpose in our province — and municipal authorities are certainly one of those institutions.

Mr. Speaker, I note in the number of pages of this Act or this amendment that it is designed to clarify a broad number of areas that the minister outlined and to make sure that The Municipalities Act appropriately addresses the needs and concerns of municipal authorities across this province.

Many of these amendments deal with the Municipal Board, which is an oversight body that is important in the way our government functions in this province. And it makes a number of changes that will clarify these relationships and clarifies the responsibilities and duties of members on these boards and municipal governments and their relationship with citizens.

Mr. Speaker, while this would seem to be rather housekeeping in nature, it I think is very important in that it addresses some long-standing issues. And I know that our critic in charge of municipal affairs is going to be very interested in having discussions with the municipal authorities to ensure that this legislation not only makes some changes, but actually meets the needs of municipal authorities in an appropriate way.

And so in order to facilitate that to happen, Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melfort that debate on second reading of Bill No. 56 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 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 Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate having the opportunity to speak to this Bill today, the Human Rights Code amendment Act. And, Mr. Speaker, I think this is very important. We've had a number of people that are getting close to the retirement age and getting to that point where mandatory retirement would affect them, but on the other hand have very much to offer to society and for that matter especially to the province of Saskatchewan.

Remembering that we have a labour shortage in the mix right now and the experience and the knowledge that we would lose when people of that age would have to step out of the workforce and be replaced by someone with probably far less experience, I think would . . . By pushing this Bill through or passing this Bill, I think is a real plus, because in many cases, in fact in cases where people wish to carry on and could still supply that knowledge and expertise to the job that they've had, would be a very good plus for everyone concerned.

So, Mr. Speaker, we've talked to people that are very concerned about what is being brought forth in this legislation and feel that we could pass this on to committee, and we'll have some questions at that point, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion proposed by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 9, The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2006 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — 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: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? The Chair recognizes the minister.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I move that Bill No. 9, The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2006 be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 9, The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2006 be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and

Infrastructure.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to talk a bit about Bill No. 8, The Paramedics Act. A couple of the things that come to mind right off the forefront on this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, is in the minister's remarks he talks about that it will regulate approximately 1,800 emergency medical service personnel in our province. And the idea of this Bill deals with self-regulation under the College of Paramedics.

But it's interesting to note that as of now, the numbers that I have, there's only approximately 100 of them that are current members of the College of Paramedics. So we have something in the neighbourhood of 1,700 people that's going to be regulated under this Act that are only 100 members of the organization right now. So I think that's something that we're probably going to have to look at, as to why there's only so many under the College of Paramedics right now and 1,700 that are not. And why are they not and why are they going to be forced under this particular Act?

The self-regulation is going to be the legal authority to register, license, and discipline emergency medical responders and all levels of emergency medical technicians. Mr. Speaker, that gives rise to a couple of issues.

When we look at regulation related to EMTs [emergency medical technician], any emergency medical people, we're always kind of looking at, what are the standards going to be? Is there going to be a two-standard system? Or is there is going to be one standard that everybody throughout the province is bound by?

And the reason I raise that today, Mr. Speaker, is we look at what the firefighters were putting forward a few years ago, and the firefighters had talked about the same kind of regulatory discipline, where you could talk about needing four firefighters before you could engage in fighting a fire. In downtown urban centre, that's very understandable. But I actually have a situation at home where in fact two people went out to fight a grass fire and an authority happened to be there — when I say an authority, there was somebody that was very familiar with the legislation — and they stopped them. They said, you cannot fight a fire until there's four people here.

So the fire went raging on while three people got into a little bit of verbal hassle as to why you need four people to fight a fire when the fire is burning on its own, going more and more wild. In the meantime some people come along and put the fire out, as the three individuals were talking about it. So the point being here is, there is regulation and legislation that is binding to people, but it doesn't make common sense in a lot of cases.

Now in this particular Bill, if you have regulation that dictates certain aspects of the EMT, what is it going to do when it comes to rural areas? I can use an example, Mr. Speaker, of ambulance services when we had direction and legislation that was . . . put the requirements in where you had to have so many X's filled to operate an ambulance. And you have some small towns where you have volunteer ambulance drivers. You have volunteer people. They've had an EMT course, and all of the sudden comes regulation or legislation that dictates that you have to have more and more and more training.

[15:00]

So what do you do when you are a volunteer organization? How do you afford this? Do individuals pay out of their own pocket? Or in order to comply with the regulation in a rural setting their hands are tied. They are unable to in a lot of cases. So I was actually confronted with a situation similar and I would give this to the people of the province to think about.

We were dealing with a box ambulance where you had to have a certified qualified driver that had X number of courses where he or she could be a certified ambulance driver. Whether it be downtown Toronto or downtown Regina or downtown Glentworth, it didn't matter. And at the same time at the back of the ambulance you had to have two qualified EMTs — and I understand that; it's nice in the regulation — qualified to, again all of the courses, everything that had to be done to follow the regulation and the legislation.

The scenario I was confronted with, Mr. Speaker, is we had a young individual that was injured. We could not put that person in the back of a box ambulance with two people as EMTs because they did not have the X's filled. And so by law they could not use that ambulance and the two EMTs to take that young person to a medical facility. Now this is the part that really gets ludicrous. What we did is we put a mattress in the back of a van and had somebody that had a first aid course take this individual to a medical facility.

Now you think about that. Where is the patient better served? In the back of a box ambulance with people that have not quite finished all of the X's? They're trained as EMTs. We have a driver that wasn't allowed to drive because he didn't have that last little course that marked the X on his licence, but he could sure drive the van. He could get into that van and drive the van, because he was licensed to drive the van with a mattress in the back and somebody that had a first aid course.

And that's part of the issue that I am little bit concerned about within this Bill is how directive it's going to be, how much of a disparity there's going to be between the treatment of EMTs in remote settings vis-à-vis EMTs in the urban settings.

And we know, we know, Mr. Speaker, that in the rural areas the ambulance service and the EMTs are very, very important. We know that 52 hospitals have been closed in rural areas — it might be up to 55 now — so ambulance service is more and more important to the rural areas because it's a longer distance to get to a medical facility. And we know that over the roads that we travel on, it is that much more of an issue and a problem when it comes to ambulance drivers and even for patients in the back of some of these vehicles.

So as hospitals close . . . And now we're finding again recently and I think in most rural constituencies, we have hospitals, you attend a hospital and there's a sign on the door that says whoops, sorry, closed. What do you do? So now you have to again get to another medical facility who knows where. And in order to do that if it's a real issue, a medical issue, you may need an ambulance. And I just go back to the situation that I just talked about. Is it better to have a van or the back seat of a car for somebody to go to the next facility or is it better to have an ambulance and people with some training to do it?

I'd like to just go a little farther on that also, is with the ambulance service. And we know the attempt before to try and put ambulance services under the auspices of . . . in other words take away the private ambulance operators. They're trying to put it under the health districts and thus would have eliminated private ambulances in the province. Now where would that go? We've got some very good ambulance private operators but the distance they have to travel is horrendous in some cases.

And also another factor in this particular whole scenario is the lack of cell coverage. How, if you've gone to a facility that has a big sign that says, closed, lack of nurses, lack of doctors, try your luck 75 miles down the road — recent cases were from my constituency to Swift Current — and how do you now . . . You're there with your patient, if you wish, that you've come from a farm possibly. You've got them in the back of a car. And now you get to a hospital with a sign that says closed on it. How do you then get them to a facility that's open? Or how do you know where a facility is open?

And now with the cell coverage the way it is . . . And we've had a situation such as this in my area where the individual couldn't even use a cellphone to call an ambulance and an EMT, and they had to drive the patient to Swift Current. Now that is absolutely uncalled for.

We had a case just south of Moose Jaw in the hills where they couldn't get a hold of an ambulance where the accident was, and somebody had to drive something like 3 miles to get a hold of 911 service so they could get an ambulance. And guess what happened? An ambulance was dispatched from Moose Jaw out to the scene. And Moose Jaw was . . . the ambulance from Moose Jaw was farther than the one from Assiniboia, but Assiniboia was a private ambulance company. And so the Moose Jaw ambulance headed out there and got lost. So there's an awful lot of conditions that need to be met to make something like this paramedic Bill have more teeth to it.

And the member wants to yip about 911 service. I'll give an example, a couple of examples that happened. A 911 call came from my area and was actually at that time handled in Prince Albert, if you could believe. They dispatched an ambulance. They got lost. And by the time they arrived, the patient — some three hours later — the patient had passed away. And it's somebody that I do know fairly well. So is that system working? No, it's not. It needs improvements. And that's why I'm a little concerned about this Bill. This is very tunnelled in some aspects, and I think it has to be looked at a little bit more.

I have another case — and probably other people have situations very much the same — where an individual could not get a hold of an ambulance. And they drove the individual in a

car, and by the time they reached the health centre — well hospital I guess it was — in Gravelbourg, the individual had passed away.

So these are some issues that I'm very concerned about in the rural areas. The direction within the Bill, where it's going? Is there going to be some clauses in the Bill that allow for situations that would require the training to be at a minimum standard rather than at a high standard? Or at a standard that . . . These people are well trained, but at a standard that is maybe unattainable because of whatever reason.

So I think a minimum standard needs to be met. There's no doubt. But also there's got to be a common sense factor. And unfortunately when it comes to that side of the House, common sense is something that's really not in their phraseology.

So we need to look at whether it's going to be better to use the back seat of a car with a first aid person or use a proper facility with some EMT people. I think that's something that has to be looked at. So we have to look at minimum standards. Now if that's done with blinders on from a perspective of a large urban area, I do have some concerns.

Mr. Speaker, that being said, I believe that the answers . . . or the questions that we have can be answered in committee. So I recommend that this Bill go to committee.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion proposed by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 8, The Paramedics Act be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would move that Bill No. 8, The Paramedics Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 8 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 Speaker: — Motion is carried. Bill No. 8, The Paramedics Act stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Bill No. 13

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Thomson that **Bill No. 13 — The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2006** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I am pleased to enter the debate on Bill No. 13. A number of my colleagues have already spoken to this Bill and pointed out the changes that the Minister is proposing in this particular piece of legislation. I'm going to very briefly deal with each of the changes. But I think most of the questions — and there are a number of questions that we have — need to be dealt with when it is sent to committee, and I mean to do that as soon as I'm finished.

Mr. Speaker, one of the changes is they want to increase the number of board members from 10 to 12, and the reason given by the minister was the growing demands that are placed on the boards to deal with the corporation's accountability. I know that approximately two to three years ago there was some issues to do with the past president and CEO of SaskEnergy. And he was, well he was let go at that point in time because of those issues.

So have they increased the accountability that the board members are responsible for? We need to find out why they feel the need to increase the number of board members. What changes have been made within SaskEnergy that makes the workload of the board members more demanding? So those would be questions that I'm sure we will be obtaining answers to once the Bill is moved into committee.

The significant change that I feel is that this Bill will permit SaskEnergy to transport energy-related products — by-products other than gas — on a non-exclusive basis. The products that the minister cited in his speech when he spoke to this Bill was carbon dioxide, hydrogen, and ethanol.

Again there's a number of questions that we have. Number one is, who asked for that change? Who is asking for SaskEnergy to have the capacity to be able to transport other products through their network? Who has SaskEnergy consulted with, or the government, the minister, consulted with to see if this will have an impact on private industry, private investment? Presently how are the other commodities being transported?

Another area that I think we need to know some answers to is will this require an extensive expansion of the network, of the infrastructure within SaskPower? If not, then are we using . . . like how many lines does . . . I'm sorry, I said SaskPower earlier. It's SaskEnergy. How many lines or pipelines does SaskEnergy have that's not in use, that we don't need to use on a consistent basis for gas transmission? So do we have pipelines available that we can then transmit a different commodity, and what percentage would that be? Where would those pipelines be located?

So in essence we need to know what direction SaskEnergy is

hoping to go in. What is their future projections? Why did they feel a need to make this change to the legislation?

The third area, Mr. Speaker, of significance in the Bill allows SaskEnergy and TransGas the ability to change pipelines where there is an encroachment by a building or structure. And currently the only authority, as my understanding in the Act, is for SaskEnergy or TransGas to remove the building and this allows them to reroute the line.

Now I have to admit I'm very surprised that they haven't had that ability prior to this. It seems rather odd to me that SaskEnergy or TransGas didn't have the ability to move a line if they needed to or reroute a line if they needed to.

[15:15]

It also deals in what authority SaskEnergy and TransGas will have if they need to have a building or structure removed or moved aside for safety reasons. Safety reasons is very important, and we agree with that. But we hope that they also have the policies in place that will ensure that there's fair and adequate consultation before modifications are made, and not that they're just made in a bullying type of manner and then a bill is sent to the private individual for the moving.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, I have a number of questions on this Bill. It's not a particularly long Bill, but it does touch on three fairly significant areas. And I will be looking forward to the answers when this Bill is moved into committee. So with that, I recommend that Bill No. 13 is moved to committee.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy that Bill No. 13, The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2006 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? The Chair recognizes the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to answering the member's questions as I would move that the Bill be referred — The SaskEnergy Amendment Act of 2006, Bill No. 13 — be referred to the Crown and Central Agencies Committee.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy that Bill No. 13 be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. The Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today we're talking about the miscellaneous statutes Act being amended, Bill No. 17.

And I guess the requirement of this Bill came forth because of the tax revolt that was in the province here a year or two ago, and actually may happen again, even though these penalties are put in place for municipalities that don't forward on taxes collected on behalf of school divisions or other authorities that they collect taxes for.

I notice in here, Mr. Speaker, that municipal hail . . . And I know the municipal hail directors are hoping this passes because they want their dollars that are collected on their behalf. And I think that's very fair, and we certainly won't be holding this Bill up to that extent.

Although having said that, I think there's a number of things that have caused this Bill to be put in place, these amendments to be brought forward. And the main thing being is that the province of Saskatchewan or the government of the day, the NDP government, has been on record as saying that the status quo is not on. I believe the Premier has made that on a couple of occasions. He's made that comment to SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention and possibly to other conventions and urban councils — saying the status quo is not on and that we will be dealing long-term, sustainable funding for education, and we will take some of the burden off of municipalities of all kinds, whether it's cities, villages, towns, or RMs [rural municipality] in this case.

I also know, Mr. Speaker, as I read this Bill, that RMs are being penalized here, to the point where there's actually penalties in this Bill for RMs that withhold tax and do what they did a couple years ago.

Now having said that, we all realize that the school divisions for sure need their dollars to fund education of our kids and grandkids. But on the other hand, if the government of the day would see fit to bring forward long-term, sustainable funding — in fact a far more fair portion of the education tax instead of the downloading that has gone in the past 15 years in this province — we probably wouldn't be in this mess, and we wouldn't need legislation such as that we're talking about today. If we had a government that was actually paying attention to what was happening in rural Saskatchewan, we wouldn't need amendments like we're talking about today to this Bill.

Now I know there's a lot of concerns out there, Madam Speaker. I know RM administrators are somewhat concerned. I see part of the Bill says that a report, a financial statement has to be passed forward every month, except for January and September, about the amount of taxes collected on the school division's behalf. Things like this are actually going to cause more paperwork for the municipalities, whatever it is, and therefore actually add costs to that municipality. But I guess then that really wasn't the concern of this NDP government because they really neglected to bring forward new funding and long-term sustainability in funding. So I'm sure that something like additional administrative costs certainly aren't going to bother this NDP government, especially this NDP government when it comes to rural Saskatchewan, Madam Speaker.

So, Madam Speaker, I think we have a number of concerns yet with this Bill. I think probably after we've gone through committee down the road and get our questions answered, then this Bill will be forwarded on. But I think at this point, Madam Speaker, we have a number of concerned people with what is in the Bill here. I know our rural administrators, rural councils have a number of concerns over this and would like some questions answered and are going to be forwarding many of those questions on for when we get in committee and look for the answers that they need. So at this point, Madam Speaker, I would like to adjourn debate until we've had time to further reassess what is really in this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member 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: — Recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to speak to Bill No. 31, An Act to amend The Regional Health Services Act. Madam Deputy Speaker, I understand that this amendment has been brought forth because of the insistence from the Provincial Auditor who has pointed out that formal service agreements need to be put in place with service providers such as affiliated hospitals or other non-designated health care organizations that may provide services to regional health authorities. And certainly we in the Saskatchewan Party agree in principle that a formal service agreement should be necessary and should be in place, Madam Deputy Speaker — formal agreements that will ensure performance standards are met, outline responsibilities more clearly, and ensure at the end of the day that the Saskatchewan Health is accountable for the services it contracts and provides of these services.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, we understand — we've been told by the auditor and by the groups involved — that the formal agreements are long overdue, and as I had mentioned,

the Provincial Auditor has asked that the regional health authorities comply with this recommendation from the auditor for a number of years. But saying that, Madam Deputy Speaker, there still are a number of concerns from the groups concerning this Bill, and that's one of the duties of the Saskatchewan Party, the official opposition, is to speak to all the stakeholders involved. And as a result of this, we have found that the Saskatchewan emergency measures service association has some concerns.

Now I'd like to point out some of the concerns that have been outstanding issues prior to this Bill — well, over the number of years that this Bill has been asked for by the auditor and by the above-mentioned group. Madam Deputy Speaker, this government's history with The Ambulance Act, where it failed to do the consult with ambulance operators, and it certainly is part of the concern about bringing in a Bill without actually speaking to or giving proper consultation with the stakeholders involved.

Now the Saskatchewan emergency measures services association have a number of concerns, and we have discussed these issues with them. And one of the concerns, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that there is one year's notice can be given without cause, is a concern because it makes it difficult for operators to secure financing when . . . just what it says. When they only have a one-year contract, what bank is willing to give a long-term loan on the business plan that basically is only possibly one year? And so it certainly is very difficult for the association members to go to a bank to obtain financing when it's only a one-year, only a one-year contract given out at a time.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, once notice is given, is served to terminate the contract through our provisions for the regional health authority to buy out the operator at fair market value. However what the association has been saying, the ambulance operators argue that if the extent of any contract is only one year, the value of their business is greatly diminished. And that would only make sense, that even though the regional health authorities would buy out the business, I mean, if it's only based on a value of one-year's business, that certainly would greatly reduce their value of their business.

And one other point that the emergency measures services association pointed out, that the provision gives 14-days notice to remedying any service disputes followed by the cessation of payments, and they find that as problematic. They feel that, operators feel that there needs to be a longer period to resolve disputes before payment ceases.

Now we understand that there is discussions. There is negotiations in place, and there is some progress in these areas. And we certainly would hope that the government takes into account these issues before this Bill is moved on.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, we certainly understand how important ambulance operators and people that work in the health care profession are. And certainly in the rural areas we find how extremely important they are, and how really the challenges out there are — when you're talking about rural health — everything from as my colleague was talking about cellphone coverage in areas and having the health care

professionals able to find where an accident is. If it's in a more remote area, we also . . . you know, when you talk about ambulances travelling to unknown areas, just being able to find the location.

You know the condition of the roads is certainly a factor depending on the weather. Certainly we've talked about the condition of roads and highways and, you know, naturally we know ambulances will travel anywhere, wherever there's an accident. But certainly it's a tremendous, it's a possible problem when there's a need to travel to a area that is rather remote.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, certainly now the distance to go to hospitals, as more and more hospitals are closed across the province, it's also a matter of getting the patient from the accident site to a hospital, to a hospital first that may be closed because there's lack of health care professionals or there's lack of doctors, and actually the knowledge of people whether that hospital is closed and which is the next closest hospital they should go to and those types of issues.

So when we talk about these types of services, we have to look at the service as a whole of the province and of the region because of the really the uncertainty of health services in more remote, in areas more . . . rural areas because we've had many really horror stories about patients finding it difficult to find a health care professional or a hospital that they thought would be open and then to find out when they get there that it's not open and they have to travel further. And of course the health and welfare of the patient is at risk.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have outlined some of the areas where the emergency measure association has concerns. Certainly we will continue to discuss these issues with them. But I believe, Madam Deputy Speaker, that in light of all the concerns that are out there, we certainly would want to keep this Bill in adjourned debate until these issues are resolved. We don't feel that this should move on yet because of the concerns around the questions that the Saskatchewan emergency measures service association has concerning this.

Now as I had said, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Provincial Auditor has pointed out that these agreements should have been in place many, many years ago. And one wonders why the government's taken so long to introduce a Bill concerning something that's been pointed out to them by the Provincial Auditor for many, many years. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, also you know, obviously the Saskatchewan emergency measures service association members obviously were wanting these contracts in place so that, so that they would have a better . . . be able to make more long-term decisions.

[15:30]

Now we find, Madam Deputy Speaker, that they're only one-year contracts. So it creates some difficulty concerning the length of the contract and the viability of the business on a long-term basis as far as doing business plans and also being reimbursed by the regional health authority if they decide to sell their assets to the regional health authority.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, as I said, certainly we want to continue to talk to the stakeholders and we will do so. So,

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to move to adjourn debate.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to stand today and talk for a few minutes on The Cities Amendment Act. What this Bill does is gives the cities a comparable level of protection from liability to that of the provincial government and Crowns.

One of the issues I guess, the first thing that comes to mind when I look at The Municipalities Amendment Act, is the consultation process that is used or the lack of consultation sometimes that is used by this NDP government. And we go back to the original Municipalities Amendment Act and we know there's a real rush from this government to put the Bill through. And there is pressure, pressure from all directions to put the Bill to committee and have it passed. And then we find out that there are so many amendments that the Bill has to be pulled and reintroduced. And I don't think that is what one in any circle would call having done the consultation process to its best and fullest degree.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in this Act it gives discretionary power to reimburse a citizen's legal expenses if they should successfully have to . . . applies to have a councillor disqualified for reasons that meet the approval of the courts. And that is probably good in some areas but I don't know if that's one that needs to be debated and discussed in committee or not.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it also deals with provisions to allow the cities the use of tax increment financing. And that's in addition to the existing powers in the Act. Now one of the things that at first blush on this . . . And the minister has stated this in his remarks. Because tax increment financing is new to Saskatchewan and refinements may be necessary, it really begs the question is . . . if it's new to Saskatchewan, why is it coming from this NDP government that's very, very loathe to put anything new into this province? And so I think there's going to be some questions that we will have related to that in committee.

The minister had said this may help to encourage development in areas where development might not otherwise occur. I'm wondering if that means that tax increment financing will help development in the province of Saskatchewan, because it seems

like right now there is very much a lack of development in this province because of NDP policies. So I wonder if tax increment financing is going to help grow the province and help all of Saskatchewan. I'm not really sure that that's what the tax increment financing is going to do. But maybe it's a step in the right direction.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I'm wondering if this raises some questions as to whether this really is another tool to lead city councils into taking on more debt. I don't think the minister really expounded on that particular aspect of this Bill. City councils will also be given more flexibility in making their own policy when it comes to selling certain parcels of land. And I think there may be some questions that we would have on that also.

That being said, Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe all of the further questions that we would have on this Bill can be answered in committee. So at this time I would move that this Bill be forwarded to committee.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion on The Cities Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2), Bill No. 28, that it now be read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Madam Speaker, I move that Bill No. 28, The Cities Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2) be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for Government Relations that Bill No. 28, The Cities Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2) be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure. 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 Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

Bill No. 37

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by of 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 Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and it's a pleasure for me to join the debate on this particular piece of legislation today. I once again am presented with a Bill here that seems amazingly short. I've had the privilege of addressing very short pieces of legislation in the past, but I've been amazed also by the fact that their brevity sometimes belies the importance of the legislation. Length does not necessarily indicate significance.

And today we have a piece of legislation called the Act to amend the Court of Appeal Act, 2000 which on the surface of it sounds like it's probably not a bad idea. It's reducing the size of the Court of Appeals from nine members to seven. But I think, Madam Deputy Speaker, before we get too excited about that particular provision in the legislation, we need to consider some of the circumstances surrounding this piece of legislation and ask really for the justification to make this particular change.

I notice that the Minister of Justice, when he introduced this legislation, made some comments in which he alluded to the fact that the former Chief Justice of the court had suggested these changes in speeches to lawyers' organizations in which he indicated the reduction in the size of the court would be appropriate in light of the workload of the court.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, without challenging the views of the former Chief Justice, I do have some concern about this language coming from the Minister of Justice whose veracity on this topic might be challenged because of the comments he's made regarding other pieces of legislation before this House. I'm not sure that the Minister of Justice entirely characterizes his position and the legislation he's sponsoring in a manner that is fully supported by the facts, and whether or not this particular piece of legislation is supported by fact remains to be seen.

I think the critic for the official opposition who handles issues relating to justice wants to have a very careful look at this provision, wants to have an opportunity to talk to judges and justices of the court through their association and also talk to legal representatives, whether it be the bar association or the Criminal Lawyers' Association. Whatever facets of information he can determine, I think our critic would like an opportunity to do that before we move too far down the road with this particular Bill.

The Minister of Justice alluded to the fact that the workload at the Court of Appeal level is light. And I find that interesting, Madam Deputy Speaker, in view of the reality that faces courts, not just in Saskatchewan but around the world, frankly, in countries where democratic systems prevail, where justice is handled in an effective and impartial way because, by and large, court systems are not finding themselves faced with light workloads.

In most instances they're bogged down and so we hear reports continually about court cases that are put off, backdated, and held off to such lengths of time that in some occasions — some rare occasions maybe, but in more and more frequent occasions — the person who's charged with a crime is allowed to go free because he didn't get his day in court in an appropriate and timely manner. There is the statement that we're all familiar with, that justice delayed is justice denied. And in many cases I think that we're finding justice delayed too long.

So if the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal is finding its workload too light to accommodate the full bench of nine judges, then I'd be surprised by that. And I think I'd like that particular comment verified by the details of the court record and the number of cases facing the court.

The other interesting thing about this particular piece of legislation is that while it sets the number at seven as opposed to the current number of judges at nine . . . and we have to change the legislation to achieve that. If in the future we should find the backlog of cases so heavy that we need to increase the number of judges at the Court of Appeal, it can be accomplished according to this piece of legislation simply by regulation that the Lieutenant Governor in Council — that means the government or the cabinet — can increase by regulation the number of judges on the Court of Appeal. So while we need to change the legislation to reduce the size of the court, we won't need that inconvenience to increase the size of the court in the future if, in fact, it's necessitated by a heavier workload.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this particular piece of legislation causes me some concern I suppose in that it's almost tantamount to an admission of defeat, I believe. The province over the last number of years has shrunk significantly in terms of population. I believe in the tenure of this particular Premier we have seen 10,000 people stroked from the population numbers of this province. We have seen the Department of Learning forecast a reduction of 30,000 students in the public school system before the end of the decade or by the end of the decade. We've seen reductions in services in rural Saskatchewan because there's nothing happening out there, according to the government.

The population loss has caused this government to take steps to reduce services in many, many communities in rural Saskatchewan. And in fact we've been talking about that just recently again in petitions that we've presented here. There have been petitions regarding funding for schools. And the argument of the government is that there isn't enough funding to go around and we certainly don't need to put it into areas where there is a reduced school population and a reduced general population.

We've seen the closure of SaskPower offices in a number of communities around the province again just in the last few days. And that is just the latest round of closures of offices that support customers of Crown corporations in communities around the province.

This province has seen a retraction and a reduction of population numbers and attendant government services. And it would appear that the government's view of the court system is that that should follow suit.

There is one area of growth in this province however, Madam Deputy Speaker, and that is in the size of government. This most recent budget just made provision for several hundred more employees and I think in the time of this Premier's tenure we've seen another 1,500 people added to the size of government. And if that isn't indicative of the way the current government thinks of things, I guess they probably won't be happy until just about everybody's on the government payroll at

some level or other.

And those of us who pay taxes at a significant rate already believe we're sort of on the government payroll. But nevertheless, the fact of the matter is that the size of government has grown significantly under this Premier. And yet, and yet the legislation that the Minister of Justice has introduced here is talking about reducing the size of the Court of Appeal in this province.

[15:45]

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that there's plenty of reason to question whether this is a prudent decision, whether it's a wise and appropriate decision at this time. I think that we need to investigate further the court backlog and the workload of the court before we could say one way or the other. And we need to have that opportunity. So while we are trying to ascertain the validity of this particular piece of legislation, I would move that we adjourn debate.

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Well thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a privilege to stand again today and speak to Bill 38, The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2006.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I started speaking on, it was March 14 regarding this Bill. And as time was running out at the end of the day and I wanted to speak more on it, I did not adjourn debate at that time.

Now many of my colleagues here are saying that because members on the opposite side did not get the drift of what I was talking about in regards to this wildlife habitat protection amendment Act, that I should start over again. And it was overwhelming decision that I do that and so I don't know if we have enough time today either to get through it.

I just want to make some references to my comments that I made regarding the habitat wildlife amendment Act, Madam Deputy Speaker, and that's in regards to, years ago it was critical habitat wildlife land and now it's been changed to wildlife habitat protection amendment land.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, some time ago there was good reason to put this land under protection. There was a lot of work

being done in order to do that. All the lands were scrutinized as to which lands would be there for the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat, and credit to the people that did that. Even the government officials at that time, a credit to them for taking the initiative to look at the lands in the province of Saskatchewan and keep it in the natural state for the preservation of wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I made comments in regards to some of the land in and around my area of Spiritwood-Shellbrook area where that land was under the jurisdiction of wildlife habitat protection land. And through the processes that have taken place, some of that land has been taken out of protection land, and I know some of it was for to satisfy TLE [treaty land entitlement] claims. And with the stroke of the pen it was done that.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, now I believe it was in 2003 that they decided to put land back into the habitat protection land to offset the land that came out. The problem with that, Madam Deputy Speaker, is when you have the best land available in the province of Saskatchewan that's given protection for wildlife and wildlife habitat, why would you take it out? Why would you take it out of that existence and exchange it for another parcel of land from Timbuktu that may be not or probably doesn't have the same land base or the land equity that was originally in there in the first place? It could be land that just has forest on it or whatever. It doesn't pertain to the original land that was under the wildlife protection land.

And I'm going to give you an example. If we were to take a town and Main Street was full of businesses, and every year we dropped one of those businesses and changed it to residential, well what's going to happen to the town? It dies because all that property has been taken out and given to another jurisdiction. That's the same with the protection of wildlife habitat land that we have in this province. It was in protection land at one time and it was taken out.

Now I know, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not the only one that has talked on this issue time in and time again. The wildlife federation has vigorously talked to government and government officials, especially in SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management], to change that; to leave the land that is originally under the critical habitat wildlife land, to leave it alone.

Now I know, Madam Deputy Speaker, in comments from the minister, that I believe he was talking about how much land is under the wildlife habitat protection land and I believe that it is something like . . . Oh, here it is here. It protects 1.4 million acres. Now I remember back in 2003 there was 776,000 acres taken out before anybody knew about it. Not the wildlife federation, not anybody knew that that land was taken out. Now over the years, the process — and this is part of the process with this amendment Act that we have today — is to put land back into there. But the whole idea was, it was there for a reason and now it's taken out. So that we're just going to substitute it for something else now.

And in maybe some cases that is okay, but I can guarantee you in land that's around my area, between Spiritwood, Shellbrook and whatever have you, that is not the case. That is not the case.

And land that has been taken out that has been substituted by other land is not even close to the land that should be left in the habitat protection land.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I was reading what the minister from Environment was saying about The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act and it says in his comments, and I quote:

Some of the land the lessees want to buy or trade has existing important natural values located on the land. We will continue to protect those values through conservation easements.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is a good point. That should have been brought in a long time ago. The question I have for the minister is, why now do they protect that land with conservation easements? Why wasn't this started years ago when they started taking land out of the wildlife protection land back in 2000 or 2001? Why wasn't there conservation easements attached to that land at that time?

Here according to what the minister says, that the easements are attached to land that will be sold to farmers or ranchers. Now easements on the land will give protection to the wildlife and the wildlife habitat, but is that going to be the same for all lands that's transacted out of the wildlife habitat land? I beg to differ. I don't think so. But the farmers and ranchers will have easements on their land.

Now we know, and the minister has said, that the stewards of the land, whether it be farmers or ranchers, are good stewards of the land. Well so is everybody else good stewards of the land. They have to be if there's easements attached to it. So why wasn't the easements attached to this land a long time ago? They're not, and they should've been.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, we in the province of Saskatchewan have a resource that is fairly abundant, and that is wildlife and wildlife in the province. But we are not going to protect the wildlife like we were doing back years ago if we're going to take this wildlife land and move it out of that protection and give it to jurisdictions. With the easement that the farmers and ranchers have, they have to protect the wildlife and the wildlife habitat. But not everybody will have that same chance to protect the land that should be given to the wildlife and the wildlife habitat.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I also notice that there was a map given with this of all the lands and the transactions that were taking place. And I noticed that in the list of land and the land locations, there is approximately, well just over 3,000 acres that has been removed again from the wildlife protection habitat land and for some possibly good reasons. Some of these are just ranchers that need land. It fits nice into their operation. And with the easements that's been attached to it, they will be able to graze cattle on there and also protect the wildlife.

I notice that down in the Beechy area there was 320 acres that's been taken out. And that is simply for, I presume, somebody to purchase the land. And just in mentioning with the purchase of the land, anybody that is in the position to take possession of land that's under the critical habitat wildlife land, I believe the land would be sold for fair market value. I believe that is how it

works. Who determines fair market value of that land? And if it is to be sold, who all pays for that land other than farmers or ranchers? Does everybody pay for that land at fair market value?

I also notice, Madam Deputy Speaker, that in this Bill it also tells or talks about some of the First Nations with their entitlements on the land, that they are withdrawing their interests on a list of some of the lands. And I look at the map and there is 320 acres just north of Pelly, Saskatchewan. And that land is going back to wildlife habitat protection land. There's also land by Saskatoon where the Little Pine First Nations has rejected that land. And there's a couple other ones, Madam Deputy Speaker. It begs the question, why do the First Nations not want to take this land? Why have they turned it back? What are the reasons for that?

It maybe is starting to show, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the land that once was under the protection of the wildlife protection land is now not worth protecting — that the land that was in there before, Madam Deputy Speaker, has lost its value when it comes to wildlife and wildlife habitat. Maybe that is why the First Nations have decided, no, we don't want that land any more.

With the amount of land that's in this Act, 1.4 million acres, 776,000 was taken out some years ago. There's been land taken out ever since that they started taking land out. I would beg to differ that the fact that most, if not all, the land that originally was put in has now been changed over once, twice, or whatever. So maybe that's why the First Nations don't want this land. There is no value in this land. Maybe the land that we have designated under protection of the land is of little use to anybody. So we've lost our power to put this land into protection.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, some of the land parcels that have been taken out is for good reason. I noticed the one, it's only 40 acres but it's up around Nipawin and it is to develop recreation cabins as part of the Torch River land use plan. Now incidences like this are maybe good for the prosperity of Saskatchewan and areas within the province of Saskatchewan. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, we need to look at this land and we need to stop taking land out of The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act before all the land that we have is of no value whatsoever. And in order to do that, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have to have a real look at the land left.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in my area where there was some land that was under the protection of wildlife habitat land, was changed over to TLE process. And I talked about this briefly last time I was up speaking, and that is the problem that we're having with wildlife damage in and around the province. And I know first well around my area that we have an extensive amount of damage done by wildlife. Again when it comes to wildlife damage, it's covered under crop insurance but yet they have to pay a deductible.

In other words, the farmer that claims for wildlife damage can only collect 80 per cent. And it begs the question why, Madam Deputy, Speaker. Why should farmers that have no recourse or no control over the wildlife in the area have to pay deductible on that land? It's bad enough trying to farm, Madam Deputy

Speaker, now without having something that you have no control over take your livelihood or percentage of your livelihood away, and you're the one that has to suffer for it.

[16:00]

Now the problem with the wildlife damage is a result of some of this land being changed from critical habitat wildlife land into — at this point in time and in this particular instance — First Nation TLE land. When you allow the occupancy of that land to hunt or utilize that land more than what it was before because it was protected before, the animals move out of the area. When animals move out of the area, so will the predators follow.

Well now these animals that were in there — like for instance deer, moose, elk — they come out into the private land and that's where the damage occurs. With the damage done to the crops, with the damage done to the grain in the bins, the farmer can only collect 80 per cent. Then on top of that, Madam Deputy Speaker, then we have the problem with the predators following these animals. When the predators follow those animals, they also end up on the private land.

Well last year, Madam Deputy Speaker, when we didn't have a lot of snow as compared to this year — this year we have a tremendous amount of snow — last year we didn't have a lot of snow, and those predators rather than chase deer to try and catch their food for the day, they decided to feed on the farmers' beef. And they can catch that beef in 5 minutes, so why would they take time to chase a wild animal when they can get a tame one? There again, Madam Deputy Speaker, the farmer was again at a loss.

It all comes back to when you take wildlife land, the protection off wildlife land and the habitat out of the system that gives them a safe haven for them to live, especially in the wintertime, where they are not hunted or chased or harassed, that's where the animals go. The predators stay there. The predators feed off the wild animals which that's what it should be. Now we've changed the environment and now they feed off the farmers. But is there any compensation for the farmers? Absolutely none.

When it comes to predator problems, and I know the minister will agree to me that over the last few months we've had many meetings to deal with the predator problem. And I can say that by sitting down with the minister regarding the predator problems, we have come to a consensus that there had to be some changes and they are working. To the credit of the minister, they are working. The people, the farmers, the rancher in my area that they are dealing with the predator problem are somewhat happy with what's going on in the predator control. There still begs the question that there is little or nothing as compensation for them. The same with the grain farmers, there's little or no compensation for them.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, we need to ask more questions about this Bill. But we also need to do more emphasis on what is protection of this wildlife habitat land, why it was there originally, why shouldn't it be now and forever, not only for ourselves but for our children and our grandchildren.

So the sooner the minister stops taking land out of the protection of the wildlife habitat, the better off we'll be. But how many years have we gone on where land has been taken out? It just keeps going on and on and on. And it begs the question, is the government listening? If I was the only one up here speaking about this issue ongoing, hey I wouldn't, believe me. But I'm not alone. The wildlife federation, other members, other farmers, ranchers, or whatever are saying the same thing. But no one is listening. So it's time for them to listen, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Now I know, Madam Deputy Speaker, that in committee we will have a chance to ask questions of the minister regarding this. And so, Madam Deputy Speaker, at this time I would like to move this to committee.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of the Environment that Bill No. 38, The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2006 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I move that Bill No. 38, The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2006 be referred to the Standing Committee on Economy.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of the Environment that Bill No. 38, The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2006 be now referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 43

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 43 — The Payday Loans Act** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, it's a privilege for me today to stand in this Assembly and speak to Bill No. 43, The Payday Loans Act, brought in by the hon. minister.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when we talk about payday loans I was actually, as I was doing a bit of reviewing as to the necessity of this piece of legislation — why it would be before

us — I was actually shocked by some of the information that I was going through.

I guess, Madam Deputy Speaker, there were a number of . . . very few people, if you will, that really take advantage or utilize payday loans. And one would have to first of all ask why anyone would use a payday loan, especially when there are so many other avenues that individuals can look into and can use if they find themselves in a position where they may need a few dollars before they get to their next paycheck.

What surprised me, Madam Deputy Speaker, was the number of Canadians who do use payday loans, and I believe the number's in the . . . around two million people annually use payday loans which really surprises me. And the other thing, according to an Environic survey, the majority of customers are educated, have bank accounts at major financial institutions, and make close to the average wage in Canada.

So one would ask, with that type of information, why would a person choose to utilize a payday loan when in most cases, and in fact the majority of cases, individuals while the . . . You look at trying to ensure that your account would have the financial resources available to meet your everyday needs or your monthly needs if you find that every once in a while a major bill comes forward that really draws down on your financial account. There are ways in which you can set up interim financing such as just ongoing personal lines of credit. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think the majority of Canadians possibly choose that, have small interim lines of credit available which can tide them over until they're able to get their account back into the financial shape that they would like to see it rather than being forced to use a payday loan.

And when you think about the interest rates that can be charged — and I don't have any information here that would indicate what is normally charged — but I understand under Bill 347, the federal piece of legislation, that Bill limits the interest rate that can be charged to 60 per cent.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I thought that 19 and 20 and 21 per cent interest rates in the late '70s, early '80s were exorbitant interest rates at that time. And we all know how that impacted people across the province of Saskatchewan, and no doubt across Canada, where young families who had just maybe entered into agreements to purchase a house and all of a sudden saw their loans jump from 9 to 12 to 15 and to 21 per cent. And it put many of those individuals in situations where it was impossible for them to continue to own their own homes.

And as a result of a change in government in the early '80s, there were some restrictions put on the amounts that could be charged, which helped a lot of the people out and gave them the ability to continue to make payments on their homes and eventually own those homes. And so when you look at 21 per cent, 21 per cent is certainly a lot lower than the potential of having to pay 60 per cent. And you ask yourself, now why would you put yourself in that kind of a position?

Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister had indicated in his second reading speech that payday loans are expensive. They are an expensive way for consumers to meet their temporary needs. And he also indicated that even a number of companies

already — in the payday loan business — have realized that and recognized the fact that they need to have some guidelines in place so that you don't have the unscrupulous abuse of consumers by payday loan lenders in offering avenues whereby individuals can access cash for a few days.

The minister also acknowledged — and I believe the industry recognizes this as well which again surprised me — the fact that despite the high interest rates, despite a lot of cases, the hidden costs, that many people don't take the time to actually read the fine print on their loan agreements and find out when they go to pay their loan off that they're actually . . . In some cases, that loan which may have been just a small 2 or \$300 loan — and I believe the average is about \$280 — can amount to well over 3 and \$400 by the time you pay it off, and that's in just a matter of 10 to 20 days.

So it certainly appears that we need to have some specific guidelines in regards to payday loans. And I appreciate what the minister had indicated. He mentioned that there are a number of concerns, and some of the concerns include the high cost of payday loans and the inadequate disclosure of costs and terms, and the excessive fees charged for the rollover payday loans and unfair debt collection practices.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, we can see that there obviously is a need to bring regulatory change in regards to payday loans to protect the consumer from the unscrupulous payday loan lender who would be out there to take advantage of consumers, while I also acknowledge from the surveys that many of the payday loan lenders also recognize the need to have regulatory guidelines to protect their industry.

The legislation, I guess, is . . . A recommendation also has come from the payday loan lenders themselves and I forget the number. I did have it down here a moment ago. I believe over two-thirds of the payday loan lenders have come forward with recommendations. And I believe the minister indicated that that was part of the reasons for this piece of legislation because the industry themselves want to ensure that the reason that they exist is to provide interim financing for individuals, that they'll be able to do it in a meaningful and forthcoming way, that people who find themselves on the short end of the stick have access to a means of some short-term financing in a way that certainly would not only assist the individual but also does it in a very scrupulous manner, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister indicated that the amendments will allow provinces and territories to set limits on the costs of payday loans as part of a comprehensive framework for the regulation of payday lenders. And it also provides the 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. So it would certainly appear, Madam Deputy Speaker, that there are some sound reasons to come forward for this piece of legislation.

I understand, just going through the news release, it also allows the borrower the right to cancel a payday loan without penalty before the end of the business day following the date the loan was made, which, Madam Deputy Speaker, if an individual all of a sudden finds themselves with the financial means to address that shortfall and then to go in and pay off that loan, I believe

that that is only appropriate. And certainly the industry I believe recognizes that as well, if I understand correctly, that the industry was quite forthcoming in some of their recommendations in regards to this legislation.

[16:15]

It prohibits payday lenders from having more than one payday loan with the same borrower at the same time. I think, Madam Deputy Speaker, that's only fair and only appropriate as there are situations where consumers might find themselves caught in a bind. And rather than finding other ways of addressing their issues, taking out more than one payday loan, and then the next thing they know, they have put themselves in such a financial bind that they really have difficulty addressing and meeting their obligations in paying back that payday loan which can be quite an impediment to the family or to all the extended individuals who might be involved, whether it's family members or whoever.

It also prohibits payday lenders from requiring a borrower to sign over future wages and prohibits payday lenders from making a loan contingent on the purchase of another product or service.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think there are a lot of good arguments, good reasons for this piece of legislation that we have before us.

And however, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think it's also important, the fact that we haven't had a lot of time yet as this piece of legislation has been recently brought before the Assembly. And it's imperative that we, as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, do take due time to go over the Bill, to review the Bill, to talk over to stakeholders to ensure that this piece of legislation is indeed going to meet the requirements and the guidelines that the minister has given as reasons for this Bill, Bill No. 43, The Payday Loans Act. And therefore at this time I move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Moosomin 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 Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 44 — The Class Actions Amendment Act, 2007/Loi de 2007 modifiant la Loi sur les recours collectifs** 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, The Class Actions Amendment Act. I think dealing with a piece of legislation, if reading right, that it was first brought in in the year 2001.

Unfortunately in our society now it seems like we need more of this legislation. There seems to be more class action suits coming along. I know in Saskatchewan there hasn't been many. But I know when you watch the news throughout North America, there has been many of them being brought forward. In fact many, many movies have been made on different class action suits that have been down in the States — some fictional, some not. I know it seems to grip the people on that when it comes to class action suits.

This particular piece of legislation I think needs to be studied and also put out. I notice that our critic, Justice critic, will be putting it out because it affects many people, whether it's the bar society, lawyers, even people that are involved in it. I know going through this legislation that it allows to file a suit now in Saskatchewan that your residents don't have to be from Saskatchewan. And now that many suits do cross across provinces, that it's probably a good piece of amendment to come forward.

I haven't heard any comments, I guess, for it or against it yet. I mean, that's why this Bill has just been brought forward, and that's why we're in the mode of debate right now, to find out what people's thoughts and concerns are with this particular Bill.

But I know one of the things that's been in the news recently is been with pet food. You know, and they're already talking some action, suit action there, you know. And I know that that will be . . . You know, not only does it cross provinces. It also goes across North America. Now whether this particular Bill makes it a little easier to help residents that feel that they've been wronged, that they can join a class action suit.

I notice one thing in this Bill. It's a question I have which may be answered later. I don't expect it to be answered today in the debate. But it talks about that a class action suit can be registered here in Saskatchewan, even though the residents can be not from Saskatchewan or . . . and from Saskatchewan. Does that mean that if there is no residents from Saskatchewan, you can still actually file the suit from Saskatchewan?

The only reason I'm asking that is I know in the States that some jurisdictions seeing the laws are a little more . . . If I remember right — hearing a story — that some states the law is a little more lenient, so a lot of class action suits will be brought forward in that particular state rather maybe a state where there is actually more plaintiffs from. Now that's a question that I know that our Justice critic will be asking later on, and it's kind of one that I'm a little curious on with that.

This Bill, you know, can affect a lot of people. As we go forward in society there can be, there will be many class action suits probably brought forward. And as time goes on, it seems unfortunately that there is more of that.

And there's also a need for it because, I mean, it also protects consumers from companies or anybody that's going to do something fraudulent out there throughout North America. So there is a need for legislation. There also is a need for legislation to be crafted so that it helps the people and also so that there can't be just frivolous lawsuits brought forward, too, to just put pressure on a company just to maybe make some

minor changes.

So there's a delicate balance there when it comes to legislation with this particular Bill, that it be brought forward in the right manner and the right things are trying to be accomplished with this Bill. Because when you bring forward a piece of legislation, that's one of your main goals, is that you want to create a situation that's better for the people.

And with that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that there's many aspects of this Bill, when it comes to law, there's many of them I don't understand. But I know that I'll have to talk with the Justice critic on this particular piece of legislation just to see what I get, what his thoughts and feelings are and also what . . . I'm even curious when I go back home to even ask if, you know, if this is a big concern with some of the people and talk about class action suits. Because back in my constituency, you mostly hear about class action suits just on the TV, and it's usually in some other jurisdiction other than Saskatchewan.

Now I know, I think this legislation is just kind of bringing us in scope with some of the other jurisdictions, some of the other provinces throughout Canada, I think, just being so that we're all on the same page when it comes to lawsuits. I know that this is supposed to possibly help, that you could bring forward one class action suit, that you're not actually involved in jurisdictional, different class action suits which I understand can be . . . before this had to be spread out maybe in a couple of provinces. And then as a resident maybe in Saskatchewan, you had to, because there was other residents who were out of province, you were dragged into that particular lawsuit where it might be a little easier and simpler for the residents of just Saskatchewan to actually deal with that particular class action suit.

So there's, you know, many aspects of this particular Bill that are very interesting. And with that . . . and questions I think that have to be answered, that I certainly can't answer, that will have to be answered by our Justice critic over here and some questions he may want to ask in committee. But right now, Deputy Speaker, I will adjourn debate on this particular Bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — It's been moved by the hon. member that debate be adjourned on Bill No. 44, The Class Actions Amendment Act, 2007. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 46

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 46 — The Crown Minerals Amendment Act, 2007** be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I recognize the hon. member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's a pleasure to rise in the House and speak to Bill 46, The Crown Minerals Amendment Act, 2007.

As you would guess, Mr. Speaker, the official opposition is reviewing this legislation, consulting with the stakeholders. In fact I just had a discussion today with the Minister of Industry about this particular piece of legislation. We understand that it is also connected to Bill No. 48 which is the freehold oil and gas production tax.

So, Mr. Speaker, when you are dealing with a couple of Acts that are interrelated with an industry as important as the oil and gas sector in Saskatchewan, you have to make sure you do your homework and understand fully what the implications of such legislation might be.

Mr. Speaker, I did review the comments made by the minister. And he talks about the fact that these changes that are being proposed have no revenue or net-back implications to the province or the oil and gas companies. But he says that it's as a factor of simplifying The Crown Oil and Gas Royalty Regulations, as well as The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Regulations, 1995.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you would know, the oil and gas industry is particularly important to the province of Saskatchewan and the Rosetown-Elrose constituency. We are on the edge of the Shackleton find which is one of the large natural gas discoveries in the province of Saskatchewan. As well, there has been oil production for quite a few years on the very west side in the Elrose and Eston areas. And this industry's been paying the bills for a long time, so it's important that we treat these industries correctly.

If the minister is correct and if in fact this is a simplification of regulations that is approved by the industry and is beneficial to the province of Saskatchewan and doesn't have any negative side effects, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you can be sure that the opposition will be supporting this legislation.

The reason we want to look at it carefully is because the NDP government has a history of doing about six things wrong for the industry for everything they do correct for the oil and gas industry.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was the old CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] government that actually ran the industry out of Saskatchewan, an industry that was prepared to be headquartered in the city of Regina. The Premier at the time — Mr. Douglas — told them they weren't welcome. And the rest is history as they say, as the oil rig moved out of Saskatchewan and it struck a gusher at Leduc, Alberta, and then the oil industry headquartered itself in Alberta. That province then surpassed Saskatchewan in population, and we've been struggling with a reputation that's not very positive in the oil and gas industry.

Now if this is a positive piece of legislation that we're looking at today, and if Bill 48 is also a positive piece of legislation, that might go a couple of steps towards untarnishing the province of Saskatchewan as far as the industry is concerned. And if that's the case then, Mr. Speaker, obviously we will support that because we want to see the industry thrive. We want to see the industry be responsible, create jobs, be environmentally responsible, and provide funds so we can provide better health care and education and better highways in the province of

Saskatchewan.

That being said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am convinced that the only way that we will really restore the confidence of the industry and reignite this industry in Saskatchewan is if we have a change of government. Now I know that's a debate for another day, and we'll probably have that debate fairly soon.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Sask Party official opposition critic for this piece of legislation is consulting with stakeholders, and I don't think the verdict is finally back. We appreciate the input from the minister, and he seems to make some very relative points with regards to Bill 46. But we want to hear directly from some stakeholders and make sure that this is one of those one in six positive directions for the industry rather than those five negative that we traditionally see from the NDP.

Given that background, Mr. Speaker, we note that the original Bill that's being amended was made in 1969. That of course raises a bit of a flag because that's when a lot of the trouble occurred in the industry. That's when a lot of the oil and gas companies were vacating the province of Saskatchewan. That's why we're not just rubber-stamping this piece of legislation.

I've noticed, and I noticed it again shortly after question period, the government suggested, well why doesn't the opposition just immediately move a Bill on to committee and just rubber-stamp it all the way through, practically before we've even had a look at it, even though we're on record as supporting the concept or the principle behind a piece of legislation.

If the minister's correct, we certainly support the concept behind this piece of legislation — that it would simplify the regulatory regime, it would be friendly to government, make it easier for government to monitor and regulate the industry as well as make it better for the industry to comply with the regulations imposed on it by government. If that's the case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'll move this Bill forward. It will follow the appropriate path that Bills follow through the legislature. It will be approved, given Royal Assent, and take effect in the province of Saskatchewan.

But being a very responsible official opposition, we take nothing for granted. Unfortunately, we've found we can't always trust the government, so we have to review each piece of legislation on its own basis. That's the reason why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I would move — until we find out more information — that we adjourn debate and renew this discussion at a later date. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[16:30]

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I thank the member. The motion before the Assembly is adjournment of debate on Bill No. 46, The Crown Minerals Amendment Act, 2007. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 47

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 47 — The Fatal Accidents Amendment Act, 2007** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Bill No. 47, the Act, the amend the fatal accident amendment Act, I'm wondering why did the government pick the date of August 1, 2001. Is there any significant reason why we're not concerned with what happened before then and just particular date like that? Or if there is a reason.

I'd also like to know about the government's definition of a child. Now it says the definition doesn't include stepchildren. And I'm wondering about some of the strange situations and circumstances that do happen. I was talking to one of the other members here and we were saying, now what if you've lost custody of your children and your ex-wife remarries, and then you have a fatal accident with their stepfather? Where are the definitions going to fit in there? And these strange things have happened.

And it also fits in their definition of parents. Where is that going to fit in? They haven't defined it more specifically. And that's what I'm looking for. Let's get specific on these definitions.

The Bill says it does not include grandparents. Well what if the grandparents have custody of the children? That's got to be a concern because we have seen a lot of cases where custody has gone to the grandchildren, and I'm not sure that the Bill doesn't deal with it. I mean I'm not a lawyer so maybe it is worded in there. But I don't see it.

And then I'm also wondering, how do they arrive at 60,000? Is it just a number we picked out and 30,000 for the children? It doesn't tell me anything, why we're getting there.

And then the Bill says that a spouse is living separate or apart that they are excluded from payment. Well what about the situation if the wife has custody and the ex has been paying child support? Does it fit in then? So the child support thing has not been answered.

And then another question I have is third party liability — I have questions on that. How does it get involved in this Bill?

And this Bill is very, very short and we're wondering if due diligence has been done. When we've seen the government get into trouble with Bills before, and I'm thinking particularly of the smoking Bill how the government got in trouble with that one because due diligence and they did not consult with First Nations. So we wonder on these quick, little, short Bills that come up so fast, was due diligence done? Because it's an important feature.

And for these reasons and for the questions that I have that are going to take some more debate and understanding, at this time I would adjourn debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — The hon. member for Batoche is moving adjournment of debate on Bill No. 47, The Fatal Accidents Amendment Act, 2007. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 48

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 48 — The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Amendment Act, 2007** be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I recognize the hon. member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly pleased to be able to enter into the debate on this Bill. I read the minister's second reading comments and looked at the Bill, and it appears to be a Bill that is very similar to Bill 46 in that it's simplifying regulations and basically making the environment, a working environment for both industry and government, a lot simplified and removed a lot of red tape which certainly is a good thing, Mr. Speaker.

As the minister said in his second reading comments, he said both Bills 46 and 48 are very similar. And I think the member from Rosetown-Elrose certainly made a lot of good comments and brought out quite a number of good points with regards to Bill 46, and I would certainly endorse those comments, Mr. Speaker.

I did find the minister mention that Saskatchewan is producing twice as much oil as it did 10 years ago. So I guess the question I would have is — I mean this government's been in place for going on 16 years, you know — why some of these moves weren't made earlier so that we could have seen the positive results of regulation change and the streamlining of bureaucracy and red tape and so on that we have now seen so recently.

If we would have had done, taken a few of these steps earlier on, it would have been a signal to the industry that Saskatchewan is a good place to do business and so on and we would, as I said, we would have reaped some of the benefits much earlier than we are now. But it's certainly good to see that we are taking a step in the right direction, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And so there are just one or two items in this Bill that I think we would not be doing our due diligence if we didn't consult with the industry just to clarify a few points. And so therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would at this time adjourn debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — The hon. member is proposing adjournment of debate on Bill No. 48, The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Act. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 45

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wartman that **Bill No. 45 — The Agricultural Societies Repeal Act** be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I recognize the hon. member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today in the Assembly to speak on Bill 45, the ag societies repeal Act. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a pretty short Act in length. It's going to repeal The Agricultural Societies Act and make amendments to The Auctioneers Act, The Cities Act, and The Municipalities Act where those pieces of legislation reference the ag society Act.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've talked to several people that are involved with ag society in my constituency and they seem to be fine with this Act. Although the first day I raised it with them, when I first saw the Bill, there was a bit of concern, but apparently that's been cleared up and they are fine with the Bill in its form.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency is served by some very strong and active agricultural societies. There's one in Coronach and one in Bengough and one in Weyburn — and that's the one that I'm most familiar with.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's interesting to note that the Weyburn Ag Society goes back nearly 100 years. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a century ago it was the Weyburn Turf Club, and then in about 1908, they changed, they reorganized and changed their name to the Weyburn Agricultural Society. And as I think all ag societies in the province do, they provide a tremendous service — for not only our rural people, but also for the urban areas — in promoting rural life and the rural way of life, and a number of events are held every year.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the Weyburn Ag Society, you only need to look at the history of the ag society and some of the people that have played a role in the ag society. And it's really an indication of the people that have played a strong role in our entire community in being founding people of our community.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, although about 100 years ago the ag society originated, in April 1959, the Weyburn Ag Society Act was actually a private Act, was incorporated or was proclaimed in this Assembly, and the petitioners for that Act — and I would like to read their names into the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker: G. Murray McFadden, Carman Metherral, Preston Andrews, Fred Zabel, Reginald Saunders, Edgar Pettit, and Paul Erb. They were the original petitioners of the Weyburn Ag Society Act. And when you look around Weyburn today you can't help but see that their legacy lives on in terms of things that are named after these people.

And I can think of Zabel Bay, and it's not far from where I live. And the Metherral name is quite well known in the area, and it just, it really speaks to the history. The ag societies, whether they be the Weyburn ag societies or other ag societies in our province, really speak to the history of our province and the

important role that ag societies played in the early days and also today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to mention while I'm on my feet, I put a little bit of a plug in for the Weyburn Ag Society. It's a very active society and we have a number of upcoming events this year. We've replaced our grandstand in the last number of years — the ag society did — at the fairgrounds in Weyburn. Last fall they actually put the last third of the new seats in, and they're raising money currently to put a roof over top of the grandstand. And they hope to have that completed by next year, by 2008, which will mark the 100th anniversary of the Weyburn Ag Society.

Recently, a couple of weeks ago, for four days running in March, at the Legion hall we had the ag society's fourth annual dinner theatre. And it was a three-part play. It was *The Girls of the Garden Club* and I attended opening night. My wife, Amanda, happened to be playing a small part in the play and it was fantastic. It was a great night. It was a great night and four days running, and they did a tremendous job.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the ag society also does a ranch rodeo, and they raised funds last year for the grandstand, and it was a great time. The CCA [Canadian Cowboys' Association] rodeo was held last year and I hope to see it back again.

The Weyburn fair, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and I'll just close with this — last year the Weyburn fair, the 98th annual Weyburn fair had over 9,000 people in three days visit the fair. For a community our size, it's a tremendous fair. And one final note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I invite all hon. members of this Assembly to visit Weyburn for this year's fair. And also May 29 is the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] Musical Ride. Weyburn Fair Ag Society will be hosting it. And so I'll move to adjourn the debate. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I just would like some clarity from the member. Is he moving, is he proposing second reading or is he closing debate? Are you adjourning debate, or are you wishing to let this go to second reading? Could you just clarify that?

Mr. Duncan: — I move to adjourn the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — The hon. member for Weyburn-Big Muddy has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 45, The Agricultural Societies Repeal Act. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 49

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Quennell that **Bill No. 49 — The Mortgage Brokerages and Mortgage Administrators Act** be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I recognize the hon. member for Thunder Creek. I'm sorry; I didn't realize a member was going to rise on this matter, so I recognize the hon. member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 49, An Act respecting Mortgage Brokerages, Brokers, Associates and Mortgage Administrators and to make consequential amendments to The Saskatchewan Financial Services Commission Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill appears to be of a more or less a housekeeping nature. It's a very extensive Bill containing some, I think, 37, 38 pages of changes and so on, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[16:45]

It refers to the responsibilities of the superintendent with respect to licensing; eligibility for licences for mortgage brokers and requirements for licence or endorsement; the financial security that may be required, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to become a licensed mortgage broker; and the actual mechanics of issuing licences and endorsements; also the effects of licences and endorsements as they pertain to mortgage brokers and brokerages; and of course suspension or cancellation of licences and endorsements, Mr. Deputy Speaker; also appeal in case of disciplinary action having been taken, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It also deals with appeal procedures for brokers.

In brokering mortgages, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it talks about the principal broker and prohibition of unlicensed individuals from practising the business, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and duties to act in private investors' best interests and duties owed to the borrower.

On the face of it, that all seems responsible. Sometimes, however, the devils are in the detail, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And when we move on to Part V of this Bill, we talk about the duty to maintain records, and we hope that that won't be too onerous. We see many circumstances in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where red tape and record keeping requirements are detrimental to business, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Act goes on to talk about the capital requirements for brokers and brokerages and the record keeping requirements of course, and that may be a cause for concern. It goes on to talk about the trust accounts that are kept by brokers and annual filing requirements of annual returns and so on, advertising and communications, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and powers of the superintendent.

Actually, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill, it's a very complicated and far-reaching Bill that goes on to talk about appeals, appeals to court, and so on. This Bill on the face of it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, appears to be something that may be needed. We just hope that the regulation is not cost prohibitive for brokers and brokerages in this province and that this is reasonable all the way through. It's very new to us, this Bill, and it's obviously going to take some consultation with the principals, and accordingly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — The hon. member for Thunder Creek is moving adjournment of debate on Bill No. 49,

the mortgage brokerages and administrators Act. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 50

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Thomson that **Bill No. 50 — The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2007** be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I recognize the hon. member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure this afternoon to rise and address Bill No. 50, An Act to amend The Municipal Employees' Pension Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it appears to me that there's three sections involved in this Act. The first section relates to the terms of the chairperson and vice-chairperson and a requirement that some changes be made so that their terms of office will coincide with the municipal employee pension plan's fiscal year. This seems to be pretty straightforward, and I don't think we certainly would have any problem with that. It also allows for the transition period so that the year ending December 31, '07, the new terms of office would be in place at that time.

The second provision is somewhat more complex. It appears that the Canadian Revenue Agency have some requirements regarding what are deemed to be flexible benefits in the municipals pension plan, which are no longer allowable in the pension plan formula. So these are being removed.

And although it seems straightforward, the reason they're being moved is because the CRA [Canada Revenue Agency] has deemed that they should be. I think we should be spending some time with those stakeholders involved — the municipal employees, both present and past, with SARM and SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] — just to assure everyone that what is being done here, because it's basically, it is changing the plan considerably, is discussed.

The last provision, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a provision that allows for a pension allowance to be paid to a new spouse attained after the member's date of retirement. That, like number one, I do not see that we would have any problem with this provision. But at this time I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 50.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — The hon. member for Cut Knife-Turtleford is moving adjournment of debate on Bill No. 50, The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 51

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Thomson that **Bill No. 51 — The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2007** be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — I recognize the hon. member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Bill No. 51 is an Act to amend the Public Employees Pension Plan. There's a number of items involved in this Bill. Firstly it allows members to contribute to the pension plan for leaves of absence after the age of 65. So basically with changes in our mandatory retirement provisions within this province, this becomes an area that needed to be addressed.

The second area involves . . . It allows active and inactive members to move their money into the pension, public employees pension plan. And this provision is allowing the public employees pension plan to be, I would say, more competitive with other pension plans that are available after retirement where people have decisions to make as to where they put their funds and how they can be drawn. This actually provides that people can take the choice to take their own RSPs [retirement savings plan], if you like, if they are contributing to the public employee pension plan, and have those funds moved into the public employees pension plan and have that become their funding retirement.

The last item is a bit more concerning, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in that it was obviously written before the federal budget which has now passed and refers to what needs to be done once a person reaches the age of 69 years and cannot be found, but that has monies in their public employees pension plan. Now we certainly have some sympathy for these lost souls, but with the change in the age from 69 to 71, I would suggest that this legislation if passed in this manner will just have to be amended in the very near future to coincide with the new federal age of 71 years — that being the age at which prior to December 31 you must make arrangements to start drawing on your pension funds.

So I think I would suggest that certainly we would move to adjourn debate at this time and recommend that we consider an amendment so that the legislation, when passed, will actually be in line with the federal legislation. So once again I will move to adjourn debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — The hon. member for Cut Knife-Turtleford has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 51, The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Bill No. 52

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 52 — The Wildlife**

Amendment Act, 2007/Loi de 2007 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la faune be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I briefly want to put a few comments on the record with regards to this particular Bill, An Act to amend The Wildlife Act.

Looking through this, and in summary from the minister's comments on here as well, there is some housekeeping points that have to be made and some areas that have to be kind of restructured and refocused to make sure that it's both focused on what needs to be done, it's not redundant, and to use the correct words in conjunction with some of the other wildlife Acts and Acts that apply to wildlife.

One of the things that it does is it actually takes away the role of the deputy wildlife officer, but then again turns around and redefines the deputy wildlife officer to be what is known in the Act as a wildlife officer by that particular name. So both wildlife officers, deputy officers are now called wildlife officers. And they are elevated in this legislation as police officer status.

One of the things that we certainly have to do for the protection of the environment and the protection of the wildlife and so that my grandchildren will be able to enjoy the wildlife that we are blessed with in this province is that there has to be regulation and controls and supervision. By putting these amendments in place and giving the actual police officer status to the wildlife officers, I think it can accomplish, help accomplish what needs to be done under the section called inspections or investigation.

The concern of course would rise that these people, for want of something better to do, might find reasons for instigating an inspection, or on the pretext of doing an investigation become more involved in the wildlife and the protection of wildlife than need to be. But I think we have to make sure that when these people are designated as such, that they are given both the training and the responsibility and accountability for making sure that what is intended under The Wildlife Act is in fact what they are tasked to do and will endeavour to do that without really causing undue concern for the people that are trying to both enjoy The Wildlife Act. And certainly anybody that is abusing the wildlife in any way, they should in fact be subject to these conditions, inspections, and investigations.

Some of the wording again allows for the inspection of vehicles and for the . . . changing the meaning for constitutional clarity and for obtaining records. And I noticed in here as well that there is several Acts. There's The Wildlife Act, the fisheries Act for instance. And under the fisheries Act there was a provision that was unconstitutional, deemed unconstitutional. And I think this change will be welcome to make sure that there is compliance with both the intent and the direction needed for the wildlife.

With that I will adjourn debate on Bill 52.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — The hon. member for Lloydminster has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 52,

The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2007. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Prebble): — That is carried. This Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:59.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Lorne Calvert
Premier

Hon. Graham Addley
Minister of Healthy Living Services
Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. Pat Atkinson
Minister of Advanced Education and Employment
Minister Responsible for Immigration
Minister Responsible for the Public
Service Commission

Hon. Joan Beatty
Minister of Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Buckley Belanger
Minister of Community Resources
Minister Responsible for Disability Issues

Hon. Eric Cline
Minister of Industry and Resources
Minister Responsible for Investment
Saskatchewan Inc.
Minister Responsible for Information Services
Corporation of Saskatchewan

Hon. David Forbes
Minister of Labour
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Glenn Hagel
Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation
Provincial Secretary
Minister Responsible for Gaming
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance

Hon. Deb Higgins
Minister of Learning
Minister Responsible for Literacy
Minister Responsible for Liquor and
Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications

Hon. Eldon Lautermilch
Minister of Highways and Transportation
Minister of Property Management
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company
Minister Responsible for the
Forestry Secretariat

Hon. Warren McCall
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Hon. John Nilson
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Minister Responsible for the Office of
Energy Conservation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Frank Quennell
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Attorney General

Hon. Clay Serby
Deputy Premier
Minister of Regional Economic and
Co-operative Development

Hon. Maynard Sonntag
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
of Saskatchewan

Hon. Len Taylor
Minister of Health

Hon. Andrew Thomson
Minister of Finance
Minister Responsible for Information Technology
Minister Responsible for
SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Harry Van Mulligen
Minister of Government Relations

Hon. Mark Wartman
Minister of Agriculture and Food