



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

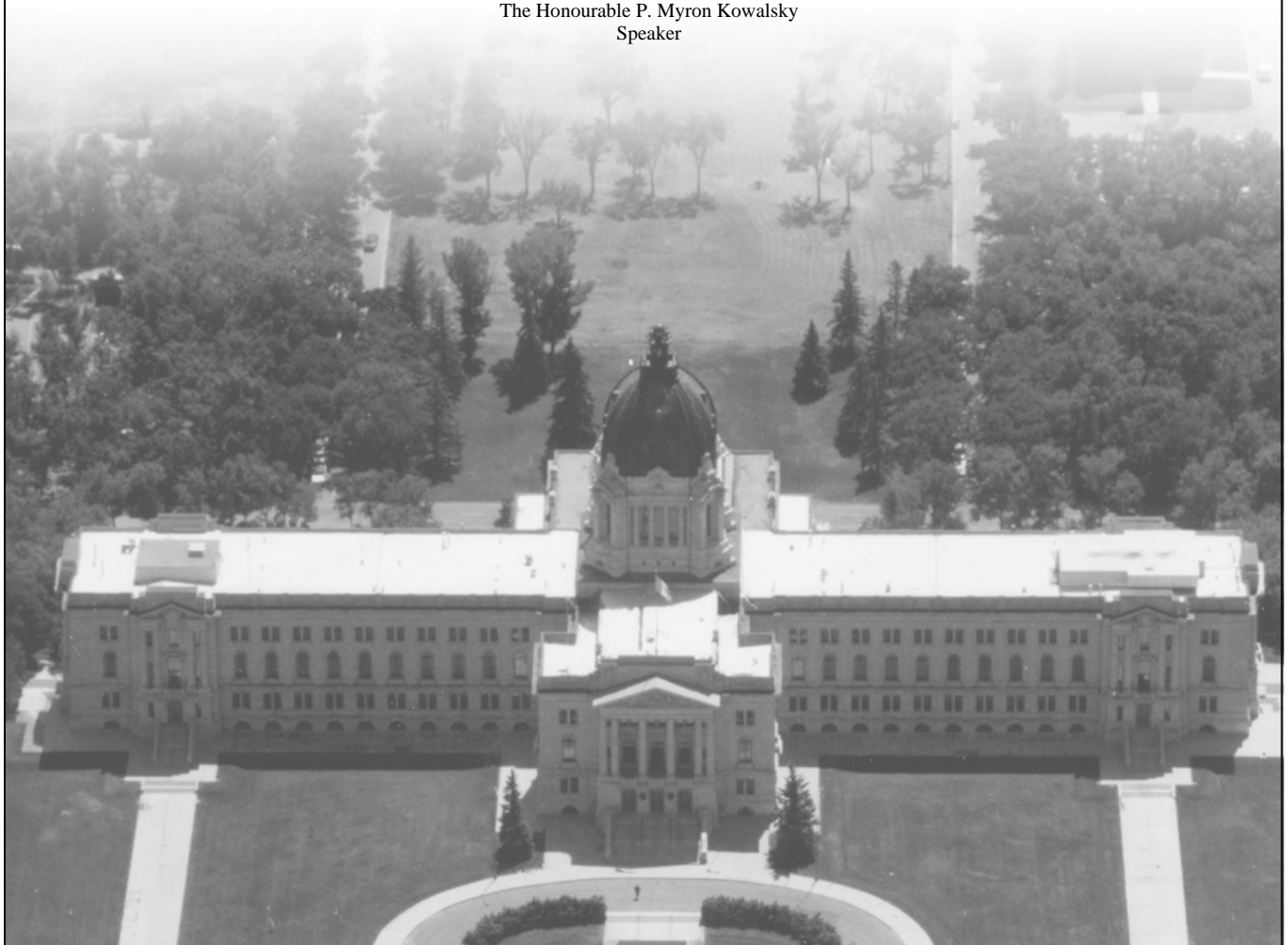
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege today to present a petition on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan and in particular the residents around the Broadview area who feel quite strongly that a dialysis unit would be appropriate placed in Broadview Union Hospital. 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 the good folks of Broadview, Cowessess, Kahkewistahaw, Saskatoon, and Whitewood. 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 action to ensure that the Maryfield School remains open.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again on behalf of my constituents who are concerned about Highway No. 310. And the prayer reads:

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

The people who have signed this petition are from Foam Lake, Yorkton, and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I have yet another petition asking that the government maintain full service of the SaskPower office at Rosetown. Mr. Speaker, they are concerned that, without an office, submission of electrical and gas permits will be more difficult and cause delays in customer hookups. Mr. Speaker, the prayer of this petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to keep the SaskPower office in Rosetown open to provide full service to the community and surrounding areas.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from the community of Rosetown. I am 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 while 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 community of Chaplin. I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again today I have a petition from citizens concerned with the safety when driving on Highway No. 5. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Humboldt, Annaheim, Meacham, Watson, and Broadview. I so present.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present another petition from the citizens of Biggar who are concerned about possible health care cut in services in Biggar and district. The prayer reads:

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

the necessary steps to ensure that the Biggar Hospital, long-term care home, and ambulance services maintain at the very least their current level of services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

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

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

The signatures come today from northeast Saskatoon, from Brunst Crescent, Kucey Cove, and Budz Terrace. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise with a petition from citizens of the South that are very concerned that if the lab services of the Lafleche and District Health Centre are withdrawn, it would cause undue hardship to residents, particularly seniors. And I read the prayer for relief:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to ensure that lab services are continued at the Lafleche and District Health Centre.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the good citizens of Limerick, Moose Jaw, Lafleche, Hazenmore, Glenbain. 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 southwest Saskatchewan that are concerned with the government's handling of rural school closures. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, signatures to this petition are from Limerick and Wood Mountain. I so present.

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring forward a petition from citizens of Saskatchewan who are deeply concerned about the presence of sexual predators that present a threat to our communities. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take all steps available to speed up the public disclosure process so that communities are alerted to the presence of a known sex offender in their communities as soon as possible.

And as duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, it is signed by the good people of Cudworth. 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 upgrade Highway 20 to primary weight status:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from Strasbourg, Bulyea, and Sifton. I so present.

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

Mr. Morgan: — I rise in the House today to present a petition signed by citizens from my constituency of Saskatoon Southeast regarding the widening of Highway No. 5. The prayer says:

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

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

I so present on their behalf. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the students, parents, and friends of Georges Vanier School in Saskatoon. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to take necessary steps to ensure that the Saskatoon Catholic School Division be provided with sufficient funds to enable the construction of the proposed facility expansion of Georges Vanier School for 2007-08 to ensure that adequate and appropriate facilities exist for the fulfillment of the school's mandate and the appropriate education of the students.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And I present this on behalf of people from the Saskatoon Eastview constituency and as far afield as St-Denis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 49 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Learning [and these are all related to the Learning department's leased facilities in Regina]: what is the name of the building manager at the department's existing facilities at 1945 Hamilton Street? What is the annual cost to lease the department's existing facilities at 1945 Hamilton? What is the total cost of the move into the department's new facilities at 2045 Broad Street? What is the total cost to renovate the department's new facilities? What is the name of the contractor the department has hired to renovate the new facilities? What is the name of the building manager at the department's new facilities? And what is the annual cost of the lease to the department for these new facilities?

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 49 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Learning: how much money did the government spend on advertising and communications in the fiscal year 2006-2007?

Also to the Minister of Learning: how much money was spent on each advertising campaign the department undertook in the fiscal year 2006-2007, and which agency received the contract?

Also how many legal actions were taken against the department in the fiscal year 2006-2007? What cost was attached to the settlements? Also, how many legal actions are pending against the Learning department?

And what was the total amount of money spent on the ministerial travel in the fiscal year 2006-2007? What was the total amount of money spent on the staff travelling with the minister during the fiscal year 2006-2007? How many staff were employed by the minister's office during the fiscal year 2006-2007?

Also I have similar questions to the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety. Also to the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment. And also I want to repeat to the Minister of Saskatchewan Property Management, to the Minister of ITO [Information Technology Office], similar questions to the minister of youth and recreation, also to the Minister of Labour, similar questions also to the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations. I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 49 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: how many tickets has the corporation purchased for the upcoming Al Gore speech, and how many tickets does it plan to purchase?

And I have the same question for the Minister Responsible for SaskTel, SaskEnergy, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], and the Crown Investments Corporation. I so present.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly I'd like to introduce two ladies sitting in your gallery: Angela Currie from Moose Jaw and Raynelle Wilson from Regina.

It should be noted that Raynelle is our candidate in Regina Lakeview and we're very pleased to see her here. And Angela, being from Moose Jaw Wakamow, she's associated with the Moose Jaw Wakamow Saskatchewan Party constituency association.

Mr. Speaker, these ladies have indicated to me that they've been watching the proceedings and are very, very disgusted that there's no answers coming from the other side of the House. So they wanted to be here in person today to see if they could actually hear what the members opposite were saying so they could witness it first-hand. So I would ask all members to welcome these ladies to their Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a group seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are members of Piapot First Nation. Most of them live in the city of Regina, and they are taking adult basic education at the Treaty Four Education Centre.

Their teacher, Bev Kulach, is here and the teacher's assistant, Linda Oponechaw, is also here. It's a unique partnership between Piapot First Nation and Southeast Regional College. I look very much forward to meeting with them later on, Mr. Speaker, getting their impressions of question period, and having a good talk with them about the issues of the day.

But if all members could join me in welcoming the students from Piapot First Nation and the staff from Southeast Regional College to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, it's my pleasure today to introduce three very special people who are seated in the Speaker's gallery front row. School is out in Saskatoon so revisiting this legislature for the third time is Sam Wilkinson, who is accompanied here by his baba, Olesia Kowalsky, my wife, from Prince Albert. And Sam is sort of watching this Assembly very, very critically and curiously and seeing what exactly it is that we as MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] do here, and he's working that out.

With him is another baba, Roseanne Kowalsky, who is here in Regina to visit her first grandchild, Mila Victoria Evanchuk who is the daughter of Anna Marie Kowalsky who used to work in this building, and is also the daughter of Noah Evanchuk.

Members, would you please welcome Sam Wilkinson, Olesia Kowalsky, and Roseanne Kowalsky to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Gratitude to Canadian Armed Forces

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedication and sacrifice of the men and women of Canada's Armed Forces. I particularly want to pay respect to the six Canadian soldiers who were killed and the two who were wounded in the bomb blast in Afghanistan this past Sunday and, Mr. Speaker, to pass our condolences on to their families. As it did 90 years ago, Easter Sunday has once again proven to be a day of sorrow for Canadians and Canadian soldiers.

Mr. Speaker, these are sentiments usually reserved for November and Remembrance Day. But I think the terrible coincidence that saw Canada's worst day of casualties in

Afghanistan occur at almost precisely the same time as the commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, one of the most significant battles in Canada's history, serves as an awful reminder that the life we have here in Canada comes at a price. And that we owe a deep debt of gratitude to our fellow Canadians, both past and present, who put themselves in harm's way so that we can enjoy the rights and freedoms and the quality of life that we do today. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

80th Anniversary of Girl Guide Cookies

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when Mrs. Christina Riepsamen of Regina decided to bake some cookies 80 years ago to help her Girl Guide company raise some money so her Guides could go to camp at Last Mountain Lake, I'm sure she had no idea what an institution the cookies would become. That's right, Mr. Speaker, 2007 is the 80th anniversary of the beloved Girl Guide cookie that has become a cultural icon in itself.

In 1927 the cookies were baked and packaged by the dozen in brown paper bags out of a house on the 1300 block of Robinson Street to be sold to family, friends, and neighbours. At that time they were sold for 10 cents per dozen. What started as a small fundraising effort in 1927 has exploded into a national campaign that now sees 7 million dozen cookies sold every year.

This morning we had several Guides, Brownies, Sparks, and their leaders attend our caucus meeting to distribute cookies. In a beautiful gesture to the past, the young girls handed out the cookies in paper bags as they had been done some 80 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all those involved with the Girl Guides that visited us this morning to educate us on the history of the Girl Guide cookie and also for giving us a sample. I would also like to invite members of this Assembly to congratulate them on 80 years of successful fundraising that also instils these young girls with a variety of skills, including leadership and community involvement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

First Nations University of Canada Powwow

Hon. Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Over the weekend, I and other members of the Legislative Assembly had the honour of attending one of the largest and longest-running powwows in the country — the 29th Annual First Nations University of Canada Powwow.

People of all ages come together to compete in a variety of performance categories. In addition to dancing there was also a

trade show that featured Aboriginal arts and crafts and a selection of very tasty traditional food.

Mr. Speaker, powwows are important social, spiritual, and cultural gatherings that promote cross-cultural awareness and understanding. This weekend, thousands of dancers, singers, drummers, and spectators from across North America gathered to celebrate traditional First Nations music, dress, song, and dance.

It was a celebration of life that provided participants with an opportunity to renew old friendships and begin new ones, and gave students a chance to visit with family and friends and to say thank you for supporting them during their educational journey. Mr. Speaker, First Nations University of Canada provides Aboriginal students with an atmosphere that affirms culture and pride and plays an integral role in the lifelong process of learning.

The theme of this year's powwow was, Honouring Our Students Past and Present. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in acknowledging the powwow committee for hosting an excellent event. And to First Nations University of Canada and to President Charles Pratt and everybody that organized it and sponsored it, congratulations. Congratulations also to the performers. And I wish everyone at the First Nations University good luck in their academic endeavours and future careers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this weekend I had the privilege and the pleasure to attend and participate in the 29th annual First Nations University Powwow that was held at the Brandt Centre in Regina on Saturday and Sunday. This event brings together celebrants, drummers, and dancers from across Canada and the US [United States]. In fact the vehicle ahead of me in the line on Saturday morning was from New Mexico.

There were 20 drum groups and about 600 or more dancers in all categories: men, women, children of all ages from preschool to elders. The powwow was well attended by thousands of First Nations and non-First Nations spectators. The dancers' costumes for both male and female dancers were elaborate and emblematic of the First Nations culture and colour. I was played out just watching some of the more enthusiastic dancers.

In all four of the grand entrances, the veterans were paid a special honour on the 90th anniversary of Vimy Ridge. First Nations are rightfully very proud of the service to Canada of their veterans. Mr. Anderson, a veteran of the Second World War, marched in all four of the grand entrances. Well done, Mr. Anderson.

The First Nations University Powwow is an excellent opportunity to showcase First Nations people and culture. It is an opportunity for us all to enjoy the celebration and to gain a better understanding of our friends and neighbours from the First Nations communities. Congratulations to the First Nations

University on an excellent powwow.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Samuel McLeod Prince Albert Business Awards

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last week the Prince Albert Chamber of Commerce hosted the annual Samuel McLeod Prince Albert Business Awards. These awards have been recognizing business excellence in our city since 1990. And I want to take the opportunity today to acknowledge this year's committee and to recognize this year's winners.

For new product or service is Solid Innovation. For new venture, Travel Master Prince Albert. The Industry Award went to Transair. The Marketing Award went to Prince Albert Alarms Systems Ltd.

In the investment category, that was won by Broda Group of Companies. And for community involvement, Northern Lights Casino. Mr. Speaker, for job creation, Broda Group of Companies again. And for tourism, the Prince Albert Exhibition Association. Mr. Speaker, the Business of the Year is Broda Group of Companies.

And as we have every year, the Legacy Award — which was established to honour individuals or businesses that have made a significant, long-term commitment to Prince Albert — the winner is my neighbour, Herschel Davidner of Davidner's Clothing and Western Wear.

I ask all members to join with me in congratulating the finalists and the winners in the Samuel McLeod Prince Albert Business Awards. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Questions Regarding Carriere Settlement

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our office received an email from a Mr. Richard Zimmer in Saskatoon who is extremely frustrated with the way the NDP [New Democratic Party] government has handled the Murdoch Carriere scandal. Mr. Zimmer had this to say about the NDP government paying 275,000 taxpayers' dollars to a man fired for harassment and convicted of assault, and I would like to quote:

... in the last 5-6 weeks we just continue to hear and see how much more that Mr. Carriere has been rewarded from the coffers of the Saskatchewan Taxpayers.

... as Mr. Nilson stated on CTV news that with this settlement we now consider this case closed.

I say BS Mr. Nilson we want this case in ...

The Speaker: — Order please. Order. Order. I would remind the members that they are not to use quotations or any other indirect means to bring unparliamentary language to this Assembly. And I would ask the member to withdraw the remark, which is unparliamentary, before he proceeds.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — I'll withdraw that, Mr. Speaker, and I'll requote:

... as Mr. Nilson stated on CTV news that with this settlement we now consider this case closed.

[He doesn't agree with Mr. Nilson.] ... we want this case in court ...

We also want Premier Calvert to tell the truth on when he was first told of the assaults and why he did nothing about it?

Was Mr. Carriere a friend to all NDP cabinet and that's why nothing was done earlier?

We need to know as Taxpayers how badly we have been shafted again.

There should be some cabinet members resigning this time around, enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker, taxpayers of this province are demanding answers from this NDP government on the Carriere scandal. It's time to let an all-party committee investigate and get to the bottom of this so that it never happens again.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Judge Gerald Morin Receives Willy Hodgson Award

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, every year the Law Society of Saskatchewan awards the Willy Hodgson Award to an individual for their outstanding contributions to the province and to the legal profession. This year the Willy Hodgson Award was presented to His Honour, Judge Gerald M. Morin of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, for his work in the Cree court system.

Mr. Speaker, the Cree court system enables Cree speakers to communicate in their own language. It was established to ensure testimony, instructions, and rulings are not lost in translation.

Mr. Speaker, in 1999 Judge Morin was appointed to the Queen's Counsel — the first Aboriginal lawyer in Saskatchewan to receive this designation. In 2001 he was appointed as a Provincial Court judge. Judge Morin is past-president of the Prince Albert Indian and Métis Friendship Centre and past member of the Prince Albert Raiders board of directors.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Judge Morin for his work in our province and as the recipient of

this award. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Al Gore's Presentation on Climate Change

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week the Premier announced former US president, Al Gore, had accepted an invitation to speak in Regina. According to the Premier this event is designed to help the people of Saskatchewan and I quote, "... understand the significance of climate change."

Mr. Speaker, this event will be held at eleven o'clock on a weekday morning. Many working people will not be able to attend and will have to rely on media coverage. However that will be difficult since cameras and recording devices are banned from Al Gore's speech. Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: if the purpose of this event is to inform the public and encourage an open public debate, why did this NDP government agree to this media ban?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the privilege of having vice-president Al Gore in our province and in its capital city, Mr. Speaker, is a rare privilege. Mr. Gore is in demand across the globe. It is a rare privilege to have him in our community. We have chosen, in consultation with his organization, a very large venue, a venue that will accommodate 5, 5,000 people, a little more, Mr. Speaker. The vice-president, Gore is traditionally speaking to audiences of much fewer. We are maximizing the opportunity, and his very presence in the province, Mr. Speaker, raises the important issue of the climate crisis change that is confronting us.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — You know, Mr. Speaker, these are very important questions that the people of the province have. Public dollars are being used to sponsor this event. SaskTel is paying \$208,000, money that may or may not be recovered through ticket sales. The Premier says this event is to spark public interest and prompt an informed debate on climate change in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this morning the Premier said he was aware of these media restrictions right from the very beginning. With taxpayers footing the bill, why on earth did the Premier agree to these kind of restrictions — restrictions that will limit who will hear the former vice president's views?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, on the involvement of SaskTel as a sponsor for this event, we're very, very pleased and very proud that SaskTel is doing this. SaskTel as you know, Mr. Speaker, has been a proud sponsor of a number of important public events including, I believe, the visit of the former President Bill Clinton to the province. They have sponsored a variety, Mr. Speaker.

Now the fact of the matter is SaskTel's investment here is already almost returned, Mr. Speaker, in the ticket sales. I'm told that about three-quarters of the tickets have already sold, Mr. Speaker. That's twice as many tickets as they sold in Toronto, Mr. Speaker.

But the point, Mr. Speaker, the point, Mr. Speaker — and I know the Sask Party opposite will do most anything not to be talking about issues like climate change — Mr. Speaker, the point is the presence of this international spokesperson in our province is good news for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and bodes well for what we will do on a provincial basis to tackle global warming in our time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clearly this is a photo op for the Premier because only 5,000 people are going to hear that message, Mr. Speaker. The media will not be conveying that message to the million people that exist in this province.

Clearly the Premier is trying to advance his own short-term political agenda by asking a celebrity to help put a new face on this tired, old NDP government with a horrible record in the area of greenhouse gas emissions. Clearly this Premier is not the slightest bit interested in advancing the debate over climate change. And if he was, the Premier would lift the restrictions that are now in place. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier commit today to lifting the restrictions on media coverage of the Al Gore speech so that everyone in Saskatchewan will have a chance to hear at least some of this important debate?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how this works. On one minute the opposition is criticizing me because we're not allowing the media in to the event. The next minute they're criticizing me for using this as a photo op. Well a photo op with who, Mr. Speaker? Lookit, it's one way or the other. Mr. Speaker, we've extended an invitation, and an invitation has been extended to all of the members of the opposition. In fact all members of the legislature . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Order. The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, we've offered an invitation to all members of the opposition, all members of the legislature, to purchase a ticket to be at this event, Mr. Speaker. It is important that we who are public policy-makers, the decision makers in this province, I think experience, experience the presentation by the former vice-president of the United States, Al Gore. You know what, Mr. Speaker? I asked this morning. We haven't had one response from the opposition yet.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Long-term Care Beds in Lloydminster

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently reported in my local paper, there was a protest. Imagine in our province where a group of seniors are standing out in the cold holding signs saying, where are we going to die? Mr. Speaker, this unfortunate event happened in Lloydminster last week because there is just not enough long-term care spaces. Mr. Speaker, my question is simple and direct and to the Premier: what answer does he have for these seniors?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Prairie North Health Region, which is responsible for the administration of long-term care beds in the Lloydminster area on the Saskatchewan side, is currently discussing the issue with the health region on the Alberta side, Mr. Speaker. The majority of the people of Lloydminster reside on the Alberta side. Alberta government has a shared responsibility, Mr. Speaker, with regards to long-term care. And Prairie North, Mr. Speaker, is seriously engaged with the Alberta government on dealing with this issue which we recognize is very important to the seniors of the Lloydminster area.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wakefield: — Mr. Speaker, it has been 16 years to get some kind of vision and plan in place for the seniors of all parts of our province. And here a protest happened in Lloydminster, and again these seniors, they want to know where they're going to end their days. These people are the ones that actually built this province, and now they must hold signs asking where they must go to die. Mr. Speaker, again I'm asking the Premier: what does he have to say to these seniors?

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Every day Saskatchewan Health does things to enhance the lives of Saskatchewan families. And in this budget, Mr. Speaker — that the member opposite chose to vote against — had the single largest contribution toward seniors in Saskatchewan Health, Mr. Speaker, in the history, since the development of the prescription drug plan. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan seniors in Lloydminster are eligible for the new and changed

prescription drug program effective July 1.

And, Mr. Speaker, on the issue of long-term care, we are continuing discussions that have been ongoing for some time now, Mr. Speaker, with the province of Alberta to ensure that we can address the long-term care needs of the people of the Lloydminster area.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Plans for Recruitment and Retention of Health Care Professionals

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Minister of Health misunderstood the question. It was about people in long-term beds, Mr. Speaker. But as usual, this NDP government never fixes a problem. They let it continue and drag on ignored.

This morning media are reporting that in the South East Cornerstone area the province lacks many health care professionals. More than 50 positions for physicians, nurses, and technicians remain empty. This NDP government must answer to the constituents of Cannington who fear they will not receive proper health care services.

Other than the minister's empty rhetoric, how soon will there be nurses and other professionals be in place to provide services to Sun Country, and particularly nurses to reopen the acute care in Arcola and the 10 closed long-term care beds in Carlyle?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Although the member opposite wants to portray this issue as very specific to a particular part of the province, Mr. Speaker, this government acknowledges, acknowledges the competitive nature across Canada of recruiting and retaining health care professionals. Mr. Speaker, this government has demonstrated a very clear plan on recruitment, retention, and education of health care professionals. Mr. Speaker, we've answered this question a number of times inside and outside this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that we have been dealing with since the development of the workforce action plan that was released in 2005. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do that work. And, Mr. Speaker, we ask the members opposite to support the efforts that are being made by this government to ensure that Saskatchewan citizens currently in school or living outside Saskatchewan . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is not a new problem but an old problem that this NDP government has failed to address in well over a decade — the worse job retention rate in health care, of the country, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister stop his rhetoric and provide specific steps that this minister has taken to ensure that my constituents do not suffer from the lack of health care professionals? Will this minister commit today to provide concrete recruitment measures and a timeframe to solve this urgent problem and provide much needed health care to the seniors, to the young families, and the citizens of southeast Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, the member opposite would best support his constituents in this regard by having shown some leadership and having voted for the budget that was just presented, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, he could have supported last year's budget — which also he chose not to do — which instituted a recruitment agency, Mr. Speaker, that is assisting all of the regional health authorities.

And thirdly, Mr. Speaker, he can turn to his seatmate and talk about the alternative that the members opposite should have in place . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The plan of the government is very visible. It's very clear, Mr. Speaker. The plan of the opposition is not only invisible, Mr. Speaker, but it's about as clear as bull meat in a hamburger patty.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Compensation for Former Deputy Minister

Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, when former Environment Deputy Minister Terry Scott resigned . . . Terry Scott was one of many who ignored harassment complaints and ended up being the scapegoat for this NDP government. When he resigned, the women who were harassed by Murdoch Carriere were asked to attend a meeting with the associate deputy minister. The ADM [associate deputy minister] informed the victims of the resignation and that, in addition to a generous pension, Terry Scott would have a soft landing because the NDP government was guaranteeing his deputy-minister-level salary regardless of what job he landed in the future.

Mr. Speaker, for how long did the NDP government guarantee Terry Scott's deputy-minister-level salary?

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I'll take notice.

The Speaker: — Notice has been taken. The Chair recognizes, for supplementary, the member for Martensville.

Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Terry Scott took the fall for the NDP's mishandling of the Murdoch Carriere affair. Someone had to go, and it wasn't going to be one of Murdoch's buddies in cabinet. I doubt it's government policy to ensure a nice, big salary regardless of what job someone decides to take after they've resigned. Mr. Speaker, how much did Terry Scott's top-up in salary cost taxpayers?

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the member of the opposition continue to insinuate that Murdoch Carriere was the buddy of people in this cabinet. I want to say to the public — because I think it's important to know that it is a continuation of misinformation that is coming from members of the opposition — there isn't one person on this side of the House that was a buddy of Murdoch Carriere.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

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

Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, one of the friends the NDP did take care of was Terry Scott. Murdoch Carriere, the man who should have been fired with cause in the first place, gets \$275,000 plus an additional three-year top-up in his pension. Terry Scott, the deputy minister, who is a scapegoat for the NDP government, took the fall for the whole Murdoch Carriere scandal and received a \$200,000 pension plus guaranteed deputy-minister-level salary. Mr. Speaker, how many other people have been paid big sums of money so the sordid details of the Murdoch Carriere scandal don't become public?

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I've indicated I'll take notice on the question regarding Mr. Scott. But I will say this, that Mr. Scott was the person that had, in legislation, the duty to hire and fire people in his department as the deputy minister for the Environment. Mr. Scott disciplined Mr. Carriere by demoting him three levels, red circling him, suspending him without pay for three months, and moving him to Regina.

Mr. Speaker, there's this thing called double jeopardy. When it became known by the members of the government bench, we made the decision that his actions were need for dismissal, Mr. Speaker. He was punished twice for the same event. And, Mr. Speaker, it's called double jeopardy, and that is why Mr. Carriere had an action against the government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the

Opposition.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Government's Settlement with Murdoch Carriere

Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again the Premier may well have been caught saying something that isn't quite true about the Murdoch Carriere scandal. This morning he told reporters that he is being misquoted in a brochure from Sask Party MLAs. He says he was talking about firing Murdoch Carriere. But he says he was actually talking about paying off Murdoch Carriere when he said he would do it all over again.

But here's the whole quote. Here's the whole quote, Mr. Speaker, quote, "Mr. Speaker, they tell us we should fight . . ."

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order please. The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, this is exactly the quote of the Premier in this Assembly on this issue:

Mr. Speaker, they tell us we should fight the case. The best legal advice said this is going to cost the taxpayer of Saskatchewan, and we are not . . . [going] to put those complainants through the public process again.

Do we like this, Mr. Speaker? You bet we don't like it. Would I do it again? You bet I would.

The Premier was clearly talking about his decision to settle out of court and pay Murdoch Carriere. Why is the Premier again changing his story, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I've said it once; I'll say it again. When it was brought to my attention, by the minister at that time in charge of the Public Service Commission, what had occurred, it was . . . I accepted her recommendation that Mr. Carriere be terminated from the public service of Saskatchewan. That termination has been demonstrated to have been inappropriately through its process.

Mr. Speaker, I said then — I've said in this House — and I say again, if I had that decision to make again, I would make the same decision. You bet. I've referred to that firing on many occasions in this regard, Mr. Speaker.

Now what the Leader of the Opposition needs to explain is how it is he takes taxpayers' dollars — taxpayers' dollars, Mr. Speaker — and spreads misinformation through radio ads and print box materials all over this province. Now I thought, Mr. Speaker, and so did the people of Saskatchewan, with the arrival of that new leader there was going to be a code of ethics, that they wouldn't participate in this kind of knowingly misleading folks, Mr. Speaker. But he goes on and on, and it's being funded, Mr. Speaker, by taxpayer dollars.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty clear what this particular brochure says. This brochure says that the NDP government rewarded harassment. Let's review the facts.

They paid \$275,000 to someone who is convicted of assault, fired for harassment. Then in this Assembly, on the second day of the session, the Premier quite clearly pointed out, he defended his decision to fight this in the court . . . not to fire Murdoch Carriere, to fight it in the court. I just read him his own words. He said he would . . . He asked the question, "Would I do it again? You bet I would."

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier realizes the amount of public outrage to this issue. And so what's he trying to do again? As he did in his press conference, he is trying to change his story, Mr. Speaker. The people of this province have had enough.

When is he going to learn that he ought to be telling the truth about the Murdoch Carriere scandal?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, we just heard it again. The Leader of the Opposition stood in his place in this House not moments ago and said that Mr. Murdoch Carriere was rewarded for harassment. That's just what he said. And now the member from Cannington says that's true. Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Speaker: — Order. The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth than what the Leader of the Opposition just said in this legislature that Mr. Murdoch Carriere was rewarded for harassment. Mr. Speaker, that is not the case. Mr. Murdoch Carriere was terminated, terminated as a result of this Premier and this cabinet's decision, Mr. Speaker, on occurrences in that workplace. Mr. Speaker, he was not rewarded for harassment.

And as long as the Leader of the Opposition and his party takes taxpayers' dollars and provides this kind of misinformation to the people of Saskatchewan, you know, it says more, Mr. Speaker, it says more about that opposition and their tactics and their desperation for government, Mr. Speaker, than it says about anything else.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I think it's important we review how many times the NDP have changed their story with respect to the Murdoch Carriere scandal each day as information has come forward.

First, they said they had a zero tolerance policy towards harassment. Then we find out they tolerated harassment for years and years and years, back to 1994. Then the minister of Justice at the time said they would defend the position of the government vigorously in court with respect to Carriere. But then, Mr. Speaker, they folded like a cheap lawn chair. They paid him \$275,000. And no matter what the Premier says, the victims view that as rewarding harassment, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Then the Premier said, then the Premier said he never heard about the harassment until it was leaked in the media. And then, Mr. Speaker, he had to call . . .

The Speaker: — Members, order. Order. Members would do well to allow the members who have the floor to make their statement and then to make the response. And I ask members to do that. I invite the Leader of the Opposition to complete his remarks.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier said he didn't learn about this harassment until he read it in the paper. Then he actually had to hold a hastily called press conference after hours in this building to confirm that what he had said originally in this House on that subject wasn't the truth.

Now we find out, Mr. Speaker, now we find out that he's changing his story that he gave again, a quote in this Assembly where he was asked, would he do this again? Would he pay this kind of a settlement again in court? He said, I would do it again. Mr. Speaker, to the Premier the question is this: why does he keep changing his story, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, it is becoming readily apparent to the people of Saskatchewan that that leader and that political party will do just about anything in their desperation for elected office, Mr. Speaker. They stand in the House, they accuse . . . they suggest that . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we've heard over and over again in this House and outside of this House the kind of misinformation that this opposition will put forward and claim to be truth.

Again the Leader of the Opposition stands in this legislature and suggests that Murdoch Carriere was settled with or rewarded for harassment. Nothing, Mr. Speaker, could be further from the truth. But you know, it speaks, it speaks to some of the values of a party that when they had opportunity, voted against — voted against — provisions in legislation to protect workers in this province from harassment in the workplace, they voted against it, Mr. Speaker. Well we may have an opportunity in the days to come to test their resolve, to see where they truly stand when it comes to voting, Mr. Speaker.

But it's pretty clear what they're doing today and what they've been doing for the last several weeks. You try and use misinformation and tax dollars to fund it, to achieve your own political goals — not good for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the Carriere scandal is simply not good for the victims, Mr. Speaker, for other employees of the government who want some leadership from this Premier, and yes — on a much more minor point — it's not very good for the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Here is exactly what the Premier said in this Legislative Assembly. Thank goodness we have *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker. Here's the quote:

... they tell us we should fight the case. The best legal advice said ... [that it's] going to cost the taxpayer of Saskatchewan, and we are not ... [going] to put those complainants through the public process again.

Do we like this, Mr. Speaker? We bet we don't like it. Would I do it again? You bet I would.

Those were the words of this Premier, the leader of this government, Mr. Speaker. I ask him again, will he finally answer a question? Why does he keep changing his story on the Carriere scandal?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the story does not change. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Murdoch Carriere was terminated when it was advised by our minister then in charge of the Public Service Commission of what had occurred when the Gillies report became a matter of public discussion, and I made the decision, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Murdoch Carriere should be terminated.

And I said, I said previously, I say it again: if I was faced with that decision again today, I would make the same decision.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what this opposition wants to do, what this opposition wants to do is take tax dollars that are provided to that opposition for research, Mr. Speaker ... Mr. Speaker, what they try to do is score of course political points because that's what they get up every morning trying to do.

Well I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, here's the difference. We get up every morning asking ourselves what can be done to benefit Saskatchewan. What can we do for Saskatchewan people? They get up every morning and ask themselves, what can we do for the future of the Saskatchewan Party today? That's their mission and that's our mission and that's the difference.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I wish to bring down a ruling. Last Thursday, two points of order were raised during the 75-minute debate concerning the language used. I thank both the member for Saskatoon Southeast and the Government House Leader for their interventions. At the time, the Acting Speaker committed to reviewing both the written and the video record and to bring back a ruling at the earliest opportunity. I have discussed the events of last week with the Acting Speaker and now wish to rule on the points of order.

Much of the language and conduct of many members on both sides of the House during last Thursday's debate on the Murdoch Carriere case was unacceptable. The written *Hansard* is replete with instances on both sides of the House of language that was unnecessarily personal or offensive, either towards an individual or towards a recognized group. Once again I direct members to Marleau and Montpetit where it is stated on page 525 that, and I quote:

The proceedings of the House are based on a long-standing tradition of respect for the integrity of all Members. Thus, the use of offensive, provocative or threatening language in the House is strictly forbidden. Personal attacks, insults and obscene language or words are not in order.

Numerous rulings by Speakers of this Assembly can be cited in support of this authority. I draw members' attention to just one. The rule of May 12, 2000 addressed a similar circumstance where the language and decorum in the Assembly diminished considerably during the debate on a private member's motion. At that time my predecessor reflected that, and I quote:

It should be our mutual goal to achieve hard-hitting, politically effective criticism of policies, positions and actions without resorting to rude, intemperate and simplistic attacks on the integrity and motives of others.

I recognize that achieving this goal becomes more challenging when the matter under debate is an emotional one which involves passionately held beliefs and values. Nevertheless, it is possible. The remarks made by the member for Regina Dewdney illustrates how one can effectively and forcefully refute the positions proposed by the other side while avoiding any personal aspersions on the integrity of other members.

[14:30]

I do find that the remarks made by the member for Humboldt at the conclusion of her speech are unparliamentary. Regardless of whether they were captured on the Hansard recorders, the language used was clearly audible in the Chamber and on the video record. They constitute a personal attack on another member and caused considerable disorder in the Chamber. Accordingly at the end of my statement, I will call upon the member from Humboldt to withdraw the remarks she directed at the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

A further concern that I wish to address is the rising level of

noise in this Chamber, particularly during divisive debates and proceedings. In my view, the debate last Thursday was characterized by an inordinate amount of heckles and interventions by members who were not recognized to speak.

The volume of noise reached an unacceptable level when it prevented both the Acting Speaker and members on both sides of the House to hear the words spoken in the debate. When the presiding officer must consult with the written record before a matter can be addressed, it illustrates the difficulty caused by excessive noise. It also prevents the Assembly from dealing promptly with questionable language or possible rule infractions.

In the future I strongly encourage members to curb the volume of their interventions to a level which does not impede the proceedings.

In regards to the point of order raised by the member for Saskatoon Southeast, I reviewed the *Hansard* and the audio tape, and they do not record the comments alleged to have been made by the Minister of Finance. Accordingly, I am unable to rule on this matter.

I wish to conclude by cautioning all members to be temperate in their remarks, both while recognized to speak and while speaking from their seat.

Many of these unofficial comments or heckles are intentionally provocative and inflammatory. The course of last Thursday's debate is illustrative of how such remarks are unhelpful. The fact that Hansard may not be able to attribute them to a particular member does not make them acceptable language.

I now provide the opportunity for the MLA for Humboldt to rise and withdraw her unparliamentary remarks of Thursday.

Ms. Harpauer: — I withdraw the remarks I made on Thursday.

The Speaker: — I thank the member for Humboldt.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. I would ask the member for Regina South to come to order.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the . . . Order. Order, order. On written questions the Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government I will be tabling response to written questions no. 1038 to 1041 inclusive. And further, Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave to table a correction to the response to written question 866 which was provided to the Assembly on March 29.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 1038 to 1041 have been submitted and the member has requested leave to or he will be ordering the questions . . . Will the member repeat that, please?

Mr. Iwanchuk: — To a correction to the response. We'll be tabling a correction to the response to no. 866.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave to table a response to no. 866. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted.

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Not Debatable)

Returns Nos. 4 — 20

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government I will be tabling returns no. 4 through 20 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Returns no. 4 through 20 have been tabled.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 61 — The Vital Statistics Act, 2007

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill 61, The Vital Statistics Act, 2007. Mr. Speaker, this Bill will repeal and replace both The Vital Statistics Act, 1995 and the unproclaimed vital statistics Act, 1998.

The Vital Statistics Act is a bilingual legislation, Mr. Speaker. As such both the English and French language versions must be passed by the legislature. Due to the time required for translation, only the English language version of the Act is being introduced today. Because of the important nature of this legislation, Mr. Speaker, we have chosen to introduce the English language legislation at this time to ensure that it enters the public forum. The French language version will be introduced this fall.

Mr. Speaker, even though the current legislation dates to 1995, the core of the Act governing the registering of Saskatchewan's vital events dates back to 1888. Having celebrated our centennial year in 2005, this makes The Vital Statistics Act older than the province itself. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the original legislation governed the North-West Territories which encompassed most of Canada west of Ontario.

That I stand here today introducing the amendments to one of Saskatchewan's original pieces of legislation only demonstrates how important vital statistics are. It is the recording of the milestones in life, Mr. Speaker, whether birth, marriage, or death. It is our responsibility to keep that information accurate, safe, and secure and use it prudently to improve the lives of Saskatchewan residents.

Times have changed since 1888, Mr. Speaker. In fact times have changed since 1995. The processes employed by vital

statistics, hospitals, and funeral directors have changed and the Act must be changed to reflect the era in which we now live. We must address how we collect, record, and use information in this day and age.

When you are reviewing and revising an Act that's been around for more than a century and will still be around a century from now, you consult with the experts, Mr. Speaker. You consult with the parties who record vital events and work with registration documents each day. Our consultations have included the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Medical Association, the Funeral and Cremation Services Council of Saskatchewan, and Saskatchewan Justice amongst others.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank them all for their efforts in helping us amend the vital statistics legislation. The proposed amendments touch three different areas: access to documents and records and the protection of privacy, use of vital event information by Saskatchewan Health, and ensuring our disclosure policies are transparent — and they are, Mr. Speaker. With the proclamation of this Act our disclosure policy will be more transparent than any legislation you'll find in most other provinces and territories.

In the past 130 years we have gone from paper records, written longhand, to databases. Electronic records have become the way we do business, improving our organization and efficiency. We need to revise our legislation to address the technology we now use every day and the challenges technology presents as far as record maintenance and retention.

While we continue to collect and retain the vital events information of Saskatchewan residents, we must also ensure we are following best practices when it comes to privacy protection. We are the custodians of a great deal of personal information, Mr. Speaker, and we take that responsibility very seriously.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, babies are still born in the usual fashion; not much has changed since 1888. But the nature of the families they are born into certainly have. With non-traditional family structures and advances in reproductive technologies, the term co-parent is now part of the vernacular and needs to be included in the Act.

Though we are proud of the legacy of this legislation, now is the time to update and clarify The Vital Statistics Act's language and ensure that it encompasses the administrative and business processes involved in registering vital events. The passing of this Act will ensure our legislation remains aligned with the vital statistics legislation of other jurisdictions, and is ready to face the century to come. Mr. Speaker, therefore I am pleased to move second reading of The Vital Statistics Act, 2007. Thank you.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 61, The Vital Statistics Act, 2007 be now read a second time. The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with pleasure that I rise this afternoon to speak briefly on Bill 61, An Act respecting the Keeping of Vital Statistics and making

consequential amendments to other Acts.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister outlined, this is a very critical bit of legislation, and it certainly dates back to the beginning of our province and actually — as the minister outlined — before the beginning of the province. It's one of the very oldest pieces of legislation that we have in our province, and indeed it is timely that this information be updated to reflect the modern realities that are before us. Certainly the importance of gathering vital statistics are certainly something that we very much support. It is certainly the kinds of information that's required in order for governments and municipalities to properly plan for the future. We need to know what the record of people that are in this province, the statement of live births, the statement of deaths, the statement of stillbirths, the statement of marriages, and all of these things are needed in order to make sure that we understand the needs and demographics of our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, as well I think the minister has rightly outlined that in the original instance I'm sure these statistics were kept in ledgers in a very manual accounting system that recorded all of this information. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, over the last 100-plus years there's been tremendous changes into how information is stored.

But I think it is important when we recognize that we are now in the age of databases and electronic records. Not only is this something that should change in this Act in terms of the way this information is harvested, in terms of electronic filing of information. We have to ensure that the databases that contain this very personal information are properly safeguarded and made sure that they are not accessible by people who have no right or authority to access these databases. And I'm sure the government recognizes the need for security of information in these databases and that the ways of accessing this information by appropriate people is safeguarded so that it is only those who have a need to know this information can access these electronic databases.

Of course in the electronic world, we have to also ensure — if we're using electronic databases — that they are properly safeguarded by proper backups and duplication of data so that, in the event of an electronic failure of some of this equipment, we do not lose this very important information for our province and our families for the future.

I think the minister, as well in going into this Act and opening it up, recognizes that there are many words and terminologies and phrases and parenting relationships, if you like, that have changed over the 100 years and that these different situations have to as well be addressed in this new legislation.

Mr. Speaker, we have certainly had a very initial opportunity to look at this information, and we as well are very desirous to communicate with the departments and the individuals that were mentioned by the minister, certainly the medical professionals and the various organizations that represent them and also people involved in the funeral business that need to account for information at the passing of our citizens. And so all of this information is important to discuss with these various stakeholders to make sure in this very elaborate and very comprehensive review of a vital piece of information that nothing was omitted or left out. And in order for that process to

occur, 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 61 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

[14:45]

Bill No. 62 — The Vital Statistics Consequential Amendment Act, 2007/Loi de 2007 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Vital Statistics Act, 2007

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to move second reading of Bill 62, The Vital Statistics Consequential Amendment Act, 2007. Previously I moved second reading of Bill 61, The Vital Statistics Act, 2007, Mr. Speaker, and as you know it is bilingual legislation. We are translating the French language version and hope to table it during the fall session, Mr. Speaker.

However in the meantime, The Vital Statistics Consequential Amendment Act is required to ensure the amendments to the Act are applicable to all the other bilingual Acts that relate to The Vital Statistics Act — Saskatchewan's marriage Act and adoption Act for example, Mr. Speaker. The Vital Statistics Consequential Amendment Act, 2007 makes all relative bilingual Acts compatible with the proposed 2007 legislation until the French language version of The Vital Statistics Act, 2007 can be passed.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of The Vital Statistics Consequential Amendment Act, 2007. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 62, The Vital Statistics Consequential Amendment Act, 2007 be now read a second time. The Chair recognizes the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with pleasure I rise to speak to Bill 62 as well. Mr. Speaker, as the minister outlined, this Bill is required in order to make sure that the Bill No. 61 that was just read the second time is compatible with other existing statutes, particularly those that are translated into the French language. And I note in passing that changes to The Change of Name Act, The Adoption Act, and these types of Acts are mentioned — The Children's Law Act — are specifically mentioned in this consequential amendments that need to be made compatible.

Mr. Speaker, the general concept is one that the official opposition very much supports. We need to make sure that when we're amending significant pieces of legislation we do it properly and completely. And certainly we believe that this piece of legislation should move together with the main Bill so

that they are considered together. And in order for that to happen, I would move at this time to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Melfort that debate on second reading of Bill No. 62 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. 53

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 53 — The Miscellaneous Environment Statutes (Inspections and Investigations) Amendment Act, 2007** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to spend a few minutes talking about Bill 53, An Act to amend certain Environment Statutes with respect to matters concerning Inspections and Investigations.

At first blush it would appear that this is more of a housekeeping Bill, standardizing terms and wording across Bills. However, Mr. Speaker, it allows for additional inspection powers of wildlife officers, or WOs, in various Bills, and I would like to just address that as part of the Bill. And on the first page of the Bill it states, and I'm quoting the Bill:

"If an officer is conducting an inspection or investigation pursuant to this Act, the officer may be accompanied by any person who, in the opinion of the officer, by virtue of his or her expertise in a particular field or his or her knowledge of facts relevant to the matter being inspected or investigated, may assist the officer in carrying out the officer's duties".

Well that's a pretty long-winded statement, Mr. Speaker, and the implications of that, I think, will have to be discussed and debated. Who determines the expertise level of an individual? Is the conservation officer or wildlife officer just going to pick somebody that he or she knows to accompany him or her?

But it's very, very ironic, Mr. Speaker, because in 2003-2004 time frame this NDP government eliminated 200 positions — 200 and I want to emphasize that — that were conservation officers, now called wildlife officers. As far as I can ascertain, they're one and the same thing. It's a different name, possibly used interchangeably as far as I can understand. The wildlife officer, conservation officer — I don't think there's any difference in there. But the fact is 200, 200 were eliminated.

So now we have a government introducing a Bill that says, now a CO [conservation officer] or WO can come along and take

somebody to help them, to accompany them, to do whatever, based on their expertise. I'm just kind of thinking out loud. Would it not be better if you actually had another conservation officer or wildlife officer to accompany you? Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the 200 positions that were eliminated were — where? — predominantly in rural Saskatchewan, a lot of them from the North.

Well if you're dealing directly with an environmental Act that includes hunting and fishing, I don't know how much fishing there is in downtown Regina or how much hunting there is in downtown Regina. I know the odd deer comes through, and there might be a couple of minnows in Wascana Lake. And yes, Mr. Speaker, I know there's lots of geese out here, but I don't believe we're allowed to shoot them in the city.

So if you look at where the wildlife officers and conservation officers, where they do their duty and due diligence is in the rural areas. And yet what did we do, or what did they do? They cut 200 positions. So now we're saying, oh we'll cover that off. We will have wildlife officer go along and grab somebody and say, you're now an expert in this field; come and give me a hand. I think there has to be some questions asked and hopefully some answers given to those particular questions.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to address another section that is being added and it's:

“Search of person

19.1 An officer may search any person if the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the person has concealed on his or her person any evidence of an offence against this Act.

Again I think there needs to be some questions asked with respect to that, Mr. Speaker. When I read this Act, what basically . . . The way I understand it, with these additional powers that are given to the conservation officers, they would have the same powers as the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. I do not know if that's the intent. I do not know if that is what the minister had envisaged when he put this in the Bill. But that's pretty strong that an officer has reasonable grounds to believe . . . may inspect if he “. . . has reasonable grounds to believe that a person has concealed on his or her person any evidence of an offence against this Act.”

So I wouldn't want to be facetious, but how many deer are you going to hide on your person? Or how many geese? So I don't know where this is going and what kind of broad powers that it's giving to the COs and the WOs — or whatever name we're going to use — to protect the system. And I want to use both because somebody will say, well they're not a wildlife officer; they're a conservation officer and vice versa. So I will use both of those names. So I'm really wondering what the intent of that portion of the Bill is, is to give these broad powers.

There's another one here that I also flag, Mr. Speaker. And it says, an officer and any person or persons . . .

“Entry on land

19.2 An officer and any person or persons lawfully

accompanying an officer for the purposes of carrying out the officer's duties may enter on or pass over any land, whether enclosed or not, and while so engaged he or she is liable only for any damage that he or she may wilfully cause”.

That congers up a whole bunch of thoughts because if you relate back to the earlier one, the powers that are given, does that indicate that the COs and WOs are authorized to go into hot pursuit? And if they're allowed to go into hot pursuit and they're going over planted fields for an example, and it's muddy — the damage that is caused to a grain farm operation — is that wilful damage or is that in hot pursuit?

And so there's a number of issues in there. And also, also “may enter on or pass over any land” but also whether it's enclosed or not, “whether enclosed or not” — so that would indicate to me that that gives these officers blanket entry to any building, facility, that they choose. Again I would suggest that this is giving them the powers that are equal to the RCMP. If that is the intent of the minister, then I think he should state that, that we wish to give the COs and WOs the same powers as the RCMP now have. I do not know whether that's his intent or not, but those are some very, very . . . a lot of questions that really need to be answered. And there's just a number of questions in this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Entry at a reasonable time to inspect, and again a WO, CO can enter at any reasonable time and inspect any premise required to be licensed pursuant to the Act or any commercial premise used by a person required to be licensed pursuant to this Act.

That again is carte blanche as far as I can see. And I can see why the COs and WOs would like this because their hands are not going to be tied where they would have to have somebody accompanying them if they're going to gain entrance into this. Again questions need to be asked. Maybe they require an RCMP to accompany them.

Well if there's 200 more that they got rid of, it would be a lot easier to fulfill their duties. Because even if then, if you had to have an RCMP member to accompany them, it would be easier to gain access to them if you had more than one person in a given area. And I know there's some areas of rural Saskatchewan where you're hard pressed to find a conservation officer or wildlife officer for miles and miles.

I know I had a situation in my area where the one conservation officer deals with an area that is just literally hundreds and hundreds of square miles. And he's the only person there to cover that whole area. So I can see why they would require or want more powers for inspection and entry into facilities because where are they going to get any assistance, any help for them to go into these facilities or to search somebody?

But, Mr. Speaker, there are just a number of questions in this Bill that I think they're going to have to have some stakeholders that really would like to look over this Bill. There's just a number of questions that I just picked up reading this Bill in the last hour or so, and so I'm sure there's stakeholders that would really like to go over this Bill and dissect it a little bit to see who this Bill is going to affect.

Realizing that the conservation officers do an excellent job, the wildlife officers do an excellent job, giving them more powers . . . I think the fact that they cut 200 wildlife officer positions, 200, and a lot in that member's area — a lot were cut from the North, and that member should know it if they're cut from the North. Now where do they get a conservation officer to come and do inspections or to control? Because we do know that there's poaching going on. We do know illegal fishing goes on. We know that there's an awful lot of activities within The Wildlife Act that people have a propensity to abuse at times.

So these conservation officers, wildlife officers are very, very important. But I would add again, not important enough that the NDP didn't cut 200 positions in the rural areas where the hunting and the fishing takes place. I want to remind people of that constantly: 200 positions were cut by that NDP government and they're supposedly now the protectors of the environment and protectors of the fish and game and all of that good stuff. But they are the ones that actually cut the conservation officers.

[15:00]

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I think there's going to be an awful lot of people that would like to review this Bill, assess the powers that are given to the conservation officers. But who it will really affect—I think there's going to be a lot of people that want to look at it. With that being said, I would like to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Wood River that debate on second reading of Bill No. 53 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. 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 Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to speak to Bill No. 17, the miscellaneous statutes municipal taxation — Mr. Speaker, very basically a simple Bill but there's a whole lot of history and concern and angst that people have felt for many years that took on before this Bill was introduced. And, Mr. Speaker, this NDP government really has the bulk of the blame for the situation that we find, and they have felt that they needed this Bill to be brought forward.

As we know, the NDP government amalgamated health care districts, and they forced amalgamated school boards. They tried to force amalgamate RMs . . .

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet? Member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, to raise a point of order.

The Speaker: — Would the member state his point of order.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in reviewing *Hansard* from Thursday, I would like to make a point of order pointing out that the member from Regina Wascana Plains made accusations against the official opposition members that were not appropriate. And specifically on page 1225 where the member outlined that, and I would quote:

Would it be a reward that members opposite in the '80s, when they were convicted of fraud, received their pensions, received the benefits that were coming to them?

Mr. Speaker, certainly there isn't one member of the official opposition that was convicted of fraud, and those comments are entirely out of order.

The Speaker: — Order please. I thank the member for raising this, but I have read all of the remarks that were made on that, during that particular debate. And there were likely a dozen or more comments that were made by members on both sides of the House which members could — if they want to — raise points of order. I decided to deal with them all at once and not embarrass the members of the House with the repetition of remarks which ought not to be repeated.

Clearly that remark was not acceptable, nor were several others. Order please. However, I chose at that time not to bring up the other remarks hopefully that members would get the message and . . . However, I will at this time provide opportunity. If there's any member that was speaking in that debate and wants to make a retraction, I would allow to them to do so at this time.

Order. The Chair recognizes the member for Regina South.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On Thursday in an exchange across the floor with the member for Rosetown-Elrose, the member had made a set of accusations that are patently untrue. I described them at that time as a lie. I am not sure whether that's unparliamentary or not, but clearly did little to raise the level of debate and I would apologize to the House as I'm sure the member for Rosetown will want to as well.

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

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would look at the remarks that I wrote, but this certainly . . . when we're talking about payment of pensions and things that were . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Either the member wishes to withdraw her remark at this stage or not. We're just dealing on a point of order. We are not debating. We're not into a debate.

Ms. Hamilton: — . . . offensive to the House, I would withdraw the comment that has offended the members.

The Speaker: — I would just ask the member to repeat the

withdrawal because it was not on the record at the time. The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

Ms. Hamilton: — A member of the Assembly attributes to me a comment that was offensive to other members of the Assembly. I would withdraw those comments.

The Speaker: — Order. I thank the member for Melfort for raising the point. The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope I'm able to be heard. I'd like to continue with the adjourned debate concerning Bill No. 17, miscellaneous statute municipal taxation. As I was saying, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I know. It's my light.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to continue with the adjourned debate, Bill 17, miscellaneous statutes municipal taxation. Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the government, the NDP government of the day has much if not all to be blamed for the situation that the province finds itself in . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll try it again.

The Speaker: — Order please. Members, we seem to be having a little technical difficulty and by leave of the House, I would ask the members' permission to allow the member from Biggar to make his remarks from an alternate chair.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll try once again.

An Hon. Member: — Start from the beginning again.

Mr. Weekes: — I think I will start from the beginning. I was speaking to Bill No. 17, miscellaneous statute municipal taxation. And as I was saying, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government has a lot to speak concerning of where the blame really lies in this situation, where actually tax revolts took place.

As I had said, this government has a habit of being very heavy-handed. They forced the amalgamation of health districts as well as the forced amalgamation of school boards. And they tried to have the forced amalgamation of RMs, rural municipalities, and they had to back down because of the outrage over what they were trying to do.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we're speaking of the collection of municipal taxes, as we know, by statute the RMs have to collect not only the municipal tax but also the school tax, the education portion of the municipal tax. And they have been doing this for many years. Of course they have to incur the costs of collecting the money and then passing it on to the school boards.

Now, Mr. Speaker, people, residents, property owners of this

province have been paying their tax as they expect to. But over the years the amount that individual property tax holders had to pay has increased dramatically and it's mainly in the education portion of the municipal tax.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I mean the government of the day, the NDP government are well aware of the situation over the last 16 years since they've been in power. They certainly refuse to do anything about the disparity in the amount of tax being paid. At one time, tax for education was funded by the provincial government at 60 per cent and by the property owner at 40 per cent on the average across the province. And as we found out, that not only reversed, but actually became more than 40/60 where the property tax owner was even paying more than 60 per cent of the education portion of property tax over the years. So obviously the stage was set for a revolt from the taxpayers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people in the municipalities, the property tax payers, only had certain avenues to take when they wanted to have a tax revolt. Now individuals could just withhold their own taxes, but of course if they don't pay the taxes they were charged a penalty. Normally the municipalities would give a discount if they paid five to six months ahead. And each month it was a less amount of discount till if they paid in December there'd be no discount. And if they didn't pay into the next year then they'd be penalized by I believe usually about 1 per cent per month.

So the property tax payer had limited means to actually revolt against the heavy-handedness of the NDP government. So they, the tax property payers in the province, lobbied their municipal governments to do something. And there was many, many public meetings held across the province. And a number of RMs, about 100, decided to refuse to pass the property tax funds on to the school boards.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, people withholding their taxes or RMs withholding their education portion of the tax didn't have a problem with their municipal government. They certainly didn't have a problem with their school boards. Everyone down the line wanted an improvement in the school system, in the school boards, in the schools. They wanted to keep schools open for the betterment of the young people in their areas. But where else could the taxpayers go to show their displeasure with the government handling of the education portion of the tax and really the over-taxation of the property owner concerning education tax?

Now, Mr. Speaker, these 100 RMs collected the tax from the taxpayer so the taxpayer was not being charged a penalty because they didn't pay. So the RMs just withheld the education portion and either passed it on in the new year to the school boards or even withheld the money to a later date.

Now at some point, obviously, the point was to impress upon the government of the day — the NDP government — that there's a serious concern with the amount of tax being paid by the property taxpayer concerning education tax. And it was very effective, I have to say. I mean you have to hand it to the individuals and to the RM councils that really stuck their necks out in doing this revolt to impress upon the government the seriousness of the situation.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, as we have seen, I believe it was last year or the year before, some of the RMs actually gave a discount to individuals who paid . . . Sorry, gave a discount . . . penalized individual tax holders if they paid early, just the reverse of what normally was done. So it's really . . . The intent was to have the taxpayer withhold their money to the RM until the last minute, and then they would get a discount when they paid in December.

And again it's just another mechanism, another tool that the RMs used to show their displeasure with the whole taxation system concerning education tax in the province. And this was very effective.

Now the side effect of this was that the school boards are short money. There's some issues around interest on the money that wasn't paid. The school boards, I understand, are concerned that they've lost some money because of this tax revolt. And again it wasn't the intent of RMs or taxpayers to hurt school boards, that the intent is to impress upon this NDP government the seriousness of the situation when it comes to the collection or the payment of education tax. And again the only way that they could display their displeasure with the high taxation rate was to withhold.

So I've demonstrated some of the novel ideas that the RM councils came up with to pass this displeasure of the taxpayer onto the government.

[15:15]

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, as we know now in this Bill, the RMs are going to be held responsible for doing monthly financial statements. And then I believe what's also in this Bill that they will have to pass on the education portion of the tax onto school boards on a monthly basis so that they are being forced into paying basically on time. And again it just speaks to the dire situation that RMs and school boards and parents and property taxpayers are in because of the government's lack of funding of the education system over many, many years.

So what is a municipality to do? This government is going to bring in and ram this Bill through and really, you know, really deflect the criticism that is due to the government and place it on the RMs where it shouldn't be. The RMs is just the vehicle of the taxpayers of this province and, through the RMs withholding tax, to display their displeasure with the underfunding of the education system by this NDP government.

And this isn't something that just happened overnight. This has been going on for many, many years. This government has been in power for 16 years, and this problem with underfunding of the education portion of the tax is growing and growing and growing, and it's obviously that's what prompted this tax revolt by the citizens of this province, by the taxpayers of this province.

Naturally, as the official opposition always does, we speak to the stakeholders and we will be doing that again with this particular Bill. And it's really, the real problem with this whole situation is not . . . It's not the citizens' fault. It's not the taxpayers' fault. It's certainly not the RMs' fault, and it's certainly not the school boards' fault that this situation has

arised. It's the NDP government's fault and their lack of funding of the education system in this province that really has come to a critical point and something has to be done.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, we will speak to the stakeholders and we will discuss this, and so at this time, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 31

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 31 — The Regional Health Services Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2)** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I'd like to add my voice to that of my colleagues who have questions about the Bill No. 31, regional health services, the amendment to this Act. The amendment was brought forward as a result of the recommendations made by the Provincial Auditor. We agree in principle that the formal service agreement is necessary in working with affiliates, affiliated hospitals, or non-designated health care organizations.

My colleagues have brought forward their concerns of some of the agencies who have an interest in this Bill. And the duty of the opposition of course is to make it clear that everyone's voice is heard and that we bring forward the very best ideas possible.

The discussions are ongoing with Sask Health, and we encourage that outstanding issues be resolved prior to passing this Bill. We know what the government's history was like with The Ambulance Act where they really failed to consult with the ambulance operators. And it really is very necessary that discussions continue.

In speaking with SEMSA [Saskatchewan Emergency Medical Services Association], we know that their concerns were the fact that one year's notice can be given without cause. The banker may say that there is no long-term business plan to warrant a business loan, and it affects business planning.

We also are concerned that when notice is served to terminate the contract, once notice is served to terminate the contract, there are provisions for RHA [regional health authority] to buy out the operator at fair market value. However the ambulance operators argue that if the extent of any conflict is only one year, the value of their business is greatly diminished.

And lastly, the provision that gives 14-days notice to remedy any service disputes followed by ceasing of the payment is

problematic. Operators feel the need to be a longer period to resolve this disputes before payment is ceased.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we know the discussions are moving along and that there are other agencies that want to speak to us about this Bill, so at this time I would move that this Bill be adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved that this do now be adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 37

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

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to speak to this Bill, Bill No. 37, The Court of Appeal Amendment Act. Madam Deputy Speaker, it's my understanding that this Bill in effect reduces the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal from nine to seven members. Madam Deputy Speaker, I presume that's in response to the lack of activity and population in this province.

However, there are some issues around this matter, Madam Deputy Speaker, particularly relating to the caseload of the justices of the Court of Appeal and the backlog of cases and so on. In the remarks by the minister when he introduced the Bill, Madam Deputy Speaker, a former chief justice is quoted in the minister's remarks as suggesting that the workload in this province is light for a nine-member court. And that may very well be, Madam Deputy Speaker.

But having worked in and with the Court of Appeal and other courts during the 1970s, I can say that the workload of the then seven-member court was heavy. And the backload of cases, both civil and criminal, was fairly substantial at all times through the '70s when I was there. More research and consultation will be required to determine what the current workload is and to decide, Madam Deputy Speaker, what is appropriate, the appropriate number of Court of Appeal justices to deal with that caseload in an expeditious fashion.

It's telling, Madam Deputy Speaker, that after 16 years of NDP government in this province that the population and activity in the province is sufficiently diminished to even have to consider reducing the size and capacity of our highest court, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal. Also, Madam Deputy Speaker, I suspect that it may be much more expensive to be forced to increase the size of the court in the future again under some more progressive government. Accordingly, Madam Deputy Speaker, we will need to conduct more consultation and

research before any formal decision can be made. And I suggest that the government do the same, Madam Deputy Speaker. And accordingly I move to adjourn this matter.

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. 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: — Recognize the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to speak to Bill No. 43, The Payday Loans Act this afternoon.

According to the news release on March 12, the purpose of this Act is to provide "a comprehensive framework for the regulation of the payday lending industry and provide protection for borrowers [those] who use payday loans."

Payday loans are by and large a very expensive way for consumers to meet their temporary credit needs. However the demand appears to be rapidly increasing. The demand is obviously spurred by the very convenience that the consumer is able to access cash prior to their receipt of their paycheque. For the lender, there are obvious risks — risks in collection of the loan proceeds, in dealing with customers with whom they may not be familiar, and in dealing with customers who may be transient in nature, etc.

Because of the nature of the risks for the lender, very high interest rates are charged on these loans. Various fees are associated with obtaining the proceeds of the loans as well. Section 347 of the Criminal Code makes it an offence to charge more than 60 per cent interest per year on a loan. And provincial legislation has previously been implemented in other provinces.

However the federal legislation does not address the area of fees. There has been support from the Canadian Payday Loans Association for regulation within their own industry. However the association at present represents less than one half of the payday loan operations in the country.

The payday loans industry has similarities to the cash-back tax preparation services where for a fee the tax preparer will advance your anticipated refund for a substantial fee. This really only differs from the practice of payday loans procedure in that the cash-back tax preparers actually are loaning funds based on the anticipated tax refund, but they are also actually providing an additional service — that is, preparing and filing the tax return for the individual.

This industry, the cash-back tax preparers industry, are

regulated in what they can and cannot do and what they can and cannot charge. Their regulations has resulted in minimizing the abuses that were apparent in this service industry as it evolved. The cash-back tax service too saw an ever-increasing demand and not that long ago a completely unregulated and underground practice preying on those in need of ready cash was ripe with horror stories.

Fortunately, the cash-back tax service industry has been cleaned up. The cleanup was lead by industry leaders and guided by legislation, legislation similar to that proposed in this Bill No. 43 regarding the practice of payday loans.

As well the provisions of this Act provide for licensing of those providing payday lender services, financial security provisions for the lender services, and provisions for suspension, cancellation and expiry of licences. Provisions that provide for written agreement within prescribed periods in a prescribed manner is an important part also of this legislation. This should put to an end or at the very least minimize some of the abuses that have been brought to our attention, among them surprise charges and fees, unexpected increases in rates charged, and requirements for customers to sign and commit to unreasonable commitments and so on.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Bill, in that it is a new Bill, a Bill addressing new ground, apparently has support — support of the association representing the payday loans industry and support of consumer rights advocacy groups. However we have not seen or been privy to the proposed regulations, and the regulations in many respects will ultimately determine the effectiveness and fairness of this Bill should it pass into law.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as this Bill is rather extensive in nature and lengthy, we will require more time to examine the Bill. And for that reason, I would move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 43 at this time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 43. 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 Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Speaker, it's a pleasure to take a few moments this afternoon to speak to Bill No. 44, The Class Actions Amendment Act.

The minister in his second readings speech mentioned that the

reason for The Class Actions Amendment Act, 2007 was to deal with situations where relief sought as a result of mass injuries. And he was talking about different areas where . . . and the fact that issues of class actions may not just impact people in one jurisdiction but indeed maybe in other jurisdictions across this country such as, say, a class action suit is initiated in the province of Saskatchewan but it may affect people across, right across . . . whether it's in Manitoba or Ontario or another province here in Canada.

[15:30]

And if I understood the minister correctly, he was indicating that in many of these cases where a class action suit may be brought forward in one jurisdiction, it didn't necessarily mean that that class action suit would apply in the next jurisdiction. In fact the understanding I had was that if a similar situation arose in another jurisdiction, that another class action suit had to be initiated. And if I understand the intent of this legislation correctly, it's going to facilitate class action suits that would follow similar circumstances interprovincially, and it would save a lot of additional suits that would have to be moved forward with.

And I think, Madam Speaker, we are reminded of class actions suits and how they impact people across the country in the residential schools class action suit that has been going on for the past number of years and in the last year or so was resolved. However to date I believe there's a number of issues still outstanding in that suit in regards to payment and how that payment is being arrived at and paid out.

So, Madam Speaker, it would seem to me that this legislation is certainly appropriate legislation. The one thing I would be concerned about, my colleagues and I, is that by expanding the way class action suits are moved forward and the fact that they can be moved forward jurisdictionally, would that we would want to be assured that this would not lead to frivolous class action suits by individuals that would . . . whereby they would be putting either companies or other individuals or groups of people at a conflict or in a difficult situation because of the broad expanse of these class action suits.

The minister also pointed out that when a class action suit is initiated, that class action suit would automatically . . . For residents of a province, anyone who was involved would automatically be a part of a class action. However if they choose to, they can choose to opt out of that class action suit. So if a class action suit was raised and it just so happened it affected a certain individual and they felt they didn't necessarily want to be involved in the class action suit, this legislation now gives them the opportunity to opt out.

Conversely if a person outside of the province feels that the class action suit that is being undertaken in the province is one that would certainly be something that they would want to be involved in, and rather than having to initiate an additional class action suit, they could opt in to that class action. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, it certainly appears that that would be appropriate, and that would seem to me that would be the appropriate action that would be taken.

But the minister has indicated it's also where they . . . given the

opportunity for individuals to opt in or opt out and to ensure that their rights and their interests were addressed in a class action suit . . . So while it's become a broader issue, it is also placing some onus on individuals themselves to take some responsibility in regards to class action suit as to whether they feel that it's in their best interests to become involved in the class action, to opt in on the class action suit or to opt out.

The minister also indicated that one of the biggest challenges in respect to multi-jurisdictional class actions concerns accessibility information. And he indicated that this Bill requires that a person who commences a class action in Saskatchewan gives notice of the application to the plaintiff and the class action elsewhere in Canada that involves the same or similar subject matter. And this would appear to be, Madam Deputy Speaker, only the appropriate and proper thing to do in ensuring that individuals right across this country are well informed of where a class action suit is going, what the purpose is, what the intent of the class action is, and that indeed that the appropriate information or all of the information that would be applicable to that action and would certainly be coming forward.

And so, Madam Deputy Speaker, it would appear at the outset as we look at the legislation that we have in front of us, Bill No. 4, The Class Actions Amendment Act, that it is a . . . the changes are being brought forward are certainly appropriate. And however, Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe they need to be looked at very carefully to ensure that the intent of the changes to this or the amendment to this legislation certainly meets the needs not only of the people of Saskatchewan but people across this country.

And, Madam Deputy Speaker, my colleague, the member responsible for this, as critic for this piece of legislation, has sent out information on the legislation to a number of groups, the Law Society and Saskatchewan Trial Lawyers. And we are currently waiting — the fact that this piece of legislation is fairly recently introduced in the Assembly — we are currently waiting for further information coming back to our caucus in regards to the Bill before us and whether or not the Bill meets all the requirements of what its intent and purposes were. And therefore, Madam Deputy Speaker, till we receive that information and are assured that the legislation meets all the requirements that the minister was addressing and raised with this Assembly, I would move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 44. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. Recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, in order to accommodate the good work of the standing committees on Human Services as well as on the Economy, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the

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 Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House does stand adjourned till tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:34.]

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