



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, I have today again a petition in regards to the need for dialysis units in the province of Saskatchewan to attack the issue of diabetes, and I read the prayer in regards to a dialysis unit in the Broadview Union Hospital. 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 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 petition I present today is signed by folks of the community of Broadview. I so present.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have yet another petition signed by residents and voters, asking the government to maintain full service of the SaskPower office in Rosetown. Mr. Speaker, they are concerned that if the office closes, the citizens of Rosetown and surrounding communities will not have a personal contact with a SaskPower representative. The prayer of the petition reads:

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

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I believe all of the signatures on this petition come from the community of Rosetown. I'm pleased to present it on their behalf.

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

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the dangerous practice of transferring patients from one ambulance to another on the highway. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to cease the transfer of patients from one ambulance to another while en route.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals all from the city of Moose Jaw. I so present.

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again today I have a petition with citizens concerned about their 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 Middle Lake, Watrous, Norquay, Yorkton, Canora, Humboldt, and Meacham. I so present.

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

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I rise to present a petition on behalf of residents of this province who are very concerned about the condition of Highway 18. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to invest the needed money to repair and maintain Highway 18 so it can return to being a safe and economical route for Saskatchewan families and business.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by folks from Radville and Regina. I so present. Thank you.

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

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

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I

rise with a petition from citizens of the Lafleche and district that are extremely concerned that the withdrawal of lab services would cause undue hardships, especially to seniors. 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 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 good citizens of Lafleche, Woodrow, Glentworth, and Limerick. I so present.

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

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the government's handling of our health care system and recruitment of doctors. 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 lab services are continued at the Lafleche and District Health Centre.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures are all from the fine community of Lafleche. I so present.

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to read a petition that concerns the condition of Highway 368, starting 4 miles south of Lake Lenore to 4 miles south of St. Brieux. And they're very concerned that the highway endangers the safety of drivers and harms economic growth in the area. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 368 in order to address safety and economic concerns.

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

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

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

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition with citizens opposed to possible reductions of services to the Davidson and Imperial health centres:

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 Davidson and Imperial health centres be maintained at their current level of service at a minimum with 24-hour acute care, emergency, and doctor services available as well as lab, public health, home care, and long-term care services available to users from the Davidson and Imperial areas and beyond.

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

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

**Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to rise in the House today to present a petition calling for the widening of Highway No. 5, a highway that goes from Humboldt to Saskatoon and is one of the main corridors east to west. I'll read the prayer:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from RR [rural route] 6, adjacent to Saskatoon in my constituency of Saskatoon Southeast. I so present on their behalf. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

## NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 55 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: what is the proposed date for the start of construction for the clean coal plant at the Shand power station at Estevan?

Thank you.

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 55 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: how many individuals purchased GreenPower from SaskPower in 2006?

And in addition, Mr. Speaker:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: how many organizations — with a breakdown of how many NGOs, government department or agencies, and private organizations — purchased GreenPower from SaskPower in 2006?

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader, the member for Moose Jaw North.

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure on behalf of the Premier to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly guests who are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and who are the provincial leadership of the Knights of Columbus.

The Knights of Columbus is a Catholic family, fraternal service organization with over 11,000 members in Saskatchewan and 1.7 million members internationally. 2007 is an important milestone in this province as it marks the 100th anniversary of the Knights of Columbus coming to Saskatchewan. In fact 100 years ago, the first Knights of Columbus council was chartered right here in Regina, the Regina council no. 1247.

The Knights serve their church and their communities in various ways, and last year, Mr. Speaker, the Knights of Columbus in Saskatchewan gave just under 1 million hours in volunteer work and donated in excess of \$1.5 million to various charities. The Knights in this province support such needs as the Special Olympics, senior citizen housing. They provide college bursaries and assist medical programs and youth projects. In recent years, Knights in Saskatchewan provided financial aid to Manitoba flood victims and last year sent four semi truckloads of clothing and household effects to Hurricane Katrina victims in Biloxi, Mississippi. The Knights of Columbus principles are charity, unity, fraternity, and patriotism.

We have the provincial leaders of the Knights of Columbus with us, and I'd introduce them and I would ask that as I introduce them if they would just stand and then we'll acknowledge all of them together at the end. I'd like to introduce, Mr. Speaker, to you and the members of the Assembly, the number one knight in the province who is a state deputy, Marvin DeSchryver of Denzil. He is accompanied by the immediate past state deputy, Bob Barkman of Saskatoon; also state chaplain, Father David Tumback of Saskatoon; state secretary, Arden Andreas of Lancer; and state treasurer, Ed Gibney of Saskatoon; state advocate, Gilles Doiron of Moose Jaw; and state warden, Dennis Carignan of Battleford.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of the Assembly join me in welcoming the provincial leaders of the Knights of Columbus to their Assembly, and at the same time congratulate them on 100 years of service to the people of Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the

official opposition and as a member of the Knights of Columbus, it is a pleasure to welcome the representatives of the Knights of Columbus to their legislature today, a privilege to have them with us today as they celebrate their 100th anniversary this year.

Since the first Knights of Columbus council was formed here in Regina in June 1907, the organization has grown from 64 members to well over 10,000 members who sit on more than 150 councils in the province. I have the privilege to belong to Biggar council 6169. We are truly blessed in Saskatchewan to have such an active Knights of Columbus organization.

The Knights participate in a wide variety of volunteer activities and projects that contribute to the betterment of life in Saskatchewan. Many in this Assembly are familiar with the Knights of Columbus track meet held annually in Saskatoon, an event that continues to support young people and sport and draws on international talent to Saskatoon.

On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to thank all of the Knights of Columbus in Saskatchewan for the dedication and service to the Saskatchewan communities. We are all richer for it.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just tell a little story about our present state deputy, Marvin DeSchryver. Back a number of years ago I had the privilege of running for the position of state warden. And Marvin DeSchryver came out first and I suffered my only election loss to date. So, Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming the Knights of Columbus state board to the legislature.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Coronation Park.

**Mr. Trew:** — I thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great honour and pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all the members of Assembly a group of 26 grades 5 and 6 students seated in the west gallery along with their teacher, Ms. Sandy Jost, and I believe there's a chaperone or two but I'm sorry I don't have the names here.

Mr. Speaker, the Huda School members represented here would look a little familiar because they're similar to a group that opened our legislature one time and shared a couple of songs with us.

And I want to commend all the Huda School and the Huda community for teaching peace every day in their school, and I want to just very proudly share that one of the happiest treasures I have in my office is a prayer rug that was gifted to me by the Huda School.

And I'm very, very proud of that and I'm very honoured that they would come and share their time with us in the Assembly. I look forward to meeting them later for pictures and then an opportunity to exchange some thoughts. And I'll learn, I'm sure, from these grade 5 and 6 students of the Huda School. Please, members, join me in welcoming the Huda School.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I see seated in your gallery, and I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, Mr. Dale Renneberg and his wife. I'm sorry I don't remember Ms. Renneberg's first name but Dale and Ms. Renneberg run a successful restaurant operation in Tisdale and certainly good to see them here in the Chamber today.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, this Chamber is a place that Dale will become even more familiar with because he's the candidate for the New Democrats in Melfort, and I'm quite convinced he'll be elected to the legislature in the next election. Thank you very much and welcome.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

**The Speaker:** — Members of the Assembly, today in the Speaker's gallery are two special visitors, two visiting Clerks from the province of Alberta. They are Louise Kamuchik, Clerk Assistant and director of House services, and Micheline Orydzuk, Clerk of journals and table branch.

The Alberta legislature recently adopted changes to their rules to reform their committee system. They based many of their changes on our committee system. Ms. Kamuchik and Ms. Orydzuk are here to observe our committee proceedings and to receive briefings from Assembly staff on implementation of such changes.

And with them today is Michel Carpentier, former intern and researcher with the Legislative Assembly Service. Members, would you please welcome our two guests from Alberta.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Coronation Park.

#### Al Gore's Presentation on Climate Change

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How fitting today, the day after Earth Day, that we in Regina and Saskatchewan got to welcome former vice-president of the United States Al Gore at the Brandt Centre.

Mr. Gore, former Vice-president Gore gave just the most moving speech I have ever witnessed, outlining many of the problems that we face, many of the challenges that we face, and many of the opportunities we face. Throughout his speech — that was filled with both scariness and much hope, Mr. Speaker — throughout the speech we all knew that we have the solutions and we just need to have the political and the individual will to make it happen.

Former Vice-president Gore was brought here courtesy of SaskTel sponsorship, and I'm grateful that we have a Crown corporation able to do that. Vice-president Gore lost an election because of some judges. The loss of the United States presidency was a loss for the Americans but it was a great benefit for the environmental movement and environmentalists worldwide. Mr. Gore has been using his abilities, considerable abilities, very, very well in the meantime.

Mr. Speaker, I thank former Vice-president Al Gore for all that he has done and particularly what he did in Regina today. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Proposed Children's Hospital in Saskatchewan

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Idea no. 9 on the Saskatchewan Party's 100 ideas for the next 100 years calls for the establishment of a children's hospital in Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan Party was pleased to learn of the site choice for a children's hospital on Friday.

However, Saskatchewan residents are frustrated that we're really no farther ahead than where we were before the NDP [New Democratic Party] finally adopted the Saskatchewan Party's plan for a children's hospital in Saskatchewan. In fact Friday's news conference, Mr. Speaker, would be better described as a desperate attempt to garner support by an NDP government on its last legs.

The problem is, Mr. Speaker, the NDP forgot to bring the dollars or a plan to the event. What we did get on Friday was an underwhelming promise of \$1 million from the NDP towards a \$200 million project — hardly a commitment in my books, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you about what is a commitment when it comes to the children's hospital in Saskatchewan. It's the hard work and dedication of the Saskatchewan Children's Health & Hospital Foundation under the leadership of Brynn Boback-Lane, her staff, board of directors, and many, many volunteers. I would like to thank the foundation members for their tireless efforts in calling for a children's hospital and educating the public and government about the benefits of having such a facility in our province.

In spite of detractors saying it would be an unnecessary duplication, the Children's Health & Hospital Foundation remains steadfast in their goal, and because of that commitment they are true to their belief that children in our province deserve the best possible health care. It's too bad that they have to wait 10 . . .

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

### **New Democratic Party Candidate in Saskatoon Massey Place**

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — On a positive note, Mr. Speaker, I'm extremely pleased to rise in the Assembly today to announce that Cam Broten is the new NDP candidate for the constituency of Saskatoon Massey Place. And, Mr. Speaker, he will be the next Member of the Legislative Assembly to represent the people of Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Speaker, Cam Broten was just one of three excellent candidates vying for the nomination, and I want to take this opportunity to congratulate and thank Diane Boyko and Monica Goulet for the energy, ideas, and passion they brought to this nomination contest.

Mr. Speaker, this race generated great interest throughout the city of Saskatoon, and it was reflected at Thursday evening's nomination meeting with a crowd of more than 400 people.

Mr. Speaker, Cam Broten is young, enthusiastic, intelligent, hard-working, and absolutely dedicated to the ideas and values at the heart of Saskatchewan's success. And he has deep roots in our party. His grandfather, Hans Broten, served as a CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in the 1960s. And at 28 years of age, he is at least 12 years younger than me, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Cam Broten on his nomination, and I have every confidence that he will prove to be an outstanding representative for Saskatoon Massey Place. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### **Tourism Saskatchewan Awards of Excellence**

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Speaker, Tourism Saskatchewan hosted the 18th annual Tourism Awards of Excellence last Thursday night here in Regina, and all in all it was an excellent evening, a night that showcased Saskatchewan's vibrant tourism industry. And while there were many first-class nominations, unfortunately everyone is not able to win an award.

It should be noted, however, Mr. Speaker, that southwest Saskatchewan was exceptionally well represented. There were 11 award submissions from my region of the province. Five of those groups made it to the final round. And, Mr. Speaker, of those five, three of them from southwest Saskatchewan walked away with awards of excellence for their efforts in tourism throughout the province.

They include the Old Man on His Back Interpretive Centre southwest of Eastend as Rookie of the Year. The Windscape Kite Festival in Swift Current won for the promotional/marketing campaign for a festival under \$20,000. And the historic Reesor Ranch in the beautiful Cypress Hills took home the Spirit of Saskatchewan Award.

While I don't have time now to name all of them, other award

winners included Dakota Dunes Golf Links for Business of the Year with less than 50 employees, and IPSCO Place for Business of the Year with more than 50 employees.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer the official opposition's most sincere congratulations to all the award recipients, and our thanks to all other nominees. Together they continue to do excellent work in highlighting the best of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### **Vibrant Economy in Meadow Lake**

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It isn't easy these days to find a real estate agent in Meadow Lake but that's only because, Mr. Speaker, they're all so busy selling houses to new residents.

In the past year alone about 50 new jobs have popped up in our community, and it's not just locals that are snapping them up either. In spite of the so-called Alberta advantage, Mr. Speaker, Meadow Lake has attracted the attention of many Albertans in recent years because of the affordability of housing, the economic opportunities, and the vibrancy of our community and of course the wonderful lifestyle.

It has been estimated in the past eight months about a dozen families have moved to Meadow Lake from Alberta alone, Mr. Speaker. According to last year's census the population of Meadow Lake is up by over 200 to the previous census and Mayor Darwin Obrigewitsch has predicted that the town will continue to grow at a rate that matches available jobs.

I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that due to the efforts of the hard-working residents of the community of Meadow Lake coupled with the sound economic planning of this NDP government with its socially progressive policies, Mr. Speaker, the job demand in Meadow Lake is expected to increase in the future and our vibrant economy is about ready to meet that demand.

Mr. Speaker, Meadow Lake is yet another example of a Saskatchewan community that is thriving, contributing to make Saskatchewan the best place to live, to work, and to raise your family. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### **Poll Results on Premier's Popularity**

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. John Diefenbaker once said that "dogs know what to do with polls." However, a recent survey conducted by Environics Research will be of particular interest to the voters in Saskatchewan. Environics phoned over 2,000 Canadians between March 13 and April 3 of this year. They asked the people in each province whether or not they approved of the performance of their

premier and the answers were quite telling.

Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach has seen his popularity rise two points since last December. Danny Williams, the outspoken Premier of Newfoundland, is up by 14 points. Gary Doer, the Premier of Manitoba, is unchanged. The rest of Canada's premiers have seen their popularity drop, but which premier has seen the nation's largest drop in popularity? Well it's the premier for Saskatchewan. According to the Environics poll, the Premier of Saskatchewan leads the nation with a 10 per cent drop.

And what could account for this plummeting popularity? Could it be his deficit budget? Could it be his appalling handling of the Murdoch Carriere scandal? Could it be his failure to address the concerns of rural parents facing school closures? Could it be the shortage of doctors, nurses, and the closures of hospital beds or even hospitals?

Mr. Speaker, I think the people who responded in the Environics poll, along with everyone else in Saskatchewan, agreed the answer is, all of the above.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Saskatchewan Party Views on Global Warming

**Mr. Borgerson:** — Mr. Speaker, just moments ago here in this city, former Vice-president Al Gore gave a powerful presentation on global warming. And I'm wondering if the opposition members will learn anything from it, Mr. Speaker, because they have a history of claiming that the science of global warming is somehow wrong.

Will the member from Estevan admit that she was wrong when she said, quote, "Scientists . . . can't assure us that there is a trend to global warming." Will the member from Thunder Creek admit that he was wrong when he said, quote, ". . . the scientific community . . . [can't] even agree as to whether or not any global warming is occurring . . ."

Will the member from Biggar admit he was wrong when he said, quote:

There's also significant debate within the scientific community about the validity of the conclusion that . . . man-made greenhouse [gases] . . . are causing climate change or global warming.

And as recently as 2006, the then Sask Party Environment critic, the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood said, quote, "I know there are varying views on climate change, and is it a real issue, and isn't it a real issue?"

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is a real issue, and today I am calling on the members of the Saskatchewan Party caucus to admit they've been wrong to deny it — which is literally the least they can do to begin to address the real issue of climate change in this world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

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

#### Flooding Conditions

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the flooding situation in the eastern part of the province is absolutely devastating. Sixteen communities have declared disaster zones. The RM [rural municipality] of Foam Lake has 39 road washouts; the RM of Invermay, 70; and the RM of Sasman, 44, and they're more severe than last year.

Yet this NDP government went on a spending spree with the rainy day fund — the stabilization fund — and they actually allocated \$550,000 for the provincial disaster assistance program. Well it's raining, Mr. Speaker, and it's doubtful that \$550,000 is going to fix the problem.

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government using the Fiscal Stabilization Fund for things like helping families in communities and dealing with flooding is a good idea rather than handing out election goodies. How much does the minister estimate it's going to cost for the flooding crisis in the province this year?

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Public Safety. Order. Order please. The Chair recognizes the Minister for Public Safety.

**Hon. Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the past couple of years, we've seen more activity under the provincial disaster assistance program in the past two years than we've seen in the previous 30. And in each of those years, Mr. Speaker, this government has been forward to make the resources available to meet the claims, to try and streamline the process, to get the money in the hands of the community more quickly, to make the program itself more responsive. We had a discussion of this very thing in estimates, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure we can have another discussion again but the point being, as the claims have come forward, this government has met those claims with resources to respond to these disasters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Flooding in the Fishing Lake area has gone from bad to worse, and the residents of that area are in desperate need of two things: immediate assistance and a long-term plan. Many still have a copy of a *StarPhoenix* article from June 1997 that discusses SaskWater's proposal to construct a ditch to drain the water eastward that would solve Fishing Lake's problem.

An NDP MLA at that time was quoted in a paper promising the



government would build a Fishing Lake drainage ditch as soon as possible. He says and I quote, "This is not a quick fix. This is a slow, down-the-road insurance plan."

That statement was made 10 years ago. That is NDP slow, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what and where is the so-called insurance plan this NDP government promised the people of Fishing Lake 10 years ago?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago when there were high waters in that area, the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority assisted the local people to establish the Fishing Lake Watershed Association, and it was established in August 1997. A plan was then developed out of that group working together with the experts, and the project was to relieve the flood risk and to provide engineering around a project.

The watershed association did not proceed with the project due to environmental issues and opposition from the downstream landowners, many of the farmers, where there were easements that were needed, and also there was a fair degree of opposition from other people within that community. So that plan was not followed through by the watershed association at that time because of opposition from other people in the area.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, the other issue is this government shuffled the problem from one department to another for the last 10 years. Fishing Lake has faced serious flooding three times in the last 10 years, and each one costs hundreds of thousands of dollars. The 1997 *StarPhoenix* article goes on to say, and I quote, "SaskWater's local resource supervisor, said Friday, the \$288,000 project would be cost-shared between the Crown corporations and local governments."

\$288,000 was supposed to be the cost or for about the same amount of money that this NDP government just brought in Al Gore. This NDP government could have solved the flooding problem and had a permanent flooding solution for the people of Fishing Lake for \$288,000 10 years ago, and we still have nothing.

Mr. Speaker, what is the total cost of the damage that could have been prevented if this NDP government would have kept its 10-year-old promise?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated before, the Fishing Lake Watershed Association tried to get the agreement of other people in that area; they were not able to do that. Last

year when the waters were starting to rise again, the watershed association, working together with the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, did go ahead with some projects to remove obstructions to increase the channel capacity between Hazel Lake and Stony Lake so that they could mitigate the impacts on Fishing Lake, but those were not sufficient to prevent what's going on this year. The amount of water this year is predicted to be much greater than it's ever been in the record of that area. And, Mr. Speaker, everybody has to work dealing with the new climatic conditions that are here.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, what the people of that area were allowed to do last fall was go in with an axe and chop down a few trees in a channel. That wasn't providing an outlet at all. The people of Fishing Lake are desperate for the government's assistance, and they wanted me to relay the urgency of the situation to the minister. The people need to know that after 10 years of promises that this government will finally take action. The people want the minister and his officials to go out there and see the devastation today.

We saw the people in boats this weekend — taking their motorboats up to a cabin, loading their possessions in a boat, and sailing them down what used to be a road to their truck a half a mile away. And right around the lake there were groups of people helping sandbags to save a cabin if they could, thousands and thousands of sandbags.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister personally tour the Fishing Lake area and will he personally meet with the people who desperately need answers from this government?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority did work with the watershed group in that area to provide a plan. And they set out all the technical information about how to do this, but the plan did not proceed, as I indicated earlier, because there were concerns about impacts on the town of Canora's water supply for example, because what effectively would be happening is moving that water down faster to cause troubles there.

There was also opposition from many of the farmers and ranchers who had lands in that area downstream from the water, and the Fishing Lake First Nation also had concerns. Last year the people who were involved have come together. I've talked with some of the local people who have been concerned about this spring already. And, Mr. Speaker, this is an area that I regularly travel through because I have a farm just north of there, and I do intend to go by and take a look.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

Martensville.

### Climate Change

**Ms. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, the pictures have been taken. The photo op is done, and the power point presentation has been packed up. Now all that remains is the grim task of cleaning up after the NDP's 16-year-long record of regulatory incompetence.

Saskatchewan people deserve to hear a debate about the future of our environment. They deserve to see the studies that have been done so far on energy alternatives. Mr. Speaker, why hasn't this government come forward with a clear plan to reduce carbon emissions?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I think that member and others from across the way who were there listening to the vice-president this morning missed the main point of his speech. And his point is that the issue of what's going to happen with our globe is above politics. And I ask that member to end up coming and working with us as we move forward on this.

As I've indicated, we will be setting out our plan for this particular province and for how we will deal with a whole number of the issues around climate change in a couple of weeks. And, Mr. Speaker, we will be setting out some very, very challenging goals for all of us. But we have to work together to do this. And for that group opposite to play politics with this is exactly the opposite of what we want to do in our country.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, what Mr. Gore said this morning was that the time for talk was over, and it is now a time for action. And that's what we're asking of this NDP government. Mr. Speaker, because of the NDP's ineptitude, this province has seen a 62 per cent increase in greenhouse gas emissions. Under proposed federal legislation, Saskatchewan will have to meet emissions targets by the year 2012.

Mr. Speaker, will an NDP plan call on SaskPower to reduce emissions targets through actual reductions or through offsets? And if by offsets, what will that cost? And are they planning to increase rates to pay for these offsets?

Mr. Speaker, these are legitimate questions on climate change proposals for our province. Mr. Gore has come and gone. It's this party's responsibility to act now. When will the real questions be answered?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, within the next two weeks, the member will have answers to those questions as we set out our whole plan. And, Mr. Speaker, what we will continue to do is fight the doubters. We'll fight those people who seed doubt throughout society around the kinds of facts that scientists have now laid before us. But, Mr. Speaker, their confreres in Ottawa last week made some comments that are of no assistance to Canadians. And, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we will be working with all of the people across this earth to make sure that what's here for our children and our grandchildren is better than what we have now.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, the NDP had 16 years to come up with a plan, but Saskatchewan is lagging behind other provinces in the debate over greenhouse gas emissions. Other provinces are already taking action. Other provinces have already set targets. In Alberta the Climate Change and Emissions Management Amendment Act sets specific targets, and those targets for emission intensity reduction have to be met by July 1 of this year.

Mr. Speaker, why has this NDP government failed to keep up? And why is it only interested in photo ops with former American politicians?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we like to stand with those global citizens who are speaking the truth to all people across the earth. And, Mr. Speaker, we will invite people to come from many places to be part of the discussion, to educate our people, and for sure to deal with the kinds of doubts spread by people like the members opposite.

And, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do that with a steadfastness because many people in this province are concerned about what kinds of things are going to happen to our country of Canada and to what's going to happen to Saskatchewan. We're going to set out a plan to deal with that. I ask the members to join with us as we do the things that we need to do to have the earth there for our children and our grandchildren.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Recruiting and Retaining Physicians

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Friday nearly 100 people attended a meeting in Shellbrook regarding their shortage of doctors. There were representatives

from the town, the RM, local doctors, and representatives from the Prince Albert Parkland Health Region. There were local people that were concerned about the potentially dangerous situation that is developing in that area.

Mr. Speaker, why are there serious problems in Shellbrook, and why are they such a low priority for the Minister? And why is he continuing to ignore shortages of medical professionals throughout rural Saskatchewan?

Mr. Speaker, on Thursday I invited the Minister of Health to this meeting. He did not attend. Was there someone there representing the minister? And has the minister received a report from that meeting? And what was in that report?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the member opposite knows the recruitment and retention of professionals in this province is a top priority for this government. And, Mr. Speaker, we have taken extraordinary steps over the course of the last two years to put in place incentive programs in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Medical Association to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that we remain competitive in a very competitive market.

Mr. Speaker, the regional health authority is the primary recruiter of physicians, not only in the Prince Albert Parkland area, Mr. Speaker, but in all jurisdictions in Saskatchewan. The Prince Albert Parkland Regional Health Authority was represented at that meeting, likely indicated that the hiring of professionals to work in Shellbrook, Spiritwood, and Big River is their first priority in recruitment, Mr. Speaker. They are hard at work.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Shellbrook currently has five doctors, and at the end of June it will drop. Two doctors recruited to this area are no longer coming, so now this is a crisis.

Mr. Speaker, Elias Nesdoly is well known to the Premier and the opposite members. In a letter to the Premier he writes, and I quote:

Is it . . . [the plan of] the Government of Saskatchewan . . . to close the Shellbrook Hospital and is the College of Physicians and Surgeons helping out in this plan . . . [to sabotage any] . . . attempts to get qualified physicians? I would appreciate your answer to this question because it goes to the very root of what . . . [the] NDP . . . [stand for in this province] and I would be very distressed and . . . [it would anger me in so doing].

Mr. Speaker, when will the minister take immediate steps to assist Shellbrook and other rural communities in finding doctors for their communities?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The NDP government considers the issue in Prince Albert Parkland, and specifically Shellbrook Hospital, Mr. Speaker, to be a priority of this government. And we are continuing to work with all of those, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that this comes forward.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite misrepresented the nature of that meeting in this Chamber on Thursday, Mr. Speaker. He misrepresented the government and the College of Physicians and Surgeons at that meeting in Shellbrook, Mr. Speaker. We continue to be committed to that community, and we will work with that community, Mr. Speaker, to help them, help the region, help the province to establish the correct number of physicians working within that community.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

[14:15]

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I can guarantee you Elias Nesdoly wouldn't be happy with the answer that was just given.

Mr. Speaker, there are problems . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please, members. Order. Member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are problems in Shellbrook. There's problems in Spiritwood. There's also problems in Hafford and Big River. And all of these problems will make things more difficult for the hospital in Prince Albert. Mr. Speaker, unless new doctors are found shortly, remaining physicians in the Shellbrook Hospital will think of stepping down. They are frustrated and they will leave. The problem will only get worse, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what immediate steps will the minister take to assist new communities, these community in resolving this potentially dangerous situation?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If the member opposite consults the jobs, HealthCareersInSask.ca jobs listing on the Internet, Mr. Speaker, he'll see that Prince Albert Parkland is currently recruiting for three family physicians in the region — one for Shellbrook, one for Big River, one for Spiritwood — Mr. Speaker, very aggressively recruiting.

Mr. Speaker, the member asks, what can this government do to facilitate that? Mr. Speaker, we need people like the member

opposite to work with his community to create corporations or organizations or whatever, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the community is ready to retain and recruit.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite can work with his community, can work with others around Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the community is as well prepared to recruit and retain as others in the province.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Emergency Health Services

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've just learned that there's going to be a disruption of emergency services at the Gull Lake Health Centre. And from what I understand, there will no longer be 24-hour coverage available at that facility. In fact services have been clawed back to daytime only. So I guess the people in this area of the province should make sure that they don't have any accidents after 7 p.m. because they might not get care at the Gull Lake facility.

Mr. Speaker, the reason cited for this reduction of services is a shortage of registered nurses. How long will the people in Gull Lake and area be without full-time emergency services?

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

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite knows that regional health authorities make decisions on a day-to-day basis to ensure the safety and protection and security of the people who live within the service areas of various facilities.

And, Mr. Speaker, from time to time there are vacancies created either by professional development days, sickness, maternity leave, or other matters affecting staff within a facility, and the regional health authorities take action to ensure the safety of the clients and patients. Mr. Speaker, the members of the . . . people surrounding the Gull Lake facility have been or are being notified about the temporary restriction of hours at the Gull Lake facility, Mr. Speaker, and they are being advised to ensure that if they have an emergency, to call 911 to ensure that they are transported to the nearest available facility.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Speaker, Gull Lake is on the No. 1 Highway, and that stretch of road has had and still has a reputation for serious car accidents. And as the minister well knows, sometimes the first hour of treatment can make the difference between life and death. How could this government let health care services erode to the point that communities around the province can no longer rely on 24-hour emergency services?

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

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The regional health authorities recognize and understand the challenges that are faced by individuals when there are temporary reductions in hours at facilities. Mr. Speaker, the regional health authority is doing all that it can within the human resources available to them, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the patient's safety is first and foremost.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite can assist by assuring that members within the area, within the community, recognize and understand the notices that they've been provided, and that they, in an emergency situation in the evenings or early mornings, contact or call 911 to ensure that the ambulance is there to ensure that they go to a facility that is fully staffed and prepared to accept for treatment any individual who requires it.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Speaker, I have also learned just in the last little while that the Cabri health centre has had to reduce emergency service over the weekends. The minister is on record saying that rural closures are a fact of life. And yet when challenged on that statement, he then tried to downplay the issue saying that there are only a few areas in the province that are having staffing issues and closures. Only a few, the minister says.

Well, Mr. Speaker, let's review the communities that are constantly being affected by health facility closures. There's Spiritwood, Big River, Shellbrook, Preeceville, Canora, Kamsack, Arcola, Bengough, Coronach, Broadview, Central Butte, Vanguard, and now, Mr. Speaker, we can add Cabri and Gull Lake. That's almost every corner of this province. How could this NDP government allow rural health care to erode to this point?

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

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite has good accumulative math, but, Mr. Speaker, his math on a day-to-day basis is not very good. There are currently three facilities that are temporarily closed because of a nursing shortage, Mr. Speaker — Arcola, Gull Lake, and Cabri, Mr. Speaker — just three.

The member also knows from a discussion that occurred in this House last week, Mr. Speaker, that on the website there are some 780 health-related jobs that have been posted. Mr. Speaker, he also knows that we have now received more than 850 applications for those jobs, Mr. Speaker.

Thanks to the work, the incentive, and the programs that have been put in place by this government and our partners in the health care sector, Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with — incrementally, Mr. Speaker — we are dealing with the health care human resource shortage, Mr. Speaker, in this province, and we will continue to do so.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Mr. Speaker, it's no secret that we have a severe shortage of registered nurses and doctors in the province of Saskatchewan. And it should come as no surprise to the members opposite that this result came about as a result of decisions that they have made to put us into this mess.

Mr. Speaker, when staff levels become dangerously low, facilities have to reduce services or close. Mr. Speaker, the question is, is this part of the NDP's plan to abandon rural health care and to close more facilities?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — The simple answer, Mr. Speaker — and I've given this answer before when I was asked this ridiculous question, Mr. Speaker — the simple answer is no. The member opposite is aware that the retention and recruitment of health professionals in this province, Mr. Speaker, is a priority for this government.

Mr. Speaker, we are also aware of the incredible competition that's occurring in North America, Mr. Speaker, for individuals with these skills and these credentials. Mr. Speaker, we are remaining competitive with other jurisdictions in North America, Mr. Speaker, because of the efforts that we have made over the last six years, Mr. Speaker. We are committed to and will continue to work to ensure that we have an adequate number of health care professionals in our province — recruitment, retention, education, and bursaries, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

##### Surgical Care Initiatives

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to call your attention to Saskatchewan's recently announced plans for our surgical care system and our efforts to address wait times for services.

As you know, the federal government has provided Saskatchewan with about \$25 million in one-time funding in exchange for introducing a wait time guarantee. We were required to choose from one of the five priority areas in which pan-Canadian benchmarks have been set: cardiac surgery, sight restoration, joint replacement, cancer treatment, and diagnostic imaging. Saskatchewan made a commitment to guarantee wait times for cardiac bypass surgery by or before 2010.

Of course we do very well already in the area of cardiac surgery and we are well positioned to meet cardiac benchmarks. The capacity we have built in this area will enable us to do some fine tuning, plan for the long term, and hopefully not have to resort to sending patients elsewhere to receive services.

It will also ensure that we can use the federal funding in other areas of need. I must make it very clear we are not required to use the funding exclusively for cardiac services, though some will be directed in that area. Mr. Speaker, we plan to invest the funding in projects that help us build our system's capacity to provide other services and to further shorten wait times across the board.

First we will build a free-standing ambulatory surgery centre in Regina. This facility will be used exclusively for day surgeries and day procedures. When fully operational, it will be able to handle about 5,000 cataract surgeries and 4,000 other procedures every year. This type of centre has been very successful in other jurisdictions. We are confident it will provide not only immediate benefit for patients, but will have a significant and sustained effect within our health system.

The centre will help us to reduce wait times for patients needing cataract surgery — another of the five priority areas identified by the first ministers. It will help us keep up the growing demand for day surgery and reduce the backlog of patients waiting for such procedures. It will relieve pressure on hospital operating rooms and free them up to do more complex surgeries. That in turn will have a positive effect on those who have been waiting longest for surgeries, many of them orthopedic patients.

Most important, this facility will put patients' needs first and foremost. They will typically be people in fairly good health who require less complex surgery. The centre will not handle emergency cases so there will be very little chance that surgeries will be cancelled. Patients will also minimize their exposure to organisms that can be present in hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, we will work closely with surgeons and other health providers as planning for this facility progresses to ensure that we are fully prepared and fully staffed when the centre opens. We have achieved considerable success in recruiting and retaining health professionals and will continue working with the health regions to meet the demand for nurses, physicians, and specialists.

Mr. Speaker, the second major area to receive funding is cardiac services. About \$6 million will fund capital improvements and equipment purchases in Saskatoon and Regina. These measures will very quickly improve the way cardiac patients move through the process of diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. They will also help to ensure that we meet wait time benchmarks for cardiac bypass surgery.

Third, we will provide funding to purchase and upgrade equipment in provincial and regional hospital operating rooms and recovery rooms. And finally, we will direct funding on a pilot project on patient recourse, one of the federal government's conditions in providing Saskatchewan with additional health funding.

Mr. Speaker, these initiatives will help us build on our successes and improve access to a variety of services. They are not only good news for residents in urban centres, but also for those in rural areas.

Saskatoon and Regina Qu'Appelle health regions provide

specialized services for all Saskatchewan residents. In fact last year one-quarter of Regina's surgeries and more than a third of Saskatoon's were for patients from other health regions. Our tertiary centres also serve significant rural populations within their own regions.

Initial planning for the new free-standing ambulatory surgical centre have already been completed. The centre is only one of many capital construction projects under way across the province. Others are proceeding and some will be completed this year in a number of communities including Swift Current, Maidstone, Preeceville, and Moosomin.

Saskatchewan's health capital construction process follows best practices for planning, design, and construction. We work hard to complete projects in a timely manner to provide rural and urban patients with access to high-quality facilities. Mr. Speaker, all Saskatchewan people will benefit from shorter wait times, more efficient processes, and increases in our capacity to provide health services.

Saskatchewan has a comprehensive plan and we are making progress. We are committed to meeting Saskatchewan's target time frames for all surgeries and pan-Canadian wait time benchmarks. Our innovative approach and our careful planning are making a difference for patients.

We will continue to press the federal government for a long-term funding commitment that will ensure sustainable progress. And we will continue working towards our goal of serving the best interests of Saskatchewan people by providing all patients with timely health services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to stand and respond to the ministerial statement that was sent over before lunch, and I appreciate it. You certainly see them coming when they come in these pink file folders. You can't miss them.

Anyway the issue around the announcement that was made on Thursday of last week. The minister is talking about the main structure, I guess, is the free-standing ambulatory care centre. He talks about, a little bit about first of all where the money came from, and it was an agreement signed with the federal government that saw some money come to Saskatchewan.

[14:30]

I found it really interesting. I happened to be at the announcement when the minister was sitting beside the federal minister, Tony Clement. I was at that announcement. I was also at the announcement on Thursday when the minister spoke about this ambulatory care, stand-alone centre. And I do notice there was quite a marked difference in the minister's demeanour when he was sitting beside the federal minister, Tony Clement. He was wanting that \$25 million badly but he just could not stand sitting there, and it was so obvious to the media. That was

the question that the media put to him many, many times.

It was a terribly uncomfortable situation for him to be in, but he had to be there because he needed, he wanted the \$25 million, which I would have welcomed — the \$25 million. But it was just the conflict, I think, and just the uncomfortable feeling he had sitting beside a Conservative federal minister when he came with a cheque. And that certainly was evident. He wasn't quite so uncomfortable on Thursday, though.

And I certainly would say, if there is one thing that I have noticed more than anything else over the last couple months, is the announcements after announcements. I would almost be assured that this government was in its fourth year, only weeks, maybe months away from a general election. And that's exactly what the announcement on Thursday looked like, and it's exactly what the announcement on Friday looked like for the children's hospital in Saskatoon.

The government has been in power for 16 years. This government has been in power for 16 years. We've kept raising the issues on health care and the wait times, and just on the eve of a provincial election I believe the government is now saying it will start making announcements . . . or start making a difference and making promises.

This facility that he talks about today and talked about last Thursday will be a couple of years in the making. It'll be two years or better before we see it in service, which certainly raises some concern because we have the longest waiting lists in many of these areas right now, and their solution will be two years down the road. So the wait lists that we see in our province that has been, I think, has been caused in large part due to some of the decisions this government has made over the last 16 years, the solution to those problems are two years down the road, Mr. Speaker.

And I think it's a lucky thing that we have elections every four years; otherwise the government wouldn't have made that decision. They wouldn't have tried to improve the lives of people in our province. They would wait until the 11th hour again.

And, Mr. Speaker, certainly a stand-alone ambulatory care or just more resources into ambulatory care is a good thing. It certainly will work towards reducing the wait times.

Our biggest concern is, and we saw it again today — whether it was in Gull Lake, a shortage of registered nurses in Gull Lake, whether it's in Spiritwood or Shellbrook or Big River — there's a huge issue around doctor retention, shortage of doctors. It's great to build a stand-alone clinic, but it doesn't work very well when that's all it is, is just a clinic, because all of these things operate and run on human resources. And we are in a huge issue, a huge shortage for human resources across the province.

And, you know, talking about building another facility, will we have the doctors and the nurses there to equip it? Or are we going to be robbing from Peter to pay Paul — taking from other areas so we can cover off this facility and leaving other areas short?

I found it really quite ironic to have the announcement at the

Pasqua Hospital in Regina on Thursday, talking about the new facility they're going to build, when the week before they had closed eight beds because they didn't have enough human resources to fill those beds. And yet we're talking about building another facility.

And the other irony . . . That was the one irony. But the other irony was hearing this government talk about eight or nine years — no, more than that — a number of years ago, probably 15, when they closed the Plains hospital. They closed the Plains hospital. We had more than enough capacity, and so we don't need a third facility in Regina. So they had no problem closing a third facility in Regina and then announcing on Thursday that we don't have enough capacity; we're going to have to build another facility.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think the absolute short-sightedness of this government was never more evident than the announcement on Thursday, Mr. Speaker. Although we will agree that we need to reduce the waiting list, whether it's cataract surgery . . . And if this will go towards that and reduce the waiting list, we're in favour of it. But the government has a huge human resources shortfall, and that will be the issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Ministerial statements.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — No, with leave to introduce guests.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Saskatoon Nutana has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce Jessica Heath, who is in the west gallery. Jessica is graduating from the College of Vet Medicine this spring with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. She has been an active member on the students' council representing the vet med college throughout the past several years.

Jessica originally hails from the coast, the west coast of British Columbia — the island actually. And it's her intention to go off on an adventure to the Yukon and practise vet medicine there for a few years and then eventually make her way back to Saskatchewan.

Joining her this afternoon is Gavin Gardner, who has also been involved in student issues at the University of Saskatchewan campus. Jessica and Gavin were here listening to Al Gore. And obviously these two young people are interested in the future of the globe. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members of the Assembly to welcome Jessica and Gavin to the Assembly.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Ms. Crofford:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With leave to introduce guests.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Regina Rosemont has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Ms. Crofford:** — We have joining us today in the House a former MLA for the Lloyd area, Violet Stanger. And I have to tell you that she's as passionate about politics today as she was when she sat in the House. I think she got a little inspiration from Al Gore today. But whenever I want to find out what's going on in the world outside our doors, I phone Vi and I say, what are they saying down at Curves? So she lets me know. And I'd like everyone to join me in welcoming her to the legislature today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill No. 66 — The Occupational Health and Safety (Harassment Prevention) Amendment Act, 2007

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

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 66, the occupational health and safety amendment Act, 2007 be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Labour that Bill No. 66, The Occupational Health and Safety (Harassment Prevention) Amendment Act, 2007 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The motion is carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Forbes:** — Next sitting of the House.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government

I'll be tabling responses to written questions no. 1,274 through 1,295 inclusive.

**The Speaker:** — Responses to questions 1,274 to 1,295 inclusive have been submitted.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 64 — The Graduate Tax Exemption Act

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

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Advanced Education and Employment.

**The Speaker:** — Advanced Education and Employment.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you. It's my pleasure to rise today to give second reading to an Act respecting a Graduate Tax exemption and repealing The Post-Secondary Graduate Tax Credit Act.

In this year's budget, our NDP government created a graduate tax exemption program for post-secondary graduates who stay in or come to Saskatchewan. Beginning this year, any graduate of an approved post-secondary education or training program of at least six months will be eligible for this benefit.

This new initiative allows for \$100,000 of tax-free income during the first five years following a student's graduation. This means an additional \$5,500 in the pockets of new graduates, allowing them to purchase a home, a car, and make investments in their futures or, Mr. Speaker, paying off a student debt. The program also reaches back one year for students who graduated in 2006. Those graduates received the 2006 postgraduate tax credit of \$850, and they too will receive the graduate tax exemption for the next four years.

This is a major investment in the future of our province and our young people and a statement of how serious we are about keeping young people right here in Saskatchewan. The graduate tax exemption program is an important component of our government's seven-point plan to address our labour shortage, increase our population, and bolster our booming economy.

It will complement our initiatives to increase training, link employers and workers, increase immigration to our province, promote our province across the country, and make Saskatchewan an even better place to live, work, and raise a family.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment that Bill No. 64, The Graduate Tax Exemption Act be now read a second time. The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and speak briefly on Bill No. 64, an Act respecting Graduate Tax Exemption and repealing The Post-Secondary

Graduate Tax Credit Act.

Mr. Speaker, I think everyone in this province applauds any efforts that are being made by any government in order to encourage our graduating students to locate and to establish their careers in our province. For far too long, many of the students that have graduated from our universities and post-secondary education training facilities have simply had no alternative but to leave this province, and that has been a great tragedy as we've watched the out-migration figures month after month over these last number of years.

Mr. Speaker, we are hopeful that this tax credit program is going to bear positive fruit and certainly the amount of monies involved have some significance over the five years.

It's interesting to note that on budget day or after budget day when the program was first announced, the University of Regina vice-president for external affairs, Kathleen Wilson — who happens to also be the Saskatchewan Young New Democratic Party's secretary — was quoted on CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] and I quote:

Students don't take tax credits into consideration. I mean it's a pretty small detail and especially students who haven't paid taxes before really. I don't think it's a big consideration. I mean students are going to go where the jobs are.

Mr. Speaker. I think that is the fundamental truth of the matter, and until recently there hasn't been the jobs in this province, and our students have been forced to leave in too many instances.

Mr. Speaker, I also note with interest that other jurisdictions have decided to take other methods into account in terms of making these kinds of programs. For example the province of Manitoba in its Throne Speech this year announced a 60 per cent rebate for tuition fees. And so for example, a person graduating with a four-year arts degree would have a \$7,800 rebate coming. Person graduating from medicine would have over \$24,000 coming. And so, Mr. Speaker, many jurisdictions are trying to retain their graduates from their programs as well as Saskatchewan.

At the end of the day, we will see if it is a better plan, has been a better plan to use tuition-fee-based kind of rebate or an income tax rebate. We're supportive in the fact that something is being done. And in order for us to consult with students and employers who will benefit potentially from this program, at this time I would move to adjourn debate.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Melfort that debate on second reading of Bill No. 64 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. 65 — The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2007**

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank very you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise and move second reading of Bill No. 65 which is the Act to amend The Income Tax Act of 2000.

In last year's budget, members of the Assembly will know that this government announced its plans to carry forward major reforms of the business tax system. These business tax reforms moved forward with eliminating the general corporate capital tax, reducing the general corporate income tax rate, and increasing the small-business income thresholds, and improving the tax incentives for manufacturing and processing.

In addition we have subsequently announced the reduction of the small-business tax rate, and we're very pleased to announce the reduction of the provincial sales tax from 7 per cent to 5 per cent.

[14:45]

Just moments ago my colleague, the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment, brought forward the graduate tax exemption changes that this government was very pleased to announce in the budget. This Bill contains in it provisions that will allow this graduate tax exemption to be deducted in determining provincial income tax and will allow any unused portion of each year's exemption to be carried forward for up to five taxation years.

Mr. Speaker, last November I also had the pleasure to announce that Saskatchewan's personal income tax system for 2007 would be fully indexed to match the national rate of inflation. That announcement continued the full indexation of the provincial tax system to the national rate ever since the income tax reform was completed in 2003. The cumulative impact of these indexation adjustments is saving taxpayers about \$85 million in 2007. Furthermore in this most recent budget that I had the pleasure to table, we announced that beginning the 2008 taxation year, Saskatchewan's personal income tax system will be automatically indexed to the national rate of inflation. The Act is therefore being amended to establish automatic annual indexation of the income tax system based on the annual change in the national inflation rate.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this Bill introduces amendments that will expand the eligibility of the income tax credit for manufacturing and processing to certain types of energy conservation equipment used in the production of electricity for sale. These amendments will modify certain federal definitions to allow them to apply here in Saskatchewan.

I do look forward to answering questions in committee pertaining to the income tax amendments that we are providing today and to looking forward to discussing with members as the Bill comes forward for review. As such I move second reading of An Act to amend The Income Tax Act, 2000.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

that Bill No. 65, The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2007 be now read a second time. The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort.

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise and speak briefly on Bill No. 65, An Act to amend The Income Tax Act, 2000. Mr. Speaker, in our preliminary reading of this legislation, we recognize that there are a number of housekeeping-related type of programs in here that make sure that the income tax is fully compatible with other initiatives that are announced by the government, in particular The Graduate Tax Exemption Act which we spoke to just a moment or two ago.

Mr. Speaker, I also recognize there are provisions in this legislation that provide for indexing of The Income Tax Act, and that is an important initiative as well as an investment tax credit for manufacturing and processing in certain types of non-renewable energy and energy conservation equipment between certain dates.

Mr. Speaker, all of these things are important updates to our income tax legislation, and we look forward to discussing these items in detail with the minister. And in order for us to have proper consultations with affected industry personnel, at this time I would move to adjourn debate.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Melfort that debate on second reading of Bill No. 65, The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2007 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — Committee of Finance.

**The Speaker:** — I do now leave the Chair so the Assembly can convene into the Committee of Finance.

#### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**The Chair:** — Before the minister begins, I recognize the Minister of Justice. Why is the member on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — I ask leave of the Assembly to introduce a guest, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** — The hon. member has asked leave to introduce guests. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to give leave?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Agreed.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you very much, and thank you to the members of the committee. This is an opportunity I didn't want to miss. In the Speaker's gallery is my son, Nathan, who I do not believe I had the opportunity to introduce to the

Legislative Assembly. Nathan is currently studying at the University of Saskatchewan, but he is also a corporal with the communication squad in reserve and in about a week starts training for an overseas tour. And I may not have had an opportunity to do this again any time in the relatively near future, so I hope that the members present will join me in welcoming my son to the Legislative Assembly and wishing him good luck in the future.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

### Motions for Interim Supply

**The Chair:** — The matter before the committee this afternoon is interim supply, and I would recognize the Minister of Finance to introduce his officials and give some introductory comment. The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am pleased today to be joined by a number of officials from the Department of Finance. Seated directly to my left is Doug Matthies who's the deputy minister of the department. Seated behind me is the assistant deputy minister responsible for the treasury board branch, Karen Layng. Next to her is Joanne Brockman, the executive director of the economic and fiscal policy branch. And seated to my right is Arun Srinivas who is the senior tax policy analyst, taxation and intergovernmental affairs branch.

Madam Chair, as you will be aware, we are dealing with interim supply today. Interim supply of course allows the government to receive approval for certain monies permitting that the work of government can happen even though the budget for the new fiscal year has not been officially approved in detail.

As was the case last year, introduction of the first interim supply Bill is coming now in April as opposed to March because of recent changes made to The Financial Administration Act, 1993 that provides for departments to have up to one-twelfth of their last year's appropriation as a temporary measure to finance ongoing government business in April.

With this interim supply Bill that we will be discussing today, we're seeking approval for an appropriation equal to two-twelfths of the budgeted vote amount for the department with two exceptions. The supply Bill seeks approval for an additional \$19.567 million for the Department of Learning which represents two-tenths of the operating grant for K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] schools, recognizing that these boards are funded on a ten-month basis.

And there's an additional \$4.6 million for the Department of Property Management for end-of-the-model-year vehicle purchases that are made between April and May.

With this level of funding requested in the interim supply Bill, departments and agencies will be able to cover their expenses for the months of April and May, and it's anticipated, at least I anticipate, that the main appropriation Bill will be passed prior to the announced closure of the House on May 17. However,

should this not occur or be delayed significantly, a second interim supply Bill would be introduced to ensure the work of government can continue. As such, I would move:

That a sum not exceeding \$1,320,506,000 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 2008.

**The Chair:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that, number one:

Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$1,320,506,000 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 2008.

To the motion before the committee?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Madam Chair, I request the information on the interim supply. I have received absolutely nothing from the minister. I haven't received any prior notification whatsoever.

**The Chair:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs. Oh, the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Madam Chair, I am very pleased to provide this. Of course it is a fairly simple two-twelfths of the budget except for the two noted exceptions. Interim supply is a routine proceeding of this Assembly, and I am sure the member will find this to be in order. I apologize if he's surprised that we're doing interim supply in April.

**The Chair:** — The member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Madam Chair. It's always nice to have information provided earlier as a courtesy, but we'll overlook that this time. A question to the minister, then, on the Learning funds — the 19.567 that he just mentioned, is any of that for capital at all?

**The Chair:** — The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The amounts are two-tenths of the Department of Learning's budget.

**The Chair:** — Member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Madam Chair. I understand that. Can the minister provide any more detailed information just than the fact that it's two-tenths? The question was: is any of that going to be dedicated for capital, for some possible construction of new schools in Saskatchewan? Can the minister provide some detail in that regard?

**The Chair:** — Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Yes. This may well be used for capital. This is an operating expenditure, but there is capital money contained in it. So it may allow some capital projects to proceed during this April and May period.

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Madam Chair. The minister says it may provide. Can he provide any information beyond that? Will it indeed provide some or it just may?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Money that we're providing is provided to divisions. It'll allow them to undertake operations in the months of April and May. It's the two-tenths that we provide.

Boards will make their decisions as to which capital projects — that they have been previously approved for — may operate during that. This is largely an operational interim supply measure. Boards will use the money judiciously.

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Madam Chair. The minister also outlined additional funding of \$4.6 million for a vehicle purchase through Sask Property Management. Can the minister outline if indeed other operations within SPMC [Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation] were considered or other options were considered rather than purchasing more vehicles? Were there other options considered, such as entering into arrangements with private operations to undertake the vehicle needs of the province of Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, the central vehicle agency undertakes a purchasing program to maintain a central pool of vehicles for government. They also involve outside clients like SaskPower and SaskTel. It's been our experience that this is a cost-efficient way of undertaking this. And there's been no review of the policy during this fiscal year.

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Madam Chair. Regarding the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation and the building communities fund, can the minister just outline how the money is going to be used under that fund? We understand that there's several, several questions that people have across the province regarding this fund. Before the applications are completed, I understand that funds are already flowing. Others aren't quite clear on the application form and the application criteria. So could the minister outline, give us some information? Certainly to this time very limited information has been forthcoming on this rather large fund.

[15:00]

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, it is customary that we provide for two-twelfths of all of the expenditures within the estimates on an interim supply basis with the two exceptions — and I noted one for the CVA [central vehicle agency] where we are dealing with end-of-year model purchases, and the second being the two-tenths issue to deal with the school division year.

The question around building communities fund, as I understand the application deadline is April 30. And I would anticipate that further to the discussions that have been going on within the committee considering Culture, Youth and Recreation, that the minister will be in a position to outline more about what the program parameters are and what the expectations are for approval of the programs once the deadlines have been met in April.

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Regarding Corrections and Public Safety, it looks like the amount, the

two-twelfths amount I believe is \$28,000, if I go from memory. I guess the only copy that we've received is now being photocopied, but from memory, just glancing at it, I believe that's \$28,000 under Corrections and Public Safety. Will that indeed be enough for what is happening in our province right now and the need for extra funding?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Yes, Mr. Deputy Chair, we are advised that this should be sufficient to meet the needs of the department over the interim period until the supply Bill is voted at the end of May.

**The Deputy Chair:** — I recognize the hon. member for Kelvington-Wadena.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I listened to your response, Mr. Minister, on the question to Corrections and Public Safety, and you feel that \$28,400 will be enough for the two months in this department.

Well I know that for the last couple of weeks we've been sitting in question period and we've been talking about the flooding in my area and right across the province. I spent the best part of this weekend out at Fishing Lake and I saw there were people there from SaskEnergy, from SaskPower, from Corrections and Public Safety, from SaskWater, from Community Resources, the Department of Health. They have a control centre set up there for people there. I'm not sure if it's 24 hours a day, but I do know it's 7 days a week. Are you telling me that \$28,000 is going to be enough for two months for the Department of Corrections and Public Safety dealing just with Fishing Lake alone?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, I don't understand where the member's getting her information from. We're asking the Assembly for \$28.635 million. We believe that'll be sufficient to deal with the department's needs in the next six weeks.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you. I know that the government is trying to save money in strange places, but getting one piece of paper 10 minutes before isn't really saving a lot of money if we don't have the right to ask questions with the numbers that we were supposed to be given. So I did not get the numbers. I apologize for not having, for using the wrong number.

But maybe now we're talking about two-twelfths of the Department of Corrections and Public Safety. The one area that I'm talking about is the provincial disaster assistance program. I believe that total amount is something like \$550,000. So two-twelfths of that would be somewhere around the — the minister can probably tell me; that's why he gets paid the money to be the Minister of Finance — he can tell me right off the top of his head what two-twelfths of that is.

And I do know from sitting out there for the last number . . . [inaudible] . . . and the people that are being devastated — not just in Fishing Lake but in Waldsea Lake and right around the province — I really do wonder if that amount of money is going to last. So could you please tell me how much money the provincial disaster assistance program is going to have in the next two months and if that's going to be enough?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, the member should be aware that the provincial disaster assistance program usually pays out at the end of an incident, and so I wouldn't expect, if there is a claim under the PDAP [provincial disaster assistance program] program, that that would occur within the next six weeks.

As the member clearly has identified, the government is doing a great deal through a number of agencies to try and assist in the operations that are happening at Fishing Lake, in fact at Red Earth and other communities across our province. But the provincial disaster assistance program is usually one of the last payers in terms of insurance claims and the rest. So damages that may come available under that program would not happen, I would anticipate, would not happen during this six-week period.

I think too, to the member's question, the amount that has been budgeted, the \$550,000 is what we were estimating. If it ends up being more than that, we of course will meet our obligations under PDAP.

**Ms. Draude:** — I'm really pleased to hear the minister admitting that they definitely are the last payer when it comes to funds under the provincial disaster assistance program, because there are a number of RMs and individuals around the province who are still waiting for money from the last two years. So being the last payer is definitely what the province is doing.

So, Mr. Minister, then the extra money that is costing areas — whether it's Department of Community Resources, Department of Health, the different Crown corporations that are out there right now — that's going to increase the expenses to their budget which would have to be happening right now. So all these different departments, are they paying for it individually? And then will they be making funds to the provincial disaster assistance program, or does the government pay for these additional expenses for each department and stay within their own department?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Probably the simplest way to answer it, Mr. Deputy Chair, is it is the latter. Departments assume costs that are necessary to deal with their operational functioning. The provincial disaster assistance program is a separate program with a very specific set of parameters around it. I don't have the parameters with me today but I'm sure the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety would be more than willing to answer those questions during the normal estimates.

I would however say that we are confident that the two-twelfths that we are asking for will be sufficient to carry the government until May 17 when we expect the main supply Bill to be passed by the Assembly.

**Ms. Draude:** — Then for the different municipalities and individuals that are waiting for money from the last couple of years, does that mean that their money won't be coming in the next two months, or is that from last year's budget?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — I haven't seen the schedule in terms of what is expected to be paid out under the PDAP program. The Minister of Corrections and Public Safety would be in a position during main estimates to do it. I should however say

that departments, when they get their two-twelfths vote, will be obviously able to move within that to cover their costs. So if, for example, there's a higher drawdown as a result of disaster assistance money, they would be in a position to deal with that. The details of what may or may not be in the pipeline for PDAP payouts between now and May 17 is a question that the member may want to pursue with the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and I do appreciate that and I think what we're discussing right now, it looks like just a number of people in a room. I can assure you that there are people right around the province watching this because of the disaster problem that's happening in a large part of our province, especially the east and central part of the province. People are needing answers. I asked in question period for the minister to come out and I'm not sure when he's coming. He did indicate he would come and I'm hoping it's quickly.

But there are some questions that need to be answered, and one of them will be things like for power and energy in Fishing Lake and the number of resorts around the lake . . . I think there are six different resorts. The power and the energy have been cut off. People are asking when they are put back on again, is this an expense that's for them as an individual, or will it be picked up because it was a part of a disaster?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — The issues as it pertains to the utilities having been cut off for public safety reasons would be obvious I think to most members. Obviously we don't want a potential explosion or an electrocution or something of that nature.

The actual response in terms of the time period for turning this back on would be left to the two Crown agencies that deal with it, SaskPower and SaskEnergy. I don't have an answer here today as it doesn't pertain to these particular estimates. If the member were wanting to pursue this in some other forum, I'm sure we can provide an answer.

**Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Minister, thank you again, and I'm sure that most people realize that the Minister of Finance can't answer all the questions.

But one of the ones that — if you don't have an answer for us now, if you could endeavour to get an answer for us quickly — is around the expenses involved. I know that the people out at the lakes understood that if they had to have their power or their gas cut off that there would be . . . that had to be done to ensure public safety. But to have it hooked up again, is that type of thing something that the Crown corporations cover, or will it have to be picked up by an individual?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, unfortunately I didn't bring that note with me as Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy. I can endeavour to get an answer to that from a SaskEnergy standpoint, and I'm sure that the Minister of SaskPower will have a similar answer. We'll attempt to do that on a timely basis.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I do appreciate that, and I will give it to the people that are waiting to hear the answers.

The other thing that I did learn this weekend was that — I learned it, but I guess we all knew it — is the fact that Saskatchewan does have a whole population that look after each other and they're there to help out. And I was really pleased and excited yesterday to see that there was emergency workers from Lloydminster and Regina out working, manning some of the checkpoints as we go into the various resorts yesterday.

I believe that this work is all done on a volunteer basis, but there must be some cost to them that they're not funded directly by a government agency I don't believe. Can you tell me is there anything that allows them to receive some funding to help them carry on their life and the fact that they're living probably four hours away from home for the next little while helping out their neighbours in Saskatchewan, even though they probably can't tell you their names?

And publicly I want to tell you that everybody out at the lake where I was yesterday was thanking them. They're just so happy at the response that's coming from around the province. And they just want to ensure that people aren't losing out of their own pockets, if there's some way that they can be rewarded for just caring about the province and the people in it.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Saskatchewan has a strong spirit of support for our neighbours and our communities. I know many of these people are giving freely of their time and their energy to make sure that these communities are protected from these flood waters. As is the case, obviously, when we have fires and other disasters across our province, it's part of our Saskatchewan spirit.

I'm not familiar with the specifics around the question that the member is asking for in terms of the policy that may be in place with Corrections and Public Safety, and as such I'm sure the minister who is here will take note of the question and will work to provide a response.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you. Again the RMs that I mentioned in question period that talked to me today, this morning, about the washouts — 77 in one RM, 44 in another RM — they're incurring considerable expense. I again come back to the minister saying that they were using one of the last payers, and I appreciate they wait until the bills come in, but at the same time they have to pay their own staff and the operators. Is the money . . . Is there going to be some effort to get some interim money out to the RMs? Are those that are trying hard to keep life going in Saskatchewan . . . will there be some pressure put on departments or some — I don't want to say pressure — or some help to ensure that they can get their money and pay their bills and keep the province going?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, I know that the minister's concern, his first concern, is public safety. The protection of property is obviously a high concern also of this administration as there's a lot of private investment in these communities.

Additionally the work that goes on that the municipalities have and the risk associated with the municipal infrastructure is an important consideration. These are all issues that are normally taken into consideration by the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety, Minister of Health, ministers responsible for the

individual Crowns, Minister for Government Relations, and there is, in fact, a fairly good working relationship with each of the municipalities involved.

So I anticipate that at this hour their focus is first and foremost on the protection of individuals to make sure the evacuation plans that are necessary are being carried out. Second of all then to make sure we can do what we can to minimize the impact on personal property, and finally on municipal infrastructure.

The minister will be in a position, as the situation becomes more clear in terms of the overall financial impact and as we get a better understanding of what the costs are that are being incurred, to provide more detailed explanation as to what program support may be available. The question the member asked, specifically pertaining to whether there's money in the interim supply to deal with it, is one that will need to be dealt with by individual ministers. I would say that given that there are currently evacuations underway in the province; obviously departments are incurring some costs. Some of that money would be worked through in terms of their priority areas.

The overall cost and impact of the flooding at Fishing Lake or Red Earth or Yellow Quill or other communities, any of the municipalities that the member's familiar with will be worked out over the coming months. And unfortunately in these situations, it does take some time to work through what the final costs are.

[15:15]

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I will be able to give the information that you've given me to the different agencies and people in my area, and I am sure that they will be waiting to hear when we've had an opportunity to speak to the individual ministers. But just for the record, I'm hoping that, as the Minister of Finance at this moment, you've got officials figuring in the number that it's going to take to build the outlet this year.

We know what it was 10 years ago, and it definitely hasn't gone down in costs. But I assure you from probably this day forward, the outlet at Fishing Lake is going to be heard by every department within your government as they make sure that they're aware that this is a priority item, not just for the cabin owners but for the towns and RMs and the people around there. So just make sure, you know . . . This is the first word you've heard on it, but it won't be the last word. So thank you very much for your help today.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, I thank the member for her questions. I know that she must also have a number of concerns for the citizens in Red Earth and Yellow Quill and other municipalities, and obviously we do also. And we'll continue to work with all the municipalities and the affected communities to make sure that appropriate resources are available to deal with their needs.

**The Deputy Chair:** — I recognize the hon. member for Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chair, and welcome to you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I'd like to spend a

few minutes, hopefully not too long, on one section dealing with pensions and pension benefits and specifically dealing with the Department of Learning.

Under the Department of Learning, of course the fairly significant portion of the Department of Learning's budget is statutory, and I'm wondering if you could explain. There are three sections within the Department of Learning that are identified as statutory, and you've indicated that on the sheet that you've distributed today that in fact there will be \$106.265 million of statutory money that will not be voted. And could you explain to the people of Saskatchewan what that means in not having to actually vote on that sum of expenditure.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Two things. First of all, Mr. Deputy Chair, if I might just revert to a question I was asked earlier about SaskEnergy and the supply, the cost of reconnect for power. I assume that member will be able to hear the answer, but there will in fact be no charge from SaskEnergy for the reconnects. This is obviously something we've done in the public safety interest and as such the citizens that are affected will not bear the direct cost of being reconnected to the lines.

With respect to the question the member for Canora-Pelly asks about the statutory provision, there are two types of expenditures we undertake in the budget. One are a discretionary set that are tabled and debated by the estimates. The second are a set that are required by law. And of course members are aware that the law simply requires a payment, statutory payment in this case, to cover off amounts that have been established in other Acts of the Assembly. The amounts that are reflected on the statutory, not-to-be-voted list are in fact those amounts that we expect will be incurred under those laws.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, then under the law that indicates that this amount is statutory, will we, the province, will the province be incurring that expenditure on a two-twelfths basis as well? In other words, do you expect that two-twelfths of the \$106 million will in fact be paid out by the end of May?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — I think I understand now what the member is asking. The question is, why are we not doing this on a two-twelfths basis also? Why is the statutory amount provided all at this time? The simple answer really is that it is required all to be paid at some point, and our view is we might as well undertake the statutory payment now as opposed to doing it in a two-twelfths basis. The remainder of the items are for normal government operations and as such are done on the two-twelfths basis. But the statutory is required and as such at the first opportunity we usually undertake the expenditure.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I note that in the Estimates document that you provided to the House back on the day that you presented the budget, your document indicates that for the statutory amount for last year, in fact, there was a significant change from the amount that you presented in the initial budget. It rose from \$138 million anticipated in the estimate document to 159 in fact, you know, \$21 million more.

Mr. Minister, my question then is if the \$106 million is statutory and you need it now as a lump sum amount, do you expect that that kind of change will occur again?

And for the record, if you could have one of your officials explain — or yourself explain — why did such a dramatic change take place last year where the estimates of the statutory amount that had to be spent was out \$21 million?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — A number of issues arise from the question the member's asked. First of all the amount, although it is shown as a statutory amount, will be paid out as is required.

Second of all, with respect to the \$21 million variance last year, we had based that in the teachers' pension and benefit line on an assumption that there would be more retirements from the profession than in fact there were. There were fewer retirements last year than we had initially projected or that the benefits agency had projected. As such, the cost of the program continued to rise by more than what we had anticipated. This year's projections are again based on the best estimates by the benefits association. If there is something that changes in that we would reflect that in, likely at mid-year.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. And I know, Mr. Minister, this question is actually going back to a little bit of last year. But for me to get a better understanding, the teachers' superannuation plan and the Saskatchewan teachers' retirement plan are the two plans that receive contributions from the Government of Saskatchewan, from the Finance department, for each of those plans.

Was the plan that forced you to allocate an additional \$21 million, was it the teachers' superannuation plan only?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — In fact it's the new plan where we incur the additional cost.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Could the minister explain then why the new plan would not have a proper projection for the retirees, based on the fact that the people that entered that plan are post-1979, and why we would be out that many dollars for retirements under the new plan?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, the issue really is the projection made by the plan. They had estimated that there would be more teachers retiring last year, which would have required less cash to be committed. What has happened is there were fewer teachers who retired and as such the government contribution was up by \$21 million last year.

These are just projections. Obviously the plan takes into account certain assumptions in terms of the number of retirements. Last year they were off. And we expect they will be back close to projection this year.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and Mr. Deputy Chair. I'm a little confused, Mr. Minister, and maybe we need to determine . . . You were indicating that the additional money was required by the new plan. The new plan is a fully funded plan that is administered by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and therefore that plan, that plan is self-sufficient. It doesn't have an unfunded liability. It doesn't have any degree . . . Because the amount of expenditure that you have budgeted this year of 40.971 million is based on the teachers that are currently in that plan. It's the contribution that government puts into that plan. It's matched by the teachers. And at the end of

retirement as I saw it, Mr. Minister, that any teachers who retire out of the new plan, out of the STRP [Saskatchewan Teachers Retirement Plan], that pension is determined by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation according to the rules that they have in place.

It was my understanding that the old plan, the teachers that are still in that plan — and it continues to decline as teachers retire — that of course government has committed that that plan will be fully funded, and each year we as taxpayers through your department contribute money to that plan. Now it was my understanding that it was that plan that was out significant in terms of projection, in terms of projection. Things changed in the year, and in fact it was the teachers' superannuation plan that had a change. And I'd like you to clarify that and explain to me again what you meant by retirements and either a loss of revenue or in fact a greater expenditure. Could you clarify that?

**The Deputy Chair:** — Why is the hon. member for Saskatoon Sutherland on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Addley:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. With leave to introduce guests.

**The Deputy Chair:** — The hon. member for Saskatoon Sutherland has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair:** — That is carried. I recognize the hon. member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Addley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm very pleased to introduce in the Speaker's gallery some very special guests: my wife Karen, who's a teacher; and my son David, who's in grade 12; and my other sons, Eric and Connor — sorry, Connor and Eric. And they're in grade 10. And they've all skipped school to come down to hear Vice-president Al Gore. And if you check the records, they're here on a real reason to address, to hear from Vice-president Al Gore address the most pressing issue facing our planet, and that's the whole issue of climate change and global warming.

Joining my family is a very good family friend, Alice Kuipers, who is the internationally published author of *Life on the Refrigerator Door*, which will be published this fall in well over a dozen countries, and is a constituent of the member for Saskatoon Nutana. So if I could ask all hon. members to welcome the entourage here today. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[15:30]

### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

#### Motions for Interim Supply (continued)

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair. Okay. After much consultation, I think we understand what the member is asking and what the appropriate answer therefore would be.

Last year we were expecting more retirements, which would have meant we would've needed not to put as much money in because we wouldn't have needed to fund the additional program. Fewer people retired, which meant there was more funding required for the plan in order to meet the numbers of teachers that stayed in the plan as opposed to moving into retirement. So the more teachers who stay on the payroll, the larger the contributions, as I understand how this works, and I think this logically holds together.

I am told that this year we are expecting some of those teachers that didn't retire last year will retire this year. Now this is getting to be complicated arithmetic, but this is what we are told by the benefits agency. And as such, we are expecting that there should be less drawdown this year than was initially projected.

So that is why those numbers are there. I mean, they are fluid. There's no doubt it depends on the number of teachers who elect to retire or not to retire. So the longer they stay on the payroll, the more — of course, because it's a funded program — the more cost that the province incurs to deal with meeting their pension. And as we understand, this is the new plan that needs to be dealt with.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Minister, then could you explain: as I understand it, the teachers' superannuation plan out of your document is the old plan. And if I look at the estimate for '06, it said it was 71.4. You're now indicating that the expenditure required for this year, statutory 63.5. You've just told me why you have lowered that number because you expect more teachers to retire. That is the old plan. Is that not correct?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Can I suggest that we simply address them by the names of the plans rather than old plan, new plan. So what we are looking at is the superannuation plan versus the teachers' retirement plan. Now we've referred to the superannuation plan as new plan. But for the purpose of what the issue of discussion is, it's about the superannuation plan and the change of estimates there. That's what the problem is, because it's a fully funded liability.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Right. Okay. We'll refer to it as the teachers' superannuation plan. And we know which plan we're talking about. It's teachers that have been teaching prior to 1979 that are in that plan — or most of them.

Mr. Minister, then as we are aware and you've just indicated, by the amount of money that the GRF [General Revenue Fund] has to put forward to match the pension requirements . . . We've had actuarial studies done for the Public Accounts Committee, I think, that have indicated that the magic year is somewhere in that 2014, 2015 where we will see the majority — and I say the majority — of those teachers who are still actively teaching today, they will now have reached retirement age, and many of them may have chosen to retire. In fact the amount that will be left in that plan will be significantly reduced. And over a period of time there will be no people in that plan because it is a closed plan and the contributions that are required.

So my question then, Mr. Minister, as the Finance minister, as you're looking ahead to the year 2015, 2020, what do you expect to have as the amount necessary for taxpayers of this province to have as an expenditure line — statutory as you've indicated, will not be voted; it is there — for this line of pension requirements? Today you're talking about \$106 million. What do you anticipate, at that time, when most of the teachers that are currently in the teachers' superannuation plan have retired?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well, Mr. Deputy Chair, although I dare fear I will probably still be the Finance minister answering the member's questions in 2015, my fear is that we will still be debating the old plan, new plan issue.

The good news is the Provincial Auditor, as I am told, based on advice that we have provided him has provided in volume 3 of last year's provincial audit report a projection out to, I think, 2020 — quite a ways into the future. I don't have that information with me today. I understand it has been made public, though, in terms of what we are expecting the cost to be to the treasury to meet our pension obligations.

So that plan has been reviewed by the auditor and, as I understand, was reported in volume 3 of last year's report. I can obviously endeavour to make that available to the member once we track down a copy of volume 3.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and as your colleague has indicated, volume 3 is on a shelf right in my office, and I'll look at it when I get back downstairs right away.

Mr. Minister, then my final question is regarding the expenditure for the entire fiscal year related to Learning. You've indicated on the sheet that this is a two-tenths requirement rather than two-twelfths. And my question then is the current contract for the teachers. And a large percentage of the staff expires, I believe, at the end of August 2007, and negotiations, I believe, have already probably started.

What has the department put in place regarding anticipated expenditure? Is there a specific number that has been put in place for what might be a new contract that will start on September 1, '07?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — As these items will be bargained later this year, we have simply used an assumption that the agreement would be comparable to what we have settled with SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] on. If the agreement is something different than that, I will revise estimates at that point or deal with that issue as it comes up.

I do want to just indicate that I have in fact of course written the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party, asking him to confirm that it is his party's position that the bargaining base should be 5, 5, and 5 as was indicated by the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

We were obviously concerned to see this break out and see essentially a bidding war at one of the teachers' conventions. I wrote some two months ago about this. I would anticipate that the Leader of the Opposition at some point would be reasonable enough to provide me with a response to my correspondence.

Obviously it's important for us to know what expectations are being driven by opposition parties as we head into a negotiating situation.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, as I've indicated to this House many times before, and so has the members of the opposition, is that putting a mandate before a bargaining team like 0, 1, and 1 does not contribute to good negotiations. And we saw that happen in the last go-around. So I would suggest that if you're anticipating that the trend that has been set in negotiated contracts thus far is going to set the parameters for negotiation with the teachers' federation, then you should be able to indicate to me then what amount of dollars have you actually put forward in your estimates booklet for an anticipated new contract on September 1, '07.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — We have built in an estimate based on what the SGEU settlement was. The actual cost allocated will need to be determined at the bargaining table. I appreciate the member's concern about establishing mandates which is why of course I was shocked to read the comments by the member for Saskatoon Southeast, the Sask Party member, suggesting it would be a 5, 5, and 5 which is obviously significantly different than what's been negotiated at other tables.

I trust at some point the Leader of the Opposition would be good enough to respond to my correspondence to clear up any misunderstanding we may have about what the Sask Party's position is.

**The Deputy Chair:** — I recognize the hon. member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, a couple more questions for the minister before we wrap this up. Regarding Health, we saw a major announcement on Friday regarding a children's hospital for Saskatoon. I see that ... for Saskatchewan. We've got two-twelfths interim supply, \$577 million. I guess what was underwhelming — is the word that has been used around that news conference — was that this government committed \$1 million to this project that is estimated in the 100- to \$200 million range. Can the minister outline if there is indeed any additional funding towards a children's hospital that comes from the interim supply?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Obviously, Mr. Deputy Chair, we are seeking a study to ascertain what the full cost of the children's hospital would be before committing the resources to undertake it, just as we would any other capital project.

Now the member opposite of course has criticized me at great length in this House — well not great length in this House but certainly outside of the House, seems unable to find his feet in the House to ask me the questions — but was criticizing us for unsustainable spending. He now seems to be of the view that 220 million should be readily available and provided for without the detailed planning.

Obviously on this project, we need to make sure that not only is the costing undertaken appropriately; we've got to factor in appropriate inflation. But given the complexity of the reorganization that the Saskatoon Health Board is looking at, I think we would want to make sure that that plan makes sense



also.

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well certainly, the sustainability factor does come into play when you see a budget that has very, very few projections beyond the election cycle. And the financial cycle, if you like, of the province has been totally ignored. And on that theme, we were talking about two-twelfths on expenditures and interim supply.

Can the minister outline on a two-twelfth basis . . . because I know he doesn't like talking about projections of revenue into the future too much. But on a two-twelfths basis, can he comment on how revenues are looking for this province? Are they ahead of the budgetary estimates? Certainly when the numbers were calculated for the budget, I'm sure it would have been early March, mid-March at the latest. We're well beyond a month to six weeks beyond that. Can the minister outline if indeed we will have extra revenue, so we can hope that things are sustainable in this province?

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Well we're now 23 days into the new fiscal year and, as such, I can report to the House that our assumptions that we have built into the budget appear to be on track. We will obviously, as the year moves on, have a much better understanding of what things look like in the other 300-and-some days of the year.

What we need to deal with again . . . And I appreciate the question about sustainability from the member opposite. I find it curious that on the one hand, he criticizes us for the spending that is undertaken and, on the other hand, pushes us to undertake more. It appears that it is all about politics. And I think that that is a very unfortunate position that the member is at some point going to have to square.

This government, of course, has a proud record in terms of the approach that we have taken with paying down the debt — almost \$1 billion since we were re-elected. The money that we've been able to provide to support health care and education — the priority areas of Saskatchewan people — the money that we've been able to provide for the 10-year, \$5 billion highways plan are all items that meet not only the test of public acceptability but of sustainability. If the member wants us to undertake significant new spending, I would appreciate it if he could identify where that would come from.

[15:45]

**Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Certainly it's surprising to hear from the minister who doesn't want to talk about projections beyond the next few months, can't even give us a comment on if we're ahead of budgetary schedules or not, and then announces programs that are, some like the children's hospital, that won't even start construction for a number of years and won't be completed for ten years, or the budget . . . I would contend to the minister that it is indeed about . . . it's about politics from his perspective. But I can tell him that in asking these questions and representing people from across Saskatchewan, it's about priorities.

And that's what this government is lacking. That's what people across Saskatchewan are asking for, is where do you get the funding to do these things on a long-term basis? And we look

through the history of this province, we've seen that projections have been made by Finance ministers, one after the other, and to not have any projections whatsoever. And then to make the irresponsible promises, some that begin ten years into the future, I would suggest does not serve anybody well.

At this time, Mr. Chair, I would say that we have no further questions as far as interim supply and ready for the vote.

**The Deputy Chair:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chair. I appreciate the comment from the member opposite, but I do find it a rather disingenuous explanation that he provides as to how it is on the one hand he can scream at the tops of his lungs about sustainability as he did during the budget speech, and then on the other hand come forth with a laundry list of additional spending that he thinks should be easily accomplished. It is not as simple as the members opposite undertook when that member was participating in Mr. Devine's regime. There is in fact a much more transparent approach that we have undertaken.

There is a budget in front of us that meets the priorities of Saskatchewan people. And I appreciate the fact, I appreciate the fact that the member opposite has been somewhat forthright in saying that they would repeal the seniors' drug plan, that they would not support the graduate tax credit, and instead undertake a health care audit, undertake a number of other changes that they seem to believe would be sustainable, while at the same time arguing these modest measures we have in front of the Assembly are simply not otherwise sustainable.

That being said, I do want to thank the officials for joining us this afternoon and thank the members for their questions. I'm sure the debate will continue in the days to come.

**The Deputy Chair:** — Members of the committee, the resolution before the committee is:

Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$1,320,506,000 be granted to Her Majesty on account for the 12 months ending March 31, 2008.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt the resolution?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair:** — That is carried.

I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, I move that:

Towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, '08, the sum of \$1,320,506,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

**The Deputy Chair:** — Thank you. I'll repeat the resolution that is being moved by the Minister of Finance:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008, the sum of \$1,320,506,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt this resolution?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair:** — That is carried. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Deputy Chair, I would move that the committee rise and that the Chair report the committee has agreed to certain resolutions and ask for leave to sit again.

**The Deputy Chair:** — I think we've all heard the resolution moved by the Minister of Finance.

Is it the pleasure of the committee to adopt that resolution?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair:** — That is carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

#### FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS

**The Speaker:** — The Chair recognizes the Deputy Chair of committees.

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Finance has agreed to certain resolutions, has instructed me to report the same, and to ask for leave to sit again.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the resolutions be read the first time? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Speaker, I would move that the resolutions be now read for the first and second time.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Clerk:** — First and second reading of the resolutions.

**The Speaker:** — And when shall the committee sit again?

The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Later this day, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Later this day.

The Chair recognizes the Minister of Finance.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL

##### Bill No. 67 — The Appropriation Act, 2007 (No. 2)

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Speaker, I would move that by leave of the Assembly that Bill 67, The Appropriation Act, 2007 (No. 2) be now introduced and read for the first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 67, The Appropriation Act, 2007 (No. 2) be now introduced and read the first time. Is leave of the Assembly granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

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

**Hon. Mr. Thomson:** — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly and under rule 57(2), I move the Bill be now read a second and third time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance under rule 57(2) that the Bill be now read a second and third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Clerk:** — Second and third reading of this Bill.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, having accomplished a great deal, it's time to move on. And so therefore in order to accommodate the good work of the Private Bills Committee, the Human Services Committee, and the Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure Committee, I move that this House do now adjourn.

**The 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 Speaker:** — Motion is carried. This House stands

adjourned until 1:30 on Wednesday, pursuant to the April 18 order of this Assembly.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:54.]

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

Toth .....	1359
Hermanson .....	1359
Stewart .....	1359
Harpauer .....	1359
Eagles .....	1359
Weekes .....	1359
Huyghebaert .....	1359
Allchurch .....	1360
Kirsch .....	1360
Brkich .....	1360
Morgan .....	1360

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel .....	1360
---	------

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Eagles .....	1360
Harpauer .....	1360

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hagel .....	1361
Weekes .....	1361
Trew .....	1361
Cline .....	1362
The Speaker .....	1362
Atkinson .....	1371
Crofford .....	1371
Quennell .....	1373
Addley .....	1379

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Al Gore's Presentation on Climate Change	
Trew .....	1362
Proposed Children's Hospital in Saskatchewan	
Cheveldayoff .....	1362
New Democratic Party Candidate in Saskatoon Massey Place	
Cline .....	1363
Tourism Saskatchewan Awards of Excellence	
Elhard .....	1363
Vibrant Economy in Meadow Lake	
Sonntag .....	1363
Poll Results on Premier's Popularity	
D'Autremont .....	1363
Saskatchewan Party Views on Global Warming	
Borgerson .....	1364

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

Flooding Conditions	
Draude .....	1364
McCall .....	1364
Nilson .....	1365
Climate Change	
Heppner .....	1366
Nilson .....	1366
Recruiting and Retaining Physicians	
Allchurch .....	1366
Taylor .....	1367
Emergency Health Services	
Elhard .....	1368
Taylor .....	1368

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Surgical Care Initiatives	
Taylor .....	1369
McMorris .....	1370

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

### **Bill No. 66 — The Occupational Health and Safety (Harassment Prevention) Amendment Act, 2007**

Forbes .....1371

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

Iwanchuk .....1371

## **GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

### **SECOND READINGS**

#### **Bill No. 64 — The Graduate Tax Exemption Act**

Atkinson.....1372

Gantefer .....1372

#### **Bill No. 65 — The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2007**

Thomson .....1373

Gantefer .....1373

## **COMMITTEE OF FINANCE**

### **Motions for Interim Supply**

Thomson .....1374

Cheveldayoff.....1374, 1380

Draude .....1375

Krawetz.....1377

## **FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS**

Thomson .....1382

## **APPROPRIATION BILL**

### **Bill No. 67 — The Appropriation Act, 2007 (No. 2)**

Thomson .....1382

# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

## CABINET MINISTERS

---

**Hon. Lorne Calvert**  
Premier

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Hon. Warren McCall**  
Minister of Corrections and Public Safety

**Hon. John Nilson**  
Minister of Environment  
Minister Responsible for the Office of  
Energy Conservation  
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan  
Power Corporation

**Hon. Frank Quennell**  
Minister of Justice and  
Attorney General

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

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

**Hon. Len Taylor**  
Minister of Health

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

**Hon. Harry Van Mulligen**  
Minister of Government Relations

**Hon. Mark Wartman**  
Minister of Agriculture and Food