



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

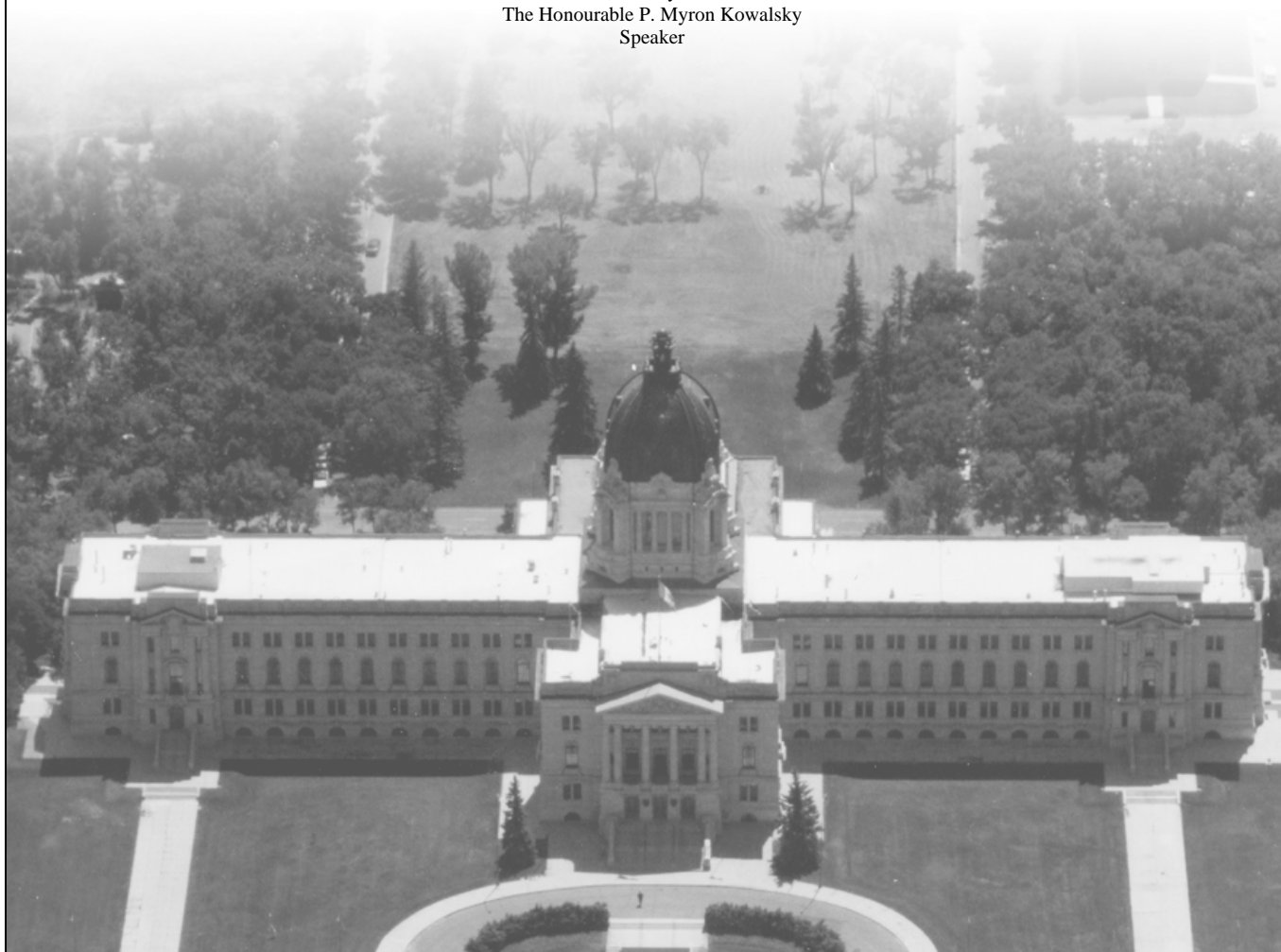
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, it's again a pleasure to stand in this Assembly to present a petition from the many residents of the Whitewood and Broadview areas of the province in regards to dialysis services in the Broadview Union Hospital. And I read the prayer:

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

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

I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Cypress Hills and some communities outside of Cypress Hills regarding the condition of Highway 18. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to ensure that Highway 18 from Claydon to Robsart is repaved at the earliest possible time to ensure the safety of drivers in the area and so that economic development opportunities are not lost.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, today's signees are from the community of Consul and also Oxbow, Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to present on behalf of citizens of the province, and this petition was signed regarding the funding of the drug Avastin. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by many people in the

Carnduff area. I so present.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of a constituent at Carnduff, I present the following petitions:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

And these petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Carnduff, Gainsborough, Glen Ewen, Rouleau, and Avonlea. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of residents of Saskatchewan, and actually other Western provinces, concerned about the state of Highway 49. The prayer of their petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to repair Highway 49 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth and tourism in Kelvington, Lintlaw, Preeceville, and surrounding areas.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from the great city of Regina, the communities of Lintlaw, the city of Saskatoon, the community of Codette, Saskatchewan, as well as Edmonton, and Prince George, British Columbia. I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I also rise today on behalf of people who are concerned about Highway No. 49. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to repair Highway 49 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth and tourism in Kelvington, Lintlaw, Preeceville, and surrounding areas.

The people that have signed this petition are from Rose Valley, Sturgis, Kelvington, and Lintlaw. I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition that says it's time to improve Highway 49. Mr. Speaker, the prayer of the petition reads:

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

repair Highway 49 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth and tourism in Kelvington, Lintlaw, Preeceville, and surrounding areas.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from Kelvington and Fosston and Tisdale. And I am pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition today to do with the funding of the drug Avastin. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Carnduff and Kennedy.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of constituents who are very upset with this government's move to turn highways back to gravel. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade and maintain Highway 22 so it can return to being a safe and economical route for Earl Grey area families and businesses.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Earl Grey and Regina. I so present.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents of mine who have great concerns regarding the future of the Estevan Daycare Co-operative. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to review the decision to deny the requested spaces for the Estevan Daycare Co-operative.

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

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

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again today to present a petition from citizens opposed to possible reductions of health care services in Biggar. The prayer reads:

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

As in duty bound, you petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition from parents concerned about the unnecessary delay in the release of the 2006 Department of Learning capital priority list and the resulting delay in the construction of a much needed elementary school in the Willowgrove and Arbor Creek areas of Saskatoon:

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

The petitioners today, Mr. Speaker, live on Kenderdine Road, Bentham Crescent, and Budz Green in northeast Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition, and the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures to this petition are from Carnduff, Alida, Saltcoats, and Gainsborough. I so present.

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

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Department of Highways section shop in Watrous remain open so as to ensure the safety of all motorists, Saskatchewan Highways

employees who would be affected by such possible closure.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by good citizens from Watrous, Prince Albert, Young, and Simpson and Lockwood. I so present.

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the Assembly today and present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan concerned with upgrading Highway 20 to primary weight status. The prayer reads as follows:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Drake, Lockwood, and Lanigan, Saskatchewan, and I'm happy to present it on their behalf.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to rise in the House today to present a petition regarding the government's failure to fund the cancer drug Avastin. I will read the prayer for relief:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present a petition on Highway 36, and I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to invest the needed money to repair and maintain Highway 36.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the people of Bengough, Coronach, Rockglen. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on day no. 17 I shall ask the government the following four questions, all to the Minister of the Environment:

Is the provincial government aware of the study released on November 13, 2006, by the world wildlife federation Canada, raising concerns about the impact of the Alberta oil sands development on Saskatchewan's water supply? If so, what action has the government taken to address the concerns raised by the sustainability of the water supply that flows to Saskatchewan through the McKenzie River?

The second question, Mr. Speaker, is again to the Minister of the Environment:

Has the provincial government raised the issue of ensuring sustainable supply of water for Saskatchewan with the Government of Alberta? If so, what actions have been taken by the provincial government to ensure that Saskatchewan has access to sustainable downstream water supply from water sources flowing into Saskatchewan from Alberta?

The third question again to the Minister of the Environment:

Has the Government of Saskatchewan taken action to negotiate a binding water agreement to regulate transboundary usage of water from the McKenzie River Basin?

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the fourth question:

To the Minister of the Environment: given the importance of sustainable oil sands development for Saskatchewan and a sustainable water supply to develop our oil sands, what action is the provincial government taking to ensure that Saskatchewan oil sands are served by a sustainable water supply?

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 17 ask the government the following questions:

To the Minister Responsible for SPM: to date how much has been spent on the construction project of the Finance headquarters on College Avenue in Regina?

Further question to the same minister, Mr. Speaker:

What will the actual final cost upon completion of the construction project at the Finance headquarters on College Avenue be, in Regina?

Continuing, Mr. Speaker, in the same line of questioning:

To the Minister Responsible for SPM: what was the total cost estimate from Dominion Construction approved by the Government of Saskatchewan for the construction project at the Finance headquarters on College Avenue in Regina?

One final question for this minister, Mr. Speaker:

To the Minister Responsible for SPM: to date how many floors have been completed in the construction project of the Finance headquarters on College Avenue in Regina, and what will be the end number of floors constructed in this project?

One other question, Mr. Speaker:

To the Minister Responsible for Learning: on what date will the 2006 capital priority list be released?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 17 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Investment Saskatchewan: what is the repayment schedule for the \$2 million loan to the Northwest Communities Wood Products?

Similar question:

For the Minister for Investment Saskatchewan: what is the interest rate for the \$2 million loan to Northwest Community Wood Products?

And the third and final question, Mr. Speaker:

To the Minister Responsible for Investment Saskatchewan: what type of loan was provided to Northwest Community Wood Products?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to be able to welcome to the Assembly today, Mr. Brian Graham and with him Cherrie Martel, constituents of mine from the constituency of Riversdale in Saskatoon. Brian serves as the community association president in Pleasant Hill, and Cherrie I know is involved in the association as well. I want to welcome them here and thank them for the commitment to their community, to the community of Saskatoon, and to the province.

Thank you very much. Good to see you here.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to join with the Premier and the members opposite in welcoming Brian Graham and Cherrie Martel to the Assembly today. We had the opportunity of meeting with them this morning to discuss crime issues in Riversdale and elsewhere in Saskatoon, and want to commend them for their continuing hard work and wish them every success in future endeavours in bringing more resources to much needed areas of crime enforcement, and etc.

Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome them to their Assembly. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for The Battlefords, the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, a large group of provincial representatives of the Canadian Diabetes Association sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

Today is World Diabetes Day, but on an ongoing basis these Saskatchewan branch volunteers, staff, and directors help to raise awareness of the issues surrounding diabetes and advocate solutions for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all hon. members to show their appreciation for the good work these people do for the citizens of our province and welcome them to their legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, I'd like to join with the Minister of Health in welcoming the people from Canadian Diabetes here to their Legislative Assembly.

I know we're going to have an opportunity to meet with them in a more formal basis this evening and certainly look forward to that as a number of members, I think on both sides of the House, will be attending that reception and dinner. So we look forward to that. And welcome to the Assembly. And maybe this evening we can answer some of the questions that were posed today during question period if they don't get answered in here. So we look forward to that opportunity.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Lakeview, the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce some students and teachers and parents who are here from the Discovery Learning Foundation. They're sitting in the east side of the Speaker's gallery. There are 10 students

and they're accompanied by their teachers, Ms. Melitta Bosse and Ms. Elizabeth Pyror. The chaperones with them are Mrs. Joanne Marsh and Mr. and Mrs. Ian Cockburn. And I ask all members to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, among the group in your gallery here to recognize World Diabetes Day are four constituents of mine. So to you and through you to all members of this Assembly, I would like to introduce Doug, Pat, Mark, and Michelle Ferguson from Estevan. And Mark is a victim of juvenile diabetes and so the whole family has a special interest in this today. So I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Assembly. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly, I'd like to welcome a couple of members from my constituency in your gallery. Mr. Jim Bateman and Merv Costley are here to visit and they should be joined later by Lyle Shada.

These individuals are members of the Notekeu flood group. And this is a bit of a sad story in that this group of farmers were flooded out in the year 2002, so that's some four years ago. And they've been trying to reach resolution with the government on their flooded out issue since that time. So they're here in the Assembly today to witness the proceedings, but also with the hope of meeting the Premier and the Minister of Highways later on. So I'd ask all members to join Jim and Merv to their Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce a friend and a constituent. I think he's in the gallery and I'm going to ask him to stand up. Is Grant Key in the gallery? I heard he was. There he is. Grant Key is from Waseca and in the constituency of Lloydminster as well. Grant has been a great supporter, but even more so, Grant's sister is my daughter-in-law. So I welcome him especially to his legislature and will you help me welcome Grant.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to rise and introduce a member, a former member of this Assembly seated in your gallery. We have the former member for Weyburn, Mr. Lorne Hepworth. And I have to say while

he's in the gallery that I was probably no older than some of the students that are here today, and Mr. Hepworth was the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Weyburn and he took some time out of his busy day to write me a little note and to sign it. And I'm happy to say that it's on my wall in my office. And I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming him today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the hon. member for Weyburn in saying welcome to Mr. Hepworth. I was in the Assembly at a time when he was and, Mr. Speaker, he was a self-appointed expert on the worst and best speeches that this Assembly has ever heard. And all can I say is we'd rather see him there than here, Mr. Speaker. Good to see you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

World Diabetes Day

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we've heard, today is World Diabetes Day — and welcome to our guests from the Diabetes Association — first celebrated 15 years ago in the hope that it would coordinate diabetes advocacy worldwide. It has become the main global awareness campaign of the diabetes community and is recognized in 150 countries.

This year, Mr. Speaker, the World Diabetes Day campaign slogan is Diabetes Care for Everyone. It draws our attention to the plight of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and the fact that not everyone with diabetes, or at risk of having diabetes, receives the care they need.

Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan our provincial diabetes plan provides a framework for a new approach to diabetes management. It supports a team approach to diabetes self-management education, primary prevention of type 2 diabetes, and the care and prevention of diabetes complications.

Mr. Speaker, we pay particular attention to the needs of our First Nations residents. And we continue to work with our partners on a national diabetes surveillance system and national diabetes strategy.

Mr. Speaker, World Diabetes Day is about raising awareness of diabetes issues and what must be done to address them. I would like to acknowledge the excellent work of the Canadian Diabetes Association in working towards this goal and in particular thanks to the CDA [Canadian Diabetes Association] Saskatchewan branches and their employees and volunteers who deliver programs and services in support of diabetes education, research, service, and advocacy in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too rise today on World Diabetes Day, and I'm proud to rise today with people from all around the world to acknowledge World Diabetes Day. November 14 was chosen because it is the birthday of Dr. Frederick Banting, the Canadian who discovered insulin in 1922. Dr. Banting won the Nobel Prize for his remarkable discovery and is one of our greatest Canadians.

Diabetes affects over 50,000 people in Saskatchewan. It is a leading cause of major complications that include blindness, kidney failure, heart disease, stroke, and amputation. Effective diabetes management can help prevent these complications.

Much progress has been made that makes managing diabetes easier. Innovative technology like sophisticated glucose monitoring systems that are designed to be worn like a wristwatch or a pager or hearing aid will soon be available. Glucose sensors based on sound waves and infrared light technology will virtually do away with the need for pricking fingertips. Insulin pumps and even inhaler of insulin are incredible advancements for those suffering from type 1 diabetes in Saskatchewan and around the world. This is something definitely worth celebrating.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Canada West Wins World Junior A Challenge

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The members of the House know that when we stand up on this side of the House in the Assembly, we talk about positive things that are happening right across the province. And last week in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, in Yorkton and Humboldt and Canora, thousands of fans enjoyed and extended their appreciation to the Junior A World Hockey Tournament that was held there. Almost 2,000 fans crammed the Farrell agency in Yorkton and watched an all-Canadian final to the World Junior A Challenge.

And well, Mr. Speaker, we can report today and through our convictions that the West is the best. And the game was a nail-biter. Canada West went ahead 4-0 over Canada East, including two goals from Rosetown's Jordie Johnston, before having clipped the lead to 4-3. But us Western Canadians are a tenacious bunch, Mr. Speaker, and we held on to become the first ever World Junior A Challenge winners.

And congratulations to Johnston and Canada East's David Kostuch for being the named the players of the game. And congratulations to Canada West forward, Kyle Turriss, for being named MVP [most valuable player]. A 17-year-old from British Columbia picked up 11 points in just four games to lead the tournament in scoring.

I want to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that next year the tournament

will be held in Quesnel, British Columbia.

We want to extend our appreciation to Dick DeRyk and Barry Shields and all of the committee who worked in bringing this outstanding event to Saskatchewan. And we want to also congratulate the communities and ask all members of the legislature to congratulate the communities of Humboldt, Yorkton, and Canora who were so successful in making this a great event for our province. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Rosetown-Elrose Chooses New Saskatchewan Party Candidate

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My statement's even more positive than the Deputy Premier's.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Last night was Saskatchewan Party night in Rosetown-Elrose. Over 1,000 people from every community in the riding and beyond converged on the Civic Centre in Rosetown to choose my successor to run in the next election. What an exciting event.

Two strong candidates, Brian Braun and Jim Reiter, gave strong appeals to the crowd based on a positive vision for our province. Our leader addressed the full house and got a standing ovation for daring to believe that Saskatchewan could play a leading role within Canada once again after decades of stumbling behind under the NDP [New Democratic Party]. The best line I heard last night was this: the NDP are so incompetent, they can't even do socialism well any more.

Mr. Speaker, after 800 votes were counted, Jim Reiter of Rosetown was chosen to be the Sask Party candidate in the next election. Jim is the RM [rural municipality] administrator for two municipalities in the Rosetown area. He served as president of the Rural Municipal Administrators' Association for five years and as such was an ex officio member of the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] board. He is currently past president and executive director of the RRMA. Jim sat on the University of Regina senate for six years.

Jim's many accomplishments range from chairing the board of the \$1.2 billion Municipal Employees' Pension Commission to serving on the board of the Rosetown curling club.

Rosetown-Elrose has a message for the Premier: bring on the election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

[14:00]

Radiothon Raises Funds for Pediatric Ambulance

Mr. Trew: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, for three days the fourth annual Harvard Cares for Kids Radiothon asked the residents of southern Saskatchewan to direct some of their hard-earned cash to the Children's Health & Hospital Foundation of Saskatchewan and the purchase of a new state-of-the-art pediatric ambulance for sick and injured children here in the southern part of Saskatchewan.

Well Saskatchewan people came through with their hearts and money — lots of money. Last Friday afternoon at the end of three days and with donations still being added up, almost \$270,000 had been raised. As well, Mr. Speaker, the Hill Companies are providing an additional \$100,000 donation. All in, Mr. Speaker, the money raised by the radiothon will fully cover the cost of a new pediatric ambulance that is designed and outfitted to meet the specific needs of children and their parents.

Congratulations and thank yous to the people who have donated, to the radiothon sponsors, to the Hill Companies, to the volunteers and employees of Regina's Harvard Broadcasting stations and of course to the people of southern Saskatchewan who made the 2006 Harvard Cares For Kids marathon such an overwhelming success.

Congratulations all around.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Suggested Names for New Democratic Party

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was so engrossed in this presentation that I forgot to stand up.

Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of the non-partisanship that the Premier exemplified yesterday in the equalization debate, we wish to provide some new assistance to the NDP, Mr. Speaker, from our online new name for the NDP contest.

We've had a good number of responses and they continue to come in, Mr. Speaker, and some of them are very creative indeed. With the NDP's convention coming up this weekend, Mr. Speaker, time is running out on the NDP so it's important that they get the words right.

Some of the submissions to our office have been — that we've received in the last couple of days — have been Saskatchewan Vikings, the party that pillages; Saskatchewan democrats, the party with no new ideas; the next defunct party; BDP, blame it on Devine party.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — You can't read it on the wall if it's not done in crayon party, and the three L's, loves lost labour, everybody's moving to Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan continue to provide us with a good many new names for the tired, old NDP as they try

and rebrand themselves. And we are sure that through this contest we can provide the NDP with at least one more idea to steal. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

St. Walburg Wins LivCom Award

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The UN [United Nations] sponsored LivCom Awards are the world's most prestigious awards for livable communities. For 10 years LivCom has been presenting awards to municipalities from around the globe in five different categories based on population.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to announce to the Assembly that the town of St. Walburg in my constituency has recently been awarded a Bronze Award in category A, representing communities with a population of up to 20,000. The LivCom Awards are all about encouraging best practice, innovation, and leadership in providing a vibrant, environmentally sustainable community that improves the quality of life for its citizens. It brings communities together in a common goal.

Mr. Speaker, the issues that the awards raise are issues common to all communities even if the solutions are sometimes different. The most important aspect of LivCom is the opportunity it presents for living in co-operation, for learning in co-operation.

Representatives Tony Leeson and Norm Linkert travelled from St. Walburg to China, Mr. Speaker, to appear before an international panel of world-renowned judges who had no easy task. The panel heard representations from 47 communities and projects from 16 countries around the globe.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to invite all members to join with me in congratulating the town of St. Walburg for winning the Bronze Award at the 2006 LivCom Awards. The town has made the people of Saskatchewan truly proud.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Oyate Safe House

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this morning we heard another disturbing story about a 13-year-old girl. She was sent to a house, Mr. Speaker. The house was supposed to be a safe house. The staff was supposed to watch out for her. The staff was supposed to protect her from those who would do her harm.

She was beaten. Her ribs were broken. Her skull was fractured. Mr. Speaker, after all that has been written and all the criticism, we finally heard the voice of a child.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister, how did his NDP government let this happen?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, this government takes all the issues raised by anybody in reference to child abuse very seriously, Mr. Speaker. As I pointed out time and time again, at the Oyate Safe House there is certainly challenges in dealing with some of these high-risk children. And while I can't make any comments about the specific case, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that there was certainly action taken on behalf of the board. There was certainly more training that was required by my officials, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that actions of this nature don't occur and shouldn't occur.

Mr. Speaker, while I can't get into the specifics of the case, I can tell you that that incident did occur. There was some problems around that particular area, and staff were advised thus that this should never occur again. And, Mr. Speaker, that's all I have to say about that particular case. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, challenges are the word that he uses. Mr. Speaker, once again we discover that the Minister of Community Resources covered up and failed to tell the whole story. Once again the people of Saskatchewan have had to rely on the media to discover this whole story. Once again we discover the government was funding a safe house that was anything but safe. Not a word in the thousands of documents released under the freedom of information Act. Not a word in the thousands of pages released in the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why did this minister fail to mention that a resident of a safe house had been attacked and beaten under his care?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, what is really important is that certainly from the perspective of getting information and sharing that information as to what the challenges were in the safe house, this government has been more than open. It has been very accountable, Mr. Speaker.

And furthermore what's really important, Mr. Speaker, is we set up the Children's Advocate's office to make sure that they have a role in ensuring that the children of this province have an additional support mechanisms in place. And, Mr. Speaker, this government led by example.

And now, Mr. Speaker, we announced this morning more solutions to help with children that are involved with sexual exploitation, Mr. Speaker. And today I'm very proud as the minister to say that good progress is made. We're going to continue building on that progress, Mr. Speaker.

And yes, there were hard lessons learned. We have never denied that. But, Mr. Speaker, we made the effort to make sure that this government led, Mr. Speaker, and we got a plan in place. We're going to implement that plan, and we're going to make sure that the children are cared for, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, after he tried to cover it up. Only because of news reports has the Children's Advocate . . . did he even act or that facility would still be open today under the same existing . . .

Mr. Speaker, this girl was so seriously injured and is now back on the streets . . . apparently most of the others who went through the safe house. Now not only was this safe house dangerous; it didn't work. And the minister's decided to stay the course. Three years after the facts, he's decided to stay the course.

He can't tell us when the safe house will open again. He can't tell us how much money Oyate will get. And in the meantime the young girls are on the street and exposed. Mr. Speaker, how will the minister justify staying the course with the current board of directors?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, what is important for the public to know that as a minister I am bound by confidentiality. I'm not going to be talking about a specific child nor her case. That member knows that and he's being irresponsible, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — What's much more compelling, Mr. Speaker, is on this side of the House we're trying to provide leadership. And, Mr. Speaker, part of that leadership is making sure that we stay the course where we think it's going to be the best benefit for the children.

And this morning the Minister of Justice and I announced a number of measures that's going to help support these children to make sure they have as many options, Mr. Speaker, to exit the sex trade, Mr. Speaker. We take that role very seriously.

What we're not going to do is become a politician and play on people's lives and do what they can in their grasp for power, Mr. Speaker. That is irresponsible. They say one thing in this Assembly. They say another outside the Assembly, Mr. Speaker. There is no leadership from that file, so stand back, step aside, we'll provide leadership, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for

Saskatoon Northwest.

Mr. Merriman: — He continues to defend the indefensible. Three years — he calls that leadership. Three years to even act on a file, and he wants to call that leadership.

Mr. Speaker, these are vulnerable young girls. They come from troubled families and they live troubled lives. And programming offered to help them must be held to the highest standards. The people who work with these young people must be highly trained and clearly motivated.

Mr. Speaker, a 13-year-old girl had her ribs broken, a fractured skull, was beaten and injured in a safe house, in a place she was supposed to find refuge. Mr. Speaker, how does this minister ever justifying renewing a contract with that organization at any time at any date?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, again as a minister I'm bound by confidentiality. I'm not going to make any comments about that specific case. I will refuse to do that, Mr. Speaker. And that's what ministers do; they provide leadership, Mr. Speaker.

And what's really important, Mr. Speaker, this morning alone the Minister of Justice and I announced a series of steps for making sure we provide as many options for these children to exit that trade, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, we got Ranch Ehrlo involved. And Ranch Ehrlo is known throughout the country for some of the work that they've done with troubled youth, and they are now actively involved with a new model, Mr. Speaker. So not only are we reaching out with these new groups in the cities, Mr. Speaker; we're also involving Ranch Ehrlo. We have an after-care model, Mr. Speaker. We have more police officers. We've got awareness campaigns. Things are moving in the right direction, and we're going to act, Mr. Speaker.

What we're not going to do is politicize the event. We're going to make sure that we make some good progress on this file, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, how many children's lives were ruined in the three years before he started to take action? Were there criminal charges brought in this action?

Let's review what we've learned over the last several weeks, Mr. Speaker. There were criminal records checks never done. There were allegations of nepotism never investigated. There was an advocate's report stating that political considerations trump the needs of children.

And now we hear the voice of one of these troubled children — not from the minister, but in the media. And the one thing we're concerned about, the minister says, let's stay the course. That's beyond sad, Mr. Speaker. That's inexcusable.

Mr. Speaker, will this minister fire the Oyate board today, do the right thing, put this whole project under Ranch Ehrlo where it belonged in the first place?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, one of the important references that I've made is that we often get advice from many sources. And the all-party committee that spoke about this particular issue, of what that member knows, various members of his caucus were on this all-party committee. And what did the all-party committee say? And I will quote, Mr. Speaker, from a document from February 9, 2000. And I quote:

Ms. Draude: — I also would like to suggest that, especially in Saskatoon and Regina, we make contact with the tribal councils and find out if we can be meeting with them and explaining what we're doing. Because we were also informed by the groups here last week . . . or last month, that there was a large percentage of Aboriginal people involved. And if we can . . . I would hate to be doing this sort of [thing] . . . outside of the band councils. They may feel like we're pointing fingers and I would rather have their involvement [Mr. Speaker].

That's exactly what is wrong with the opposition, Mr. Speaker. They say one thing here, another thing outside the House. That's why they'll never be Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Retaining Young People in Saskatchewan

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since this Premier took office, 18,000 fewer people now live in the province of Saskatchewan. Last year alone, in the middle of a boom, Saskatchewan lost 4,500 people while even the province of Manitoba grew.

Mr. Speaker, many of those are young people. They get a great education in the province of Saskatchewan, and then too often, they leave for other jurisdictions.

Last year the New Brunswick government introduced a tuition rebate plan. Mr. Speaker, it rebates up to 50 per cent of tuition cost to students who stay and work in the province for several years. It's a long-term plan. Now we know the Manitoba government is also looking at a similar long-term tuition rebate program.

Mr. Speaker, the current government policy is just for one year,

and it's not working. Will the Premier confirm for the Assembly today that his government will look at such a long-term plan to keep young people in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment.

[14:15]

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the members will know, our government is in the second year of a three-year tuition freeze for the University of Regina and University of Saskatchewan students.

In addition the Premier of Saskatchewan has announced the member from Regina Elphinstone's review on affordability and accessibility to post-secondary education in the province. It's the intention of the minister who is looking at this issue to provide an interim report this winter and a final report next fall. I fully anticipate there will be a number of recommendations that come out of that report that will ensure that young people in this province have access to an affordable education.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, what we're hearing from the minister is we're hearing what we've heard from the NDP for 10 years while people have left the province. The Premier's been in office for six or seven years — too long by any count — and we've lost 18,000 people. Well the Minister of Finance says it's only five years, but it seems like a lot longer, Mr. Speaker, frankly.

In the last provincial election, in the last election the Saskatchewan Party did propose a long-term plan. We need a multi-year plan, not only in the interest of tuition levels in the province but as an incentive to keep young people here. New Brunswick's done it. Manitoba is looking at it; the NDP in Manitoba are looking at it. The Saskatchewan Party believes this is the kind of thing that's necessary. Will the Premier act, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to share some facts with the members of the opposition.

October 2006, we are up 22,900 full-time jobs in the province of Saskatchewan over last year. In addition we have 8,100 more youth employed in the province of Saskatchewan. We currently have over 5,000 jobs posted on saskjobs.ca. In the last two years, Mr. Speaker, we have over 3,900 more training opportunities in the province, and more will be announced tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we have \$12 million going to community-based organizations for career and employment programs. We have \$2.9 million in tax credits for qualifying tradespeople. And, Mr. Speaker, we're in the third year of a four-year program to get to a \$1,000 tax credit for those people who graduate from post-secondary institutions and stay in the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister makes our case for us. She makes the case for exactly what we're talking about today. She is talking about what is a labour shortage in the province of Saskatchewan. She's highlighting the training aspect and responsibilities of the Government of Saskatchewan. And it's true that young people can get a great post-secondary education in the province of Saskatchewan. The problem is, is that under this NDP government they leave for other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker.

This Premier, last year in the middle of a boom, oversaw the loss of 4,500 people. Other provinces are looking at a long-term plan, tuition rebates as an idea that will keep young people in the province, Mr. Speaker, that will keep them here to fill those jobs, to pay taxes, Mr. Speaker, to improve the quality of life in our province, to make our province grow.

Can we expect some action on this count from this Premier, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely amazed at the comments coming from the Leader of the Opposition, and let me tell you why. In July of this summer, July 2006, a young woman emailed the Leader of the Opposition asking about opportunities in the province of Saskatchewan. She said she loved the lakes and the rivers and the forests, and she wanted to move here and get a job.

Well, Mr. Speaker, did that member opposite, did he once invite that young woman to come to Saskatchewan? Did that Leader of the Opposition at any time mention our hot economy? Did he refer her to the city of Swift Current's website where there are jobs? Did he refer her to the chamber of commerce website in Swift Current? Not once.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talks about a labour shortage, but when he has an opportunity to speak positively about this province, does he do it? All he does is dump on the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Vacancies in Nursing Positions

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, during the 1999 nurses' strike, this is what the former Health minister had to say, the member from Saskatoon Nutana, in a letter to SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses]. This is what she said, and I quote:

We made some mistakes . . . one mistake was being too busy to really listen, to really hear all the legitimate concerns facing nurses . . . some problems that should have been dealt with promptly were allowed to fester.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the festering is continuing in the nursing profession. Here is what nurses are saying. Stress levels are too high because RNs [registered nurse] are overloaded. The overtime is incredible, and it makes it impossible to balance work and family life. That's what the RNs are saying to this government right now, Mr. Speaker.

When will this minister start listening to the concerns from nurses on the floor? Or is he going to allow this situation to continue to fester, and are we going to be faced with a nursing strike like in 1999?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And throughout the previous session of the legislature and now this one, almost every day I am surprised at how little the member opposite is paying attention to what's actually going on in the world and in the government today, Mr. Speaker.

Since 1999, Mr. Speaker, this government has been actively engaged in consulting and working on policies relating to health human resources, Mr. Speaker.

In 2001 we brought forward the action plan. In 2005, Mr. Speaker, we brought forward another plan that further updated how we will respond to this issue. And, Mr. Speaker, just a couple of months ago I reconvened the nursing committee, put the actions in place on recruitment and retention policies — \$15 million, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, this government continues to manage nursing vacancies with overtime. As a result, nurses are getting burnt out, and that's what they're trying to tell this government.

Here's what one nurse had to say. Schedulers constantly harass nurses to work on their days off. It becomes very stressful. We know that some nurses have been asked to work at least three shifts in a row out of desperation because they can't find enough people.

Overtime costs have increased by \$2 million in Regina and Saskatoon in the last year. In one year, overtime costs for Regina and Saskatoon amount to \$10 million. How many nurses would that hire full time? Ten million dollars a year is what this government is spending on overtime.

Will this minister commit today to funnel some of that money from overtime and offer it for full-time, permanent nursing positions to start dealing with the issue that we're facing in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is fully aware that the recruitment and retention issues that this government is addressing, Mr. Speaker, speaks directly to the issues that are being raised with this government by the organized nursing profession and by individuals throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, in the process of recruitment . . . Because recruitment and filling vacancies certainly goes a long way, Mr. Speaker, to ensuring that there is less requirement for overtime, less requirement for filling in for holidays, Mr. Speaker, in our recruitment initiatives, Mr. Speaker, we have gone to the nursing education program, and we've said to the young people there who are graduating, will you work in the province of Saskatchewan? Mr. Speaker, those people have voted with their activities, Mr. Speaker. Ninety per cent of last year's graduating class are working in Saskatchewan today, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I don't think health care professionals put any faith in that minister's recruitment and retention program. We heard them talk about a health plan that they introduced five years ago that has had them back away from committing a 30-minute drive to primary health care. They're having to back away from many of their promises, and I believe that's what's going to happen with this initiative too, Mr. Speaker.

Managing overtime, managing vacancies with overtime is just poor management. We're hearing nurses that are being burnt out, are being burnt out and leaving this province. Morale is low, and we're seeing WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] claims in the nursing profession skyrocket because you're managing vacancies with overtime which is simply wrong.

They didn't listen to the nurses in 1999. Will they start listening to the nurses in 2006, so we don't avoid the shemozzle that we faced under this NDP government in 1999? Will he start listening to SUN and taking their recommendations into heart?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The simple answer is yes, Mr. Speaker, we've been listening to nurses. And, Mr. Speaker, the significant problem is not that there aren't programs and incentives and recruitment and retention initiatives that we're taking. Part of the problem, Mr. Speaker, is that there aren't large groups of unemployed nurses throughout the world, Mr. Speaker, that are prepared to come and work in these vacancies in Saskatchewan.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, regional health authorities manage as best they can given the resources that they have. I encourage the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, if he knows of unemployed nurses in the province of Saskatchewan, bring forward their names and we'll hire them tomorrow, Mr. Speaker. We'll put them to work.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, we are working to increase the seats in our nursing education program and, Mr. Speaker, we are working on recruitment and retention initiatives that are going to fill vacancies and give us opportunities to improve . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I can't give the minister any names of nurses that aren't working in the province right now. But what I can give him are the thousands of nurses that we have trained in this province that that government hasn't retained. We have the worst nurse out-migration of any province in Canada, Mr. Speaker, under this NDP government.

But, Mr. Speaker, let's look at the record and some of the decisions this NDP government has made. In 1991 Saskatchewan graduated 364 nurses. Today, this year we'll graduate about 230. That's 130 nurses short. He asks me what we should be doing about retention and recruitment. How about increasing the number of seats back to where we were in 1991 to start dealing with the issue?

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government has got us into this mix, this mess in the last five or six years or ten years. Mr. Speaker, it's about time they start increasing the number of seats so that we deal with the problem internally. Will he increase the number of nursing seats in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I don't have the time to give the member opposite a history lesson about the financial state of this province in 1991. There are other people around today, Mr. Speaker, that can help with the member understanding the state of this province in 1991 and again in 1996.

Mr. Speaker, this economy is re-energized. It's in a position now, Mr. Speaker, where we can improve health care, increase the number of seats. Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech of just a

week and a half ago indicated very clearly, Mr. Speaker, and I quote, "Strengthen Saskatchewan's leadership in improving public health care while reducing wait times and improving access to services."

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite and his party voted against that very initiative just this week, Mr. Speaker. I encourage the member opposite to stand up and say that he supports the initiatives that the government has taken because every single initiative we take is going to have additional nurses working in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, it only took that minister four chances to stand on his feet and re-confirm that this blame, blame it on the Devine party is the perfect name for that NDP government, Mr. Speaker, because they can't live up to the decisions that they made five and eight years ago that's put us in this problem, Mr. Speaker. We're in this problem because of the decisions that government has made. We have been calling on this government for the last . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please. Order. The member for . . . Order please. The member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, if it comes down to backing that government and what they're doing regarding recruitment and retention of nurses or backing up what SUN is saying — what's actually happening on the floors of our hospitals — we'll back up SUN each and every time, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, it's the health care professionals that are making this system work, but the overload because of overtime and lack of staffing levels is causing burnout, is causing huge issues in the health care profession. Mr. Speaker, this minister has got to start acting and not just present another report or another committee. He's got to start acting and recruiting and retaining the nurses that we have in the province. When will he start dealing with the overtime and the vacancy issues in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:30]

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Like I said, I don't know where the member opposite has been or who is doing his research. In the nursing education program, Mr. Speaker, in 1999 we had 1,023 students enrolled, Mr. Speaker. In 2005-06 we have 1,557. We have increased by 120 per cent, Mr. Speaker, the number of seats in the nursing education program since 1999.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is

a part of a party that distributes a pamphlet in Saskatoon that says their goal going into the next election is for steady, gradual reduction in government spending. Mr. Speaker, how do we increase seats and do these sorts of things while decreasing the health care budget? I ask the member opposite to stand up and be clear on that matter.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Expansion of Provincial Strategy on Child Sexual Exploitation

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, the use of a child or youth under the age of 18 years for sexual purposes in exchange for money, drugs, food, or shelter is sexual exploitation. Mr. Speaker, children and youth exploited in these ways are victims of sexual abuse and should be protected. Sexual exploitation of youth and children is reprehensible and cannot be tolerated.

In 1997 Saskatchewan developed a comprehensive strategy to protect children from sexual exploitation through the sex trade. Further actions were implemented in response to the June 2001 recommendations of the joint special committee of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan — Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade.

Front-line service providers tell us that the strategy has had a positive impact. Police report a marked reduction in traffic in the stroll areas. Intervention committees have improved networking among service providers. And there are more safe places for sexually exploited children and youth.

Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to announce that the Government of Saskatchewan is providing funding of \$133,000 this year and nearly \$1 million annually to expand the provincial strategy on child sexual exploitation. We are expanding our strategy to provide new police and prosecution resources to further protect children from sexual exploitation.

We will provide \$50,000 this year with \$550,000 annually to expand the capacity of police services to deal with street-level sexual exploitation of children. Five new municipal police provisions are being provided — two each in Regina and Saskatoon and one in Prince Albert. These positions work closely with community organizations and government agencies.

Mr. Speaker, this year we also begin work to establish a specialized team staffed by two prosecutors and one assistant coordinator to strengthen the province's ability to use the national flagging system to identify a long-term offender or dangerous offender cases. One new RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] investigator will work closely with the prosecutors. Thirty-three thousand dollars is being provided this year to begin this important work with \$390,000 to be provided each year thereafter.

And finally, funding of \$50,000 will be made available this year

to begin development of a \$150,000 public education campaign aimed at prevention of child sexual exploitation. Further details of the campaign will be announced following detailed development of the plan.

Mr. Speaker, these new initiatives build on the extensive amount of work that has already been done to protect Saskatchewan children from sexual exploitation. Those initiatives include legislation to keep predators away from at-risk children and to ensure that victims of sexual exploitation receive the support they need. Legislation to seize vehicles used in the commission of prostitution offences or that are repeatedly seen driving or parking in stroll areas, and to shut down a property used for sexual exploitation. Funding for outreach and residential services for sexually exploited youth. Policing and prosecution policies that recognize sexually exploited children and youth are vulnerable victims and that those who prey on them must be held accountable.

Participation in the establishment of the national sex offender registry. Initiatives to keep children and youth in school. Ensuring that there are a range of medical, public health, alcohol and drug, and mental health services to address the needs of at-risk youth. And ensuring youth who have offended are provided the right services to reduce both the risk of reoffending and the risk of being victimized by sexual predators.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise the citizens of Saskatchewan, the members of the Legislative Assembly, of these new initiatives to protect our children.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to respond to the ministerial statement that was just given to the House. Five years ago I had the opportunity to sit on the committee that was dealing with the sexual exploitation of children. Five years and there's been nearly deafening silence in this legislature on the issue. Only this year when CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] broke a story on a scandal at a safe house did we actually start hearing it in the House again.

And today we have an announcement by the Minister of Justice on three initiatives — three great initiatives that we do applaud. But I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the timing is suspicious. It's more to take the heat off the Minister of Community Resources than it has to do with anything of their commitment to children in this House.

We have \$133,000 spent on this issue this year, Mr. Speaker, and \$1 million after the next election.

It happens to be also the timeline for Project Hope. Let's put it off. Let's just say what we have to say right now and put it off till after the next election.

Anyone who doubts this need only ask the minister how he's going to spend the \$30,000 on the public ad campaign. It was

announced today, but it hasn't been designed. There's no idea how the money's going to be spent. There's no timelines. There's no best practices. And there was no consultation. There was no partner standing beside this minister saying, that's a good idea. The minister just decided to spend some money, and hopefully it'll direct the focus off the minister who failed our children.

We talked about the committee and the recommendations that were made, Mr. Speaker. There was 49 recommendations made by the committee that were dealing with the children who are being exploited. And from my calculation, there's been 13 of those recommendations that this government has actually dealt with.

The second recommendation about adopting a zero-tolerance policy for children who are sexually offended hasn't been talked about at all. The committee recommended the government should publish the names and pictures of those convicted of offences against children — has not been touched.

We haven't seen the work that's been done with the federal government. We don't have a provincial-wide tracking system. We don't have a secure home that we've asked for. We don't have a safe home in Regina. We don't have satellite recovery homes across the province. We have not expanded funding to wraparound and absenteeism. We have not talked about the service agreement between governments and service providers. We haven't dealt with the issue of racism that's continuing to expand in our province. We do not have mandatory treaty education in the school. We do not have any kind of a network to build understanding and co-operation between the governments and FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations]. We do not have the school curriculum that's dealing with sexual exploitation of children. Those issues have not been dealt with, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, earlier the minister quoted the statement I made during the committee when we talked about the necessity of having First Nations involved. What I said, I believe. But I did not say that that would abdicate the minister's responsibility for the work he had to do. At the end of the day the minister is the father of all the children under his care and it is his ultimate responsibility.

The only way that people in Saskatchewan will believe that sexually exploited children will be safe in this province is if the all-party committee has an opportunity to deal with the issue, not just this minister. I've written to the Premier and asked him if he's going to reinstate the all-party committee, and I've heard nothing.

Mr. Speaker, I do thank the minister for the work he has done, but there is so much to be done yet. So please don't do any patting on your back.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government I would like to table responses to written questions no. 33 to 40 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to written questions no. 33 to 40 inclusive have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 16 — The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2006

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2006.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the tobacco tax that is built into the price of tobacco products sold at retail, the provincial sales tax is applied to the selling price. As you will know, we have lowered the sales tax from 7 per cent to 5 per cent effective October 28, 2006. This would have resulted in lower tobacco prices. Mr. Speaker, this is not our intent nor our desire. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, this Bill increases the tobacco tax on cigarettes and loose tobacco from seventeen and a half cents per cigarette and 18.3 cents per gram. On a package of cigarettes that sells for about \$10, this amounts to a tobacco tax increase of 20 cents. Mr. Speaker, this is roughly equivalent to the 2 per cent reduction in PST [provincial sales tax] on a \$10 pack of cigarettes. As a result, cigarettes and loose tobacco prices for consumers will remain the same.

As such, I am pleased to move second reading of The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2006.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 16, The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2006 be now read a second time. The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to rise in the House to participate in the debate and discussion on this Bill. It's not often, Mr. Speaker, that you will actually hear the opposition joining with the government in supporting what is actually a legislated increase in taxation. But actually the reality is this is one of those times.

The increase that the Finance minister indicated was that this will be an increase back to the same level of taxation there was before the drop in PST, so the net effect of this Bill is to prevent a drop in prices for tobacco. We have over the last number of years, Mr. Speaker, seen some significant benefits towards society's efforts to try and combat and reduce the consumption of tobacco in all citizens, but in particular young people.

We've seen this through an effective combination of an increase in the prices of cigarettes and tobacco products, aggressive labelling, and a significant public education program. All of these things have worked together to provide noticeable and significant drop in the consumption of tobacco products.

Nobody's unaware of the fact that tobacco usage is one of the most significant health risks that we have in our society today, and it's because of initiatives that society and governments at various levels have taken that we're actually seeing a reduction in tobacco usage. And I note, Mr. Speaker, that one of the target groups for reduction tobacco usage was young women who were earlier regarded as the most at risk for starting the usage of tobacco, and that has been where it has been successful. So in that area we're pleased to see that there's been a benefit and that measures such as this have started to bear some fruit.

The concern that we have, Mr. Speaker, is whether the additional revenue from this increase, or the revenue that will actually be yielded to the government by maintaining this tax at the same level, that it be used and committed for purposes for either health or for measures that will further reduce the consumption and usage of tobacco.

Earlier in this session we saw and indicated some support for the fuel tax accountability Bill. And we would like to see something similar with regard to this Bill, where the additional revenue that will be generated as a result of this tax initiative would be targeted specifically for public education regarding tobacco use and education of young people in schools and one of the earlier levels. We would like to see some of this money be used and targeted for classes for adults and non-school-age people to stop smoking and just broader public education in general.

Part of this money could go to, and we would be pleased to see it being used for health services for people that have got cancer, emphysema, and other tobacco-related illnesses. We want to make certain that this is not seen by the public as just a tax grab or as is commonly referred to as a sin tax. So we want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that this money go where it's targeted for and where it can be well used. We want to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that there is a good measure of accountability and transparency with all expenditures by the government, but in particular where money can and should be used to protect youth and people. They're at risk for starting one of the most addictive habits there was.

[14:45]

I'm pleased, amongst my caucus colleagues, there's been some aggressive efforts to have people stop smoking, and I'm pleased to see it throughout our province and want to see that those measures continue. And the additional revenue that will be generated here would be a good place to try and ensure that that money be there.

So I hear the Finance minister over there making some of his usual type of derogatory comments. I think he's talking about losing money. This is actually preventing a reduction in revenue. I think the Finance minister would be well advised to think back on his days as the Health minister and try and target some of this money where it would do well. We are at a time, Mr. Speaker, where The Tobacco Tax Act could generate some revenue that would be well used in fighting health issues and fighting addiction issues.

And if that's not enough, Mr. Speaker, they could use that to fight other addictions other than tobacco. They could deal with

alcohol, drug abuse. We've got a large problem with crystal meth in our province and an issue and a problem that that particular minister ignored when he was in the Health and the Education portfolios. So that minister would be well advised to look back at what his failings were in his earlier portfolios and would want to take some of this money to try and shore up some of the problems that he let grow unchecked during his tenure in previous portfolios. It would be a good use for this money to go towards drug abuse, for crystal meth, towards additional policing, and a variety of other measures that are necessary.

We will, Mr. Speaker, want to have some consultation with other groups that are affected by where this money is and should go and by retail merchants that will be affected by this. Mr. Speaker, I would move adjournment of debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Southeast that debate on second reading of Bill No. 16 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Bill No. 32 — The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2006

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

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased today to rise to move second reading of Bill No. 32 which is An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act . . . Sorry, let me say that again. This is The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2006. It also makes consequential amendments to The Provincial Court Act, 1998.

Mr. Speaker, this government is moving to provide pension increases equal to 70 per cent of the change of the consumer price index for superannuates from the Public Service Superannuation Plan, the Power Corporation Superannuation Plan, the Liquor Board Superannuation Plan. This indexing will also extend to the Saskatchewan Transportation Company Superannuation Plan and the Anti-Tuberculosis League Superannuation Plan. These are often referred to as the old plans.

This indexing of pensions has not been guaranteed by legislation by this Assembly since 1965, Mr. Speaker. As such this government has been the first in my lifetime to move forward with a guaranteed indexing plan for these pensioners. The government has, however, been providing increases to the public sector pensioners on an ad hoc basis.

Over the last several months, I've had an opportunity to meet with the pensioners to hear their grievances and to understand their concern. I agree that we should put an end to the ad hoc approach to pension increases and we should serve to legislate an annual increase of 70 per cent of the change of CPI

[consumer price index].

It will be important for us to note that the existing provision for the Lieutenant Governor in Council approval for ad hoc increases is no longer needed. This legislation will take effect as of April 1, 2007.

Mr. Speaker, our retired civil servants will now have the benefit of a locked-in annual increase to these civil service pension payments. At 70 per cent of the CPI, Saskatchewan will be providing higher guaranteed indexing than either Alberta, which is at 60 per cent, or Manitoba, which is at sixty-six and two-thirds. I would also note that this exceeds the commitment that was made by my Finance critic last session when he said that what Alberta was giving was simply good enough. I'm pleased that we have been able to do more. I am pleased that we've been able to guarantee a 70 per cent indexing for these civil service pensions.

Mr. Speaker, I move as a result second reading of Bill 32, The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2006 and to make consequential amendments to The Provincial Court Act, 1998.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill 32, The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2006 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it is once again my privilege to rise and participate in a debate and discussion regarding Bill 32, superannuation legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this is unfortunately an example where even when the NDP members decide they want to copy something from the Saskatchewan Party platform, they can't get it right. We contemplated a band of acceptable increases of what percentage of the CPI would be included in this, and what the Minister of Finance chose to do was arbitrarily pick a number.

What the minister failed to do was consult with the people that were here yesterday. We met with some of those people and we talked to them about whether there'd been any meaningful consultation or any consultation at all. And what we had was a Finance minister that decided, oh yes, this sounds like a good number; I'm going to go with it, without having any discussion with them, without looking at what the effect of this was on them. And while we're supportive of this concept in a general sense, we take very serious exception to the minister's lack of consultation and lack of meaningful rapport and dialogue with the people that are directly affected by it.

Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that anything less than 100 per cent of CPI is in effect a reduction in income for those people that are affected for it. And those people are not asking for 100 per cent, nor is anybody advocating 100 per cent. But we have to understand as legislators when you are not meeting cost-of-living changes, you are actually moving somebody backwards on the scale.

So what I would like to ask the Minister of Finance to do is engage in some meaningful dialogue and some discussion with the pensioners that are directly affected by this to try and determine what would be satisfactory, what would be appropriate, what needs they have financially, which of their expenses are affected by inflation, which of them are not. Clearly the cost of purchasing a house for seniors and retirees may not change. They may live in the same existing house. But they are affected by inflation when it comes to things like utilities, groceries, gasoline, fuel, and heating costs.

So we would like to invite the Finance minister to have meetings by the people that are directly funded by this type of legislation. We think it's important that they enter into a meaningful dialogue to ensure that our seniors are well and adequately cared for.

Mr. Speaker, it also goes without saying that our seniors are some of the people in our province that are the most vulnerable. They do not have a voice in legislation any more because the unions that they belonged to, they have now retired from. So they no longer participate in union elections, management of their locals. So they're not in a position to advocate or lobby through . . . for better pension benefits or appropriate pension benefits through a collective process. There are retirees spread out through the province that don't have the same level of organization or resources to try and negotiate on their behalf. So I think it's incumbent on the government to do an adequate and appropriate job in dealing with these people.

Mr. Speaker, as opposition members we also have concerns about where the funds are going to come from for this particular purpose. While we support the benefits going, we want to know, Mr. Speaker, how much the ongoing costs are going to be to fund this, whether it's the intention of the government to make a one-time payment into those pension funds that will in perpetuity ensure that there's sufficient funds in there to meet the obligations required, or is it the intention of the Finance minister to have this as an ongoing obligation of the province?

We have a problem, Mr. Speaker, with superannuation type of expenses throughout the finances of this province. In this province we've got large funds, large pension funds, that have got significant unfunded liability. What we have now is a minister that said, I want to increase the benefits that are payable out of one of these funds. Fair enough. He wants to do that. But what's he doing with the other unfunded liabilities? What's he doing with the other expenses that are in those funds?

We are at a point right now in our financial history where we have had some significant windfall gains. Those gains, those financial benefits that we've had in the last two or three years as a result of resource revenues, may well not be something that's continued for a long time in the future. This is the time to play catch-up on things like dealing with topping up pension funds, dealing with unfunded pension liabilities, and other capital funds that the minister does not seem to regard as important because they're not part of his leadership agenda or part of their next election agenda, Mr. Speaker.

What this minister should be doing, if he was a prudent steward of the taxpayers' resources, would be saying: how much is the

unfunded liability in the pension funds in this province? How much money will this additional cost be for this, and am I prepared as the Finance minister to put additional funds in this? And will I be taxing the future of this province to do so? And hopefully he has done that analysis, and we would like to hear about whether he's done that analysis. And we'd like to know about the ongoing issues that he's going to deal with, unfunded pension liability.

And we'd also like to see that minister go outside and have some discussion with the retirees and with the pension recipients of this province to ensure that he has made an adequate plan to deal with them.

This is the first time this has been brought back before this legislature since 1965 is what he had indicated earlier. So we are now some 40 years hence is the first time it's been brought back. So why don't we develop some kind of a plan that can look after this type of issue, not just now but in perpetuity, by ensuring that there's ongoing legitimate funding that's going to be in there. And where is the funding coming from? Is it a one-time . . .

So if he wants to know what our position is and he's asking what our position is, I'd like to urge him to call an election or talk to the outgoing Premier as to what the election is going to be called. So that when we have that election he can sit down and he can read about our platform, he can go to our press releases. I know he's reading a lot about our platform on the website and I'd like to encourage him to continue to read about it on the website and in our literature because there's no doubt he's getting a lot of good ideas from that. He doesn't do a very good job of transplanting them over there and turning them into NDP ideas.

But, Mr. Speaker, the superannuation Act is an important piece of legislation to the seniors in this province. It's an important piece of legislation to this party and we're going to see to it that the seniors in this province are looked after. And it's not enough to say we're going to wait another 40 years before the seniors get brought before this legislature again.

We want to see to it that their funding is safe, secure, long-term, made by reasonable consultation with them, and addressing what the needs are of those people. And I think before that's going to happen appropriately, Mr. Speaker, we're going to need another election in this province. And as far as this party is concerned, we want to bring it on because we know the seniors are behind us and the seniors want us to look after them with this type of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I hear that the minister . . .

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please. I hear three people vying for attention, or four, and the Chair at this time has recognized the member for Saskatoon Southeast and he should be the person that is heard. The member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think what I'd like to do — I know that they missed a lot of my comments — I think I'd like to just go back and start again at the beginning and review everything from the top. But in the interest of time,

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to do is urge the Minister of Finance to do listening instead of talking, not just in the House but outside when he's talking to seniors, so seniors can be heard and seniors can have a legitimate voice in what their needs are in this province. The Minister of Finance above all else is someone that should be listening, should be caring, and should make a commitment to those people.

Unfortunately we've heard a lot of, a lot of noise from that minister and, Mr. Speaker, we have not heard anything that means that there's been any kind of meaningful commitment to those seniors as to what they're going to receive for ongoing benefits, what their needs are, and how he's going to pay for the costs of this Bill on a long time basis. Mr. Speaker, I would move adjournment of debate on this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Southeast that debate on second reading of Bill 32 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

[15:00]

Bill No. 31 — The Regional Health Services Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2)

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of The Regional Health Services Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2). Mr. Speaker, a few brief comments in introducing second reading. The Bill proposes changes to The Regional Health Services Act respecting the operating agreements between regional health authorities and affiliates.

In each health region, the regional health authority is responsible for the delivery of health services. In several regions, regional health authorities entered into agreements with one or more affiliates to provide those important services. These new provisions will allow regional health authorities and affiliates to develop more effective relationships that support improved performance management and the delivery of quality health services.

I would like to note that regional health authorities and affiliates are very supportive of the proposed changes. In turn Saskatchewan Health will be in a better position to ensure regional health authorities are accountable for the delivery of those important services.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of The Regional Health Services Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2). Thank you.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 32, The Regional Health Services Amendment

Act, 2006 (No. 2) be now read a second time. The Chair recognizes the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with pleasure to speak briefly on Bill No. 31, An Act to amend The Regional Health Services Act.

Mr. Speaker, it certainly is true that regional health authorities have a primary responsibility for the delivery of health care services in the province. They do not have the only authority. In fact the prime authority rests with the Minister of Health and the Department of Health. And very often the regional health authorities are caught in the middle between a lack of proper direction and guidance from the Department of Health and from the minister and trying to cope with issues that are laid on their table.

Mr. Speaker, it is sort of a shame that regional health authorities have to pick up the inadequacy of the NDP's direction and guidance in terms of many of the fundamentals of the health services field in our provinces. We've been telling this government for over a decade now that they were facing a looming crisis in people, in health care professionals to be available to work in the system. And systematically one Health minister after the other ignored the advice that was given by the official opposition.

And now they sit there and sound as if they're surprised or point to recent decisions to increase training seats. Those decisions should have been made a decade ago or 12 years ago when now we could be reaping the benefits of those decisions. Unfortunately they weren't made, and the result is that regional health authorities are trying to cope with this lack of vision and this lack of direction and this lack of leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it probably is worthwhile for contracts to be clarified between regional health authorities and affiliates. But again I wonder what's been taking so long to get this to the forefront. How in the world have affiliates and regional health authorities been able to hammer out agreements in the past without this kind of amendments to The Regional Health Services Act? It just seems as if it takes one problem after another to develop and get to a crisis stage before this government introduces any kind of legislation or any kind of changes to improve the situation. And certainly it has not needed to be that way. It was obvious to anyone who would take the time to look objectively at the health care system that we are facing a crisis.

I met a doctor in our community the other day that said, do you realize you are going to face an even greater crisis going forward in the supply of physicians in Saskatchewan? And I said, what's your perspective? He said, look at the demographics of existing practising physicians in this province and tell me how, with the reality that it takes approximately eight years to graduate a physician from a training program, you're going to physically be able to have enough graduates if you keep 120 per cent of them. If you keep every single one that's in a training seat, if you keep every single one, it won't be enough to meet the demographics that are looming in terms of the next decade.

And this is the kind of statistic that was available a decade ago,

12 years ago, 14 years ago. And the opposition was saying that for all of these many years, and Health minister after Health minister has ignored the advice, and here we are now debating changes to contracts that the regional health districts have with their affiliates as they try to cope with this lack of leadership by this NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, I suspect when we look at this at close look that there is probably nothing problematic in this legislation. We want to make sure that the regional health authorities and affiliates have been fully consulted. We want to investigate as well if this kind of changes to The Regional Health Services Act is going to have implications by third party providers of services to the affiliates and to the regional health authorities, and to make sure that all of this has been fully discussed and consulted and that there is no unintended consequence from the government stumbling through the actions that they take as a small token of compensation for what is inadequate leadership over the years by this NDP government in the field of health services delivery.

So, Mr. Speaker, in order to allow this discussion to occur and for us to make sure that they haven't missed something else in this legislation, or proposed changes, I would adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Melfort that debate on second reading of Bill No. 31 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Bill No. 27 — The Film Employment Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2006

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 27, The Film Employment Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2006.

I'm proud to say that Saskatchewan's film tax credit program is one of the most competitive in all of Canada and encourages the development and support of local film industry workers. It is a young and flourishing industry with the average age of workers in the film industry here in Saskatchewan at around 35 — that is around 10 years younger than the rest of Saskatchewan's workforce — so it's an attractive opportunity for young people here in the province. For every dollar invested in the film industry by the tax credit program, it's estimated six more dollars are spent in the province from other sources.

Mr. Speaker, last year we made some major changes to the tax credit program. We increased the tax credit but we put some limits on how it can be used. Those changes have resulted in a small reduction to our total film production volumes but a significant increase to the economic benefit those volumes bring to our province. Madam Deputy Speaker, the proposed change to the tax credit program will continue down this path by further clarifying the intent of the program.

Since the inception of the film employment tax credit program, producers have been able to receive a bonus for undertaking production outside a 40-kilometre radius of either Regina or Saskatoon. The 5 per cent rural bonus has included all production costs incurred in Saskatchewan. The proposed amendments are designed to clarify that salaries paid to non-Saskatchewan residents do not, Madam Deputy Speaker, do not qualify as Saskatchewan expenditures for the purpose of the rural bonus.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment will ensure that the benefits of the film industry flow to the Saskatchewan economy while continuing to allow our employment tax credit program to be one of the most competitive programs in all of North America.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 27, The Film Employment Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2006.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to rise to participate in the debate regarding the film employment tax credit legislation. Madam Deputy Speaker, we've had the opportunity to briefly review this Bill and it is one of the Bills that has been put forward in this session that can be described most aptly as tinkering with existing programs. As such we are always leery of and question where we've gone to.

Film employment and films in this province have been somewhat of a sensitive issue over the last number of years. And I question the wisdom of tinkering when we may have been better off to have done a more detailed or careful analysis of, are we meeting our goals, or what are our proper . . . and things that we want to arrive at by having incentives for a film and movie industry in this province.

We've seen places where politicians have gotten involved in this type of thing, and I'm troubled by the political involvement in the film industry. And in this particular Bill the last line of the Bill before the coming into force is “. . . for whom residency requirements have been waived by the minister pursuant to subsection 4(1).”

So what we've done is allowed for this tax credit to be dealt with directly by ministerial intervention into how the system is supposed to work. And who it applies to and who doesn't is determined directly by the minister. Madam Deputy Speaker, I can't imagine anything more troubling than having the minister deal with when tax credits apply and when there's no direction given as to how that should be applied or what the purposes of it is.

Last year we saw the Tommy Douglas film produced in this province, something that Saskatchewan residents should have been able to take a great deal of pride in. Unfortunately politics crept into that film. We saw the character of former Premier Gardiner besmirched because of a political agenda on the part of people involved in that film or certainly if not a political agenda, certainly an inability to deal correctly with the history of what this province was. As a result of that, there's now issues whether that film should be shown and widely circulated. There's issues of whether it's appropriate to use as part of

school curriculum.

And a large part of the cost of that film was incurred at the expense of the Saskatchewan taxpayer through Minds Eye productions, through the sound stage, through a variety of different tax credits and incentives by the provincial government. And it's troubling when we see that kind of a financial commitment by Saskatchewan residents go for something that because of incorrect politics has now defeated the purpose of why that was supposed to happen.

And then the NDP come forward with an amendment that allows for tax credits to be granted or not granted at the whim of a minister pursuant to section 4(1) of the Act. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's not a good day when legislation allows for direct ministerial involvement in taxation where there's that kind of discretion. There isn't even in the legislation any direction for a fair-minded minister to use in applying that discretion. And I'm not saying the minister there wouldn't be fair minded, but the minister should be entitled to rely on some direction from the legislature as to how that discretion should or should not be applied, under what circumstances, and what the goals of the legislation are.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have concerns with the costs that go with any kind of a tax credit. A tax credit sounds like something that doesn't cost the province any real money, but a tax credit is that. It is taxes that do not need to be paid. So dollar for dollar it is money that the province does not receive and dollar for dollar it is an expense to the taxpayers of this province.

As such, Madam Deputy Speaker, we do have concerns with this. We will want to do some significant consultation with people in the film industry to ensure that the changes are appropriate. And we have concerns with any time the government puts forward legislation that gives that much discretion back to a minister or a government official or a bureaucrat.

We have a reason for passing laws. And one of the reasons that we pass laws is to create certainty in the marketplace, certainty with regard to our taxation structure, and to give citizens some comfort that their money and their hard-earned dollars when they pay taxes are being used appropriately, fairly, and within the bounds of the law.

To have something as open-ended as to allow for a ministerial waiver on a particular program or not, when you don't even know what the number of films that are going to be produced in a given year — it's not saying we're going to allocate \$300,000 for this — this could be completely open-ended for as long as that industry continues on.

It may be that a minister one year will want to be supportive, grant the waiver, and maybe the minister in a subsequent year won't. How is there any consistency going to be made available so that people are . . . business people in the industry know what they're going to receive, not going to receive? So what we're going to have is gamesmanship on the part of film companies to try and lobby for . . . or people seeking political favour with a current minister to try and have the credits granted.

It's certainly the type of legislation that the Saskatchewan Party is troubled by. And we want to see the film industry grow and prosper in this province. And we think that having a discretionary tax credit where the discretion lies solely with the minister is certainly an issue for concern and I suspect, Madam Deputy Speaker, will be a troubling issue for people that work in the industry. People that work in the industry I think want the same kind of certainty that any other industry would have, and I can't think of very many other places in our financial structure, in our taxation scheme where the legislation would directly call for a ministerial involvement.

[15:15]

The government tries to distance itself and says this is something that's done by an independent council, a tribunal, commission, board, whatever. They don't want to participate in it. They don't feel it's appropriate to make comments when things are before the courts . . . [inaudible] . . . and fair enough. Those are fair things.

But when the minister directly gives the authority back to the minister under a piece of legislation, it invites nothing more than having a particular film or a particular project become a political football, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's something that the Saskatchewan Party wants to try and distance itself from. We want to have a fair, reasonable, level playing field for all businesses in this province, and this isn't the type of thing that would create that. But unfortunately the NDP don't see eye to eye with the Saskatchewan Party on that issue.

In any event, Madam Deputy Speaker, we will go forward. We will have the consultation. We may want to come back and seek an amendment to this Bill. I would move adjournment of debate.

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

Some Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 28 — The Cities Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2)

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. At the conclusion of my remarks I will be moving second reading of Bill No. 28, The Cities Amendment Act, 2006.

Madam Speaker, The Cities Act provides a modern legislative framework through which all Saskatchewan cities, with the exception of Lloydminster, exercise their powers and provide services. Hon. members may recall that the legislature passed The Cities Act in the spring 2002 session and that the Act came into force on January 1, 2003.

Madam Speaker, some of the key objectives of The Cities Act are to modernize the relationship between the province and the

cities; enable city governments to encourage initiative and creativity; and provide citizens with better, more accountable local government.

Today, Madam Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of The Cities Amendment Act, 2006 which supports these objectives. The amendments are a result of ongoing consultation with the cities as they move to implement the Act.

Madam Speaker, the amendments proposed in this draft Bill address some significant issues. First, the Bill responds to requests from the municipal sector and the municipal liability review committee with amendments that update and enhance the liability provisions in the Act. Second, this Bill introduces policy amendments in several areas that have been identified as being necessary to improve the effectiveness of the Act. And third, this Bill provides for some clarification to areas identified by the cities, Government Relations, and Corrections and Public Safety.

Madam Speaker, the proposed amendments will serve to strengthen the legislation. Proposed amendments support the intention of the legislation to grant cities broad powers, more flexibility, and greater decision making capacity to deal with matters that are of a local nature.

I want to take just a few moments to highlight the more significant changes that the Bill proposes. Madam Speaker, of particular note are the amendments related to municipal liability.

In recent years, Saskatchewan's municipalities, particularly the larger cities, have brought forward issues with respect to the scope and nature of the liability protection that is afforded to municipal corporations under Saskatchewan's municipal statutes. Several recent developments, such as the passage of the new Cities Act and Municipalities Act, made it timely to conduct a thorough review of the liability provisions. Madam Speaker, a working group of officials from Government Relations, Saskatchewan Justice, SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], SARM, and the city solicitors from the four major cities, began work on the review in late 2004 and continued through the first six months of 2005.

This review was very successful in achieving consensus and making recommendations in key areas such as general liability for nuisance claims, statutory immunity for employees and for the acts of firefighters. After the review was completed, Government Relations undertook extensive consultations with the municipal, legal, insurance industry, and business associations on the review's report, as well as all the city managers and the relevant government departments were consulted. The recommendations met with a largely favourable response although, as might be expected, some of those consulted had contrary opinions based on their special interest.

Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to say that this Bill addresses all of the review committee's recommendations. These amendments will provide cities with a level of protection from liability that is equivalent to or consistent with protection afforded to the provincial government and its Crown corporations, and to municipalities in other provinces and territories across Canada. Madam Speaker, I sincerely thank the

review committee for its excellent work that led to these provisions.

Madam Speaker, this Bill also seeks to address other issues that the cities have encountered as they have implemented the Act. A good number of the amendments in the draft Bill address policy issues that the cities have brought forward and that had been determined to be in the public interest. I would like to highlight several of these amendments.

The Act currently allows a council to reimburse either a councillor or a mayor for legal or other costs if a citizen is unsuccessful with an application to have he or she disqualified. The proposed amendment would extend council's discretionary authority to also reimburse the legal or other costs of a citizen where there is a successful application to have a member of council disqualified for reasons approved by the courts.

Madam Speaker, the cities brought forward this idea themselves and it was agreed that the current Act is unclear. The cities questioned, if an elected person can be reimbursed, then why not a citizen? This is a matter of fairness.

Madam Speaker, some might think that this amendment could increase the number of frivolous actions against council members. Madam Speaker, I would like to assure you that the grounds for disqualification are specifically set out in the Act and are limited to significant issues like becoming ineligible to hold office or being convicted of a criminal offence. A judge would have to determine that grounds exist in the first place for disqualification to occur.

Madam Speaker, we believe that this amendment supports the ability and civic responsibility of electors to bring forward legitimate actions and allow councils the discretion to recognize those individuals.

Madam Speaker, as members of this House are well aware, one of our government's major concerns is economic development. Through this Bill, we are pleased to introduce a new financial tool to Saskatchewan in support of new economic development in our cities.

Madam Speaker, this Bill contains broad provisions to allow cities to use tax increment financing in addition to the existing powers in the Act. Tax increment financing is a concept that has been used largely in the United States, however interest has been growing in Canada. This tool will allow cities to finance public improvements in a designated area by the increase in property taxes generated by a private development. Using this tool may help to encourage development in areas where development might not otherwise occur.

Madam Speaker, one might ask why we need to add specific provisions in this regard given the general taxation powers the cities already have. While The Cities Act provides great flexibility and autonomy, its taxation provisions were largely carried forward from previous legislation. Legislation needs to be as clear and specific as possible in areas such as assessment, taxation, and local election procedures. In this instance we have included regulation making authority because tax increment financing is new to Saskatchewan and refinements may be necessary in the context of practical application.

Madam Speaker, we recognize that city governments are often in the best position to make local decisions for the benefit of their residents. In support of this, some amendments provide greater flexibility for cities to respond to existing and future needs of their communities in innovative ways. For example, this Bill proposes an amendment to the provisions relating to bylaw enforcement that would allow a city to expedite a remedy to a bylaw contravention so long as the city bears all the costs. As an example, city police services have advised the cities that, to be effective as a deterrent, graffiti should be removed within 48 hours of its occurrence. This amendment will allow city officials to enter a property in a timely manner and clean up the graffiti at no cost to the property owner. Cities will have the flexibility to adopt similar approaches to other nuisances if they so choose. Doing so will be a local government choice.

Madam Speaker, another example of increased flexibility is an amendment that will allow a council to establish its own policy regarding certain land sales. With this amendment a council may, by bylaw, adopt a policy setting out the threshold under which land can be sold for less than market value and without a public offering. The cities often come into possession of small, irregular, leftover parcels that are administratively burdensome to deal with under the current process. This amendment will allow city councils additional flexibility to determine how they may make such a process more efficient within their local priorities.

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

Madam Speaker, this package of amendments was developed in consultation with a working group of municipal representatives who provided their professional experience, advice, and time. As you can imagine, this is a significant and ongoing commitment to take on in addition to their regular duties as municipal officials. I would like to take this opportunity again to thank this group for their participation and dedication to help refine the legislation to the betterment of Saskatchewan people's lives.

In closing, our cities have much to offer in terms of social, cultural, and economic development for Saskatchewan. It is in all our best interests to enable and facilitate the ongoing success and growth of our communities. Accordingly I move second reading of Bill No. 28, The Cities Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2).

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has moved second reading. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise and speak briefly on Bill No. 28, An Act to amend The Cities Act.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that it's very important, on an ongoing basis, that we recognize the importance of our cities in our province's development and future and as the place where

many of our citizens choose to live and raise their families.

When the legislation was changed in the last couple of years, I think it was important that there be an ongoing review and assessment if this legislation was adequately meeting the needs of our cities. And I'm pleased to hear that the government has consulted with cities. And the amendments being proposed in this legislation are a result of that direct consultation and further meet the cities in the challenges that they have to provide services to their citizens.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as we know very clearly there is only one citizen. There is only one taxpayer. And if cities or RMs or provincial governments or federal governments look to that same citizen to raise the taxes and the funds that are needed to provide for the services that our citizens require . . . And very often we see a duplication of services and not a clear distinction between the roles and responsibilities of the provincial government and what the cities can probably do and provide much more efficiently to our citizens.

And so certainly from a perspective of the official opposition, we're very much in favour and supportive of positive developments that define this relationship and ensure that there are adequate resources allocated to the cities so they can maintain and provide the services that clearly they're responsible for to the same citizen that we all care about.

[15:30]

I am equally positive in that the cities needed and requested clarification and further definition of what their liabilities are in the providing of the services to citizens, and I think the other detailed amendments that the minister outlined likely will provide a great deal of more security and assurance for city managers and city council members and mayors in our cities so that they understand what the roles and responsibilities are and what protections that are available to them in the discharge of their duty.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the official opposition would like very much . . . and looks forward to the ongoing consultation that we have with our cities and communities in this province. In order to specifically deal with the issues of this Act, we would at this time move to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 29 — The Labour Standards Consequential Amendments Act, 2006/ Loi de 2006 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Labour Standards Amendments Act, 2006

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise today in support of labour standards consequential

amendment Act, 2006. I will formally move second reading of the legislation at the end of my remarks.

This legislation completes the amendments necessary to introduce Family Day, Saskatchewan's new public holiday. The current Bill adds Family Day to the list of holidays defined for The Education Act, 1995, The Interpretation Act, 1995, and the French versions of each.

Madam Speaker, it has been more than 30 years since our province last introduced an additional holiday. Our province has changed greatly in that time, as have the needs of our employees and their work environment. This government is stepping forward to acknowledge the hard-working families and the individuals that have contributed to our booming Saskatchewan economy. We believe Family Day is another means to help our workers strike a healthy work and family balance.

By introducing our 10th statutory holiday, Saskatchewan joins nations such as France, Germany, Portugal, and Sweden in recognizing the importance of this balance. Madam Speaker, Family Day is one more way to ensure our families benefit from Saskatchewan's strong and prosperous economy.

I invite all hon. members to support Family Day by passing this legislation. And it is my pleasure to move second reading of Bill No. 29, The Labour Standards Consequential Amendments Act, 2006. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has moved second reading. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Madam Deputy Speaker, it's my privilege to rise to participate in the debate and discussion regarding the labour standards amendment Act. Madam Deputy Speaker, this Bill is some four sections long and I would anticipate speaking to each section for about 20 to 25 minutes so that . . . not excessively long-winded on any of this.

I would like to first start out, Madam Deputy Speaker, by commending the NDP for using yet another one of the Saskatchewan Party initiatives. This is something that the Saskatchewan Party has talked about for some significant period of time. And once again it shows that the NDP are at least doing some homework by checking our website, checking our platform documents, checking our policy resolutions. So we're pleased to see that they're doing that. And we want to give them credit for doing that and want to encourage them to continue doing that on financial issues and other matters as well.

They put this forward and, Madam Deputy Speaker, this Bill will be received by the citizens of Saskatchewan in the same way giving the Weyburn hospital to the city of Weyburn was during the death throes of the NDP campaign in Weyburn-Big Muddy. The voters in this province are getting far too savvy to either be tricked or finagled with electioneering. They certainly see through this. They know that it's something that's stolen from the Saskatchewan Party, and they also know that it's something that's a ploy to try and buy votes.

The reality of it, Madam Deputy Speaker, is if the NDP wants to use this to try and buy the next election, what they really should do is have that holiday fall on election day because then most of the voting age people will be in Alberta visiting their children and won't be here to vote, to vote them out of office. So the reality of it is the only way the NDP could hope to salvage the next election is by finding methods of having more people out of the province on election day. And perhaps that's the direction that they're going to.

The Labour Standards Consequential Amendments Act broadens this out to ensure that all employees in various government agencies, etc., are going to be able to participate in that holiday and certainly, Madam Deputy Speaker, that's something that the members on this side of the House want to see. And we look forward to further discussion on this Bill as it goes forward.

And perhaps the NDP would like to add some of the other hundred books. We've got some of those left and had some of them reprinted. And perhaps we could distribute those to the NDP members, Madam Deputy Speaker, so that they may have some other ideas from some legislature that they may want to bring forward as new initiatives. Madam Deputy Speaker, it's my privilege to move adjournment of debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the member for Regina Victoria, the Government Deputy House Leader.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. In order to facilitate the operation of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies, I move that we do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House does now stand adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 pm.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:36.]

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Premier

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Minister Responsible for Seniors

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Minister of Advanced Education and Employment
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