



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

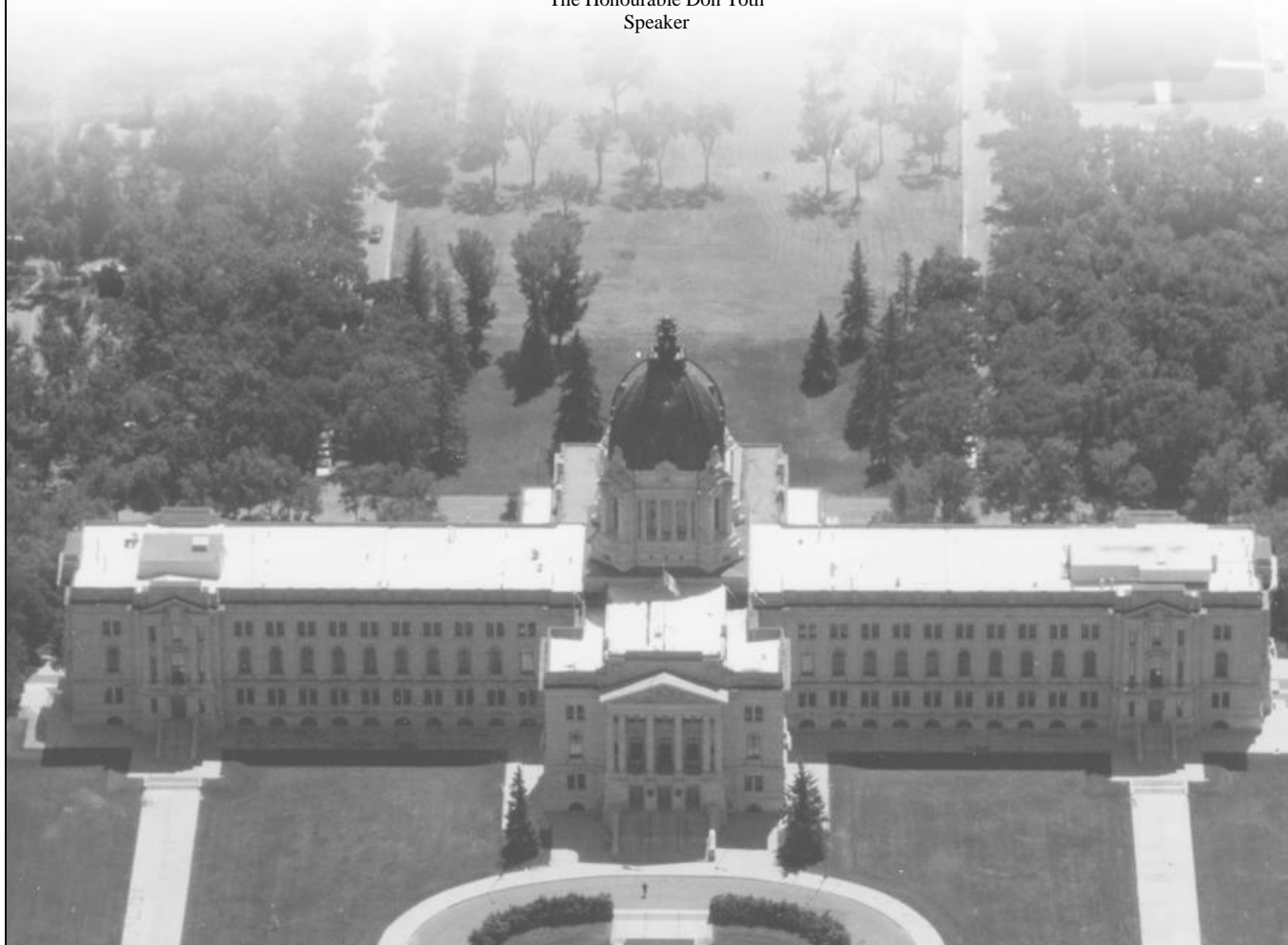
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth  
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall  
 Leader of the Opposition — Dwain Lingenfelter

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
LeClerc, Serge	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Lingenfelter, Dwain	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I would seek leave of the Assembly to give two introductions that will wind up being an extended introduction for one of them.

**The Speaker:** — The Premier has asked for leave for an extended introduction and the opportunity to give two. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — I thank members of the Assembly for permission to make a bit of an extended introduction, Mr. Speaker. My first introduction is a family that have joined us on the floor of the Assembly, a special family that also joined us earlier today for an important announcement here at the Legislative Assembly. Joining us is a Paralympian medallist from Saskatoon, currently employed with the Abilities Council, is Heather Kuttai has joined us here on the floor of the Assembly. She's joined by her husband, Darrell Seib. And their kids, Patrick and Chelsea are also here today.

Heather joined us earlier for an announcement, the unveiling of a new podium that the Government of Saskatchewan's able to make available to hotels and other groups that may host speakers who are in wheelchairs. Mr. Speaker, we know that sometimes as much as we think we have made, and I think we have made a lot of progress in terms of accessibility for those who have disabilities, for those who are in wheelchairs, there is always something else that has been missed, something else to be done.

And so, Mr. Speaker, Heather was here earlier today to help the government unveil a podium that through hydraulics moves up and down and accommodates those with wheelchairs and those who are not in wheelchairs to be able to use them. And we're going to make those available right across the province to hotels and other groups and other halls that may host those kinds of events. We'll also have one available in Saskatoon.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming Heather, a Saskatchewan hero, and her family, her husband Darrell, and Patrick and Chelsea to their Legislative Assembly today.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on feet, I have a second introduction if I may. In your gallery are also two special individuals I'd like to introduce to the Assembly. Many people in this Assembly know them well. Many of the people in the province of Saskatchewan know them well.

One of the best parts of my job, and I think the jobs that we have as elected representatives, is the amazing Saskatchewan people that we get to meet almost every day. One of those people I met on a trip out to the Grey Cup in 2007. I had heard about her, but I hadn't met her until that day. And I want to welcome her and her husband to the Assembly today and say just a few brief things, if I can, about them just before I formally introduce them.

Mr. Speaker, I think everybody knows the story of Chris Knox and the foundation that has come from that very, very compelling story. There is now a Chris Knox Foundation that is operating in the province of Saskatchewan with the leadership of Sharla and others, the help of others as well. It raises money and donations so that kids who are battling cancer and their families can go to concerts and special events — events like Grey Cups for example when they happen to come along.

This weekend, Mr. Speaker, you will know that 10 children who are battling cancer are going to be able to attend the Grey Cup, thanks to the Chris Knox Foundation. And their family members and chaperones will be able to attend too. We thank Cameco, certainly, for their participation in making that happen.

And just before I introduce them formally, I also want to acknowledge a couple of people who really got the ball rolling with the Chris Knox Foundation as well: Kelly Schermann and Trevor Lowey who are not here with us today. I remember back in 2007 when we were trying to make arrangements for Chris to come to Grey Cup, our office was talking to Kelly. And we asked him, how long have you known Chris? And he said this — we've saved this quote — he said, "I don't know him. I've never met him. I just heard his story in the news and thought I wanted to help him get to the Grey Cup."

Well, Mr. Speaker, in typical Saskatchewan fashion, the whole province rallied. And it didn't stop there. Witness the Chris Knox Foundation that is in place today and I think the heroic leadership of Chris's mom, who is Sharla Folk. And she is with us today in the Legislative Assembly. She's joined by Kim.

And I just want to, on behalf of the Assembly, welcome them to their Legislative Assembly and thank them for their great example and their great courage, and to make sure that Chris's legacy lives on in really amazing ways, benefiting kids and their families here in our province still today. Welcome to the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome a group of guests we have in your gallery today. We have with us numerous members from the Saskatchewan Professional Fire Fighters Association that have been here today talking to all members of the Assembly about concerns they have in doing their jobs each day on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, they come from communities across the province here to speak to each of us today about their jobs and what they do on behalf of all of us. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome them all to their Assembly today. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Wood River, the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

**Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the Assembly, I'd like to introduce some special guests here today, and I would ask if they would rise and be recognized. Mr. David Marit. Dave is the president of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. He is currently a councillor for division 3 in the RM [rural municipality] of Willow Bunch, and in my constituency, I might add. And Renaud Bissonnette is SUMA's [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] vice-president for towns. And Renaud is currently the mayor of Willow Bunch and was mayor of Assiniboia previously.

Mr. Speaker, these gentlemen were part of a very important event earlier today in the Saskatchewan gallery, announcing new funding to make the new provincial public safety telecommunications system more affordable for all users.

I would also like to welcome a number of other stakeholders who attended the ceremony this morning for our announcement. And they're seated in your galley also, including Dale McFee, who is the chief of police for Prince Albert. And Dale is also the head of the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to acknowledge the many firefighters in attendance today on behalf of the government. I welcome them to their legislature. Several of our MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] met with these folks this morning to hear their concerns, and I also had the chance to meet with Saskatchewan Professional Fire Fighters Association Vice-president Kirby Benning last Thursday.

So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members and the people of our province, I'd like to express our appreciation for the contributions made by these people to our many municipalities, both urban and rural. And I would invite all members to join me in welcoming all of them to their Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pride to introduce 21 students from Pinehouse Lake, Saskatchewan who are in the east gallery. And Pinehouse Lake is one of the greatest communities of our province, and they come from a school, Minahik Waskahigan School, which is the translation in Cree for pine house.

And of course with the students is Jacqué Skage — and I think her husband Ron's there as well — Rose Natomagan, Jerry McCallum, and Donald Misponas.

And if I can say in my language of Cree:

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

So I just basically told them that I'm very glad they're here and that they have nothing to fear here. This is their Legislative Building. And it gives me great pride to welcome the fine people from Pinehouse and especially the students. Great job of bringing them down here. And I wish all the members of the

Assembly to join me in welcoming these fine students from Pinehouse Lake, Saskatchewan.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Sutherland.

**Ms. Schriemer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to introduce one of my constituents. Her name is Senait Gebrekidan, in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. If you want to give us a wave, Senait. Senait came here to Saskatchewan from Ethiopia through the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program and she joined her cousin, Tadesse, in Saskatoon. She is finding the weather a little cold, but she's getting used to it. She's speaking English very, very well. And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, she feels safe here. Welcome to your legislature.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Northeast.

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through to all the members of the legislature, sitting up in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, is Mr. Lorne Nystrom, former member of Parliament for Yorkton-Melville and Regina Qu'Appelle Valley. And Mr. Nystrom has served as a member of Parliament for a goodly number of years in this great country and province of ours. And during his entire career, he did enjoy three years that I think was probably the most outstanding years in his career and that was during the period of time that I was part of his staff. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all the members to welcome Mr. Nystrom to his Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw North.

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too want to welcome two groups this morning. Our committee met with these two groups. The Saskatchewan Professional Fire Fighters Association, there's a number of them up there and maybe they could just stand for a second and be acknowledged. They do a commendable job of fire protection, both for full-time and volunteer capacities throughout the province. And there's too many to introduce individually, but I want to acknowledge them and thank them for the job they do. So thank you, gentlemen.

We also met with the Saskatchewan Association of Fire Chiefs. Two of them are in your gallery. Fire chief of Kindersley Fire and Rescue, Ron Hope, and deputy chief of the Prince Albert Fire and Emergency Service, Dan Heney.

These two associations do a commendable job of protecting, assisting in EMS [emergency medical services], and promoting fire safety. And I'll ask all members to make them welcome in their Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing in welcoming our guests that are here for his special

announcement earlier today about the enhancement of our emergency radio systems.

Mr. Speaker, if they stick around a little later this afternoon, they'll have the opportunity I believe to see the Bill actually be passed third reading and finalized in the House. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery, to you and through you I'd like to introduce to all members of the Assembly, Ms. Melony Materi and Dianne Pahl. They represent a very unique organization, the Options Pregnancy Center from Regina. They offer counselling as an option to women and men in unplanned pregnancies, options which include adoption.

Our committee met with them this morning, and we found it very informative. Some of the numbers they shared with us quite astounding, alarming statistics including a high rate of abortions as opposed to the low rate of adoptions, Mr. Speaker.

Interestingly they are the only group that I'm aware of that offer options and supports to the men and women who struggle with emotional issues after such an event. And I'd ask all members to welcome them to their Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, is a lady that came all the way down from Shellbrook today to take part in the Saskatchewan House of Prayer. Her name is Tracy Azevedo. If you would just give a little wave, Tracy. Thank you for coming.

Her and her husband moved to Shellbrook some six years ago. And she is involved in the Saskatchewan House of Prayer, she came down to partake in that and also to take part in the sitting today. And I welcome her here and I ask all members to help me.

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

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Soon we will have the whole gallery covered, but I noticed there was one individual who was not introduced. Cypress Hills constituents don't make it to the legislature very often, so I don't want to miss this opportunity.

So, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members, I'd like to introduce Fire Chief Dean McNabb from the community of Shaunavon. I'm very pleased to see him here today as part of the chiefs delegation. He does great work on behalf of Shaunavon and some of the surrounding communities. And I would like all members to welcome Dean to his Assembly.

[13:45]

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw

Wakamow.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan that speaks to the difficulty that families are having accessing quality and affordable child care and that this truly is a major roadblock for parents, whether moving on to higher education, accessing training, or returning to the workforce. And, Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government through consultation with the child care community to immediately invest in growing the capacity of the early child care community to enable new child care spaces. And this investment must include infrastructure funding for new facilities and expansion, funding to significantly increase the number of early childhood diploma and certificate training seats, and funding to ensure that the sector is able to increase its wages and benefits to attract and retain the needed personnel.

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of wage equity for CBO [community-based organization] workers. And we know that workers in community-based organizations in Saskatchewan have traditionally been underpaid and many continue to earn poverty-level wages, that low wages paid to CBO workers results in a high staff turnover. The subsequent lack of caregiver continuity has negative impacts on the quality of care clients receive. And we know also that research demonstrates that CBO workers are paid on average 8 to \$10 per hour less than employees doing work of equal value in government departments. So I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the development and implementation of a multi-year funding plan to ensure that CBO workers achieve wage equity with employees who perform work of equal value in government departments.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, these folks come from Regina. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of a new long-term care facility in La Ronge. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause

the government to immediately invest in planning and construction of new long-term care beds in La Ronge.

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

It is signed by the good people of La Ronge and area. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition in support of fairness for Saskatchewan students through the necessary expansion of the graduate retention program. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately expand the graduate retention program to include master's and Ph.D. graduates.

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition are from the city of Saskatoon. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present yet another petition on behalf of rural residents of Saskatchewan who question why the Sask Party government is leaving them behind with respect to providing safe and affordable water, and who have yet not had any commitment of assistance. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to financially assist the town of Duck Lake residents for the good of their health and safety due to the exorbitant water rates being forced on them by a government agency, and that this government fulfills its commitment to rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the good residents of Duck Lake. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition on supporting the maintaining of quality health care services.

Mr. Speaker, we all hope that the Government of Saskatchewan recognizes the essential role of all health care providers as valued members of the health care team. And one of the ways they can show the commitment is to provide adequate funding and the installation of good faith in the collective bargaining process. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your

honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to maintaining quality health care services and job security for all public health care providers.

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

And the petitions are signed by residents of Swift Current. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise and present a petition in support of affordable rents and housing for The Battlefords.

The residents note that some apartments have been given notice of rent increases of 40 per cent, and they note that vacancy rate for rental accommodation is very low. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to develop an affordable housing program that will result in a greater number of quality and affordable rental units to be made available to a greater number of people throughout The Battlefords, and that will implement a process of rent review or rent control to better protect tenants in a non-competitive housing environment.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by residents of the city of North Battleford. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of their finances by the Sask Party. The billion dollar deficit created by the Sask Party does not sit well with people in communities across this province, Mr. Speaker. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to start managing our provincial finances responsibly and prudently to ensure that it does not continue its trend of massive budgetary shortfalls, runaway and unsustainable spending, equity stripping from our Crowns, and irresponsible revenue setting.

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

These petitions of the many I've presented this session, Mr. Speaker, are signed by good folks and concerned citizens of Regina. I so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Estevan.

### **International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women**

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, many of us will leave work this evening and anxiously rush home to the open arms of a loving family. For far too many women, this is only a dream. For them, walking into their home can feel more like a nightmare they cannot wake up from. Today is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Together we say no to violence and collectively empower women with the strength and courage to change their lives.

Between July 2007 and July 2008, over 900 women and children were admitted to Saskatchewan shelters, and many of those children had witnessed the violence against their mothers. We recognize their struggles two ways. Through the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] of Canada's Rose Button campaign, we recognize that violence against women affects us all. Men who wear a white ribbon make a personal pledge to never commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we stand united — our arms reaching out, our voices speaking out, our hands ready to help, and our hearts full of love. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, designated by the United Nations. This date marks the brutal assassination of the Mirabal sisters, political activists in the Dominican Republic. Strong, independent women, all three were firmly dedicated to ending the brutal dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo. On November 25, 1960, Trujillo sent men to intercept the women after they had visited their husbands in prison. The unarmed sisters were led into a sugar cane field and executed.

In Canada we continue to remember violence against women on December 6, which marks the 20th anniversary of the massacre at École Polytechnique. On December 6, 1989, Marc Lepine singled out 14 women at the technical school in Quebec and brutally killed them with a semi-automatic rifle before killing himself, claiming that he was fighting feminism.

Mr. Speaker, women around the world are subject to rape, domestic violence, physical and emotional abuse every day. Often this violence goes un-noted, unquestioned, and unchallenged. But there is hope.

After the assassination of the Mirabal sisters, 49 years ago today, a revolution started from their village. Because of their efforts, Rafael Trujillo was eventually forced to turn over his power and resign. The eldest daughter of one of the Mirabal sisters went on to serve as a congresswoman in her country, a symbol of the change that only one generation can bring.

In the wake of the Montreal massacre, improvements were made to gun control laws and tactical police response to shootings.

I ask all members to join with me in taking the opportunity today to learn from our past and to take action to prevent violence against women today and every day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

### **Podium Affords Access for Wheelchair Occupants**

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise in the House and announce that our government is making great strides in achieving increased accessibility for those in need.

Last spring our Premier was attending a prayer breakfast with Paralympian Heather Kuttai. This exceptional woman was involved in a terrible vehicle collision at the age of six which left her in a wheelchair. Heather was a guest speaker at this prayer breakfast. When it came time for Heather to speak, of course the microphone had to be moved to her table since podiums are made for people standing. She jokingly said, wouldn't it be nice if someone built a podium that would fit people in wheelchairs.

The Premier approached her after the event and asked if she would help design such a podium. He then asked Saskatchewan Property Management to work with Heather to develop a podium that would work for people in wheelchairs. Together they designed a device with a hydraulic system that allows the podium to be adjusted to whatever height is necessary to accommodate the needs of the speaker.

This is the first of its kind in Saskatchewan, and we're going to have a couple more built to be loaned out to hotels and other venues across the province when a person in a wheelchair needs a podium.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to accessibility for all of the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

### **Young Man Receives Youth Award for Philanthropy**

**Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to honour a 10-year-old constituent of mine, Ronnie Thiessen. In mid-September, Ronnie and his mother Shelley encountered a man getting ready for bed in the space between the West Side Community Clinic and the Friendship Inn on 20th Street in Saskatoon.

Ron started asking his mother questions about shelters and why that man just couldn't go to the Salvation Army because Ronnie had given them money last year. His mother explained about the lack of room. And Ronnie's response was, I am going to build a building that everyone can live in. I'll pay the bills. They'll be warm and safe and everyone will have their own space. They won't have to share, and they won't have to pay a penny to live there.

His mother reminded him that he didn't have a job and that he

was 10. Well Ronnie got a job delivering newspapers. He gets up at 5:30 every morning for six days a week, Mr. Speaker and gets out 40 *StarPhoenix* newspapers and puts aside the money.

He has raised \$5,000 in pledge donations through matching donors, small fundraisers by university students and his local church and local artists. Ronnie has joined with Saskatoon Overnight Shelter, who was also working on the very same idea that year. And Ronnie was nominated by SOS [Saskatoon Overnight Shelter] to receive the youth award for philanthropy by the Association of Fundraising Professionals and received that honour on November 13th.

I ask the Assembly to join with me and join with the Association of Fundraising Professionals in honouring Ronnie Thiessen.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Sutherland.

### **Innovation Place Receives Award of Excellence**

**Ms. Schriemer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to speak about exciting news from Innovation Place in Saskatoon. Innovation Place has recently received a prestigious international award of excellence.

On October 23rd, 2009, the Association of University Research Parks named Innovation Place the 2009 outstanding research science park, in recognition of their role in supporting the growth of science and technology-related economic development in Saskatchewan.

In 2008, clients of Innovation Place contributed \$647 million to the provincial economy. I would like to recognize Doug Tastad, the president and CEO [chief executive officer] who celebrated his 30th year anniversary with the organization on October 15th. Doug has been the key management person in Saskatoon since 1979 and is instrumental in making them a world-renowned research development park.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Doug and Innovation Place for the contribution to this great province through science, technology, research, and of course, innovation.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

### **A Cautionary Tale**

**Ms. Morin:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to share with my colleagues in the Assembly a story. It's a cautionary tale of a true leader who thought he could sell anything. Some people may know it as a story of a man who couldn't sell country music to Saskatchewan.

In 1991, former Premier Grant Devine spent \$150,000 in taxpayers' money to lure the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame to Swift Current. Then the museum hired a former ministerial assistant in the Devine government to manage it. Guess who that was? The current Premier of Saskatchewan.

The manager told the media at the time that the museum needed at least 28,000 visitors annually to break even. He also predicted the museum would attract at least 34,000 visitors in the first year. But the museum attracted an average of just 2,500 people a year over the next three years — 2,500. Not surprisingly, the museum went bankrupt in less than five years.

Mr. Speaker, I can't help but think that this sounds like a familiar story. Someone takes over an operation that should be a surefire money-maker. They set a budget based on numbers that turned out to be wildly overinflated. The revenues come in way under budget. The result is a disaster for everyone involved. Does this sound familiar to anyone?

All cautionary tales have a moral, Mr. Speaker, and I think the moral of this story is clear: you can't build a budget with a pocketful of optimism any more than you can build it with a pocketful of magic beans or a pocketful of imaginary potash sales. And you can't lead a province just by thinking positively; you have to take positive action.

[14:00]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Thunder Creek.

### **Twenty-Sixth Canadian Western Agribition**

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Each November for the past 26 years, Canadian Western Agribition has opened its doors to the world. From November 23rd to 30th, Regina will be hosting the largest agricultural show and marketplace in Canada. Approximately 150,000 people from nine Canadian provinces, at least 28 American states, and more than 23 countries worldwide will come to Regina this year. There are over 500 exhibits displaying the newest developments in agricultural technology and services.

Agribition has become known as one of the pre-eminent livestock shows in the world, Mr. Speaker. There are around 2,000 exhibitors that will come out and display the best of the best in the livestock industry. Agribition's pro rodeo attracts the top professional cowboys from across North America. The national non-pro cutting horse finals, the heavy horse pulls and hitches, and the stock dogs are more examples of family entertainment. The Agri-Ed Showcase educates thousands of children from across the province in the business of agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, putting on a world-class event such as Agribition would not be possible without the support and commitment of thousands of volunteers. It's people like them that allow for the world to see that Saskatchewan is moving forward in all aspects of the agricultural industry and I extend a sincere thank you to all of them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **QUESTION PERIOD**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

### **Municipal Financing Corporation Budget**

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, last night in committee we were given shocking evidence of just how incompetent this



government is with respect to budgeting. And we found 31 million new reasons why this legislative session needs to be extended to allow the official opposition and the people of Saskatchewan to question this government's financial mismanagement.

Last evening the Finance minister admitted that the budget for the Municipal Financing Corporation has gone \$31 million over budget in the first six months of this year — a 100 per cent overrun. Worse, the minister admitted that he knew nothing about this until the mid-year report. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: how does this happen?

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night we spent three and a half hours discussing this topic and so I'm glad to have a little opportunity to do it today, although I must admit I think everyone's a little weary.

Mr. Speaker, in the budget we had to make an estimate of how much uptake there's going to be from municipal entities in terms of the municipal infrastructure funding program. We had in the previous year budgeted \$37 million, which was half of the \$75 million that was authorized under the SIGI [Saskatchewan infrastructure growth initiative] program, and that much money was not up taken in the first year. So the second year we budgeted \$30 million of the \$75 million SIGI program, and we were on track to do that until particularly the city of Regina's program for the global transportation hub came in at some \$43 million.

Mr. Speaker, this is important initiatives that build this province, and the people of Saskatchewan and their municipalities very much appreciate it.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, it has nothing to do with the projects that were funded. It has to do with the huge accrual and racking up of government debt, of people's debt, under this minister. And he had no knowledge of that, Mr. Speaker. We're not opposed to municipalities being able to borrow funds for important projects. We're opposed to this government's financial incompetence.

Let's put this in context. Who is the Minister Responsible for the Municipal Financing Corporation? Well that's the Minister of Finance. Who is the staff of the Municipal Financing Corporation? Well that's the Finance department officials. Who is the Chair of the board of the Municipal Financing Corporation? Well that's also the Minister of Finance.

A simple question: how can he ask the taxpayers of this province to believe that he knew nothing of this budgetary mistake of 100 per cent?

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite don't quite understand the important role for the Municipal Financing Corporation in the province of

Saskatchewan. This was an entity that was created in 1969 and has been functioning in the province for 40 years under basically the same guidelines as what we have now.

What's different, Mr. Speaker, is this administration recognized that there was a badly needed infrastructure investment in the province by municipalities. Right across this province, large municipalities and small came to this government and said, we need to get caught up on some of the infrastructure that has crumbled under the previous administration. And so we put in the SIGI program that allows municipalities to potentially access this money, who potentially will be able to have subsidies of their interest rate. This is an important initiative for the people of Saskatchewan, and municipalities very much appreciate this initiative.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, we're talking about proper oversight that does not occur in the Finance ministry or does not occur by this Minister of Finance, and it's important. No constraint, no control. Mr. Speaker, I thought the minister getting the potash revenue forecast off by 95 per cent was the topper, but here's a 100 per cent budgetary mistake right in his own department.

Can the minister confirm that more than \$17 million of this overrun was approved by Finance officials on June 5th, within days of the spring budget having been passed by this legislature? And does the minister not agree his budget controls and oversight were so poor that he presented a budget to this legislature which even his own officials knew was bogus even before it was passed? Why should anyone trust a single thing that he has to say about the budget or our finances as we move forward?

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, as I explained at length last night in the three and a half hours of time that we had together, Mr. Speaker, there's a \$75 million authorization limit on the SIGI program. Certainly that that authorization was not nearly been committed to.

And, Mr. Speaker, as a brand new program I explained to the Assembly . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — Mr. Speaker, I explained to the committee last night and to the members of the committee that this was well within the authorized limits of the program. And there was no way of knowing traditionally if a city like Regina, with the major \$43 million infrastructure program for the global transportation hub, was going to use the Municipal Financing Corporation or was going to establish the practice that they had long held of using the independent banking and lending institutions for this money.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important initiative to build the infrastructure of this province that has been allowed to crumble in the province under that previous administration. And right across this province, people are creating these jobs. They're creating this infrastructure and allowing this province to grow.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

### Financial Management of Crown Corporations

**Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people will also be paying more for their utilities as a result of this government's mismanagement. The government originally planned to take \$185 million from the Crown corporations as a dividend. Then they kept 110 million originally designated for the children's hospital. In the mid-year financial report, they announced they were taking another \$460 million out of the Crowns.

And thanks to their fiscal incompetence, the entire \$195 million required for the children's hospital will have to come out of the Crowns. That's a total of \$950 million stripped from the Crowns.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan]: how much will utility rates have to go up in this province in the coming years to pay for this government's fiscal mismanagement?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Investments Corp.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, I really think it's important that the members opposite understand that everybody in this province knows the importance of the Crowns to the people of our province. They know that the Crowns are an integral part of Saskatchewan's economy. And we know that investing Saskatchewan taxpayers' money in Saskatchewan is the very best place in the world to invest. And I'd like to remind the members opposite that they wasted \$300 million of taxpayers' money in out-of-province investments in the last number of years.

As for the dividend that came from the Saskferco this year, we have \$560 million that came from the Saskferco fund. What we're doing here right now is, through the sale of Saskferco, we're going to get through a tough period. Our situation's really no different than a family might face if they have a sudden cash flow problem. You dip into the money that's set aside in order to get your family through to a better time.

Mr. Speaker, there's still money in CIC for the children's hospital. There's still money for future projects. And we believe investing in Saskatchewan is . . . [inaudible] . . . the job for the people, the Government of Saskatchewan.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

**Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Speaker, the money in the Crown corporations is not the government's money. It's the people's money. Mr. Speaker, we can see how petty this government is when it comes to rate increases to taxpayers, Mr. Speaker. An

example of this is the \$8 a month minimum charge to SaskTel Mobility customers who purchase prepaid cellular phones and cards. Mr. Speaker, many of these customers for these prepaid cellular phones are people who primarily use cellphones for emergencies, including low-income people and seniors.

To the Minister of CIC, Mr. Speaker: why are low-income people and seniors paying the price for this government's mismanagement of our Crowns? And what other mean-spirited rate increases can we expect from this government as a result of their \$1 billion deficit?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, a little over a year ago our government passed legislation prohibiting the expiry of gift cards. SaskTel complied with that legislation for the last year. None of the other companies chose to comply with that. SaskTel is legislated or governed by federal regulation. Mr. Speaker, there are ongoing costs to providing services through telephones, through cellular telephones and, Mr. Speaker, it is the goal of SaskTel to make money by providing services, not by forfeiting time on cards.

Mr. Speaker, SaskTel is reviewing this policy. And within the next few days, we'll be coming back to the House and we'll be making an announcement with regard to a new . . . We'll be coming back to the House, Mr. Speaker, with regard to a new pricing formula for prepaid cell cards, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

**Mr. Yates:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, isn't that interesting. First the minister tells us he has to do it. Now he's telling us he can review it and change the structure. I don't know. That tells me maybe that he just wasn't very thoughtful when he did it to start with.

Mr. Speaker, the government's financial mismanagement of our Crown corporations by stripping \$1 billion out of the equity has undermined the viability of the Crowns. And let's not forget that equity stripping is not all they've done, Mr. Speaker. They've borrowed more than \$800 million in new debt to add to the Crowns' future misfortunes.

This increased debt to equity ratio will put pressure on Crown utility rates moving forward, without doubt. It will weaken the Crowns' ability to invest in improvements and infrastructure for better service for the citizens of our province, and it will prevent SaskPower from making needed improvements to our future energy sources to meet climate change commitments.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why is the government undermining the ability of Saskatchewan Crown corporations to contribute to a better future for our province's citizens?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Investments.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to the member opposite, I find this line of question very interesting. In the last 10 years, the NDP [New Democratic Party] took \$2.2

billion from the Crowns. And in the past 10 years, the NDP sorely underspent on infrastructure. They spent an average of \$500 million a year, on average, on SaskTel, SaskEnergy, and SaskPower.

Last year the Sask Party spent \$750 million on infrastructure. And this year, this year, Mr. Speaker, we're going to spend \$1.25 billion.

The members opposite should just stand up and admit that they've left as big a deficit in the Crowns as they did in the highways and the schools and the hospitals in this province.

It isn't easy for the citizens of Saskatchewan to see if their lights are going to come on or if there's going to be power and gas there. But we are going to make sure. That's why, Mr. Speaker, we've allocated \$90 million for high-speed Internet. That's why SaskPower's working on four projects to ensure the . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. The minister may finalize her comments to the House.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you. That's why our government is planning for growth. We're not planning for a decline, like the members opposite.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

#### **Financial Projections and Activities of Health Authorities**

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health. Can the minister confirm that Saskatchewan's regional health authorities are now projected to be running deficits totalling more than \$119 million this budget year?

[14:15]

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health doesn't deliver health care, of course, in the regions. The regional health authorities deliver health care. They're responsible for providing a number of initiatives throughout the province, one of which is the H1N1 rollout, Mr. Speaker, that I would say has been very interesting. It's been very absent from question period since the member opposite wanted us . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I would like . . . Order. I would ask the opposition, a handful of opposition members — most opposition members are allowing the minister to respond — allow the minister to finish his question. Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said, the regional health authorities are responsible for delivering health care throughout their areas. And it's been interesting because they've done such a great job on the H1N1

rollout.

The absence of questioning on that very subject has been very interesting, Mr. Speaker, because it was only a couple of weeks ago that the member opposite wanted us to run around with a little bag of vaccination to each university student that might be contracting H1N1 and vaccinate, Mr. Speaker. Thank God we didn't take the advice from that opposition.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister's comments don't even bear remarking on. They're so far from anything connected to an answer.

The mid-year financial report, tabled by the government this year, projected deficits of more than \$119 million at the regional health authorities for this budget year. That represents a shortfall of more than \$131 million from the March provincial budget, when the government forecast a surplus in the regional health authorities of nearly \$12 million.

To the minister, a simple question: how did he get this budget projected so very, very wrong? And how does he plan to pay for this \$131 million deficit?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said, the regional health authorities are responsible for delivering health care in their areas. Their board sits down with their CEOs and work out a budget for the year, Mr. Speaker. Then it's their responsibility to operate and deliver the services within that budget, Mr. Speaker.

And that's what the regional health authorities have done. They've budgeted. Most are all running on a surplus budget or a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, as we go through and depending on the demands that each health region will see — it will fluctuate from health region to health region, Mr. Speaker — but the financial responsibility is within the health regions to deliver the services that their citizens need.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

#### **Harmonized Sales Tax**

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Finance please tell the Assembly when he or his officials last communicated with the federal government about adopting the harmonized sales tax?

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — Mr. Speaker, officials from my ministry communicate with the federal government on an ongoing basis, weekly or every two weeks or whatever. In terms of the issue of harmonized sales tax, this government has said we're not interested in participating in that program. We looked at it when we were first elected government in response to Minister Flaherty's request that we do look at it. We looked

at it. We decided, in the interests of the province of Saskatchewan, we're not interested.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Finance commit to filing the documents that relate to this particular issue, the harmonized sales tax, with this House? And will he provide us with the information around this discussion? And, Mr. Speaker, will he do it today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, as I tried to explain to the member opposite, there's an ongoing dialogue between ministry officials in Saskatchewan, ministerial officials in other provinces, and the federal government's Finance department. Mr. Speaker, that's an ongoing dialogue. That's an ongoing communications over the telephone or in person. Those things are going on, Mr. Speaker, as they always did. There always has been this constant discussion between ministries in regard to these important topics.

It's important to note, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan looked at the issue at the request of the federal Finance minister. We studied it and see as best we could, what the impact might be on Saskatchewan people. And we decided it was not in the interests of Saskatchewan. And Saskatchewan said, we're not interested; thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people have watched as the governments of Ontario and British Columbia have broken their campaign promises not to adopt the harmonized sales tax when they get into financial trouble.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that there are troubles in the finances in this province. We know that there's a \$1 billion deficit. Can the minister assure us that they are not now susceptible to the federal government's legalized bribery and that they won't adopt the harmonized sales tax?

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I recognize that Ontario made the decision for the interests of their province that they were going to move forward with it. And after the last provincial election in British Columbia, British Columbia announced that they were going to be implementing it as well because of the pressure they felt that they were going to receive from Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan looked at it. Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Prince Edward Island are the only provinces that are outside of this program right now. Saskatchewan looked at it and we said that we're not interested and it's not in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan.

And I note with interest the neighbouring province of Manitoba just recently announced that they too have reviewed it and

they're not interested either, so the two provinces are going to stand together. And we're not interested in harmonizing the sales tax. And, Mr. Speaker, that is the promises that we have made in this regard, and we keep our promises in this government.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

### School Construction

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you. On February 9th of this year, the minister announced \$142 million in new capital spending for 102 Saskatchewan schools. How much of that \$142 million, as part of the economic booster shot for shovel-ready projects, has actually been spent in 2009 — not committed to planning or being spent on design work, but actually spent on construction?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated I think in an answer this week as well that was asked around capital expenditure by the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, we've moved forward on a lot of projects. It's not just the dollar figure that she refers to. We in fact put \$13 million into the budget of '07-08 by way of a supplementary expenditure when we were elected. And, Mr. Speaker, that was to take care of projects that that former government had initiated back in 2003, Mr. Speaker, 2003. So we've moved forward on nearly \$303 million worth of projects, Mr. Speaker.

We have various stages at which they're designed. I read into the record yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the major projects, the 22 major projects that are under way. We can provide the list of hundreds of projects that boards of education are moving forward, Mr. Speaker, but I don't track every one of those projects. That is the school divisions' responsibility. And we'll provide that list, Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite about every project, every roof, every window, every furnace, all of the projects that we have moved forward with, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, these school projects should have been more than shovel ready for 2009 because many of them were the very same education capital projects that were announced in the budget of March 2008: Balcarres, Humboldt, Scott Collegiate, E.D. Feehan, Nutana Collegiate, all of these were announced and paid for, apparently, in the March 2008 budget and all re-announced in February of 2009.

Again this is a member that likes to pay attention to figures. I'm sure he has them in his desk. How much money has actually been spent on construction in 2009?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, having been a former minister of Education and also, Mr. Speaker, and also, Mr. Speaker, a former Finance minister — the only Finance minister who never did deliver a budget, I

might add — Mr. Speaker, that member knows full well that there are many stages in major capital investments.

There's approval in principle, which we announced this year two schools that are going forward with approval in principle. They're Wascana-Herchmer and they're the CEF [Conseil des écoles fransaskoises]. Now they're going to move through various stages of detailed design. They're not going to go to tender this year, Mr. Speaker. We know that. The member opposite knows that.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows that we're working on a project in Nutana, right in her constituency, Mr. Speaker. And that's going through detailed design. It is going into tender. Right now, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. The minister complete his comment, short comment.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that the members opposite don't want to know the answers. But the answers are, at every school division, we're moving forward with projects. We'll supply the complete list of every school that was announced in the spring, as far as whether or not they're . . .

**The Speaker:** — The minister's time has elapsed. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the 2008-09 budget announced \$117 million for education capital. The February booster shot announced a further \$142 million, and the March budget announced \$61 million for more school capital projects. That's \$320 million set aside for school capital in two years.

But how much construction has the government actually completed in those two years? Well, Mr. Speaker, it's \$20.5 million. And that's confirmed in the minister's written answer.

So, Mr. Speaker, no wonder Saskatchewan's in a recession. Why can't this minister get his so-called shovel-ready projects with approved budgets off of his desk?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has it wrong again. Mr. Speaker, as we announced before when we . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I would ask opposition members to give the same latitude to the minister as they gave to the member placing the question, to answer the question without interference. Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I won't turn the volume up. I'm going to tell the member opposite that she's wrong when she says that we have allocated \$61 million. She's right in that it was announced in the budget, but we have made a decision that 30 million of those dollars

were taken out of the budget. That's a public statement. Mr. Speaker, it is a public statement, Mr. Speaker. And I find that the Leader of the Opposition finds that very strange, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there have been many projects here in Regina, in Saskatoon. We're going to go over that list. We have St. Anne's School in Prince Albert that's under construction, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just was in Norquay not too long ago and we did the ribbon cutting, Mr. Speaker, of a renovation in Norquay that was in excess of \$2 million, Mr. Speaker. We have tenders now that are going to end on December 3rd at Humboldt. And we've set aside those dollars to continue with those projects, Mr. Speaker. We'll gladly supply for the member from Nutana the complete list of projects about all of the schools that have benefited from the \$303 million.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

### Province-Wide Public Safety Radio Telecommunications Network

**Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to update this House on an important initiative relating to community safety in Saskatchewan. Earlier this afternoon, I hosted officials from the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], SaskPower, and emergency response organizations across the province in a progress report on the construction of a province-wide public safety radio telecommunications network. This multi-year project, which started in 2002, is being led by Corrections, Public Safety and Policing. The network is currently being built onto the existing RCMP-SaskPower radio telecommunications system and when completed will serve public safety users across the province.

[14:30]

This system will serve such public safety users as fire services, emergency medical services, provincial government agencies like CPSP [Corrections, Public Safety and Policing], Highways, and Environment, and of course SaskPower and the RCMP, who are also our partners in building the system.

Mr. Speaker, this system needs to accomplish two very important objectives. First, it needs to ensure that public safety subscribers to FleetNet, which will be wound down at the end of 2010, have a continued means for radio communications. Second, inter-operability needs to be a vital feature of the new system, that is, all users need to have compatible equipment and equal access so they can talk to one another during an emergency response, particularly during those large emergencies that seem to have been besetting us more and more over the past few years.

Mr. Speaker, we heard concerns from small users, particularly in rural areas, that they might not be able to subscribe to the system because they couldn't afford the monthly fee. We also heard that these same users might not have the financial wherewithal to purchase new radios that are compatible with

the system. And so, Mr. Speaker, we have established a monthly user fee of \$40 per radio so that all users will have a place on the system. The amount of this fee is slightly higher than current FleetNet fees, but considerably lower than the actual \$90 a month per radio operating cost.

Because we see this requirement for an affordable subscriber fee as absolutely vital to maintaining an effective level of emergency response in this province, we are asking consumers of telephone service to pay an additional 24 cents a month on their phone bills for 911 service. We believe that this is a small price for the peace of mind assurance of a service that could minimize damage to property or to save a life.

As well, Mr. Speaker, we have created a radio purchase program that will help fund more than 1,600 radios for those non-government agencies who would be hard-pressed to bear the cost. To that end, government has provided 4.5 million for the radio purchase program during this fiscal year. Mr. Speaker, the new provincial public safety telecommunications system is critical to ensuring that public safety agencies can continue to seamlessly respond to emergencies.

Our partners in safety in this province rely on a radio system that must be available 24-7, 365 days a year. As a government, we need to guarantee that this will be so for our public safety community and for every citizen of this province who looks to our emergency responders to be there when they need them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased on behalf of the opposition to respond to the ministerial statement. I thank the minister for sharing a copy of his statement moments before the session started. But I sincerely thank the minister for that copy.

This is an issue that of course has been years in the making, and I'm very pleased that we've gotten to the stage we are today where we could get some relatively concrete announcements made. We were in committee last night on this very Bill, and we were able to share some of our concerns with the minister and officials, the concerns being around coverage, but really concerned with the affordability issue for the potential users.

And I'm quite pleased, Mr. Speaker, with the two-front attack on affordability. The radio purchase program, which I note was lacking detail in the ministerial statement, but nonetheless there is a radio purchase program that I hope in fact does make the radios affordable for, for instance, volunteer fire departments throughout the province, but for all users of the new system.

I'm very pleased with the \$40 cap for the user fee per radio, Mr. Speaker, and congratulate the officials and the minister for getting that cap. I am much less pleased with the quarter that is being added to our telephone bills every month. It used to be that the Sask Party government was nickel-and-diming the people of Saskatchewan. Well now they've stepped it up to quarters. Perhaps it's because of the \$1 billion deficit.

This is an issue of public safety, Mr. Speaker, and all million

souls in Saskatchewan should be sharing in this. The simplest thing to do would be to tax through the General Revenue Fund and just pay for the public safety portion of this. That would be by far the easiest and most effective and cost-effective way of doing this. The two bits a month, I just want to point out, is not just two bits a month, Mr. Speaker. It's an extra two bits; it's an extra quarter. So no longer nickel-and-diming, they're quartering us, the people of Saskatchewan.

So overall to sum it up, despite the colossal fiscal mudhole that the Sask Party has gotten us into, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that this money is being spent on public safety. This is a good program, and I'm very much looking forward to its continued rollout. Thank you.

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Crown and Central Agencies.

#### Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Mr. McMillan:** — I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 116, *The Traffic Safety (Drivers' Licences and Hand-held Electronic Communications Equipment) Amendment Act, 2009* without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister Responsible for Crown Investments.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole on this Bill and that the Bill now be read the third time.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Crown Investments has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 116, *The Traffic Safety (Drivers' Licences and Hand-held Electronic Communications Equipment) Amendment Act, 2009* without amendment and that the Bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — It's agreed. The minister may proceed to move third reading.

### THIRD READINGS

#### **Bill No. 116 — *The Traffic Safety (Drivers' Licences and Hand-held Electronic Communications Equipment) Amendment Act, 2009***

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

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for Crown Investments that Bill No. 116, *The Traffic Safety (Drivers' Licences and Hand-held Electronic Communications Equipment) Amendment Act, 2009* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly

ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

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

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee.

##### Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

**Mr. Michelson:** — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee of Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 99, *The Emergency 911 System Amendment Act, 2009* without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

**Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill and the Bill be now read the third time.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 99. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. The minister may proceed. I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

#### THIRD READINGS

##### Bill No. 99 — *The Emergency 911 System Amendment Act, 2009*

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

**The Speaker:** — The Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing has moved that Bill No. 99, *The Emergency 911 System Amendment Act, 2009* without amendment be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

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

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to question 540.

**The Speaker:** — Question 540 tabled. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Weekes:** — 541 ordered.

**The Speaker:** — Ordered. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Weekes:** — I wish to table the answers to questions 542 through 544.

**The Speaker:** — Questions 542 through 544 are tabled.

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 118 — *The Milk Control Repeal Act*

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks, I'll be moving second reading of Bill No. 118, *The Milk Control Repeal Act*.

The dairy industry has voted overwhelmingly in favour of forming a producer marketing board under *The Agri-Food Act*. Consequently *The Milk Control Act* and its regulations will no longer be required once a dairy industry marketing board is established. I am very pleased with this development, Mr. Speaker.

Practices within the industry have changed considerably since the last revision to the Act. Producers are asking to be in charge of their industry. Government does not need to be involved in the day-to-day business of the dairy industry. Clearly it is important that there be adequate oversight, and *The Agri-Food Act* provides that oversight.

Mr. Speaker, the dairy farmers of Saskatchewan, Saputo, and the Milk Control Board have been consulted. Dairy producers, the bulk transporter, consumer associations, retailers, and the hotel and hospitality industry, among others, have also been consulted through direct correspondence.

We have been working with the dairy industry extensively since

taking office. The previous government incorrectly transferred the provincial dairy lab to the Milk Control Board in April of 2006 without having the proper authorities in place to do so. This change to create an industry marketing board will help rectify that issue. We will continue to work with the dairy industry on these issues as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Finance has reviewed and analyzed our proposal to repeal *The Milk Control Act* and has satisfied all financial, accounting, and administrative matters are addressed. Therefore I move that *The Milk Control Repeal Act* be read a second time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Agriculture has moved second reading of Bill 118, *The Milk Control Repeal Act*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was interested to listen to the minister's comments on *The Milk Control Act* being repealed and the changes that are being proposed or I guess the repealing of the Milk Control Board itself.

Mr. Speaker, while the minister didn't seem to have an awful lot of good comments about the Milk Control Board, I think there are many across the province that feel that the Milk Control Board served a purpose and did a very good job dealing with not just producers, but the scale of people that deal with the industry, right from producers into the retail areas. I've heard many people say that the regulations and the regulating that the Milk Control Board did was well-respected. And when you look at other provinces that have gone to a marketing board, that there are some weaknesses.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that the minister is looking at setting up his, from what I understand, a marketing board and having the industry in charge of itself — really, the producers. I think the minister said the producers want to be more in charge.

And I truly hope, to be successful, that when he's setting up the new marketing board, that they pay some particular attention not only to making the change, but to actually the mandate and the structure and the selection of that initial board.

Because a great deal of work has to go into those early beginnings to make sure that the marketing board gets off on the right foot and to make sure that all stakeholders are included in the decisions. And that the marketing board's future success really relies on what happens over the next year or year and a half, getting everything in place and making sure that the appropriate changes are made and that all the appropriate safeguards and consideration is given to the issues that need to be brought before the marketing board. But those early beginnings can be very important and can have a huge effect on whether this succeeds into the future or runs into problems down the way.

[14:45]

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that there are people across the province that have a stake. And it may not be something that is of a concern, a broad public concern across the province, but I

know there are a number of producers and other interested parties that my colleagues and I would need to really have some conversations with.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's with consideration to the early comments that I've heard that the Milk Control Board had some good points, did some very good work. And if the minister feels that it needs to be done away with and moved into a marketing board, I hope we're not just jumping into doing what other provinces have done, that in Saskatchewan we like to review the situation and put in place solutions that are suitable for the province itself.

So I hope he's taken the time to do the consultations, and that he takes the time, when they are putting in place the new board, to make sure that the board itself and the structure — many, many questions on what will it look like, who all will be involved, and how broad of input will be . . . how broad will the board be open to input from the public and from other interested parties.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that there are a number of my colleagues, in fact I think there are a number today that wish to make a comment. So, Mr. Speaker, I'll make room for my colleagues to speak.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It really is a pleasure today to speak to this piece of legislation, Bill No. 118, *An Act to repeal The Milk Control Act, 1992*. And, Mr. Speaker, I say it's a pleasure to talk to this Bill today because although it seems to a certain extent insignificant generally because evolution within the industry is taking place. And there is always need to make changes in legislation and regulation to follow the evolution of the industry, Mr. Speaker.

It's also important to note that while there are a lot of individuals and communities involved in the dairy industry, most of those involved today want to ensure that their history is respected, their history is understood, and the role that they have played in the past is recognized by the people of the province. Because, Mr. Speaker, it's only in recognizing what has taken place in the past that we can truly appreciate and support the work that's going on in the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that in his opening remarks on this Bill the minister indicated a list of people that have been consulted. And my colleague who spoke just moments ago, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, Mr. Speaker, indicated that consultation is important. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House have to do some consultation of our own. But, Mr. Speaker, I think simply knowing that the minister says it has been done and the opposition says we need to ensure that it has been done, Mr. Speaker, has to simply carry us . . . We can't forget in doing that that there are some things that we need to remember.

But first, Mr. Speaker, before I go through some discussions about where we've been and where we're going, I simply want to outline for some of the people who are tuning in today who may not know what's in Bill 118. The minister's remarks were very short. The minister's explanation of the Bill, Mr. Speaker,



simply indicated that the repeal of the Milk Control Board isn't . . . The Milk Control Board, Mr. Speaker, isn't necessary any more because producers have formed a marketing board. Therefore the Act is no longer required, Mr. Speaker.

But there's more in the Act than simply getting rid of something that has gone before. So, Mr. Speaker, we recognize the short title of the Act is cited as *The Milk Control Repeal Act*. Mr. Speaker, what does it do? It repeals *The Milk Control Act*, very simple. But, Mr. Speaker, what else is in the Bill? Well there's a transfer of assets, liabilities, contracts, and personal property, Mr. Speaker. I think the people at home should know marketing board means the marketing board designated pursuant to section no. 2, that's *The Milk Control Act* which is being repealed.

Mr. Speaker, the Milk Control Board means the Milk Control Board as that board that existed on the day before the coming into force of this section. So, Mr. Speaker, the Milk Control Board is the board that's basically in place. And of course definition of minister: ". . . the member of Executive Council to whom for the time being the administration of *The Agri-Food Act, 2004* is assigned."

Mr. Speaker, simple language, but it means that this can be bounced around from time to time. Whoever the minister in charge of *The Agri-Food Act* is, Mr. Speaker, is the minister to whom the board reports. And then, Mr. Speaker, in addition to this section on transfer of assets, liabilities, contract, and personal property, we see that "The minister may make an order designating a marketing board established pursuant to *The Agri-Food Act, 2004* for the purposes of this section." So the minister has the power to designate, Mr. Speaker. We need to keep that in mind.

The Lieutenant Governor in Council may, by order, transfer to and vest in the marketing board any assets, liabilities, contracts and personal property of the Milk Control Board, subject to any terms and conditions that the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers appropriate or necessary.

So, Mr. Speaker, again the cabinet may order the transfer of or the vesting of marketing board assets including liabilities, contracts, personal property of the board, Mr. Speaker. And that is the Milk Control Board which is the board that is being . . . Under the Act that's being repealed, Mr. Speaker, the board that the minister indicated is no longer required because there's a new marketing board in place.

Then, Mr. Speaker, the Act in front of us states:

Any assets, liabilities, contracts, and personal property of the Milk Control Board that are not transferred to the marketing board pursuant to subsection (3) are transferred to and become the assets, liabilities, contracts, and personal property of the Government of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, if the minister in transferring the properties does not transfer all of the assets, liabilities, contract, etc. to the new board, then the assets become the property of the Government of Saskatchewan. So, Mr. Speaker, there is an element there that of course requires some review, evaluation, and some accountability on behalf of government. And I have

every reason to believe that the new board will be watching that transfer provision very closely.

And then of course, "As soon as possible after the minister makes the order pursuant to subsection (2), the minister shall cause the order to be published in the *Gazette*." This is indeed part of the accountability process, Mr. Speaker. And those who know how government works, understand that that handful of people and multitude of lawyers who read the *Gazette* will know what the government is doing, Mr. Speaker. And hopefully this information is communicated regularly to the public.

And then, Mr. Speaker, there's also a section on auditing and annual reports. Ministry is interpreted in this section to mean the ministry over which the minister presides. Reporting period means the period commencing on April 1st. And, Mr. Speaker, then notwithstanding the repeal of *The Milk Control Act*, Mr. Speaker, the new Act says, "the Provincial Auditor shall audit the accounts and financial statements of the Milk Control Board for the reporting period."

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is very important. The Provincial Auditor doesn't always have access to all activities of government or agencies. On occasion, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor, in his annual report to the legislature, indicates that he would like greater access to certain areas of government spending, Mr. Speaker. And this part of the Act correctly ensures that the Provincial Auditor will be the auditor in question.

Mr. Speaker, as a former minister of Health, I can indicate that the Provincial Auditor has in the past indicated an interest in having greater responsibility over provincial regional health authorities. Mr. Speaker, we find out in the question period today that regional health authorities halfway through the year, this year, Mr. Speaker, are indicating that they're going to be running significant deficits, Mr. Speaker, when just six months ago in budget, they were indicating a surplus in accounts.

Mr. Speaker, while we realize that the Health ministry is under a lot of stress this year, particularly because of the advancing of the H1N1 pandemic. Mr. Speaker, this actually should have come as no surprise. Given that the regional health authorities have been planning for a pandemic for several years, Mr. Speaker — probably in excess of five years of planning — that indeed just six months ago, there should have been provisions included in their financial activities. And, Mr. Speaker, that's the sort of thing that at the end of the year, the Provincial Auditor reviews, has access to the books, and explains to the public what is happening.

So, Mr. Speaker, while we need to know what's going on in regional health authorities, quite often a lot closer to the public, Mr. Speaker, it's also important for the people to know what expenditures are being made even for something like the new milk marketing board, Mr. Speaker. So this provision of the Provincial Auditor being in place is certainly welcome and warranted.

Mr. Speaker, I think that just continuing here in explaining the Act and its provisions, let me just finish. There's just two more sections:

the ministry shall prepare and submit to the minister the financial statements mentioned in clause (a) [which is the Provincial Auditor's report], and the minister shall lay those financial statements before the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, that's important. After all the Act is a creation of the legislature, and the report should be laid in front of the Legislative Assembly.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the Act says, "subsection 25(4) and section 27 of *The Milk Control Act, 1992* [should] remain in force and apply, with any necessary modification, for the purposes of clause (b)," which is the preparation of reports and submission to the legislature.

Why is this reporting and accountability important, Mr. Speaker? Simply because milk is a foodstuff. It is a product that we require, Mr. Speaker, in our daily intake. Dairy products, Mr. Speaker, generally are important for individual health and well-being. I know that there are some arguments, Mr. Speaker, throughout North America, Mr. Speaker, about the ultimate value of milk — whether it's natural milk, whether it's pasteurized milk, or whether it's the processing of milk for other dairy products, Mr. Speaker.

But milk is important to us, so therefore the responsibility of members of the Legislative Assembly for the health and well-being of Saskatchewan residents and important, Mr. Speaker. The health and well-being of the industry is important for the people of Saskatchewan to know. And as representatives of the people, Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure that we have the ability to review decisions that are being taken — not just by government, but by the agencies and boards established by government.

[15:00]

Mr. Speaker, there's another reason for ensuring that government has some idea as to what's taking place within the dairy industry. But before talking about that, Mr. Speaker, I notice that members of the Chamber were very interested earlier when I talked about the evolution of the industry. And, Mr. Speaker, I think there's a couple of things that they remember that they know needs to be put on record.

And more importantly, Mr. Speaker, I know that members of the Legislative Assembly that recognized it, a number of young people have entered the Chamber, something that we are very pleased to see. Mr. Speaker, I see you rising; I'll take my place for a moment.

**The Speaker:** — Thank you, member from The Battlefords. I ask leave of the Assembly to introduce a group of students who have joined us this afternoon. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — With us this afternoon — and they've just arrived in the Assembly — are 25 grade 4 students from the community of Kipling. I notice they've got their green sweaters

on. With them, they're accompanied by their teachers, Robin Roy-Hampton and Rhonda Balogh, and chaperones Rhonda Kapell, Ron Zepick, Tammy Joorisity, Merodee Hassler, and Dana Sproat. I want to welcome the students to their Legislative Assembly.

What you observe taking place on floor right now is debate in second reading of the specific piece of legislation introduced by the Minister of Agriculture. And if you have a few moments, you'll get a bit of an idea of what the legislation is and listening to the member from The Battlefords. But it's my pleasure to invite the members to help me to welcome you to your Legislative Assembly.

I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Before I continue in my remarks, may I have leave to also welcome the students that you have introduced?

**The Speaker:** — The minister has asked for leave as well for introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to, on behalf of the official opposition, welcome the students from Kipling to the legislature. I hope they can stay for a few minutes. I'm about to entertain a bit of a story about the past history of dairy and, Mr. Speaker, they may find it interesting.

But I realize a lot of times students here on tour come in. They recognize what's going on, and they continue their tour. I just want to ensure that they enjoy their stay here in the provincial legislature and want them to know that, as they mature in life and get a better education, that any chair in this place is easily accessible by Saskatchewan residents. And I welcome all of your interests in the political process and taking care of Saskatchewan people. Mr. Speaker, I welcome them with you to the Legislative Assembly.

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 118 — *The Milk Control Repeal Act* (continued)

**Mr. Taylor:** — All right, Mr. Speaker, back to Bill No. 118, *An Act to repeal The Milk Control Act of 1992*. I indicated, Mr. Speaker, that I see the milk industry evolving. And I think anybody that's involved in the dairy industry . . . And I'm sure that anybody that comes from Kipling, Saskatchewan or North Battleford, Saskatchewan knows somebody that's involved in the dairy industry.

Well, Mr. Speaker, some time ago, I was campaigning on doorsteps to be a Member of Parliament in Ottawa. I was successful in that bid, Mr. Speaker, but I'll never forget the conversation that I had with a older gentleman, an individual, Mr. Speaker, who had worked in the dairy industry all of his life. And he was retired and then living in Edam, Saskatchewan along Highway 26, north of The Battlefords. Well, Mr. Speaker,

this older gentleman and I had quite a good conversation on his back porch. And he was lamenting, Mr. Speaker, the changes that were occurring in the dairy industry at that time.

The dairy industry of course was very local. It was serving a very local market. And it involved family business, Mr. Speaker, so that anyone raising dairy cows were always up early in the morning, taking care of those milk-producing cows and, Mr. Speaker, 365 days a year. If you were in the dairy business years ago, Mr. Speaker, you were a family farm and you worked 365 days a year. It was really difficult, Mr. Speaker, for that family to leave the farm for more than a day or two at any given time of the year, Mr. Speaker. And some times of the year were more difficult than others, whether it had to do with increasing the herd locally or when certain good milk-producing cows required some extra feeding or some medical attention, Mr. Speaker.

But the gentleman that I talked to was, what we would call in the education process, a substitute teacher. He was an expert in looking after cattle. He understood dairy cattle. He understood the breeds. And, Mr. Speaker, what he did, he made a living out of doing this job, Mr. Speaker. What he did his entire life was to travel from farm to farm to farm and providing relief services for families running dairy herds and producing milk for the people of Saskatchewan.

He was providing relief for them so that if they needed to go away for family wedding in another province or in another part of Saskatchewan, if they had a family member that was ill and they had to travel to support that family member, if they'd had a good year previously — and there weren't a lot of them, Mr. Deputy Speaker — if they'd had a good year and wanted to have a holiday break or go somewhere for Christmas, these family farms required someone to come, someone trustworthy, someone knowledgeable to come and take care of the cattle and ensure that that farm was still producing and still successful when they returned from their time away.

Mr. Speaker, he was lamenting the fact that his job was no longer necessary, that he had been done out of the job of supporting family dairy farms because of changes in technology, changes in size of farms, the greater influence of the corporate structure within the farm, and more or less the loss of the small, family farm producing for a local market.

Well, Mr. Speaker, part of the history of dairy and the evolution of the industry, Mr. Speaker, with the globalization of our economy, with the globalization of technology, with the globalization of markets, Mr. Speaker, things have changed dramatically. And as a result of these changes that have occurred, we have seen a number of changes become necessary in the way in which we legislate or regulate the industry.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that, in the changes that the government are making today, that they're taking into account how this industry and how the world continues to evolve, Mr. Speaker.

There are some who are arguing that with the world marketplace having been so heavily influenced by cheap oil, Mr. Speaker, and globalization coming from cheap oil, that as the price of oil increases and we reach peak oil — and some are

arguing we've already reached peak oil — that, Mr. Speaker, the future of rural areas in the world, North America included, Mr. Speaker, that reaching peak oil, reaching expensive oil, reaching the scarcity of moving into a world where oil might be more scarce, Mr. Speaker, there are those who argue that the need to become more local, especially in agriculture, Mr. Speaker, is increasing. The need to move in that direction is increasing.

And I'm sure that there are many in the dairy industry, Mr. Speaker, who are recognizing that some of the major growth that has occurred might actually start to back up a bit, and the regulatory process is going to have to stay with and ensure that we are always able to have access as a public to quality, health-safe milk and dairy products.

Mr. Speaker, I've been reading a book that I think other members of the legislature have read. It's available through the Legislative Library here. I know it's also in other libraries across the province. And I know that it's available on the bestseller shelves of most bookstores in Saskatchewan. It's a book written by Jeff Rubin. He's formerly the chief economist with CIBC World Markets. Jeff Rubin's book is called, your world is about to get a lot smaller, or maybe more importantly, *Why Your World Is About To Get a Whole Lot Smaller*.

And I just want to read, Mr. Speaker, the first three paragraphs in the chapter 1 of Jeff Rubin's book. I want to put this on record, Mr. Speaker. This is the quote, the three paragraphs:

When you don't have enough money in your pocket to get on the subway, finding some change between the cushions of your sofa can seem like a pretty important discovery. And if it gets you to work on time, it is.

But if you had to depend on finding spare change to get to work each and every day, well, you might start looking for another job a lot closer to home.

Right now, the oil companies of the world have their hands deep between the cushions, and so far they have been coming up with enough dimes and quarters . . . to get us all to work. But there is only so much change to be found, and more people are heading out the door to work every day.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I continue the quote:

The world's oil wells are running out of the stuff that keeps the whole system going. Every well will eventually run dry — in fact the well is tapped out long before it is empty. Even with the most advanced technology, oil companies get barely half the oil out before geophysics and economics conspire to make what's left not worth going after. The question is how fast, and whether new supply can be found in time to replace it. Even if today's depletion rate holds constant, we must find nearly 20 million barrels per day of new production over the next five years simply to keep global production at current levels.

That sets the stage, Mr. Speaker, for the argument that he lays out in the rest of the book. And the argument quite simply is, it

might not be tomorrow. It might not be next year, and it might not be for another five or ten years. But, Mr. Speaker, the way that oil is being found and technology is being developed, Mr. Speaker, sooner or later our economy is going to have to shift to less oil and more expensive oil which affects transportation, which affects agriculture, and certainly which affects our quality of life.

Why am I talking about that under *The Milk Control Repeal Act*, Mr. Speaker? It's simply because our world will get a lot smaller, according to Mr. Rubin. Our world will get a lot smaller. It will become more local. And, Mr. Speaker, we won't rely on milk coming from Ontario to support the market in The Battlefords. And North Dakota won't be relying on milk from Saskatchewan to support the people of North Dakota, Mr. Speaker.

The days that I referred to earlier, with small, family farms producing milk for a local market, may be — may be, Mr. Speaker, underline the word may be — in our future here in Saskatchewan. A more local market, family farms, less corporate dominated, not a lot of transportation because — remember — if the cost to transport becomes too great, the price of the product at the end of that transportation loop becomes unaffordable for the people who have it.

So agriculture producers, not just dairy farmers, Mr. Speaker, but cattle and hogs and grain. Foodstuffs, Mr. Speaker, are going to become much more important to the local markets than ever before, since we started to develop our land base here in North America.

[15:15]

So I'm hoping, Mr. Speaker, that those who are now charged with ensuring that the regulatory process, the accountability process, the development of our milk control, our milk regulation system, are able to ensure that, as the industry continues to evolve — whether it gets larger or smaller — I hope that they have the tools necessary to ensure that the public is able to have access to quality, safe, healthy milk products, Mr. Speaker. I know the producers are going to produce the product. I'm very supportive of the producers, Mr. Speaker. But I need to know and I need to be assured that in fact the systems that are there supporting those producers, to make sure they stay in business and continue to do the work that they need to do, are able to do that in a way that benefits all of us and ensures that our quality of life is not too negatively affected.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to support my colleague who spoke a few minutes ago, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, who indicated that the previous board had done a good job, that stakeholders need to be included in the decision-making process, that indeed consultation may have occurred, needs to continue to occur to ensure that the public feels confident that the system is serving their interests in the long run. Their interests are very important to us, whether you're a young person from Kipling, a working person from North Battleford, or a retired dairy support worker in Edam, Mr. Speaker. Everybody cares about the future of agriculture and the future of dairy production here in Saskatchewan.

So having said that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing the

remarks of other members of the legislature on this Bill. So therefore, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to put some of my thoughts on record, and I will take my seat with a great interest in how this Bill proceeds through the legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand up and present some remarks on Bill 118, *An Act to repeal The Milk Control Act*.

Mr. Speaker, the issues that arise when one repeals an Act involve what's in the legislation itself, what the intention is of the government as far as how they're going to do the important work that's been done under the existing legislation, and then how the whole area that's being legislated about is going to be dealt with in the future. And I listened with interest to the words of my colleague from The Battlefords because he touched on a number of those aspects of the repealing of *The Milk Control Act*.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I come to this topic wearing a few different hats, and so I'm going to start, I think, and tell a little bit about one of them which is being the grandson of a woman who sold milk — actually she sold cream — to provide for the piano lessons for my mother and my aunt. And this was something that I think was done quite commonly across the province of Saskatchewan. And in many ways that cream can become a symbol of the independence of the women of Saskatchewan, because they were often the ones who spent the time milking the cows and then using the cream separator to separate the milk, and then making sure that it was delivered appropriately to the local dairies or to a local store. Sometimes it was sold directly.

And I start with that kind of a perspective in saying that this area of milk control has always been a rather contentious area as it relates to the local community, because we are now quite used to the fact that in Canada we have controlled marketing right across the country. And in fact this particular legislation that's going to be repealed is part of a national scheme. So you go from the small farm just south of Outlook that I recall going into the dairy barn — the cows were gone by the time I was around — but going there and realizing that that aspect of independence for the women of Saskatchewan ended up having some of the roots that ultimately resulted in the kinds of legislation that we have here and across the country.

Now why is the issue of production of milk and the control of the production of milk so important for Saskatchewan? We know that in the national scheme of things, our farmers in Saskatchewan have had to fight for a national share of the production of milk. And I know, I think it's about 30 years ago that there was little or no capacity in Saskatchewan to sell milk products into the industrial milk area — in other words, the area where milk was being used to produce cheese.

And there were a number of people who were involved in that particular battle, and I know one of them ended up with a seat in the legislature as the member from Moosomin, Mr. Larry Birkbeck. And he came out of this time as a milk producer

where they were working to gain rights to participate in the national marketing scheme of industrial milk as opposed to the fluid milk, the milk that you buy in the stores. That fight was long and hard, and the ultimate result is that we got a very small percentage of the national market.

And one might ask, well where is that national market? I think practically there's a huge chunk of it that is controlled in the province of Quebec, and in Ontario, and also then in British Columbia. And we might not often think about that, but in Saskatchewan we had Dairy Producers Co-op which was all the dairy producers working together. They were the people who were regulated under this particular legislation that we're planning to repeal. But they were able to provide the supply for Saskatchewan.

Well we know that there's been consolidation in the milk industry across the country and that there are many, many fewer corporations of a large national or international nature that are involved in the milk business. Now this may be the reason that this legislation is being brought forward for repeal. I'm not totally certain, from what I've heard so far, if that is the ultimate rationale. But practically, at the same time all of this internationalization or broad corporatization of the production of food as it relates to milk and dairy products is happening, there's also a similar discussion about eat locally, buy locally, get your produce locally. Because that's how the new world is going to be organized.

And so the question becomes, what does this particular action that we're taking today facilitate — the international control of the milk industry, or does it facilitate more a Saskatchewan local control, or is it some other thing that's happening here?

An added aspect to this particular issue relates to the incredible pressure on our national government and our provincial government in the form of the ministers of Agriculture as it relates to marketing boards in general. We in Canada have protected marketing boards in a number of different areas in a way that ends up being attacked from our neighbours to the south by our, I guess, world neighbours, because they think that we have ended up with a process that makes it difficult for others to compete in our country.

And I think it's not as obvious in Regina or Saskatoon or in Saskatchewan as it might be in some other parts of Canada. But if you live in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia or if you live in the Detroit-Windsor area or St. Catharines-Niagara Falls area, there are many people who actually will drive across the United States, buy milk, and bring it home again as it relates to the difference in cost.

And that's another sort of practical aspect from an ordinary family perspective that in a world where costs are increasing all around, one place where you can actually make some savings on your food budget is to shop in the United States, if that's a practical thing to do. It's not practical for most people in Saskatchewan and I don't recommend that. But it is a factor as we look at legislation around like this particular Bill, Bill 118.

So we're into an area which has many different pressures on how milk production is controlled and then how it's appropriately sold. And it's quite fascinating actually to look at

the legislation itself and see what kinds of things are authorized. If one goes from the legislation to the regulations, one will note that the price of every class of milk is set by regulation and those regulations are updated regularly.

I note that the set of regulations here in the legislature, the most recent update of the pricing rules around milk was on July 24th of 2009, just a few months ago, and that there's a constant adjustment in that legislation. Now it may be that this particular Bill is being repealed because there is that process of very publicly stating what the price of milk is that producers will get, and it's a rather complicated way to get it changed, to have to go and get a regulatory change every time that you want to adjust the price of milk.

Now we may eventually hear some of that — I'm not sure I've heard it so far — that that's one of the rationales for the change that we're talking about here. But it is interesting in how much detail what one has very publicly in the legislation. And obviously now you can go and look at these things online through the government website and keep track of what the prices are.

And so basically the prices . . . The other factor in this legislation that ends up being quite interesting, and it's not totally clear from what's happening here, what new system is going to replace *The Milk Control Act*, but I might talk about that a little bit later.

Now another hat that I wear when I come and look at this is the hat as a legislator and as a lawyer, as somebody who has been watching and looking at various pieces of legislation and regulatory change over the last decade and a half. And it's clear that *The Milk Control Act* and the Milk Control Board under that Act is a little bit of a different entity than quite a number of the other product control or product marketing Acts that are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture.

[15:30]

And so it strikes me that there may be something in this particular legislation now that actually relates to that issue, which is how it's administered within the Ministry of Agriculture and how it actually relates with the farmers who are members of the board or milk producers who are members of the board, and what the processes are that allow for that responsibility to be carried out by the board.

I know that there have been a number of different marketing agencies that have been brought under *The Agri-Food Act* which is what I understand is one of the . . . It appears that there's going to be something that'll be done under that particular legislation as it relates to the Milk Control Board. So the question comes, well what differences will there be to the milk producers if, in fact, this is being administered in some relationship to *The Agri-Food Act* as opposed to what happens under *The Milk Control Act* as well?

I know that from discussions and trying to understand how *The Agri-Food Act* works in its broadest sense, that there are common methods of administration going across many of the products that are controlled under that legislation. And I think what we will need to hear from the minister and from officials

as we look at this over the next number of months, is what will the practical effect be for the farmers or the producers here, and how much of the control of their industry will shift into the control of the minister versus how much may shift back to the industry, and what are the trade-offs that are going to be proposed.

Now as everybody can see, the Bill that we have in the legislature is barely one page long and so the information isn't set out here. So what we have to do is say look at, based on our experience as legislators and as people who are able to go and contact those in the industry, to get information from them as to what the effect of this will be.

Now the original legislation is interesting in the sense of what its purpose was. And when you look at legislation you always go and say okay, what are the powers that are invested in this board? You know, you get away from all of the issues around, well who's on the board, where do they come from, what are their powers, but look at what is it that they're given the job to do by the people of Saskatchewan through the legislature.

And so basically the powers of the board are to deal with disputes in a lot of ways, but when you actually look through all the . . . I think it's actually quite enlightening to do that. If you go to section 8 of the legislation that we're going to repeal, it says:

Subject to this Act and the regulations, the board may:

(a) on its own initiative or on receipt of a complaint in writing, inquire into, hear and determine any matter relating to:

- (i) production;
- (ii) distribution; or
- (iii) both production and distribution;

and may make any order it considers advisable with respect to that matter.

So that's the first power that's given. The second one is that it can:

(b) regulate its own practice and procedure for the conduct of hearings and inquiries held pursuant to the Act.

A third one is sort of a power of setting up committees to investigate where there are problems around the legislation. The fourth area is they can determine the remuneration and reimbursement for the expenses of the members of the committees that are established. A fifth area is they can enter into contracts where those contracts will accomplish the objectives of the Act, and it also gives the standard clauses about buying and selling and holding or mortgaging and owning property so that they can fulfill the purposes of the Act, and it also allows them to invest the money that they have in their Act. And then in (h) they can:

designate or hire agents on those terms that the board

considers to be in the public interest to:

- (i) collect and purchase producer milk;
- (ii) transport and sell milk to distributors and processors
- (iii) collect deductions and levies [that's a key one] from producers; and
- (iv) for the purpose of doing the things . . .
  - (A) handle funds; and
  - (B) keep records in accounts; . . .

And it can generally do all of the things that are set out in that legislation. And so basically what you have is a self-contained system of controlling the milk area and dealing with the total milk production.

And as we know from looking at the newspapers and also, I think, some of the court records over many decades, there were often disputes between people who wanted to produce and sell milk to their neighbours or to local towns versus the Milk Control Board, which has the responsibility of marketing and dealing with milk for the whole province. And so often the kinds of things that the board was asked to deal with related to these disputes over whether the Milk Control Board actually had jurisdiction over their production, or whether some of the ways that milk was being marketed were contrary to the rules that had been set up under this particular legislation. And so what we have, as I said, is a system that has been developed.

Now one of the things about creating organizations or creating methods or creating systems to do things is that they will sometimes make mistakes. But they also gain experience in managing and doing a good job of managing the purposes for which they're originally created.

And so once again, one of the questions becomes then, around Bill 118, is what will be the continuance process? And how will the powers that are presently available under *The Milk Control Act*, how are those powers transferred forward and where do they go? Do they go to the minister? Do they go to a new board? Do they go to some of the senior officials in the Department of Agriculture, or do they go to some other place? Or are all of these controls just going to be gone within a period of time? And some of those things, I don't know if we have heard fully as to how this is going to be happening.

Now I know that often as the Minister of Agriculture probably wouldn't hear very much about this whole area of the ministry unless there were problems or unless there were issues. And so I don't know whether there have been complaints that have come forward where people have said, well let's get rid of that milk control Act because it's messing up our industry, or that there may be certain individuals who want to change the power structure, or if there are some other ways that the matter may be managed through the Ministry of Agriculture which will allow for a different way of collecting the fees and the levies that happen on the production.

Now one question obviously comes, as far as where this

legislation takes us, is there's clearly a lot of money flowing through this particular legislation and it does relate to monies that are collected on the production right across the province. And so where will this money go? How will it be used? Will it be used primarily in the milk industry or will it possibly be used in other aspects of the Ministry of Agriculture?

And this may not have been a question three or four weeks ago, but now that we have this mid-year report with pressures on the government to find money wherever they can, we need to then ask the question if this is a method of a money grab or what is it. So, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of questions around that particular issue that we'll need to continue to examine.

Now any time that there's change within an industry, there are questions that are asked. And it may be — we don't know; we can't tell from this particular Bill — but it may be that in the 21st century there's a different way to organize and deal with the milk industry. We haven't heard that, but that may be what is happening here. And if in fact that is what the situation is, then I think we will probably have to have a chance to talk to people who will be affected by the legislation. We'll need to hear from the minister. We'll need to hear from his officials as to what they see the changes will be when this legislation ultimately is finalized.

I'm not certain that anybody's entirely clear as to what is going to happen, and so as a result, I guess we'll have to wait and maybe in committee or another situation get more information. It probably would be a good idea for the milk industry itself to, or the minister, to actually provide much more information about why this is being done so that everybody in the public can understand exactly why this is being brought forward at this time.

What we don't want to see is what sometimes happens when there's a change in government, is that there's a new group of people who are interested in changing who actually controls something like the Milk Control Board. And if that's what's happening, well then we'll have a lot of questions about that. I don't have any reason to believe that at this stage, but I think it is important to ask that question as well.

Now there are a number of national and international negotiations that are happening over the next number of months that may also affect this particular legislation. And we will also want to hear from the minister what aspects of the international negotiations will affect what we're doing locally here in Saskatchewan.

We all know that the number of the smaller dairies anywhere in North America have dropped drastically, and most of our milk production comes from very large plants in some of our larger cities both in Canada and the United States. And so we need to understand what that actually means for Saskatchewan. I mean it seems logical that this would be an area where Saskatchewan producers and then the whole agri-food industry could provide food for a much broader group of people right across the country or across the world, and it may be an area for expansion in Saskatchewan.

[15:45]

What we do know is that the traditional division of the quotas across the country left Saskatchewan substantially out of the industrial milk market because they were based on population, not on the ability to produce. And we're in this interesting place called Saskatchewan where we have 43 per cent of the agriculture land of Canada, but we only have 3 per cent of the population. And so sometimes the policies that are based on the people and the population of the country don't make as much economic sense as they should. And so we're interested to find out whether this aspect has been thought about by the Minister of Agriculture and by his staff and we'll look forward to hearing about the place of this particular change in the broader international context.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are quite a number of clauses and powers that are in this particular Act and it is possible that we should actually go and ask, well what's going to happen when the rules are no longer there as set out in this Act? And I guess, being a lawyer, the one I look at the most is, what are the new rules going to be around resolution of conflict between producers and distributors, between some of the pricing mechanisms, and what remedies will be available for people to correct those things? If a lot of those are no longer available in this legislation, will they be available under *The Agri-Food Act* or will there be rules somewhere else or will the parties be forced to enter into contracts of a whole new nature or what is going to happen?

So, Mr. Speaker, there are quite a few unanswered questions about this. But I think at this stage, I will adjourn debate on this particular motion. And I know some of my other colleagues may, another day, have some comments to make about it. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 118, *The Milk Control Repeal Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 119 — *The Ticket Sales Act*

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my privilege to rise today to move second reading of *The Ticket Sales Act*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, *The Ticket Sales Act* responds to consumer complaints about recent concerts and sporting events which sold out instantly, while tickets were available from ticket resellers at the same time. Saskatchewan does not have legislation to prevent secondary sales and this Bill will change that.

We recognize that there are many situations where secondary sales are not only appropriate but in fact necessary. For example, consumers who purchase tickets and through no fault of their own are unable to use them, there must be a way for those people to transfer their tickets to willing purchasers.

We also recognize that there will be circumstances where ticket exchanges will be necessary and appropriate. For example, the Saskatchewan Roughriders allow season ticket holders to transfer tickets that they cannot use. Those types of exchanges will be exempted from the legislation through regulation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan residents however are entitled to know that even if they do not get the tickets they wanted, they at least had a fair chance. Our goal is to ensure the broadest possible distribution of tickets to the ticket buying public. This Act will increase transparency and public protection in the following ways.

First, the legislation will prohibit the primary seller from having links to reseller websites on a primary ticket website. The legislation will also prohibit a secondary ticket seller who has any legal association with the primary ticket seller from selling tickets to the same event except by the exceptions in the regulations. And finally, it prohibits a reseller from advertising for sale in any manner to a Saskatchewan event until 48 hours after the tickets go on sale to the public.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we feel that this is very significant protection. Consumers who are unable to obtain tickets initially will still be able to buy them from secondary sellers. However, they will be able to make a more informed choice if 48 hours has passed since the initial disappointment.

One growing concern is that some resellers have tickets for sale in large volumes earlier than they should have been able to acquire them. The Bill will make it an offence to use computer software to break the code intended to prevent automated ticket buying. The accompanying regulations will include reporting requirements for publicly owned venues. This way the ministry will be able to call for reports as needed to determine whether the sale was fair to consumers.

Fines are up to \$5,000 for individuals and \$100,000 for corporations for first offences, and up to \$10,000 for individuals and \$500,000 for corporations for subsequent offences. Individuals can be jailed for up to one year.

Mr. Speaker, we wish to acknowledge the co-operation of Ticketmaster and the venues in crafting this legislation and working with us to develop solutions. We also wish to recognize the assistance of Saskatchewan venue operators for their insights into this business.

This is a changing industry with changing technology. It is not our goal to impede in any way, which is why we will be able to use regulations to keep up to date with the constant innovations and changes. It is not our desire to have events and sporting events, concerts, etc., that will not come to our province because of our legislation. This legislation . . . [inaudible] . . . create as many tickets for an event as there are consumers who wish to attend. That is clearly impossible. It will however, create transparency and fairness.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the media has asked me when this Bill will likely be passed and come into force. I've indicated to the media that this Bill should have no political ramifications and should be supported by both sides of the House, and would like to urge the members opposite to give speedy passage of this

Bill.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to now move second reading of *The Ticket Sales Act*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved second reading of Bill No. 119, *The Ticket Sales Act*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and offer some comments on the Act respecting the sale of tickets. The minister raised a couple of issues in his comments. And I do know that this was a fairly substantial public issue a short time ago when there was issues with a number of event tickets that were sold and resold basically, and where many people either couldn't get a hold of tickets — they were sold out quite quickly — or the tickets that they did have access to were substantially higher priced than what they had of been, if you had of been able to buy them from the primary seller.

And this actually has become a fairly large issue right across North America and I believe in Europe also, where we have seen some performers who have boycotted tickets being sold in certain ways, and we have seen a number of statements being made. And I don't disagree that each of these, whether performers or promoters or whichever end of this entertainment industry that they may work on, they're all entitled to make a profit. But really, Mr. Speaker, there were some shortcuts being made that really were only harmful to the consumers.

So when we look at this Bill and we look at the short title, it's fairly self-explanatory: *The Ticket Sales Act*. And interpretation, the interpretation and the definitions are always interesting, Mr. Speaker, because it gives us a better understanding of the legislation and, when we look through the Act, what exactly the wording means.

So of course the primary concern here is the consumer. And that means, “. . . an individual who participates, as a purchaser, in a transaction involving the sale of a ticket.” Also gives a definition of the minister. And prescribed means, “prescribed in the regulations.” And, Mr. Speaker, that's always the interesting part. We always wait to see what the regulations will say and what will be contained in the regulations.

Some governments had had a policy of having more, or had been more prone to having the bulk of the information and direction in the legislation. For one thing, when there is any changes that are to be made, it will be brought back to the Legislative Assembly and will have to go through a process of scrutiny, both by stakeholders, interested parties, and the opposition. And at that time there's also an opportunity to ask questions directly of the minister when we are in committee.

But when we see a fair bit of information, some governments prefer to have things in regulation which are much easier to change. They can be done through cabinet, and there is absolutely no public scrutiny when regulations are to be changed. So it's always an interest to see what exactly is contained in the legislation itself and what will be contained in regulation.



There also is definitions for primary seller. It means:

... a person, other than a secondary seller, who is engaged in the business of making tickets available for sale, and includes the owner of the place to which a ticket provides admission, the promoter of the event occurring at that place and any agent or broker of those persons.

Also gives a definition for secondary seller, Mr. Speaker. Lays out quite clearly whom that person or operation may be. And it also gives a definition for a ticket, which could be a card, a pass, a paper, a “document or thing, whether in electronic form or otherwise” and “that, on presentation, entitles the holder to an admission to an event.”

And I guess, quite clearly, Mr. Speaker, when you start looking at the Act itself, quite quickly it gets into prohibitions re primary seller and secondary seller. And really, Mr. Speaker, I’m definitely not a person to be using any type of legal language, but the short and sweet of this legislation was, what we had was companies and primary sellers that were basically scalping their own tickets to make a higher profit.

And it was truly to the detriment of consumers. And not just maybe consumers who had decided at the last minute and went to what we would more traditionally view as a scalper out in front of an event and paid a little bit higher of a price for a ticket, but these were actual tickets that would go on sale, and within minutes they would be sold out to the secondary seller who would then sell them in a variety of methods and venues at a considerably higher price.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we were having was just impossible situations where the average consumer could not even buy a ticket at what would be considered a traditional price for some of these concerts. And we’ve seen markups. I mean, it was in the hundreds of dollars that people would pay for tickets.

So, Mr. Speaker, it quite clearly lays out:

In this section, a primary seller and a secondary seller are associated if they are associates within the meaning of *The Business Corporations Act*.

And also:

Subject to any prescribed ... [exemption], no secondary seller shall make a ticket available for sale for admission to an event in Saskatchewan if a ticket to the same event is or has been made available for sale by a primary seller who is associated with the secondary seller.

So that’s quite clear in what it does. And I know that there will be many people in the province of Saskatchewan who will be happy to see this legislation because I clearly remember that when this issue first became quite public — I think it was about a year ago; could be a little bit longer — there was lots of comments on the radio, lots of people writing into blogs and various other formats that were furious over the difficulty that they had been facing, and that Saskatchewan had no legislation to address this.

[16:00]

And I believe the minister was in the media at that point in time saying that he would look at moving something forward in the province of Saskatchewan. So this is it. So I would imagine, Mr. Speaker, that he has looked at other provinces, what works, what doesn’t work, and has put together a piece of legislation that is something that’s workable here for the province of Saskatchewan, but it also goes on to talk about no references or links to secondary sellers permitted.

So it’s subject to any prescribed exemption, and with any piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, there are exemptions. So we need to find out what the prescribed exemptions are or will be:

... no primary seller shall permit, for an event that will take place in Saskatchewan, a reference to, or a link to, a secondary seller:

[And it’s] (a) in the primary seller’s promotional material;

on an Internet website of the primary seller; or

as part of any sale of tickets by the primary seller.

So and it also goes on to advertising of tickets, and this I believe is important that:

No person, other than a primary seller, may sell, advertise or list for sale, in any manner, any tickets to an event in Saskatchewan until at least 48 hours after the tickets to that same event were made available to the general public by a primary seller.

So we should no longer see the circumstance where the minute tickets go on sale they are gone, and consumers are left wondering how they couldn’t have dialled quick enough or got in quick enough on the Internet. And even though Saskatchewan has lots of high-speed Internet, there was many, many that were concerned because tickets would be gone by the time they got in on the electronic sites. But this should make a huge difference when there’s the restrictions in place that at least 48 hours after tickets for the event have been made available to the general public by the primary seller.

So, Mr. Speaker, the legislation also talks about software, which I’m going to totally avoid. And I’m hoping that the minister has received some very good advice on software and why specifically. It’s questions I’ll have to ask though, why this specific software needs to be in the legislation itself, and we’ll get further information I’m sure from the minister.

But now one area where I do have some questions, other questions, Mr. Speaker, “**Reports by owners of public venues.**” This is section 8 and it says:

Every venue owned or operated by the province or a municipality at which events are held shall provide a report to the minister in accordance with the regulations.

So I’m not sure what is being required to be reported and how often this will be and how cumbersome it will be and what is

the necessity. Because I also know near the end there is in section 13 under regulations there, is section:

(c) respecting the report to be provided to the minister pursuant to section 8, including:

- (i) the information to be included in the report;
- (ii) the manner in which the report is to be provided; and
- (iii) the times at which the report is to be provided.

But I'm still not clear here on what is to be reported and why. So those are going to be some of the questions that we have for the minister once this legislation moves into committee.

But I think one thing that will make consumers very happy is a consumer may commence action. So the legislation clearly lays out that a consumer, as a result of a contravention of sections 4, 5, 6, or 7 may commence an action in a court against a person who has contravened one of these provisions. So there are remedies and there are also . . . the court. If a court finds that a person has contravened any of these sections, the court may — and there's a list of what the court may order:

- (a) order restitution of money or other consideration given . . .
- (b) award the consumer damages in the amount of any loss suffered because of the contravention . . .
- (c) grant an injunction restraining the person from continuing to contravene the provision;
- (d) make an order of specific performance against the person; or
- (e) make any other order the court considers appropriate."

So, Mr. Speaker, there are, contained along in the legislation, the offences and penalties. And it's quite clear what the penalties shall be. And those are quite clear. And they're fairly steep, Mr. Speaker:

- (i) in the case of an individual, to a fine of not more than \$5,000, to imprisonment for a term of not more than one year or to both; and
  - (ii) in the case of a corporation [this is for the first offence, in the case of a corporation], to a fine of not more than \$100,000; and
- (b) for a second or subsequent offence:
- (i) in the case of an individual, to a fine of not more than \$10,000, to imprisonment for a term of not more than one year or both.

So the fine increases, prison term doesn't, possibility of prison term. But the fine is definitely increased and "in the case of a corporation, to a fine of not more than \$500,000."

So there's other requirements that are in here. There is a limitation on prosecution. And I'm not sure why the limits and if that is common practice among this type of legislation or if it's something that the minister felt was important to put in. But those are questions that we will be able to ask as we go into committee and as we move through with this piece of legislation.

So a number of questions. What exemptions would be in place? Why the reporting? And reporting of what information? And, I guess, why the limits on prosecution, and why there would be the flexibility or the limits, I guess, that don't seem particularly long when it comes to these type of events.

But, Mr. Speaker, I know that there are a number of my colleagues that would also like to make comment on this legislation. But I think all in all there may be some specific issues that we have questions on, but I think most people will be pleased that the minister has brought this forward. So I'll leave time for my colleagues to make comment.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again I am pleased to be able to rise today to speak to legislation introduced into the Legislative Assembly today at second reading. The Bill in front of us is numbered 119. It's *An Act respecting the Sale of Tickets*. And, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have been in my place to hear the explanation by the Minister of Justice in presenting the Bill to us today and to hear the comments from my colleague, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, who has laid out some of the terms of the legislation.

We always ask, Mr. Speaker, why is a piece of legislation necessary when we are in this Chamber. Every year, regardless of who sits in the government benches, Mr. Speaker, there are 35, 40, maybe as high as 50 or 60 pieces of legislation that come into the Assembly. And each piece of legislation comes with some motivation behind it. Some are political. Some are consumer-based, and some, Mr. Speaker, are simply intended to improve the quality of life of the people within the province. And, Mr. Speaker, I think the legislation in front of us, when we ask why is this legislation necessary, fits, Mr. Speaker, into the categories of both improving the quality of life and addressing needs that have been expressed to government by members of the public.

But when that happens, Mr. Speaker, of course it's necessary to ensure that the response that government makes to the requests or needs of the public actually will meet the needs of the public. More importantly, Mr. Speaker, actually meets the expectations of the public. Sometimes those two words — needs and expectations — are actually different. So we have to read the legislation carefully. We have to consult with members of the public and with those affected by the legislation and, Mr. Speaker, ensure that the needs and expectations of the public are met by the specifics of the Bills that come before us.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's the circumstances we find ourselves in on Bill No. 119. And I've got a number of things that I want to comment on with regards to that. The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow indicated some of the things that are in the Act, and

I'm going to repeat a couple of those as I express some of my concerns.

But I think, when we go back to what I said earlier about the needs of the people of Saskatchewan and their expectations, we are talking about a quality of life that we have in Saskatchewan that complements any anywhere in the world. And so our legislative response to needs and expectations are becoming more sophisticated than we've needed to have in the past because, of course, our quality of life competing with that of people who live anywhere in the world demand it, Mr. Speaker.

We're blessed in Saskatchewan with a quality of life that ensures that not only do we feel secure in our homes and within our communities, but we are healthy. We like to laugh. We like to socialize, Mr. Speaker. We like to share our personal environments with others.

Mr. Speaker, we have welcomed people from across the country, the continent, and the world into our province and into our communities. We have welcomed visitors. We've welcomed new residents, Mr. Speaker. And we've done that because we have always been, from the First Nations people who originally inhabited this land through the first waves of immigration into our province, Mr. Speaker, we have always been a people that like to socialize, like to gather, like to share information and, Mr. Speaker, like to laugh and have fun.

Mr. Speaker, we who live in a large geographical area with a small population have had to, for commercial purposes and other reasons, build a system of transportation in this province to ensure that we are able to move from community to community reasonably and quickly, Mr. Speaker. Everyone in this province knows that, whether it was originally the horse trails that covered the province or the cart trails or later the railroads, and then finally, Mr. Speaker, this massive highway system that we have in Saskatchewan was developed to move not only goods across the province, Mr. Speaker, not only goods across the province but also people. And so we have recognized for a long period of time that the public in Saskatchewan likes to travel, likes move around to various events.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in every one of our communities, we have tickets being sold to events that draw large crowds. And I do not believe that the minister intends this legislation to apply to the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League games where sellouts occur regularly, Mr. Speaker, in most of our cities. I don't think the minister intends this to apply for tickets to our community theatres where sellouts, Mr. Speaker, occur in our smaller communities and cities on a regular basis.

And I don't think, Mr. Speaker, this legislation is intended to apply to many of the community suppers and music festivals that occur in our communities and are also sellouts, Mr. Speaker, as people compete with each other locally and with surrounding communities for tickets for these events. I know that in the spring of every year when the rodeos begin and the Kinsmen start selling tickets to rodeos, Mr. Speaker, in The Battlefords for example, that people want good seats. And they compete against each other for those seats at the spring rodeo in our community, Mr. Speaker. And I don't believe that this legislation is intended to meet the needs or expectations of

those people.

[16:15]

But, Mr. Speaker, we have a province and a group of citizens that travel extensively throughout the province. We have venues, particularly in Saskatoon and Regina, Mr. Speaker, very good venues that attract large crowds. My first experience with that, Mr. Speaker, was in, I think it was, 2006 when the Rolling Stones came to Saskatchewan following the hard work done by former premier Lorne Calvert, Mr. Speaker, premier of the province of Saskatchewan, to build up an economy and beginning, for the first time in many years, this sense of optimism that continues through the province of Saskatchewan today.

Mr. Speaker, my first experience with a very large venue concert was at Mosaic Stadium here in the city of Regina, the capital of our wonderful province, to see the Rolling Stones, Mr. Speaker. Tremendous concert. The people of Saskatchewan travelled from all over the province. People from Manitoba came. They sat in front of me at the event, Mr. Speaker. These crazy people from Manitoba sat there at a Rolling Stones concert saying, go Bombers, go Bombers. It was absolutely crazy, Mr. Speaker. But they had a right to be there. They had a right to be there and they enjoyed the concert in a venue in Saskatchewan, and no doubt they purchased those tickets from a seller that could be influenced by this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, we have been blessed over the years with quite a number of events at credit union place in Saskatoon, at the teachers' credit union place in Saskatoon as well, and, Mr. Speaker, the Brandt Centre here in Regina, the Centre of the Arts here in Regina — venues that attract world-class events. People want to go — whether it's Elton John or whether it's AC/DC or whether it's world-class comics or ballets. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet was recently in Saskatoon, the Moscow Ballet recently here in Regina. Mr. Speaker, tremendous events. People drove all over this province, Mr. Speaker, in order to get here.

They want to be certain that when they're searching for a ticket, whether they live across the street from Mosaic Stadium or whether they live four hours away in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, that they have fair access to the tickets that are available to attend that event because that's who we are, Mr. Speaker. We will travel four hours, five hours, six hours. We'll spend all night driving, Mr. Speaker, to attend an event because we are social people.

Some members will remember when there was a talk of a National Hockey League franchise in Saskatchewan. Bill Hunter was trying to bring the NHL to Saskatoon, and he went to the people of Saskatoon and northwest Saskatchewan and even south of Saskatoon as far as Regina. And he said we need to prove to the NHL that we can support a team. And they sold season tickets, Mr. Speaker, on spec. Interestingly enough those tickets, Mr. Speaker, were sold throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

And it really was interesting, Mr. Speaker. It really was interesting to see that the majority of those tickets were sold in groups of three. And why was that, Mr. Speaker? There was

some speculation as to why these tickets were sold in groups of three, National Hockey League seasons tickets in Saskatoon, because that's how many people drive in a half-ton truck, Mr. Speaker. That's how many people can sit across the bench in a half-ton truck.

This is Saskatchewan. We care about our hockey. We care about our events, and we will drive, Mr. Speaker, together in order to go to events. And the sale of those tickets proved that the beginning of Saskatchewan's ability to support events were tremendous.

Mr. Speaker, I have a number of things that I would like to talk about on this legislation, but I do know that there are other members who wish to speak before the legislature adjourns for today. So, Mr. Speaker, with that I thank you for the opportunity to address some of these matters in this Bill, and I look forward to the comments made by other members. I think the member from Regina Lakeview is interested as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to speak about Bill 119, *An Act respecting the Sale of Tickets*. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping by the time we're through looking at this particular Bill that we won't have a Bill of unintended consequences but that we will actually have a Bill that deals with a particular problem.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my understanding of the issue which arose, which raised the public's ire and also the consternation of legal officials and people within the consumer protection branch of the Ministry of Justice, did relate to section 4 of this proposed legislation, which is that relationship between a primary seller and a secondary seller.

And I think the Minister of Justice set out this particular problem where a certain block of tickets would be set aside by the primary seller into another corporation or another entity because they knew that they would be able to market those once the initial batch of tickets had been sold. So it appears that that is the triggering problem.

Now often what happens when you try to attack a particular problem, you have quite a bit of difficulty in actually drafting the legislation so that it deals only with that problem. And my comments today will relate to what are the possible unintended consequences of this legislation. And I raise them in this context because there may be some possibility of fixing unintended consequences as we proceed with the legislation.

So basically when you look at the Act, it has a number of definitions that are laid out in section 2. Now that's, you know, basically pretty straightforward, except section 3 effectively gives the ability by regulation to totally remove people or classes of people or certain circumstances from the legislation. And it's a pretty broad clause. Now normally when you see a clause like that in a piece of legislation, that means that they know that there may be places where they're going to have problems. So when something pops up, well then you'll end up with another place where a prescribed person or a prescribed

group of people or a prescribed circumstance is excluded from the effect of the legislation. Well that's not very comforting to people who are trying to figure out what the legislation is all about.

So you have a definition of the consumer, and that means an individual who's going to buy the ticket. You have a definition of minister. Well that's relatively obvious. They have a definition of the word prescribed to say, "prescribed in the regulations." Well I think they've actually put that definition in here because it's used so often that they want people to understand that there's going to be regulations that are going to have to try to define this.

Now this may actually be a Bill where we will not want to finally approve it until we actually see what the nature of the regulations are. Now that's often the case, but in this particular Bill, it may be actually a prerequisite to having the matter dealt with because there's so much that is not set out.

Now obviously a couple of key definitions here are primary seller — and it says, obviously, "a person," so that could be a corporation as well — and then the secondary seller. So those definitions are there. Then it goes on to define a ticket. And basically that's also becomes a challenge because of the world we're in now where your ticket can be on your BlackBerry or iPhone or whatever as a digital record of some kind. And I think it does cover that in the definition here. But if it's not covered in these definitions, well you just go to section 3, and you can exclude anything you inadvertently included.

Now I'm not sure. I suspect there's probably a clause in here which allows you to add anything as well, which makes it very interesting. So you both can include things and then you can add things.

And in fact it is there under the regulatory power, the first power, which is section 13(a). It says that cabinet can make regulations "defining, enlarging or restricting the meaning of any word or expression used in this Act but not defined in this Act." And so we end up with a situation where it may not be entirely clear who will be caught by this legislation.

Now my friend from The Battlefords, the member from The Battlefords and also the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow ended up talking about certain circumstances where this legislation may apply. Well obviously if something doesn't work, there's enough wiggle room in this one that you can change everything to adjust to that. Now normally that's not a good basis for proceeding with a Bill because you end up not having the certainty that you require if you're going to try to enforce it.

Now to add on top of that, there are certain other issues that are being dealt with here where it's not totally clear what the intention is. So I think that sections 4 and 5, about primary sellers and secondary sellers, that ends up dealing with the issues that I think triggered the whole review and ultimately this legislation.

But then you get into advertising of tickets in section 6, and this one I think will end up causing problems because of trying to define who is the primary seller, secondary seller. Perhaps they

think that, within the definitions, they've fully defined that but I think there are quite a few problems in that one.

Then you go into section 7 and this is an admirable attempt to provide some regulation around the software applications that may or may not be affected in the electronic purchasing of tickets. And this perhaps adds a layer of protection to people who operate those kinds of systems. But I think when you look at the whole of section 7, the key word is equitable — equitable ticket buying process. What is attempted here is to try to create a level playing field, a fairness in how tickets are purchased. It's an admirable goal, but does the Bill actually do that? And I think that's the question that is going to have to be asked as we move forward looking at the Bill itself.

[16:30]

Now I think that all of us are in support of equitable ticket buying, but if in fact it makes it such that you can't buy certain kinds of tickets that have been readily available or if it has unintended consequences somewhere else, we should know about that before the legislation is passed in the legislature.

The next section is curious because it separates out owners of public venues. And it says these venues owned or operated by the province. So I assume that's the, you know, the Casino Regina, Casino Moose Jaw. Or owned by . . . and maybe the new Dome Stadium, if that ends up being owned by the province or a municipality. That all of these venues will have to ". . . provide a report to the minister in accordance with the regulations."

Now it doesn't say what the report's about. Now we can assume it might have something to do with ticket sales, but it doesn't say that. So what is this report going to be about? Another example of why we need to see what the regulations are before we actually pass the Bill because we need to understand what it is that's to be reported.

Now it's curious that there's no obligation on owners of private venues to provide reports, so we need to know what's the difference there. It also doesn't say anywhere here whether a school that has a public auditorium that they rent out, is that a public venue that needs to report on there because it's not owned by a province or a municipality? That's not clear. What about universities?

Another particular issue is there may be some venues that are public-private venues. So does this, are they caught by section 8? We can't tell from this legislation at all.

Now the next area goes into methods of enforcement of the provisions of the Act. And there are two ways you can enforce this. One is as a, under section 11, which is effectively a penalty or criminal-like process, but section 9 and 10 gives some ability to start a civil action to remedy the problems that have arisen.

Now it's curious because we don't have many tickets in our province that cost \$100 or more, but if you as a consumer suffer a loss, you're not allowed to take it to small claims court. You have to go to the Court of Queen's Bench. I'm not sure what the rationale for that is. We've increased the limits for your claims in small claims court, and so it would appear that there's some

rationale for this, but it's not obvious here. And that the types of remedies that are available as set out in section 10 are not the types of remedies that would ordinarily be available in the small claims court. They need to be dealt with in the Court of Queen's Bench, which as we know is a court of equity.

And so I understand that, but if you think about the cost and the methods of getting into the Court of Queen's Bench, and also you think about from the court's perspective, I'm not sure how often they would want to be having cases come forward to them involving a \$100 ticket or a \$50 ticket or even somebody who bought 10 tickets, so it's \$500 or \$1,000. I'm not sure that the remedy in sections in 9 and 10 will be of any practical effect at all for people of Saskatchewan. So if it doesn't have any practical effect, why is it here?

I think this needs to be looked at, and maybe there are some other remedies. Now there may be a way whereby the Ministry of Justice would be responsible for the costs and would step in on behalf of a consumer and actually take the kinds of cases that are involved here because then it would be a shared cost of all of the people of Saskatchewan. But the way those sections are set up now that's, I would say, an insurmountable hurdle on the cost side to make a claim for a \$50 ticket or a \$100 ticket.

Then when you go into the next area, there are penalties. And penalty, I think amounts there are reasonable within the traditional levels of penalty. And so that is a possibility, but to go and get a remedy under section 11, you would need the co-operation or the authorization of a prosecutor to proceed with the case. And for a \$50 ticket or \$100 ticket, do you want to use that whole system that is there that's dealing with other kinds of crimes? Well that's another question that needs to be asked.

So I think there are a whole number of issues as it relates to the enforcement of this legislation that haven't been fully thought out or costed or looked at. And I think that it may be that we should have this returned to the Minister of Justice and the people in his consumer affairs area to look at.

Now it's also interesting that section 12 puts a limitation on the prosecution of two years. So in other words, you can't prosecute a person for a contravention of this Act more than two years from the date on which the offence is alleged to have been committed. I think this probably needs better definition because this is the kind of case that goes into the commercial fraud area in our police departments. And we know from experience that they are extremely difficult cases to investigate.

And so there may be situations where that \$100 ticket doesn't exactly move to the top of the pile of the kinds of cases that are of the greatest importance, and they end up being not fully investigated within two years of the date on which the offence is alleged to have been committed. So there maybe needs to be further work on that section to actually provide sufficient time for investigations. Or if you're going to have a limitation, at least have a limitation then that allows for matters to be dealt with.

Now it is possible that these kinds of problems that are listed here are better dealt with through some mediation process or through some other process. And it's perfectly legitimate for the

Ministry of Justice officials to look at that and see whether there isn't some other much less expensive way to resolve disputes that may arise related to the offences in this legislation.

And so what you have is a problem with some fairly large corporations which triggered all of these things, and then you end up with remedies that, you know, envision some fairly large expenses. But you also then suggest that the individual consumer gets caught into this very expensive process to try to resolve their particular problems.

So here we have legislation, as I said earlier, that may have unintended consequences that is not as clearly defined as legislation we normally like to have in this legislature. And frankly I think it's legislation that maybe should go back for a bit more work to provide the information that sets out how this is done. If that's not the intention of the minister, then I suggest that we end up getting full copies of the proposed regulations by the time we get to committee on this particular legislation so we can have a better understanding of how it's supposed to work.

But I have quite a few questions about whether this is going to accomplish what is intended, and it may be trying to do too much in a particular piece of legislation. If there's one specific problem with some fairly large sellers and resellers or primary sellers and secondary sellers, maybe we do something that's specifically related to them and leave out all of the other people that might inadvertently be caught in this legislation.

So as it stands so far, I think the concept is right. I think the actual execution of what's supposed to be done isn't there yet, and I would suggest that it go back for further work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Just to the member, did I hear you say you adjourn, adjourn the motion?

**Mr. Nilson:** — I adjourn the motion, yes.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed.

**Bill No. 120 — *The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2009***

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and move second reading of Bill 120 to amend *The Financial Administration Act, 1993*. Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to developing a strong public infrastructure built for the 21st century to meet the growing needs of Saskatchewan residents. *The Financial Administration Act* incorporates *The Fuel Tax Accountability Act* which commits fuel tax revenue from fuel purchased for on-road purposes to maintenance and construction of our provincial highways.

Mr. Speaker, the Act requires that the public accounts include an annual report that shows the difference between eligible road-use tax revenues and eligible highway spending. The Act defines eligible highway spending to include all monies appropriated to the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure except expenditures on airports, executive management, and amounts received from the federal government for highway infrastructure. However there is no legislative authority to deduct any other new or unforeseen expenditures undertaken through that ministry which are not associated with highway investment, such as water and sewer infrastructure for the Regina global transportation hub.

This legislative amendment will enable these types of non-highway related expenditures to be excluded from the annual fuel tax accountability report. Mr. Speaker, this amendment will maintain a clean and clear link between road use, fuel tax revenue, and provincial highway spending in support of our government's commitments to the maintenance and construction of provincial highways.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be pleased to answer questions concerning this proposed legislative amendment when discussing the Bill during committee review. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2009*.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has moved has moved second reading of debate on Bill 120, *The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2009*. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, since I first had a look at this Bill, I actually was quite anxious to get up and make a number of comments on it. And it was actually interesting to hear the minister's comments about *The Fuel Tax Accountability Act* which I believe is in 1997, and also the amendments that were made that dedicate fuel tax to highways.

For someone who had this in their platform during the 2007 election, this legislation was in place long before that. And that's often why you will hear hooting and hollering when these guys talk about, when the government talks about how many commitments and platform promises they have kept because, Mr. Speaker, it would not hold up in the light of day.

But anyway, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to stand up and make comments on this Bill. Quite simple, very short, and really what it does is it expands the power of the ministry to spend dollars and allows for greater flexibility. And I think after the last couple weeks when we have been leading up to and when we have been dealing with the mid-term financial report, it's appalling that this government would come forward with something that allows greater financial flexibility.

[16:45]

And when we look at the circumstances that the province sees itself in and the lack of accountability from this government . . . And I guess what's even more frustrating — and I know for

people that will comment to me when they are listening at home and watching on the legislative channel — the attitude from this government that next year is wonderful.

Now this is another sore spot, Mr. Speaker, even though two throne speeches ago the minister stood in this House and he said that this is no longer next year country. We're here and now and we're moving ahead. Well that's great. But all of a sudden, now when every time the Minister of Finance gets up or the Premier, he talks about last year's figures and next year's opportunities. He's kind of ignoring the here and now and where this province actually finds itself in.

And I know also the member from Saskatoon Northwest stands up and entertains the House and does his little comments about turn your frown upside down. I don't know whether it entertains at parties or not, but I'm afraid there needs to be a little bit more paying attention to the business of the House and the business of government.

And clearly when we look at the mid-term financial and what that laid out for the people of Saskatchewan, for this minister to bring forward *The Financial Administration Amendment Act* and expect greater flexibility, that's pretty difficult. And it's going to be open to a great deal of scrutiny because the mid-term financial clearly showed that over the past two years — two short years — we have seen a 32 per cent increase in spending by this provincial government.

And that's often why we talk about the reckless spending, and, Mr. Speaker, clearly reckless because I don't know any of us in this House in our day-to-day lives, I don't know any of my constituents in their day-to-day lives who could increase their spending by 32 per cent over two years and expect to be able to maintain that. I mean sight unseen, here we are. We're just going to continue increasing spending, and that's the way we're going to live. Well people don't live like that.

People plan. They make improvements when they are sure they can afford it and when the money is there to sustain you into the future. When I get my paycheque, I don't just say, whoop-de-do I got a big load of money. I'm going to spend it all today and I'm not going to worry about the bills next month. None of us do. None of us live like that and expect to be able to sustain it. But yet we've seen this government, who has with this mid-term financial, released the most current data that's available, and what we've seen is a 32 per cent increase in this reckless spending.

And truly some questionable priorities, Mr. Speaker, I mean priorities, the things that I'm hearing in Moose Jaw, the things that my colleagues are hearing across the province about cost of living, about students being under stress because of tuitions, finding a place to live when they're off to either improve their post-secondary education or access post-secondary or training — the cost of accessing those basic, basic needs in our lives are getting more and more expensive. Those are the things I'm hearing at home.

I'm hearing about five buildings in the city of Moose Jaw that have been bought out and residents, all low-income residents, have been given notice that in six months from now their rent is going to double. So we have people who in many cases earn

\$800 a month or less . . . Mr. Speaker, I would like to see half of us go back to living on \$800 a month. It would be tough if not impossible. It would. And for us in this position, to expect residents in our constituencies to live on that kind of income and then turn our backs and not provide adequate housing and adequate supports, is appalling.

So here I have five apartment buildings in the city of Moose Jaw that have been bought recently to someone — I believe the company is from Regina — and right away notice was given to these low-income residents; their rent is going to double. So for people who live on \$800 or less a month, their rent is going from 320, 370, that range, to over \$600 a month. How the heck does somebody live on \$800 a month when their rent is 600? You can't do it. You can't feed yourself. You can't pay your light bill. You can't pay a phone bill. You can't afford to buy new clothes or buy winter boots. It's ridiculous. It just doesn't work.

These are the things I'm hearing. So when we talk about questionable priorities of this government, those are the things we're talking about. I'm not hearing anyone in Moose Jaw clamouring that Saskatchewan should have a pavilion at the Olympics in Vancouver for the tune of millions of dollars. They're asking for reasonable rents. They're asking for reasonable utility costs.

But these guys are spending in Vancouver . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Now the minister is hollering across the floor about Olympic jackets. And if he, you know, has a problem looking into a budget for me, well I apologize for bothering him and asking him to look into something that was addressed in my office. The minister can hoot and holler all he likes. But you know something? If he feels that's a reasonable . . . then come clean with the cost, come clean with the cost, and lay it on the table. How long you there for? How many ministers are going to be in Vancouver for nice photo ops? You . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order. Order. Order. Order. I just want to remind the member, the members, to direct all comments in debate through the Chair, and I'd ask other members to allow the member to make her comments without interference. I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

**Ms. Higgins:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I realize I'm to make comments to you and through the Chair on the Bill that I'm addressing. And, Mr. Speaker, these are the issue that I'm hearing at home. And these are the things that need to be addressed. And they're the everyday issues of people across this province.

So when we are seeing fiscal mismanagement, when we are seeing poor choices being made, Mr. Speaker, we have to question why this minister would bring forward a Bill that would offer and look for more financial flexibility for this government.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's not just . . . We can talk about the potash till the cows come home, but if this government had of watched its spending, made some good choices, and maybe spread the

initiatives out over a period of time where they could actually afford them, it wouldn't have mattered what potash came in at because there's over \$9 billion in revenues coming into this provincial coffers of this provincial government.

And we're also seeing a deficit. So here we are. We want more money. We want more flexibility. We have a deficit. We're seeing the Crown corporations being expected to borrow more money while they give almost \$1 billion to the General Revenue Fund. And we're also seeing debt mounting in other places. So, Mr. Speaker, a lot of people say, why the worry about a deficit? Well basically what it is — and you can look up the definition — deficit spending is in excess of revenue of funds raised by borrowing rather than by taxation. And basically, Mr. Speaker, they're spending way more than they're taking in, and sooner or later the taxpayers in the province of Saskatchewan have to pay that back.

There's no way around it. Somebody pays. And there's only one taxpayer — it's us — in the province of Saskatchewan. The people of this province pay the bills. So when this government is running a deficit and requiring that the Crown corporations provide excess and special dividends to the General Revenue Fund to bail out this government and borrow money to do the business that they need to do, we'll pay a billion dollar deficit. And they're looking for more financial flexibility.

And I guess the big thing is, do we see any steps being taken or any indication that this government is looking to correct some of their mismanagement or rein in this out-of-control spending? And do you know what, Mr. Speaker? There's absolutely nothing. There's no indication that there is any changes coming. There is no indication that they have any concerns. In fact I don't think there's any indication that the Premier has any concept of the slippery slope that this province now is sitting on.

And not only are they contending that we still have a balanced budget — well we've taken a billion dollars from the Crowns, made them borrow for what they need to do — we have cleaned out a big chunk out of the rainy day fund, even though it's been some of the sunniest days in Saskatchewan's history with historic revenues into the provincial coffers.

But still there doesn't seem to be a realization that we are on a slippery slope with some real problems. And now we're looking for more flexibility which really relates to less accountability to the taxpayers of this province and less accountability here in this Assembly.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have already seen a number of areas where this government, after this disastrous mid-term financial . . . And the opposition asked for the session to be extended so that we could do scrutiny on the mid-term report which made substantial changes. Mr. Speaker, there's something like 295, \$293 million in cuts in 19 different government departments and agencies. But yet we're still seeing \$65 million in increased spending in eight different government departments or agencies.

So when we asked, the Premier said oh, no, no. We offered you more time. You can ask all the questions you like. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in question period the Premier stood yesterday and he

said, and I quote:

And last night those supplementary estimates were introduced for discussion and debate. Some of the changes that have occurred would be reflected in the mid-term report.

And then he went on in his answer, and he said:

Yesterday members opposite had a chance to ask detailed questions till midnight if they wanted on Advanced Education, Social Services, First Nations and Métis Relations, and Municipal Affairs. But what did members opposite do? They are so concerned about these budget issues that they called the clock.

Well you know what? That's not really being straight up with the people of this province because on both of the committees that I've sat in the last two nights, each of the chairpersons have sat there, quite clearly at the beginning of the committee, and they have said debate is restricted only to a certain vote. I can't ask questions on anything as the Premier said in question period yesterday. And they want more financial flexibility when they can't even be accountable for the money and the changes that they have made and are hiding behind the rules of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, any government that had the wherewithal to make these decisions should damn well have the wherewithal to stand here and be accountable for . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Not allowed? Oh I apologize, Mr. Speaker, if I strayed over the line.

But anyway, Mr. Speaker, there is many, many questions on this piece of legislation. When this government is asking for more financial flexibility, there are huge questions. They have avoided financial questions so far on the mid-term report. And instead of standing up and being accountable to the people of this province and allowing this Assembly to work, they're hiding behind the rules but asking for more.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I know many of my colleagues have questions on this piece of legislation, and there will be a number of my colleagues that will rise to join in this debate. And, Mr. Speaker, until this government . . . I mean, I could go on and on about Municipal Affairs, about the Municipal Financing Corporation. They're adding debt to this province and not being accountable for it.

They won't stand up for the questions, and they won't allow this Assembly to do an honest-to-goodness job of scrutinizing the mid-term report. And, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation will be under debate for a long time.

**The Speaker:** — Being now the time of adjournment, this Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]





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# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

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**Hon. Brad Wall**  
**Premier**  
**President of the Executive Council**

**Hon. Bob BJORNERUD**  
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