

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**April 25, 1995**

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to present petitions today on behalf of the people from Gull Lake and area.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to allocate adequate funding dedicated towards the double-laning of Highway No. 1; and further, that the Government of Saskatchewan direct any monies available from the federal infrastructure program towards double-laning Highway No. 1 rather than allocating these funds towards capital construction projections in the province.

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

And the people from Tompkins and Gull Lake area of my constituency are happy to have these brought to the attention of the Minister of Highways today.

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions to present today. The petitioners read:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to support Bill 31, An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code (Property Rights) which will benefit all property owners in Saskatchewan, and specifically firearms owners, in order to halt the federal Liberal government from infringing upon the rights of Saskatchewan people.

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

These petitions come from the White Fox, Codette, Regina, Davin, Cabri areas, Abbey. Mr. Speaker, I so present today.

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of more than 100 residents to be added to the 10,000 petitions that . . . signatures we brought forward in this House previously, of residents of the city of Saskatoon and district, who are gravely concerned about the possible effects of certain changes to the health care delivery system that have been proposed by the Saskatoon District Health Board. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to: (1) cause the Minister of Health to examine the proposal to close emergency and cardiac care at City Hospital, and to involve the medical and nursing staff at City Hospital in an open review process before any decision is finalized; (2) examine all proposals for alternative approaches with a view to seeking a solution to keep the emergency and cardiac

care units open at City Hospital; (3) to delay any renovations at University Hospital needed to accommodate the decision to close emergency and cardiac care at City Hospital until a full consultation with City Hospital nursing staff and medical staff has taken place and their alternative proposals have been examined; (4) to respect the voices of the thousands of taxpayers who have signed this petition to ask that the new City Hospital, financed by their tax dollars, will provide safe and efficient health care, including the components of emergency care and cardiac care which it was designed to deliver; and (5), to report to the petitioners within three days of this presentation of this petition the decision of the minister with respect to the requests outlined in this petition.

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

I so submit, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition I'd like to put forward this afternoon, and I will read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to unequivocally oppose changes to present legislation regarding firearm ownership, and instead urge the federal government to deal with the criminal use of firearms by imposing stiffer penalties on abusers, recognizing that gun control and crime control are not synonymous, and allowing provinces to deal with gun control legislation on a provincial basis.

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

Mr. Speaker, these 100 names were signed up in 10 minutes at a banquet that I was MC (Master of Ceremonies) . . . a wildlife banquet that I was MC'ing on Friday in Osler. And these folks come from Hague, Osler, Saskatoon, Warman, Martensville, and Rosthern.

**READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS**

**Clerk:** — According to order, the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received:

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to allocate funding toward the double-laning of Highway No. 1.

And of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly to oppose changes to federal legislation regarding firearm ownership.

**NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS**

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I give

notice that I shall on day 59 ask the government the following question:

Regarding Saskatchewan Government Insurance: (1) how many newspaper advertisements are scheduled for Saskatchewan Government Insurance's 50th anniversary; (2) what is the cost of those advertisements; (3) how many letters and invitations are being sent regarding this anniversary; (4) what is the cost of producing and mailing those invitations; (5) what is the expected cost for all items related to these anniversary celebrations, including staff costs, cake costs, and memento costs; (6) what promotional items are being produced in conjunction with the anniversary, what is the cost of those items, and to whom will they be given?

**Mrs. Bergman:** — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day 59 ask the government the following question:

Regarding SaskTel: (1) what was the cost of sending Clay Gegner, Trisha Shearer, Edward Splett, and Patti Kindred to the effective executive program at Waskesiu in 1992; (2) what was the cost of sending Hank Pulles and Rick Tabin to the effective executive program at Waskesiu in 1992; (3) what are the names of all Sask Tel employees who participated in the effective executive program at Waskesiu in 1994; (4) what are all costs associated with these employees attending this seminar; (5) what are the names of all employees who have enrolled in this seminar for the current year?

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce through you and to the rest of the Assembly, 37 students from the Dillon School. They're seated in the Speaker's gallery, Mr. Speaker, and they come from grade 6 to 10. They are here with their teachers, Jessie Sylvestre, Leona Campbell, Donna Nezcroche, and principal, Don Thompson. They are also accompanied by their chaperon, Joan Campbell.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like all members to welcome the students and the rest of the group here from Dillon today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs. Bergman:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, two groups of friends here today. First of all, John and Patricia McNiven and Jean Beattie, right up here in your gallery. They usually watch us, I believe, on TV, but here they are to see us in the flesh this afternoon. I ask all members to join me in welcoming them here today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs. Bergman:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to introduce two friends who are sitting a little farther up in your gallery. They are Irene Wald and Marilyn Rink, long-time friends. And

they're here to see what we're doing today. I ask the Assembly to join me in welcoming them here today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Whitmore:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the west gallery, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you, a constituent, Mr. Cal Erickson, who is also greatly involved in the labour movement. I certainly welcome Cal here today and I hope that all other MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) will do so also.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Cline:** — With Mr. Erickson, Mr. Speaker, is Mr. Greg Eyre, who's a constituent of mine, and even though he's been introduced here before, I didn't want him to feel left out. So I thought I'd get members to welcome him as well.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

##### Expansion to Meadow Lake Pulp Mill

**Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the member from Thunder Creek got the jump on me by announcing some very good news from my constituency. I understand his desire to be part of the positive economic developments happening in our area and I want to join with him in his announcement.

I was delighted to be present with the Premier yesterday at the official announcement of a major expansion to the Meadow Lake pulp mill. The pulp mill is a joint venture between Millar Western Industries, which operates the mill, and the Crown Investments Corporation. This mill, Mr. Speaker, is the world's first zero effluent chemi-thermomechanical pulp mill. That means it's environmentally friendly, Mr. Speaker.

Presently it employs 196 people with another 170 involved in the wood harvesting. The \$32.5 million expansion, funded by the mill's own cash flow, will install a wood chip handling system to improve wood utilization, build new facilities to improve product quality, and reduce chemical costs and increase overall capacity. Twelve permanent new jobs will be created, and there will be an additional 125 construction jobs created.

Mr. Speaker, this plant is now operating at a profit, employing Saskatchewan workers, and doing all this in an environmentally responsible manner. My congratulations and thanks to the management and workers of the Meadow Lake pulp mill.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

##### Old-fashioned Bunnock Tournament Planned

**Mr. Britton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a while

April 25, 1995

ago I had a two-part statement in which I mentioned two elevators. Well they're both up and running.

But today, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about something else. Every long weekend in August residents of Macklin host the world's championship bunnock tournament. And for those of you who are not familiar with the bunnock, might not know that it was a game started in the early 1800s, then introduced to Canadians by Russian-German immigrants.

It consists of two teams using old, dead horse bones as a competitive game, Mr. Speaker. In the 1800s, bunnock was a free form of entertainment because for years long-dead horses were plentiful, and they used bones out of the front leg of a horse.

This tradition, Mr. Speaker, is still celebrated today in Macklin and about 150 people participate. Besides playing bunnock, the celebration includes live bands on Main Street, face painting for children, helium balloons, craft and bake tables, food booths, beer gardens, and much more. Two years ago, Mr. Speaker, I was asked to throw the first bone, and this year the mayor, a reeve, and myself, will launch the tournament together.

Commemorating this long-standing tradition, at the junction of Highway 31 and Highway 14 stands an interesting landmark. The town of Macklin has constructed a 32-foot bunnock made out of steel pipe, chicken wire, and fibreglass. This giant bunnock, Mr. Speaker, serves as a tourist booth stocked with information about the town as well as souvenirs. The local Eye Hill tourism committee is planning a grand opening of this boon on June 11 in order to tie the opening with the province's 90th anniversary. And I would like to congratulate all of those who have kept this tradition alive and who are working very hard to bring more tourist dollars into the town of Macklin and our constituency. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### **Canadian Liberator Revisits Utrecht**

**Mr. Koenker:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From time to time in my work as a member of the Assembly, there are touching stories involving constituents. And a story that fits into that category began some 50 years ago in Holland during the Second World War.

The headline in a Dutch newspaper reads: Canadian liberator found after 50 years. In April 1945, Roy Armstrong of the Regina Rifles and hundreds of other Canadian soldiers were responsible for liberating the community of Utrecht in The Netherlands. Armstrong became good friends with a young boy, C.W. Slinger, and his family and helped them by providing food.

Many years passed and this young boy, who is now 62 years old, decided to search for his long-lost friend. He wrote numerous letters and articles to newspapers and various groups and agencies, and finally an article that appeared in the Regina *Leader-Post* found its way to Mr. Armstrong in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Armstrong will be travelling to Utrecht this Thursday to be honoured at a special 50th anniversary ceremony and to be reunited with the people he helped liberate.

I would like to extend my best wishes to Mr. Armstrong for serving his country and helping others, and to his friends in The Netherlands who never gave up hope. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And on a final note, I might add that to see this story visually, you might want to tune in the BBS (Baton Broadcasting System) TV news at 6 o'clock tonight. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### **Lloydminster Kinsmen Rodeo**

**Ms. Stanger:** — Mr. Speaker, this week in . . . The Lloydminster Kinsmen and a number of event sponsors will host the 23rd annual Lloydminster Kinsmen Rodeo. Traditionally this is one of the highlights of the year, and this show promises to be among the best ever.

Like almost every community event in Saskatchewan, what makes this one so special is the way the town gets behind it for fun and worthy causes, as if fun were not a worthy cause in itself.

This year, in addition to the rodeo, there will be a pancake breakfast to raise money for the outdoor pool. There will be a first nations art show and sale, designed to showcase emerging first nations artists. For those who love to watch horses work in more precise ways than the traditional rodeo events, there's a cutting horse meet on Saturday.

Mr. Speaker, the Kinsmen are expecting 8,000 spectators this weekend. For that number of sponsors, they have gathered together probably the finest herd of rodeo stock anywhere and the finest group of cowboys to oppose them. I invite all members to travel north-west this weekend where the climate is dry, the drinks cold and wet, and the excitement first rate. Thank you.

#### **Prince Albert Business Awards**

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a number of businesses in Prince Albert which have recently been honoured for their leadership in the community.

The fifth annual Samuel McCloud Business Awards were presented in Prince Albert on April 19. The Saskatchewan government was represented at this event by my colleague, the member from Prince Albert Northcote. Mann Motor Products Ltd. was presented with the business of the year award for demonstrating overall success and performance in the local business economy. The Mann family has been involved in the automotive business in Prince Albert for more than 40 years.

Mann Motors developed a new marketing and investment approach which resulted in a 1994 sales increase of 80 per cent over the previous year. The other award winners were: Industrial Automated Systems for product development; Shuttlecraft International for job creation; Quin Tec Enterprises

for new business; and community involvement ... the community involvement award went to P.A. Bottlers. Central Answering Service won the service industry category, and Leon's Furniture won in marketing.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize Steve Ruznisky of Prince Albert Northern Bus Lines who won the legacy award for long-term contribution to the community.

Congratulations to all of these businesses for doing their part in helping our Saskatchewan economy grow.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Ogema Trade Show

**Ms. Bradley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this weekend Ogema's second trade show takes place and it promises to be a real success.

Sponsored by the Ogema Economic Development Committee, the trade show advertised for 70 inside booths and 10 outside displays, and I'm pleased to report the show has sold out and even more than sold out with 73 indoor displays.

The trade show has attracted visitors from the United States, British Columbia, and all across Saskatchewan. The huge variety of displays include plastic recycling, meat processing, auto painting, pedigreed seed, and even carpet cleaning.

I'm also happy to note that Saskatchewan's team, the Roughriders, will be out in full force with both a booth and appearances by players.

As well, Mr. Speaker, there are several health-related displays. These include a blood pressure check, medi-chairs, and even a mock emergency put on by the Pangman Ambulance Board and the local health district.

Mr. Speaker, the Ogema Trade Show takes place on Friday and Saturday this weekend at the Ogema rink complex and regional park. Show times are noon to 8 p.m. Friday, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. The event wraps up with a cabaret for visitors and participants on Saturday night. At this time I want to invite all people in the area to the Ogema Trade Show. I also wish to congratulate the Ogema Economic Development Committee for another successful demonstration of the Saskatchewan spirit.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### 100th Anniversary of Salvation Army

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to take a moment to acknowledge the work of an organization in this province and across Canada for the work they do with disadvantaged people, and certainly the work has extended to other parts of the world.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm talking of the Salvation Army. I had the

privilege this afternoon of attending, along with the Premier, a luncheon hosted by the Army in acknowledgement of their work and the 100th anniversary they're celebrating of the establishment of the Army.

Certainly this group of individuals puts into practice the words of our Lord when he said: when I was hungry, you fed me; when I was thirsty, you gave me to drink; when I was cold, you put clothes on me.

So I want to extend our appreciation, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, to the Salvation Army for the work and their endeavours not only in our city but in our province and in our country.

Thank you, and God bless.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Firearms Legislation

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again our caucus is pleased to bring forward these questions sent to us by members of the general public. And my question to the Premier comes from Larry Prokopetz from White Fox.

Mr. Premier, I want to know why we do not have the legislated right to ownership of private property in the province of Saskatchewan. It would seem to me that this is a very basic right in any democratic society.

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, of course all Canadians have the right to own private property. I think though that the question is put forward with such obvious good humour by the member that he refers to his own legislation which he had introduced in the House earlier this session.

The objection that we have to that legislation is that it would serve no useful purpose in the gun control debate. Our position in respect of any potential or possible constitutional challenge to what the federal government is doing must stand on its own feet, and there is literally nothing that we can do in this House of a legislative nature that will assist us in that fight with Ottawa, if indeed we find ourselves in that position.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Post-secondary Education Funding

**Mr. Martens:** — Mr. Speaker, this question comes from E. Mikale McDonald from Saskatoon: Mr. Premier, I want to know if the federal government cuts cost — excuse me — if the federal government cuts post-secondary transfer payments, what programs will the provincial government implement to help students? As it is now, receiving full students loans, students in colleges such as law are not making ends meet. Will you be able to help?

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — I want to thank the member for that question. As all members will know, we are not yet in a

position to respond in any substantive way to the proposed changes to federal transfers to the province. As you know, we have had EPF (established programs financing) post-secondary education funding, EPF health funding, and then CAP (Canada Assistance Plan). The federal government is proposing to put all of these items into one big sum.

Our Finance officials are working with the Finance officials in Ottawa so that we have a clear understanding of what in fact the impacts will be in the province. So we are not in any way able to respond to the question because we do not yet know in any precise detail what the download from Ottawa is going to be on the provinces.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### School Closures

**Mr. Britton:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the Premier also. This question comes from Inga Sample from Livelong:

Mr. Premier, I want to know why you are closing so many schools. In your election campaign you promised to provide all Saskatchewan people with full access to education, based on their desire and ability and not their income, gender, race, geographic location, or disabilities — well?

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — I want to thank the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, I had our Department of Education go back to the late 1960s to look at rural school closures in the province of Saskatchewan. And I can tell the member that, as far back as we can go, there have been rural school closures in every year in this province.

Why has that come about? That has come about as a result of a demographic shift in the rural population; people moving from small towns and villages, small farms, to larger centres.

So I think I can say with some precision that regardless of which political party has been in office in the province of Saskatchewan, we have always had rural school closures in every year in the province of Saskatchewan, as far back as we can go.

#### School Sex Education Programs

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this question comes from Alice Hounjet from Prud'homme: Mr. Premier, I want to know why your party is so intent on destroying morality and family life. The sexual and reproductive health program that you want to mandate in our schools is thoroughly disgusting.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Well you know, I think part of the problem here is that there have been some people in the province that have gone around Saskatchewan saying that we are going to put compulsory sex education in our province's schools. That is simply not true.

The province of Saskatchewan has left it up to local people to decide whether or not they want to put sex education into their

health curriculum. It is totally at the discretion of the community.

And I can assure the member — and I do hope that he sends this answer out to the person that wrote the question — that we are not poised to put compulsory sex education into Saskatchewan's schools.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### MLA Pension Plan

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to ask a question on behalf of a Saskatchewan citizen today, and this is Adolph Sushko from Pelly. And Mr. Sushko says: Mr. Premier, I want to know why all of us taxpayers have to hurt in lowering the deficit, but you and a few others see no reason to remove part or all of the pension you will receive. It is strange that the burdened have to hurt, but the well-to-do have the massages and ointment so as not to hurt.

**Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to respond to the question by Mr. Sushko because he raises a question which is of concern to him.

I want Mr. Sushko to be reminded, and I'm sure he knows, that one of the reasons why we face the dilemma we face in Saskatchewan today and why we have had to take some of the measures which we have taken — with a great deal of success — in balancing . . . being the first province in Canada to balance our budget, was because of the 1980s and the almost \$15 billion debt which was incurred by the former administration, which today asks these questions.

But the hope for Mr. Sushko and I think the optimistic news for him is, and I'm sure he will appreciate it as well, is that we have balanced the budget. We're the first province in Canada to do it. We balanced in '94-95, '95-96, and in on until 1999. And in that also is a plan to start paying down that tremendous debt which was incurred by the Conservative government when it was in power in the 1980s.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### Regional Parks Funding

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this question comes from Les Wieler from Riverhurst. Mr. Premier, I want to know why the funding for regional parks has been withdrawn to the point that many are going to be forced to close, when tourism is the greatest part of our economy. On one hand we are promoting tourism and on the other hand, taking away funding so that the parks have to close. I thought the Premier had more smarts than that.

**Hon. Mr. Wiens:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question. What we have done in the process of trying to come to grips with the need to reduce costs in the system is to maintain the energy of the regional park system while reducing costs.

And as the member opposite may be aware, the capital commitments that were in place were maintained and the operating support has been withdrawn. But we have asked the regional parks association to work with us on designing a new program, with the continued expenditure level that's existent in the capital program, to design a program that properly meets the balance of regional park needs across the province for implementation in 1997.

### Social Assistance Benefits

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I want to direct my attention to the Minister of Social Services. Mr. Minister, I'm often proud of my communities. But I was especially proud recently when the Hague Lutheran church helped organize a fund-raising hockey game and other activities in order to raise money for Elmer Sawatzky, who is a 32-year-old man suffering from cystic fibrosis and badly in need of a double lung transplant.

Through community efforts, \$10,000 was raised to help provide for the high cost of living for this family while they will be awaiting this occurrence in Toronto.

Unfortunately, as soon as social worker Donna Lawson read in the local paper in Rosthern that \$10,000 was raised for the Sawatzky family, she phoned him to inform him that they would be cut off from social services until this money was gone. Use it all up before you get a penny more.

Mr. Minister, this money was placed in a trust account over which Mr. Elmer Sawatzky has no signing authority, no control over whatsoever.

Is it your government's policy to cut social assistance recipients off in their greatest time of need?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Pringle:** — Mr. Speaker, I know nothing about this situation. And as always I have encouraged members to feel free to come to my office or contact me if there's anything that they're concerned about. And I continue to do that.

I take this question very seriously. I think that the sensitivity of this government relative to low income people, the measures of which you and the Liberals voted against every single one of them, is unparalleled in Canada.

I would be personally willing to talk to this family if you would be so kind as to share the information with me.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you, Mr. Minister. You talk about your government's desire to help, Mr. Minister. Last year I brought up Elmer Sawatzky's cause because then he was in desperate need, needing help to help pay for the drug Pulmozyme since it cost him about \$1,000 a month. And thankfully Mr. Sawatzky received help after his case was brought up right here in the legislature.

However since that time, Mr. Sawatzky has been unable to work, and as a result he and his wife and two small children are now relying on social assistance.

Mr. Minister, the community rallied around this need and donated funds for Mr. Sawatzky's family. Mr. Minister, don't you find it ironic that during National Volunteer Week you are negating any benefits this community has provided; that you have made it so that the community has been working to save the government a few bucks instead of helping a family that was depending . . . and in need of it.

**Hon. Mr. Pringle:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to make his political points, he can do that. I've indicated to him already that I would be willing to look into this personally myself out there. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what else to say.

I commend the community for rallying around. I think that's the Saskatchewan spirit. That's the strength of our people.

I'm telling him, if he's really interested in helping this family, let's sit down as soon as this question period's over and go over the details, and I'll personally go and see this family.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Neudorf:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I never, ever doubt the Saskatchewan spirit. It is this government's spirit that is in doubt, Mr. Minister.

The social worker told the Sawatzky family that her superiors had instructed her to cut the family off. And keep in mind that this transplant, the average waiting time is about nine months. So some of these trust funds have already gone; \$4,000 of this trust fund have already had to be spent in getting the family poised to go to Toronto.

Mr. Minister, it's extremely unfair that Elmer Sawatzky does not only have to fight for his life, but now he's got to fight for something that's even more unfair, and that's fighting your government. And his comment to me this morning was, simply, what's the point of continuing to fight? That's the seriousness of the situation, Mr. Minister.

Now, Mr. Minister, Mr. Sawatzky leaves for Toronto in five days. I'm asking you now to publicly commit to immediately looking into this matter, helping this family which is being placed into such needless stress and anxiety by you.

Will you commit not only into looking into this matter, as you have already done, but also resolving the issue before Mr. Sawatzky leaves for Toronto this Sunday? Will you resolve the issue for him favourably, Mr. Minister?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Pringle:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what else to say. Mr. Speaker, I have already indicated that I would look into this personally. If you were really interested . . . You know I'm kind of surprised that you're using this case to keep

getting up and getting up and getting up like this. I don't know what you want me to say. I'm willing to meet with him.

Will you also tell him that you voted against, and the Liberals with you, you voted against special and differential benefits to disabled persons. Would you tell him that you voted, and the Liberals with you, voted against the child development and nutrition program for low income children? So tell him that as well.

I told you, after I will meet with you, get the details, I will personally look into it. What else do you want me to say?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Saskatoon City Hospital Emergency Ward Closure

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health today. Sir, when you are presented with evidence that a district health board decision is not in the financial or medical best interest of health care delivery, are you prepared to take responsibility to intervene and ask the board to justify its decision to the public?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Third Party, the Leader of Liberal Party, here in the House, raises what is obviously a hypothetical kind of question. If she wants to add some detail to that question, I'll respond to the detail.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Well that's most interesting, Mr. Speaker, because not only has this minister heard this before, the previous minister of Health had the meat to the matter and decided to do nothing.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatoon District Health Board struck a committee to prepare a report on the board's proposal to close City Hospital emergency ward. The 19 doctors and nurses on this committee produced a consensus report which I table today.

The report included their budget calculations, which conclude that it is impractical to close emergency because it will cost more money to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan and threaten the ability of City Hospital to provide acute care.

And I brought this issue not only to this minister's attention but the previous minister of Health as well. My question to the minister this afternoon: are you going to ignore the advice of professionals and allow the Saskatchewan district health board to implement a plan that will cost the people of this province more money and will actually reduce services?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, as the member knows — or I believe she knows — the process of decision making is vested in the district boards which we work with very, very closely. This is not new, Mr. Speaker, that decisions of this nature, previously had been taken by hospital boards or ambulance boards or home care boards; those decisions are now taken by the district boards.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as a province we maintain and enforce the highest of standards province-wide. Now I am assured by the Saskatoon board that they have been in close communication with the medical community in Saskatoon over this decision and stand firm that this is the appropriate decision for their community and for the needs of their people.

Now we know we have a record in this session, Mr. Speaker, of the Liberal leader coming into this House with all sorts of charges. We know she came into here with charges regarding the Regina District Board, not so many weeks ago, to which the Regina District Board had to respond publicly: that's false information.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again we've seen the Liberal leader bringing circumstances into this House, and we will of course be in touch with the appropriate authorities and we will check the bona fide of her statements.

But if she wants to raise some important issues in the House, she may want to talk about the future of medicare in this nation under a Liberal government. That may be the subject she wants to develop in her next line of questioning.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The group and the report that I tabled today, their findings showed that the plan to close emergency ward and to create an ambulatory assessment unit would actually cost more overall. And on top of that, Mr. Speaker, millions will have to be spent expanding the emergency ward at Royal University Hospital. Now the health board's decision to this first report was to do what? Strike a second committee. When the physicians from all of Saskatoon and the surrounding areas learned of this attempt to ignore the original report, they unanimously supported a resolution to ask the board not to make further changes to emergency services at Saskatoon hospitals. The district board is still on track to implement the plan by January 1, 1996, ignoring it.

My question, Mr. Minister — the public and the professionals in Saskatoon and district deserve to see evidence of this decision. I've tabled more than 10,000 signatures in this House. Are you reluctant to conduct an open review of this decision because you're afraid of taking responsibility, or because you happen to know it's wrong?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I want the member to know . . . and I wonder if she has raised this with the Saskatoon Health Board. I'm sure they would be more than happy to discuss it with her.

I would want that member to know that in making this decision, the Saskatoon Health Board conducted the most detailed study conducted in Canada over emergency services before the decision was made.

Now I ask about the credibility of that member. She comes here to the House and will raise it, but has she talked to the Saskatoon Health Board? And who is it, Mr. Speaker, that she

would want to have these decisions made by? Would anybody in this province want the Leader of the Liberal Party making decisions on medicare based on the record of her party, based on the record of the party — as we were reminded last night on national television — the party that opposed medicare, the party that opposed medicare in this province, and the party that is dismantling national health-care standards across Canada today?

Would they want her making those decisions? I think not, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Mr. Speaker, everybody in this province knows who's been dismantling the health care system in the province of Saskatchewan. It most certainly has not been any other party except the New Democratic Party.

Yesterday this very minister refused to tell us the total cost of the health care pamphlets. He gave us the cost of distribution but side-stepped the cost of writing, designing, printing, project management, and production. Unfortunately this gives us a great deal of insight of how the Department of Health is able to distance itself from responsibility, to selectively ignore and dismiss valid questions about their priorities in health care.

Mr. Minister, if you continue to claim ignorance about the full costs of something as simple as advertising pamphlets, how can anyone trust you to know the full cost of closing an emergency department at a major hospital?

**Hon. Mr. Calvert:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House the member was making all sorts of accusations. She talked about the federal government giving this province more money than we've ever got or more than any other province in the country.

Then she went on to say, as I was reminded by members of the press, she said that every pamphlet is going to cost \$36,000. That's what she said yesterday — check the *Hansard*. Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. The total cost of the pamphlet, with the exception of some staff time in the Department of Health who wrote it, was \$36,000 — 9 cents a copy. That's the exact amount.

And if she would . . . Now today she was telling me, I think . . . yesterday she was saying we shouldn't be doing that; today she's saying we should be doing it.

Again it's a flip-flop and a flip and a flop. Now I'll tell you the one thing that isn't a flip-flop is the matter of trust. The question, Mr. Speaker, being asked in this province and being asked across Canada now: who is it can you trust with the future of medicare? And the resounding opinion that I'm getting is certainly not Liberals, not Tories, and not the Reformers, then certainly not Liberals.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### Firearms Legislation

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we saw one of the most deplorable spectacles in the whole gun debate, when Allan Rock cited the Oklahoma City bombing as a reason to register guns. I thought it was sickening that Rock would try and capitalize on the misery of the people in Oklahoma City by trying to draw a link between the bombing there and his proposed gun registry.

Mr. Speaker, there is no evidence that terrorist groups of this nature exist in Canada, and Allan Rock seems to be trying to suggest that gun ownership ultimately leads to terrorist activity. That is an insult to every responsible firearm owner in Saskatchewan and in Canada.

My question is to the Justice minister. Mr. Minister, have you been in contact with Allan Rock to let him know that his comments are nothing more than fearmongering and the lowest kind of political opportunism, and that they detract from the legitimate debate on this issue?

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, I heard media reports to the effect that the hon. member states, and I must say that, while I wouldn't necessarily have used those words, I agree with the tone of his characterization and his criticism of it.

It's no surprise to me. This minister has been all over the map in trying to defend his proposals. Originally this gun control law was supposed to fight crime. Then when he lost that ground, it had something to do with the suicide rate in Canada. Well nobody could understand why a registered gun would be any less dangerous in a suicide situation than an unregistered gun, so he abandoned that.

Then he related it to domestic violence. Then he gave that up and related it to smuggling, and that didn't seem to go very far because he couldn't explain that connection. Now he's on this Oklahoma trick. I don't know where the guy is going to land next, but this defence of his is getting to be ridiculous, and Canadians are beginning to see it.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Allan Rock's inconsistencies is another reason why we need some action here, Mr. Minister. But unfortunately, Allan Rock isn't the only Liberal making the link between the gun lobby and Oklahoma City.

Yesterday, the Saskatchewan Liberal leader said, and I quote: we've seen people make accusations that in fact there is some kind of hidden agenda in all this, being confiscation. A new quote: I think that does nothing except push people to extreme limits, and that's why we see the Oklahoma cities of this world.

Later in the House she said:

. . . when people try to push emotional buttons, based on fabrication, that do nothing except promote extremism, and that kind of extremism we've seen in Oklahoma City this past week.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure who the Liberal leader is referring to when she talks about those who are talking about confiscation and promoting extremism. I can only assume she means that pro-gun lobby in Saskatchewan and in Canada.

To the Justice minister — this is the mind-set of the Liberal Party. Do you really expect to get a fair hearing, a fair hearing in Ottawa? Wouldn't it be better to pass our own legislation, instead of hoping that the Liberals will come to their senses, Mr. Minister?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Mitchell:** — Mr. Speaker, thanks. I thank the member for the question. I don't know whether we'll get a fair hearing in Ottawa or not.

I think it was off to a good start yesterday because I thought that Mr. Rock's defence of his own legislation was particularly weak. I thought the presentation from the Government of the Northwest Territories, backed as it was by the aboriginal peoples in that region, was particularly strong. And that was only day 1. I think as time goes on the heat will increase, the media will pick up on it, and Canadians will begin to twig to just what is involved in this particular piece of gun legislation that they have before parliament.

Now I think that trying to connect this Bill to fighting terrorism or to fighting an Oklahoma-style situation or to fighting extremism is just a way off the mark. I criticized Mr. Rock for it. I criticized the Leader of the Liberal Party for it. I think we've got to keep our eye on the ball here.

What's at stake here is not extremism nor is not any kind of car bombs or anything like that. What's at stake here is the rights of ordinary, law-abiding citizens of this country to enjoy a pastime, to enjoy a way of life that they've enjoyed for generations in this country and should not be upset.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Five-year Agreement with the Western College of Veterinary Medicine

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that Saskatchewan, along with Alberta, Manitoba, and British Columbia governments, have signed a five-year agreement with the Western College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, this agreement provides funding to maintain a regional university veterinary medicine program. The agreement demonstrates the unique model of interprovincial cooperation between provincial partners to deliver a regional university program. And there is widespread support for regional cooperation of this kind.

The four provinces have been partners since 1963. However this agreement is especially significant because this is the first time the University of Saskatchewan has been actively involved in negotiating the terms and conditions of the agreement as well as taking a position as a signatory.

I'm pleased that the new agreement will maintain the level of funding to the college. The agreement also provides greater cost recovery from the other provinces over the five-year term of the agreement. The provinces have agreed to share the operating costs of educating doctors of veterinary medicine and graduate students.

An interprovincial Veterinary Medicine Advisory Council advises the college on such matters as enrolment numbers, employment demands, and professional development needs. The advisory council includes representatives of the University of Saskatchewan, the provincial Veterinary Medical Association and the provincial departments of Agriculture and Education.

The Western College of Veterinary Medicine deserves much respect for achieving and maintaining an outstanding professional reputation in Canada, and we're extremely proud that 20 places out of the possible 66 or 67 places will be reserved to train Saskatchewan students to become veterinary doctors.

Saskatchewan residents also benefit greatly from the college's veterinary services and professional expertise. Farmers and veterinarians know they can depend on the college to educate students with up-to-date information that will meet today's demands of agricultural diversification. The University of Saskatchewan is pleased with its involvement in the process and its position as signatory.

Mr. Speaker, this government, our government, is proud to be a partner in this unique model of cooperation. The people of our province are fortunate to reap the benefits of having this prestigious institution in Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to join with the minister today in welcoming this agreement. The thing is, Mr. Speaker, it was announced two days ago and I'm glad that the minister has felt free to bring it to the Assembly.

Mr. Minister, it's very important that this veterinary clinic continue in the province of Saskatchewan. We're second only to Alberta when it comes to the cattle industry. And with the expansion of gaming farms and the other exotic animals, Mr. Speaker, it's very important that the people of Saskatchewan and the livestock industry of Saskatchewan have access to the kinds of knowledge, the technologies, and the expertise, that is available at the university with the veterinary college.

I know even for myself, Mr. Speaker, I had a dog who was injured and I took that opportunity to take the dog up to the veterinary clinic at the university, and they managed to perform

miracles and save that dog for me. So it's very important, not just for the hobby industry such as dog breeders, but for the main industries of Saskatchewan, which include livestock, to have access to this program, Mr. Speaker.

So we welcome this and we welcome the fact that certain seats are set aside for people in Saskatchewan to take advantage of veterinary training. We need to develop this college, Mr. Speaker, into a centre of excellence which can compete directly with Guelph as the pre-eminent veterinary college in Canada, Mr. Speaker. And we welcome this agreement. Thank you.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

#### Saskatoon City Hospital Emergency Ward Closure

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm bringing forward a motion on behalf of more than 10,000 signatories in Saskatoon who are deeply concerned about the decision by the Saskatoon District Health Board to move forward with its plans to close the emergency ward of the newly built Saskatoon City Hospital.

There are many members in this Assembly who may not realize why this is of such serious concern. And I hope that they will listen with open minds today because I'm asking for their support, particularly those who represent constituencies from Saskatoon and its surrounding area.

What is at issue here is the fact that the Saskatoon District Board began, under instructions from the Department of Health, to reorganize the delivery of health care in Saskatoon with certain cost saving initiatives in mind. Initially each area of care was approached and asked to look for efficiencies in their operations.

There were a number of working groups established to conduct the exercise, and these working groups pulled together professionals from Royal University Hospital, from St. Paul's Hospital, and from City Hospital. For the most part, there was a consensus reached about how services could be delivered most effectively.

But there was one area that was much more difficult. It concerned the directive to the clinical working group for the consolidation of emergency services, which was convened on March 1, 1995. The 19 people represented a cross-section of professionals who were fully conversant with emergency and acute care.

By directive from the Saskatoon District Health Board, the goal of this emergency working group, quote: was to develop an implementation plan for the Saskatoon District Health Board decision of December 17, 1993 to consolidate emergency services at two sites. End of quote.

Mr. Speaker, this was the beginning of a process which was doomed from the outset. The only way to gain the support of my colleagues today, the only way to convince the members of

this Assembly that action must be taken, is to tell the story as it has been told to me.

But first let me say a few words about the people who have come to me with this issue. They are doctors, nurses, patients, and families of people who depend on quality care at Saskatoon City Hospital.

From the outset, I've been very impressed by the non-partisan approach that they have shown. Usually when we see people take up a cross against a government decision, it is because they have some vested interest, something to gain or lose in changing the decision. But this is different. This is not about people protecting their own self-interest.

Yes, the ultimate decision, no matter which way it goes, will affect some people's jobs, but the people fighting this battle are not the ones who stand to lose their jobs. The people who are trying to bring some common sense to this process are doing it because they care about their hospital, their patients, their profession, and Saskatoon and district.

Before I go into the meat of the matter, let me tell you a little about the doctors and nurses I've met with concerning changes to the health care system. The most recent meeting I had with Saskatoon City Hospital. The nurses present were there on their own time, giving up precious hours of their days off out of concern.

As we waited for the chief of medicine to arrive, I listened to the nurses tell me of the decimating effect that health care reform has had on their morale as a nursing staff. I remembered the recent statistics I had heard about the alarming numbers of nurses on stress leave and workers' compensation because they're simply overworked, burned out, and unable to cope with the cumulative effects of physical overwork due to short staffing and the emotional stress that has come from a sense of losing control over the fast pace of change to their work environment.

These were women with nothing to gain; professionals who admitted that they could not believe they were talking to a politician about health care because they were so desperately worried about what was taking place. I remember wondering if they knew that most people in this Assembly would probably tune me out as soon as I began to speak today because their partisan differences would make them deaf to real information about real issues. Finally the physician, the surgeon, joined us, apologizing for being late, but he'd been involved in a cardiac emergency just moments before.

As he caught his breath and launched into the story, I noticed the strain on his face, the frustration with telling this tale to yet another politician. He is a rather small man in stature, but as he spoke I found my gaze fixed on his hands — the skilled hands of a man who has saved the lives of many.

As he talked, trickles of perspiration ran down his temples. He seemed grateful for the gesture of a nurse who slipped out to bring him a cold drink. During our two-hour conference his pager summoned at least a dozen times — a signal of how much pressure these people endure on a daily basis. Why am I

telling you all this? What difference does it make?

Well, fellow members, it makes all of the difference in the world because it is the human face of health care — the patients and the professionals that have been stripped away from our health care system by what people deem as bureaucratic moves and politicians anxious to achieve goals at any cost.

And what happened to the clinical services emergency working group in Saskatoon is not much different, I suspect, from what happened to many other professionals across the province in the course of health reform. It's not different from what happened to surgeons in Regina, who cannot comprehend the logic in the plan to move surgery from the Plains to the Pasqua and the General.

It is not different from the physicians in the north-west of Saskatchewan who watched their entire health care system delivery being changed without an opportunity to have input. And no, what happened to the clinical services emergency working group in Saskatoon is sadly more typical than exceptional.

It began, as I said, on December 17, 1993 when the Saskatoon District Health Board decreed that there would be a consolidation of emergency services between two hospitals. And that was the first misstep in the process.

The Saskatoon District Health Board did not ask people whether it made sense to have two emergency departments instead of three; they did not ask which two hospitals would be natural choices if there were only two emergency departments; and they did not ask about the effects it has on an acute care hospital to close their emergency department.

They did not ask because they had already decided that this was to be the outcome of the process, and to predetermine the conclusion of a process is to negate the value of the process at the outset.

(1430)

But the most interesting and I think the most telling statement, is in the bottom line. On one page of the report it states, and I quote: a \$500,000 reduction in the expenditures was to be inherent in this plan. End of quote. So that was it in a nutshell. Bring together a group of professionals and ask them in essence to create a report that supports the foregone conclusion of the Saskatoon District Health Board and make sure that you save half a million dollars in the process.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the committee began its work. Weeks and weeks of meetings, research, consultations, budgets. The diligence this committee showed was exemplary. And they didn't do it for money or power or control; they did it because they want to deliver quality health care.

The working group did as it was asked. They put forward a plan to consolidate emergency services from three hospitals to two hospitals, but they also examined the other side of the equation, a side that the Saskatoon District Health Board did not expect

or want them to examine.

They looked, Mr. Speaker, at the consequences of the proposed decision to close the emergency at Saskatoon City Hospital. They looked at it from a cost-effectiveness perspective and they looked at with a view to how it would affect the overall delivery of services by the medical staff at that hospital.

And then, Mr. Speaker, they drew their conclusions. They concluded that it was possible to close emergency department at City Hospital and devolve responsibilities to University Hospital and St. Paul's. They concluded it was only possible to achieve \$500,000 in savings if the emergency ward closed and if City Hospital ceased entirely to be an acute care facility.

And they reached a consensus which said, and I quote from page 27:

It is the consensus of the clinical working group for emergency services that the provision of acute medical services in three hospitals requires the support of three emergency departments. If in the final analysis the role of the Saskatoon City Hospital is determined to exclude acute medical services, we would be more likely to recommend the implementation of this plan.

As it stands, (this is another quote) however, we are unable to recommend the implementation of this plan in its entirety. Although it defines a plan to achieve the community provision for emergency services in its narrowest sense, it does not support the provision of acute in-patient services in all three hospitals.

That, Mr. Speaker, was the conclusion, the conclusion reached by experienced, educated, committed group of 19 doctors and nurses who were asked to prepare the report. It was a consensus, as I just quoted from the words in the report submitted.

But what happened to that report, Mr. Speaker, is what we must concern ourselves with today, and I would suggest that the member from Saskatoon Sutherland-University pay heed to this. What happened to that report is actually a travesty to the process of health care consultation. It is a complete dismissal of the concerns of the very people who were asked to give their learned opinions. The fact is that the Saskatoon District Health Board was not willing to accept the consensus conclusions put forward by this group. The district health board had already decided two things: first, City Hospital was going to remain an acute care hospital; and two, City Hospital was not going to have an emergency ward.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, they were unwilling to accept the professional advice put forward by this group. Despite the years and years of combined experience that achieved consensus on those recommendations, despite the hundreds of professional person-hours that were spent in meetings, despite the research and consultation done with other hospitals who do not have emergency wards in North America, despite all of those things, a group of bureaucrats from the Department of Health and appointed board members with virtually no experience in the delivery of health care or emergency services decided to dismiss

those conclusions and recommendations contained in that first report.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am not prepared to dismiss their conclusions, and I believe that these people deserve to be heard and that what they are trying to say is not only valid, it is critical to the future of health care in this province.

We've had numerous exchanges about why specialists are leaving Saskatchewan. And politicians argue back and forth about the shortage of beds, the waiting-lists, the stress on front-line care-givers, and so forth. But most people in this Assembly really know absolutely nothing about it because none of us have even been there, with the exception of one. And we have seen the treatment of the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, a medical doctor who chose to become part of the legislature because he was concerned about health care.

I want to serve notice, serve notice to the members from Saskatoon, I want to hear what they have to say about this decision specifically when I finish my remarks — and I'm sure that some will comment. And I suggest that they be prepared to address this issue because their comments will be sent to those 10,000 people who signed this. They will be sent to the members of this committee, the first committee, and to the members of the staff of Saskatoon City Hospital and others around the province.

And I appreciate the attentiveness of the members because I believe that this issue is just one example of why the wellness model is not working.

To continue, I want to walk people through what conclusions were reached in the report of that clinical working group for emergency and how they were reached. In creating their report, everything was examined with a view to eliminating the emergency department of City Hospital. The role and function of an emergency department was examined and defined. Current volumes of emergency traffic at all three hospitals was assessed and a model was developed which would divide the volume of patients equally between the two remaining emergency departments. The next step was to work on the creation of an ambulatory assessment unit which was to be the replacement of an emergency ward at City Hospital.

In other words, this group created a model that would allow for the closure of emergency ward at City Hospital and replacing it with a day clinic of sorts. They detailed all of the equipment that would be needed in moving, calculating even the space requirements, and then they worked out the staffing requirements.

Interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, they determined that there was a minimal staff reduction for two 24-hour emergency departments. And the examination pointed out two realities: first, the plan to close one emergency was not turning out to be a cost-saving measure; and two, the number of staff on duty in emergency is already pared down as finely as it can be.

As it turned out, the budget held the final evidence, and I quote from the findings of the report:

The total projected budget for the two Emergency Departments, including both salaried and non-salaried expenditures, is \$3,735,178 (annually). This amount, added to the amount budgeted for the Ambulatory/Assessment Unit at . . . City Hospital (to replace emergency) is \$4,057,038, a figure (Mr. Speaker) which is greater than the current budget for the Emergency Departments at all three (city) hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, the seconder to this motion is going to go into greater detail about this particular document, as well as making reference to what the second struck committee was actually required to do.

I am very pleased to put forward this motion to the Assembly today for everyone to carefully consider:

That this Assembly strongly urge the Minister of Health to intervene in the pending closure of emergency ward at Saskatoon City Hospital, and to conduct an open and objective review of the report made by the emergency working group whose recommendations were ignored by the Saskatoon District Health Board.

I so move.

**Mrs. Bergman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Liberal leader has spoken about the flaw in the process. Mr. Speaker, let's talk about what that means in terms of health care.

Today phase 1 of the district health board decision has already been acted upon. The emergency department at City Hospital is closed from midnight to 8 o'clock a.m. and the complete closure of emergency was scheduled for May of 1995. Due to delays in the construction, or the onset of an election, or both, the date has now been pushed back to January of 1996. Therefore some of the consequences have been immediate; some will not take place until January.

Well let's have a look at the entire spectrum of effects on health care delivery. First, it means a huge change to the health care delivery system in Saskatoon, which will actually end up costing more money than what was being spent before the change took place. You don't need to be a brain surgeon or a bureaucrat to figure out that it simply does not make sense.

Second, it means that approximately \$6 million will have to be spent to renovate the existing emergency ward at Royal University in order to accommodate the additional volume from City Hospital.

Third, it means that City Hospital will no longer be a teaching hospital and the residents and JURSI's (junior undergraduate rotating student intern) who used to provide support to the medical staff will no longer be available. In essence, it means that when the students pulled out, there was no longer any physician, no house resident, on duty from 5 o'clock p.m. to 8 o'clock a.m. — an entire hospital, Mr. Speaker, with no house resident on duty.

In the critique section of their report, the working group outlined this issue, and I quote:

Medicine/Family Medicine - It is the position of Medical Internists and Family Physicians that Clinical Teaching Programs for Medicine and Family Medicine will cease to exist at City Hospital with consolidation of Emergency Services at the other two sites.

They were right. Imagine what would happen if someone went into cardiac arrest at 2 a.m. in the morning. Here we are in one of the finest-equipped coronary care unit hospitals in western Canada, and thanks to the new wellness model there is no resident physician in the hospital to respond to the emergency code because emergency is closed and there is no doctor on staff.

Dr. Sharma stated that his grave concerns . . . because he and most of his colleagues are at least 20 minutes from the hospital bedside if called at home. Those concerns were raised and it was necessary to create a new position of house resident, which added as much to the budget as the closure of the emergency ward was saving.

These were the obvious effects, the direct effects on patient care. These are the things which do not make sense to even the most medically ignorant lay person.

But there are other implications which require an explanation. Mr. Speaker, by definition an acute care hospital relies upon a complex network of specialists to make it functional and effective, capable to respond to any emergency. The emergency ward helps to attract and keep quality internal medicine specialists practising in the hospital environment because they are able to call on one another for patient consults. When the emergency ward closes, it is more and more difficult to convince the cardiologists, the neurologists, the urologists, and many others, to stay. Many patients who arrive in acute care come through the emergency department.

In the report this situation is addressed:

The Ambulatory/Assessment Unit at City Hospital will be insufficient to meet the needs of Internal Medicine for Emergency resources. The Internists who are presently providing services to this site believe they need a full complement of Emergency Services on site to support patient care. It is their position that the practice of Acute Medicine without the presence of an Emergency Department may be of serious detriment to patient care.

The points brought forward by this group are not only valid from a common sense perspective, they are supported by both financial evidence and research from other hospitals.

There are serious and legitimate questions raised in the report which involve: (1) the unresolved issues about the cost of transportation of patients from one site to another; (2) the additional travel by physicians from one hospital to another; first to assess the patient, then to admit, and then follow up; and

(3) the liability of the sending physician. The sending physician is responsible for the patient on transfer. Who is responsible if there is no house officer present to receive the patient?

Overall there are sufficient concerns raised in this report that no action should be taken or should have been taken until they were addressed. When this evidence was presented to the district health board, however, it was not well-received. The board had its own foregone conclusions and was simply looking for supporting evidence.

(1445)

The report of the clinical working group for emergency services built a powerful case against closing emergency if City Hospital was to remain an acute care hospital. And that is where the critical and unacceptable error was made. Instead of sitting down with the committee and reviewing the report and accepting their recommendations, the district board chose to replace the original emergency working group with a new, smaller version and call it the emergency operations working group — almost the same name.

The committee opened its report by saying:

. . . no consensus could be reached by the members of the group regarding the . . . model for delivery of these services . . .

And the new report was selective in terms of which areas of concern were brought forward from the original report.

For instance, on page 26 of the original report, serious concerns are expressed about the impact of closing emergency at City Hospital will have on the delivery of medicine and family medicine. In the revised report it says:

. . . the impact of this model on clinical teaching of medicine is not expected to be great.

The second report indicates that the provision of clinical teaching of residents and JURSI in emergency medicine will occur on two sites rather than three. It makes no mention of the fact that removal of the clinical teaching aspect will mean there will be no doctor on staff overnight at City Hospital.

The most glaring contradiction, however, appears in the bottom line. While the first report indicated that it would cost \$1,976 more to operate two emergency departments and an ambulatory assessment unit than it would the three emergencies, the second report claims to save money.

In the second report, they acknowledge that they can only save an additional \$139,000 by further reducing the hours for emergency at City Hospital. The new report does not include the costs of any staff or operations of the ambulatory assessment unit, which is to cost about 200,000 to equip and operate. It also does not include the costs of patient transfers.

The fact is that the additional cost of the ambulatory assessment unit actually outweighs the cost of the emergency ward and

there is no real demand for such a unit being raised by the professionals. It would appear to be a creation designed to fill the empty space left by the vacant emergency ward.

When asked about the cost of the ambulatory assessment unit, the chief of medicine was told by a person of authority in the health board, that cost comes out of the out-patients' budget, so don't worry about it.

Mr. Speaker, he is worried about it. And I am worried about it. And more than 10,000 citizens of Saskatoon and district, whose names have been laid before this Assembly on petitions presented by the caucus, are worried about it.

We have asked the minister to intervene and have an independent review of these reports and budgets to verify that there are indeed savings. We have had no response.

The second report, Mr. Speaker, recommended that the closure of City Hospital be March 31, 1995. Then it was moved to May 1, 1995. Attached to the report of the emergency operations group, there is a memorandum from John Malcom, Chair of the implementation group, which says the date for the move of emergency services has been adjusted to January 6 to allow for completion of sufficient renovations at Royal University Hospital. It says the final report of the operations group will be circulated.

Mr. Speaker, that is a typical story in this government's health reform. For us, it has been a half-hour of history. For the professional whose careers, whose ethics, and whose commitment to patient care have been undermined and dismissed by the foregone conclusions of the few health department bureaucrats, this whole thing has been a nightmare. The hours and hours of meetings, the careful planning, the long and arduous discussions about what would be the best for the patients, the doctors, the nurses, and all of the front-line staff have been for naught because this government doesn't care.

Mr. Speaker, that motion was passed unanimously by almost all Saskatoon physicians at their January meeting. Since then, there has been no movement by the Saskatchewan district health board on this issue.

Today I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the motion, and I now second the motion, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Koenker:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to comment on the member from Greystone's motion itself and the misrepresentation when she talks about the report made by the emergency working group. Not once does she mention that there are two reports: a draft report and a final report. I think that is deliberately done in order to confuse people and to mislead.

Secondly I want to point out, in terms of the motion . . . pointing out that the emergency workings group's recommendations were ignored by the Saskatoon Health District Board. That simply is not true. They were not ignored. Maybe they weren't implemented in full, but all of the people who were partners to the final report — and she doesn't want to

talk about the draft report and the final report — all of them were members of the final report and the draft report.

Having said that, I want to then say a couple of other things. Basically there are only two alternatives available to the Government of Saskatchewan at this time with respect to health reform. And that is to make changes that either preserve or protect the medicare system that we have here in Saskatchewan and in Canada and to preserve that system, or the other alternative is to allow our health care system to deteriorate and drift into an Americanized model: a two-tiered medical care system.

That means that change is inevitable. Some kind of change is going to be taking place. And either we drift into or we deliberately move into an American model, or we work to preserve our Saskatchewan and Canadian model of medicare. And that's what this government is attempting to do with health reform — to protect the system of health care that we have come to know and love and cherish.

I now want to speak very directly and review the issue of emergency services in Saskatoon.

And we need to begin by saying that the health board has tracked emergency department use at all three hospitals over a six-week period in January and February 1994. This in itself proves that the recommendations made by the physicians and staff and people of Saskatoon were not ignored. They were taken seriously, or else this sort of review would not have taken place — this tracking of actual use.

And if we look at the facts . . . the member from Greystone doesn't talk much about the facts. But the facts of this tracking reveal that the busy times of day were similar at each of the hospitals. Each day, around 47 per cent of the visitors to the emergency departments chose St. Paul's Hospital. So right there, virtually half of the emergency entrances, visits in Saskatoon, are to St. Paul's Hospital. Another 27 per cent went to City Hospital. Another 26 per cent went to Royal University Hospital.

Another point of fact — in an average 24-hour period, 85 per cent of all emergency department visitors did not need admitting to a hospital; 15 per cent entered the hospital — that's a fact — upon presentation at emergency wards during the tracking survey.

Another point of fact — in an average 24-hour period, 85 per cent . . . excuse me, I'll go to the next fact. I've just given that one.

Between the hours of midnight and 8 a.m., each hospital emergency department received about 15 per cent of its total daily visits. Another fact — on average, between midnight and 8 a.m., City Hospital received 10 visits, University Hospital received 10 visits, and St. Paul's Hospital received 20 visits. Another point of fact — on average, between midnight and 8 a.m., each emergency hospital department received one visit which was a real health emergency. Other visits were not threatening to life or limb.

So that we have a situation where during these hours, all the people coming into the emergency room, as we might suspect, wanted immediate or convenient service. But an average of only one person arriving at each hospital emergency department had health needs which were health emergencies in these evening hours. Surprisingly, even half of the emergency department visitors who arrive by ambulance were discharged after being served.

Now in changing to a two-location emergency system in Saskatoon — and that's the issue that the member raises — this changing to a two-location system will maintain the needed emergency services that Saskatoon and area people need, that the province's people need, in terms of using Royal University Hospital as well.

This change will allow for a second staffing team during peak hours at both hospitals, which the member conveniently chooses to dismiss or not to mention. It also will free up close to half a million dollars a year to use for other important, vital health services.

And I want to say here that the choice of St. Paul's as one of the sites was based on its community hospital role and the fact that it presently serves almost half of all the emergency work in the district — a sensible choice. Royal University was chosen as the second site due to its role as a provincial trauma centre and a children's hospital.

And so the decision to consolidate emergency services in St. Paul's and Royal University Hospital is not done willy-nilly, has not been done — as the member likes to suggest — by Health department bureaucrats, but by people in the city of Saskatoon, residents of Saskatoon, members of the local health board, and yes, doctors and nurses in our city.

And it's a decision that makes good sense. In fact it's a decision — contrary to the spirit of the motion which the member puts forward, that says the recommendations were ignored by the district health board; that simply is not true — it's a decision that has been studied and refined and actually there's been a delay in the implementation of the decision based on some of the concerns that have been raised.

And then the member says, from Greystone, that the recommendations have been ignored when the decision or the implementation has been delayed. Hardly. I think it's very convenient, all too convenient, for the member from Greystone not to mention that emergency services will consolidate in '96 and that an assessment unit will then open at City Hospital to provide patients and physicians with direct access to services available within the hospital — that an assessment unit is being opened. She never mentions that.

It's also important to note that when she talks about acute care that many of the services at Saskatoon City Hospital — not all of them — but many of them are for geriatric patients and rehabilitative services.

Coronary care, for example, is not one of the services found at

City Hospital but rather at RUH (Royal University Hospital). And so, Mr. Speaker, I think we have a situation where less than the full picture has been painted by the member from Greystone. The plain, simple truth of the hospital emergency situation in Saskatoon shows that Saskatoon does not need three complete emergency departments in three separate hospitals. Yes it needs two, and yes it can phase one out in City Hospital, and this is part of a reform of our health care system.

The member from Greystone can't have it both ways. She can't have all existing programs held intact exactly as they have been, and yet insist that costs be controlled or contained. She can't have her cake and eat it at the same time. She can't have it both ways. And we're willing to make the decisions on our side of the House to reform the health care system and to keep our Saskatchewan medicare system as strong as is possible and not to drift or to deliberately move to an American style of health care which is unaffordable and does not meet the people who deserve to be serviced.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take strong exception to the motion that the member from Greystone presents. And therefore I would like to move this amendment:

To delete all words after the "Minister of Health" and to add the words:

and his Department to continue to work closely with the Saskatoon Health District to ensure that the emergency service health care needs of citizens are met in the best manner possible; and further, to continue to work towards protecting the Saskatchewan style of medicare from eroding to an American-style system.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And this is seconded by the member from Saskatoon River Heights.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

(1500)

**Mrs. Teichrob:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have some brief remarks to make with respect to this motion and the proposed amendment, and then I will be pleased to second the amendment.

I'm somewhat saddened that we're having this conversation today. This is an issue where the petition was presented and the decisions, original decisions made, is almost a year ago. And I think that health care for Saskatchewan people and a positive and congenial attitude and a consultative mode in involving the dedicated health care-givers in this province who work in this system is too important to trivialize and play politics with, and I certainly don't want to do that.

But for their all their talk and concern about health care the Liberals devoted — in 1991, their platform document — a half a page, on page 20, to this topic which is the largest expenditure of government dollars. And I want to quote from that document. This is the Liberal Party's platform in 1991:

A Liberal government will focus on effective delivery of

services rather than construction of new facilities. Individuals and families must become more responsible and self-reliant in providing for their own health. Health services are now very costly, (the Liberal platform development, platform document says) partly because individuals and families have turned their responsibility for their health (care) over to health professionals.

The Liberal platform document goes on:

Increased self-reliance in health areas will be facilitated by:

Developing a **network** of health care and social services that is community and regionally-based. Each region should have a full range of health care and social services, with each community having services tailored to their specific needs and capacities.

Promoting and expanding the cost-effective option of Home Care so that more people will have the option to remain in their own home for medical treatment rather than being placed in a hospital.

Encouraging communities to explore the comprehensive community clinic approach to service delivery.

Placing a moratorium on capital construction until the community regional network is designed . . .

That is almost the total amount of space and comment that appeared in the Liberal platform policy in 1991 devoted, Mr. Speaker, to the important subject of health care. But what is interesting about those excerpts is that their policy is basically an endorsement of everything that we have done except that there is no notion of citizen involvement or input through local health boards.

And I think that with the elections that will be coming up this fall, that local control will then be completely in place. The transition has been difficult. It certainly hasn't been without some problems. Change is always difficult, but the dedicated people who work in the health care system have cooperated to a very great extent in coming to solutions and moving to a better system.

As far as the emergency facilities at City Hospital are concerned, fewer emergency rooms are a national, in fact international, trend. And I quote from the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* of February 11, 1994 where the headline is: "Fewer emergency rooms trend."

But hospitals in Alberta and across Canada are looking at making do with fewer emergency rooms, says health board president John Malcom.

He points to the Camp Hill Medical Centre in Halifax as an example of how the "one hospital, two site" concept can work.

In 1987, the 300-bed Halifax infirmary was merged with 150-bed Camp Hill Hospital. Though the two acute-care hospitals are 1.6 kilometres apart, there's only one

emergency department serving both.

"I would say it's working very well," Dr. Richard MacLachlan, the centre's vice-president of medical services, said in a telephone interview Thursday.

"Certainly it took several years to get the bugs out."

Though many patients, including psychiatric and intensive cardiac care patients, are transported between the sites every day, there have been no problems.

Again I talk about local control that I think we want to emphasize. And that has always been our approach — to put health care in the hands of the local care-givers who are in a better position to make the decisions on what the priorities for good quality care in a certain region should be.

And on this particular issue, the fate of the emergency facilities at City Hospital, of course I have met in the past . . . as I say this is not a new issue. I think it's over a year ago since I was requested to have a meeting with members of the emergency working group, some of whom, most of whom, I believe were my constituents. I never met with the whole working group but I had requests from my constituents who were members of that group to have meetings.

These are reasonable people, Mr. Speaker, people that are dedicated health care-givers. They made their points. They also approached the health board, and as a result . . . at the time the date for the closure had already been announced. And as my colleague from Sutherland mentioned, that because of their representations they were listened to, and the Saskatoon District Health Board made the decision then and announced publicly the decision, to delay the closure of the City Hospital emergency facilities until other rationalizations could take place.

And now, for instance, the cardiac . . . the coronary unit is being moved from City Hospital. In the remarks by the member from Sutherland, I believe he talked about the percentage of admissions to each hospital and so forth. There was also a reference to 2 per cent of people who were admitted to City Hospital through the emergency that had coronary problems. Now it wouldn't make sense to admit those people through emergency if there wasn't a cardiac unit in the hospital, which is going to be the case once the consolidations take place.

So I do believe that local control is the key here; and because the member from Greystone includes in her original motion a request for the Minister of Health to intervene, I think that kind of intervention, Mr. Speaker, goes against the principle of local autonomy that has been the hallmark of the health care reform in this province right from the outset.

And as I said, although we recognize that the transition sometimes has some rough spots in it, that eventually, by listening to those dedicated health care workers at the service level, by paying attention to them, by paying attentions to the clients of the health care system in this province, we will have health care reform that will result in not just financial savings

— not even financial savings — but a health care system that works better and delivers a better quality of care to the people in this province, and creates a better, more congenial, more productive atmosphere for those health care workers to provide their services in.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to second the motion . . . or the amendment to the original motion which was moved by the member from Saskatoon Sutherland. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Lorje:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start out by saying how disappointed I am in the remarks by the member from Saskatoon Greystone. I'm disappointed but not surprised. She clearly has a very good speech-writer who can pull out all the heartthrobs at the appropriate time, but very, very few facts.

Pork-barrel politics, Mr. Speaker, I thought had left this province with the election of 1991. Unfortunately, what we see is the Leader of the Third Party trying to hold out to people the promise that somehow, if they scream loudly enough at her, that she will immediately give them whatever they want.

I have to say that threats — threats to mail out a heartthrob speech to 10,000 people — and challenges to Saskatoon MLAs to defend the actions of a local board are not the appropriate way to engage in and to examine matters of very important public policy.

The Leader of the Third Party is showing a dog-in-the-manger attitude towards health care reform. And I say to her, shame on you.

I'm not surprised though that she's showing this attitude. Because lately we've seen in the House that she clearly has no policy, no substance, no principles. She believes in the flavour-of-the-week issues and tries to bring everything down to the level of individualistic "what's in it for me, Jack, and the rest of you shove off the boat" politics.

That kind of politics is dead and gone in Saskatchewan. That is not the sort of politics that the people of Saskatchewan want and demand, and she will discover that very, very shortly.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Lorje:** — I say to her, and she had better learn it if she wants to even retain her own seat, politics is not about championing the mote in the eye of the latest person that you talked to. You cannot run responsible government if what you are doing is flip-flopping and engaging in will-o'-the-wisp kinds of policy approaches.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday in my constituency I had the great privilege to chat with a physician, an important specialist at the University Hospital in Saskatoon, who said to me, it is imperative that the people of Saskatchewan start to look at their health care system, start to have a public policy debate about what it is they want, demand, and expect, and what they're prepared to pay for. He said, I am very pleased that your

government has begun this discussion.

He then continued and said — which was music to my ears, I have to say, Mr. Speaker — he said, I am very pleasantly surprised by your government. I've never voted NDP (New Democratic Party), but this time around I will be voting for you, he said. You did what had to be done. For some people it was a bitter pill to swallow. Many people do not cope well with change, but at the end of the day people recognize that we do need to change. I was pleased to hear that, and I wish that the Leader of the Third Party would start to listen to so many people who are saying the same kinds of things that that physician said.

I also want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that she is getting exactly what she asked for in 1991. In 1991 she said, quote: we should stop talking about bricks and mortar and start talking about what really counts. Her party, she said, would promote specialization in larger hospitals and halt further construction and expansion.

But in 1995 what does she want to do? She wants bricks and mortar, she wants to halt local planning, and she wants to stop specialization. It's a typical, typical flip-flop without any basis in facts or health care needs.

There is no consistency to this woman, Mr. Speaker. It's apparent that she's trying desperately to discover her political principles. What we're seeing here is the politics of desperation. No wonder she's talking about emergency services at City Hospital in Saskatoon. She's running around the province crying emergency, emergency all over the place, as she tries to get elected.

Mr. Speaker, we need to look at a few of the facts. What is actually happening is that the configuration of emergency care services in the city of Saskatoon has probably received the most detailed study of emergency services in any city in all of Canada. Fifty-four per cent of the attendance at emergency wards comes to one hospital in Saskatoon. That hospital happens to be St. Paul's Hospital, where the Liberal leader has not yet gone for her heartthrob visit.

Between midnight and 8 a.m. in the Saskatoon hospitals each ward sees, on average, one visit of true emergencies. But even more importantly, Mr. Speaker, and what is very startling — and the people of Saskatoon and all over this province need to attend to this — 25 per cent of people who went to emergency wards at the three hospitals in Saskatoon, 25 per cent of them saw their own doctor there. Rather than going to the doctor's office or having the doctor make a home visit, they went to a very expensive emergency ward.

(1515)

That simply is not efficient use or effective use of public funds, and it is not something that this government nor the local health board will allow to continue to happen.

Mr. Speaker, we have to put this into context. There is a need to modernize, to change, to reform our health care system. All people across Saskatchewan recognize this. Some of them don't

like it, but they do recognize the need for changes. And there are major changes happening all across Saskatchewan. Let's take a look at what's happening. In Regina a whole hospital will be closed, not simply a ward or a specialized service, but a whole hospital will be closed. Similarly Moose Jaw will see the closure of a hospital. Prince Albert will see the closure of a hospital. And in the rural parts of this province, we've had 52 hospitals converted to clinics. To date Saskatoon has lost nothing.

And what we're seeing now is the Liberal leader saying Saskatoon cannot stand to have the closure of an emergency ward. I would say to her, this may play well to the 10,000 people she's going to mail out this debate to, but I think it's very ill-advised. It certainly is not a rural vote getter. And I think what she generally tends to do is only champion things she thinks are going to get her votes rather than championing good, long-term public policy.

Her motion says that we strongly urge the Minister of Health to intervene in the pending closure of the emergency ward at Saskatoon City Hospital. In fact it's not pending. The earliest will be January '96. There are ongoing discussions. People, health care professionals, are very involved in the long-term process.

Mr. Speaker, she challenged and said . . . she attacked the credentials of the people on the Saskatoon Health Board, saying they didn't know anything about health care. I phoned and checked, and of the eight people who are on that health board, seven of them have very direct experience with health care administration or health care provision as professionals. It is not proper to attack them.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, we are very fortunate in Saskatoon. Currently we have three emergency wards. It's a largesse. In Saskatoon also we likely have the most modern infrastructure of any city in the world. We pioneered day surgery at City Hospital and same-day surgery at St. Paul's Hospital. We're national leaders. Kids from Manitoba are coming to Saskatoon now for heart operations. We just opened the most modern pediatric intensive care ward in — probably the state of the art — in the world. We just put on an addition to the neonatology intensive care ward.

We see in Saskatoon the first ever out-patient antibiotic intravenous use. We're about to open, and I'm very proud of this, the first in Saskatchewan, a maternal child care centre. As well we have a pediatric care centre where 22 of the 24 subspecialists are. I think we're very . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thought maybe it's time I get in the debate and bring some common sense into the debate that we're now having before us this afternoon regarding health care. And the members may question my sincerity, but I trust by the time I've finished my comments, they'll recognize that on this side of the House, we as well are quite well aware of some of the problems that our health system

is facing.

Unfortunately, I've listened with interest to a number of the comments being made by different members as they've entered the debate. And I find it interesting that while the member from Saskatoon Wildwood talked about pork-barrel politics and how she was going to change it, I'm not exactly sure that she rose above that avenue of politics this afternoon in her speech and in the debate.

I think, Mr. Speaker, the question we're facing regarding health care, and the motion that was brought forward by the Leader of the Liberal Party and the amendment that we're debating as well, certainly goes well beyond the debate in this Assembly. I can understand the frustrations that people of Saskatoon are facing as they look at the possibility of having the emergency ward moved from City Hospital and possibly consolidated in the other two hospitals.

But, Mr. Speaker, may I just add that while health care . . . and while the construction of a new hospital or the construction of City Hospital in Saskatoon a number of years ago seemed to be an appropriate thing to do, I would suggest that my views may differ a bit from some of my colleagues and certainly from former members of this Assembly in the construction phase of health care in this province.

Realistically, when you look back and take a serious look and a long overview, or broad overview of health care in this province and hospitals in this province, it would seem to me that the government of the '80s in fact would have been further ahead to put dollars into a couple of hospitals, establish both in Regina and in Saskatoon. The fact that maybe two facilities would more than facilitate the need of services in those two centres as well as amalgamating services, as was done in a number of the small rural communities, rather than having a hospital on one side of the community and a care home . . . the fact that there were amalgamated services.

So, Mr. Speaker, while we discuss the uncertainty that many people . . . and certainly professionals who are facing as they look at the fact that maybe the job . . . and though their workplace may change, there's no doubt that change was needed.

But I'm not exactly sure that this government has managed . . . changed appropriately or properly or in an efficient manner. The questions are still out whether or not we've arrived at the efficiencies that the government has talked about and their discussions as to the necessities and the necessary moves that they were talking about, and have made, in health care in this province.

I listened with interest to the debate, and I also have followed some of the election in Manitoba and that Manitobans are going to the polls today. And it's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP in Manitoba stood up as the great protectors of health care, as the NDP continue to do in this province. And yet, I'm not sure if we can say that the NDP and the present government have really been protectors as much as possibly dismantlers.

And certainly as I indicated earlier, we needed to see change. And the people, in general, across this province will acknowledge that change was essential in order to protect health care.

The NDP talk about the fact that what our caucus has discussed, or even the Liberal caucus, that what we're talking about is Americanizing our health care system. Mr. Speaker, I would have to ask you if we . . . do we not face a two-tiered health care system in the province at this time?

Mr. Speaker, if you can afford it, you can go out of the province and receive eye care much quicker than you can achieve it in this province. And yet we've had physicians and specialists who are willing to offer those services.

Mr. Speaker, we also talk . . . this NDP government while they were in opposition continued to belittle the former government for their drug plan. What do we have in this province? We just heard this afternoon in question period about some of the problems people are facing in this province regarding the drug plan. And the fact that now your deductible is up to \$1,700 a year.

And I would suggest if you have the privilege of having good, solid health and do not need to use substantial drugs, you better be thankful. Because there are many people around this province who are facing substantial costs that come out of their pockets just to attain the drugs that they need to sustain life.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about emergency services — and again, I come back to the member from Saskatoon Wildwood talking about the individuals who maybe have used the emergency ward as a means to visit their family physician — I would like to suggest that in the community and the constituency I represent some of the doctors that have recently moved in have publicly placed in the paper ads indicating to people that unless it was an emergency they were facing, unless they had a slip from the doctor asking them to go to the hospital for lab services or X-rays, that they would prefer they took the time to make appointments to see their doctors for just a general visitation through the office rather than coming to the emergency wards. And they indicated the reason they were doing that, Mr. Speaker, was because it was much more costly to see a doctor, visit a doctor, in an emergency ward, than it was to go through the doctor's office.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think even the professionals in this province are quite well aware of some of the difficulties we face and are willing to put ideas and suggestions forward themselves to attain the efficiencies that our health system needs in order to reach into and go into the year 2000.

So, Mr. Speaker, it would seem to me that we do have people who realistically understand the problems. We have individuals who are providing the services, be they care-givers like nurses, be they doctors. And I think if there is one thing that I hear time and time again, it's a feeling from the care-givers of this province that they have been left out of the discussion of the changes that were needed and the changes that have taken place in our health care system.

So I would trust, Mr. Speaker, that as we're debating this issue this afternoon, and even as we look at the debate and the impending closure of the emergency ward at Saskatoon City Hospital, that the government and that the Minister of Health indeed do take the time to talk to some of the people that are involved.

And while the people of Saskatoon may be alarmed — and many people may be alarmed, especially if they happen to be in close proximity to City Hospital and realize that if the emergency ward is moved out of City Hospital to St. Paul's or Royal University, it might be a 15-minute drive versus a 5-minute drive — maybe they should also recognize the fact that in rural Saskatchewan, people have had to cope with substantial distances and drives, whether through an ambulance or whether just in your own vehicle, to go and see a doctor for the last three years, of much greater times and much greater distances than certainly our large urban centres.

So, Mr. Speaker, it behoves us to look at health care in general and as a whole and to look at ways and come up with ideas whereby we can certainly sustain the health care system as we know it today.

And I would go so far as to suggest that there may be avenues whereby you can allow specialists or doctors to set up clinics that could provide services that are not as essential, and allow them to provide those services. If there are areas that we feel we're being strangled in in the health field, then maybe we need to look at what is the most basic and essential need in providing health care — the most essential services that are needed.

And I'm sure that there are medical professionals who would indicate that there are services that really aren't totally essential to sustaining life. There are services that they provide that are maybe cosmetic in nature, or other forms of services that possibly are not as essential as the services that we would consider the most important and most appropriate.

So while I can feel for the individuals who are concerned about the closure of the emergency ward, I can also suggest that I think if we all sit down, if we all do our part, if we all work together, Mr. Speaker, we will at the end of the day, and we can, because Saskatchewan people have shown that they have the ability, they have the resolve, the willingness to put the resources together to design programs that are people oriented.

And what I'm asking of the government today, I'm asking that the government take the time, I'm asking the Minister of Health that he actually take the time, and implement some people-oriented programs whereby we can sustain and enhance health in the province of Saskatchewan.

**The Speaker:** — The member's time has expired and so has the 65 minutes of the debate as per our agreement. There now will follow up to a 10-minute discussion — comment, discussion, and question period. So I will entertain some comments and discussions now.

Let me remind members that the first priority will be given to members who participated in the debate.

(1530)

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the member from Saskatoon Sutherland-University. Regarding the string of facts that you presented, all of these facts were actually prepared by the original emergency working group, Mr. Member. And it was they who did the research upon which they based their recommendations.

The working group acknowledged that emergency service could indeed be provided by two hospitals and actually proposed the model of how it could be delivered. But they agreed that it could not be done without incurring more expense or without jeopardizing acute care.

So this is really the issue. Is the member aware that their concern was that City Hospital could not continue to provide safe, cost-effective acute care without an emergency department?

**Mr. Koenker:** — Mr. Speaker, that's only one point of view. Last September, another study was done, an audit of services — how people arrive, at how they're discharged, how they become in-patients, and so forth. And that study showed that there was a horrendous waste of money occurring under the previous . . . under the existing system at the three Saskatoon emergency wards. This study then shows that there are additional reasons to those cited by me earlier, for reviewing the situation and dealing with it.

Quite simply, if you're going to provide leadership, Madam Member from Greystone, you have to be able to separate wants from needs.

Now that's what our government is doing. People in Saskatoon, in the medical community and otherwise, might want three emergency wards in Saskatoon. But the truth is, the fact is, that we cannot afford that, and nor does it provide the services that we want or need.

In fact, you failed to mention how sticking with the status quo actually robs Saskatoon people of other health services in the community such as home care, mental health care, long-term care. And these are needs that have been there and have not been addressed. And we intend to address them; we don't intend to stick with the old system and just with status quo. We're going to reform the system and we're going to be conscious of costs. And we're going to improve health care at the same time.

So there you have it, Madam Member.

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is going to remain the same, and that is, perhaps there's not an understanding here that the original emergency working group indeed looked at how we could have only two emergency departments, Mr. Member, two emergency wards — not three, but two. The point is this, that in fact they have indicated that if there are going to be two emergency wards, then the request from the Saskatoon Health District Board that they remain an acute care facility could not be part of that.

They stated that they couldn't meet those two objectives, and they indeed went and did surveys of 32 other hospitals as part of their research in order to validate this claim — that an acute care hospital cannot function properly without emergency services. This is not about wanting to keep three emergency departments. And you've missed the point entirely.

My question is directed to the member from Saskatoon Wildwood. I wonder whether you feel that the unanimous request by all Saskatoon physicians to leave emergency services unchanged should be ignored, because every one of them voted on it.

**Ms. Lorje:** — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate and respect the opinions of the working group — they were that though, opinions. And the Saskatoon and District Health Board sought opinions from a wide range of people; did the most detailed and exhaustive study of emergency-care services that's ever happened in Canada.

All over the world there are hospitals that function quite effectively without emergency wards. Perhaps we might want, in days when money flows like oil, to have three very expensive emergency wards. In fact those days are long gone; we have to reconfigure the health care services in Saskatoon.

More and more people are going to hospital for day surgery, rather than for long-term stays. More and more people are seeing their physicians in their offices rather than going to emergency wards for services that can be carried out quite well in a physician's office. And more and more we are seeing home care services. I am pleased that Saskatoon is leading the way in modernizing our health care system.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this debate, Mr. Speaker, the question that's in people's minds is who can be trusted to protect medicare and I say, Mr. Speaker, with a question to the member from Greystone, that this is an issue of her credibility, because her flip-flops are a problem and her inaccurate statements are a problem.

And if she wants the 10,000 people who she's going to send this statement to believe in her, she should first come clean on some errors that she's made in the past.

If she looks at her own statement of March 9, in *Hansard*, on page 756, she made this allegation, that in Regina . . . I quote:

The administrators have, with the help of an eraser, Mr. Speaker, rubbed out 921 of the needed 1,430 operations.

The very next day, Mr. Royce Gill of the Regina District Health Board looked; after seeing this statement, said this, Mr. Speaker. He said, that's false information. He said that's false information.

I ask the member now: will she stand up in the House now, withdraw the statement that she made on that day . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Order. I think the member

knows that the questions that he's going to ask must be on the topic that was discussed and not on a discussion that went on in some other debate. So I rule the question out of order.

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I unequivocally do not withdraw, but I will ask the following question. My question is as follows. The member from Saskatoon . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. I want the member from Humboldt to withdraw that remark.

**An Hon. Member:** — It's not on the record.

**The Speaker:** — It doesn't matter whether it's on the record if the Speaker hears it from the chair. It's unparliamentary and I ask the member from Humboldt to withdraw the remark.

**Mr. Upshall:** — I withdraw the remark, Mr. Speaker. A point of order.

**The Speaker:** — What's your point of order?

**Mr. Upshall:** — Mr. Speaker, the remark that I made was that . . . I didn't call the . . .

**The Speaker:** — The member knows he's out of order. Order.

**Ms. Haverstock:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A comment made by the member from Saskatoon Sutherland-University indicated that we have to recognize the difference between wants and needs. The original working group was concerned that clinical teaching services would be discontinued at City Hospital, and with the emergency department being closed, there would be no physician of any kind on duty — not a resident or JURSI or anyone between the hours of 5 p.m. and 8 a.m.

Mr. Member, have you in fact met with and listened to the concerns of not just this original group but also the fact that . . . We're not talking about simply these people in this research group. All Saskatoon physicians had an opportunity to vote on the original working group's recommendations. And have you listened to them in order to understand what the removal of an emergency ward means to the operation of an acute care hospital?

It is indeed true that there are many hospitals without emergency wards, but they are not acute care hospitals. And it's been a requirement of the Saskatoon District Health Board to have both an emergency ward removed and remain an acute care hospital.

So the differentiation between wants and needs, have you listened to their concerns to understand what the removal of an emergency ward will mean when they can't provide acute care at all, and they will have no physician, no resident, and no JURSI, on from 5 p.m. to 8 in the morning?

**Mr. Koenker:** — With the greatest of respect, Madam Member, you're confusing and distorting the situation. You're

not dealing with facts. You're not dealing with facts. There are acute care hospitals that can . . . have emergency services, and to suggest otherwise is balderdash.

**The Speaker:** — Sorry. The 10-minute question and discussion period has ended. Let me compliment the members. I think it was certainly a very worthwhile discussion and question period.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. There will be no further compliments from the Chair.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

##### Motion No. 6 — Support for Canadian Wheat Board

**Mr. Carlson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of my remarks I'm going to be moving a motion:

That this Assembly reaffirm its support for the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly and the concept of a single-desk selling, marketing, system that provides maximum returns for farmers; and further, that we oppose the concept of a dual marketing system.

Mr. Speaker, the issue about dual marketing and the role of the Canadian Wheat Board and the western grain industry has been a debate for some time now and it's still going on, about the role of the Canadian Wheat Board and should there be a dual marketing system or a single-desk selling system.

I've got a clipping here from the *Leader-Post* dated April 20, and it sort of . . . there's some comments in here I want to read out . . . or not comments, but reported about what's been happening in Alberta. And that seems to be where the major push is coming from to get into a dual marketing system.

Alberta is going to be holding, or is looking at holding, a vote next fall on whether they want the Canadian Wheat Board to continue its exclusive jurisdiction over wheat and barley. The Alberta Minister of Agriculture has now set up a steering committee to prepare for that vote.

Our Minister of Agriculture from Saskatchewan said in the interview that:

A dual market(ing) spells the death of the CWB. A dual market takes away the defining characteristics of the CWB — (which is) single-desk selling and the ability to sell at different prices and different markets.

Mr. Speaker, if there's going to be a vote on the role of the Canadian Wheat Board and what the Canadian Wheat Board's mandate should be in western Canada, I would like to see all members within the Canadian Wheat Board district have a vote, not just the members of a specific area.

And I would probably like to see that vote not necessarily on whether there should be a dual marketing system for the grains that are underneath the Canadian Wheat Board at this point in

time, which is wheat and malt barley, but the possibility of branching out into certainly canola, one of our second largest production crops in western Canada or certainly Saskatchewan.

I think if we want to start looking at the Canadian Wheat Board and the role of the Canadian Wheat Board, we have to go back a few years to where the idea of single-desk selling and price pooling first started. It was in the late teens and the early twenties when farmers, my neighbours, people that I remember — one of them was Frank Wotherspoon, and of course another one who was not a neighbour but lots of people in the province of Saskatchewan will know the name, John Brockelbank — and thousands of other people in this province went around prior to 1924 to school houses, to farm yards, visiting farmers to try and set up a pooling system whereby it didn't make any difference in what particular day of the year you sold your product, you'd get the same price for it. And they were successful.

And in 1924 they were able to have enough contracts that the Wheat Pool started up in Saskatchewan, with the principle of price pooling. Everything went along quite well from 1924 to 1929, and then of course the '29 crash hit and the Wheat Pool found themselves in a shortfall. They had the price set at a particular level, started taking deliveries of grain in the fall, the crash come in late fall, and the price of grain dropped drastically. And of course they found themselves carrying a tremendous debt load.

So the federal government, shortly after that, covered that loss, but in the saw-off said that the Wheat Pool could not go into a price-pooling system because if there was another downturn in the grain economy it would put it into a problem.

And I had mentioned the importance of the pooling, concept which the Canadian Wheat Board operates under right now, is it's equitable to farmers that are marketing their products that's under the Canadian Wheat Board because it doesn't make any difference when you sell your product, you're going to get the same price and guaranteed the same price.

I remember my father telling a story about an individual who was a relatively a small farmer. He combined . . . combining — he was threshing in them days — threshed some wheat. He didn't have a threshing outfit of his own so he hired this neighbour to come in. And when they got done combining, or threshing, the guy that owned the outfit said, now don't sell your wheat now, he said, because it's too low; you wait till spring and you'll get a better price. Well, the farmer said, well I'll see what I can do.

So in springtime, of course the price of grain is up substantially. The person that did the threshing went over to the guy and said, okay now you sell your grain; the price is up; you'll make money. Well he says, I haven't got any grain left. Well he says, why didn't you save your grain and sell it when the price is higher? Well he said, I needed food and I needed clothes for my family and, he said, every time I went to town I had to take some grain to sell to get some money.

(1545)

So when the price was at its highest or at least going up, he didn't have any. So it was harder on the smaller farmers and the farmers who did not have the capacity to hang on to try and hit the highest markets. They were forced to sell, not necessarily at the highest price, but when they needed the money.

I think the Canadian Wheat Board and its single-desk selling also helps out in the area of transportation and the efficiencies in the transportation system. Our transportation system, Mr. Speaker, has to work 365 days a year. We've got a mountain barrier on our west side of us; in western Canada we've got a mountain barrier to the west. We've got a seaway to the east. We've got a port at Churchill to the north. That's sort of our three water ports that are within our own shores and they all have, you know, sort of bottlenecks. And like I said, the mountains, the seaway, and of course the Churchill, Port of Churchill, is only open, depending on the season, three or four months.

So in order to use our three outlets to the capacity and to the best efficiency, it has to be a plan and a plan out of only one area. I mean if you have a bunch of different groups trying to rush in, it just throws this kibosh out. I mean it has to be well planned and well laid out for the system to work efficiently.

And I want to talk a little bit, you know, about trucking too. I mean Canadian Wheat Board, they use the rails a fair bit. If we decided to start trucking our product . . . some people are saying that that's a possibility. Canadian Wheat Board right now loads three-and-a-third ships a day, 365 days a year. And if we were going to move that product into export position by truck, that amount of product, we'd have 2,500 B-train unloaded every 24 hours. That's over 100 semi-trailers an hour. And I just don't think it's realistic to think that we can even do a portion of that by truck. I think we have to look at rail movement as much as possible. And of course the Canadian Wheat Board, with their single-desk selling, has the capacity to work this through the system so that it works much better.

Also if the Canadian Wheat Board . . . And I'll just talk a bit about wheat and canola now. They're the two major crops certainly in Saskatchewan. Wheat is a board grain; canola is a non-board grain.

When the Canadian Wheat Board and the rail system, the train companies, are moving our product, our wheat, into export position, because it's under the Canadian Wheat Board — wheat — they don't have to get the wheat from the United Grain Growers or the Cargill to meet a specific sale. Because as soon as wheat hit the elevator and it's dumped in the elevator, it is automatically the property of the Canadian Wheat Board. So they can go out and grab the proper grade; it doesn't have to come from specific shipping points or from specific companies.

Whereas canola, they have to get the proper grain companies' canola in position for specific sales. And that just makes the system that much more cumbersome and a little harder to use when they've got to go and get specific canola from specific companies, as opposed to wheat, where they can just go in and grab the specific grades they need, no matter which company it was sold at.

I want to talk a bit about farm-to-elevator movement and some of the changes that have happened in that, and how the Canadian Wheat Board I believe reacted to a change. Remember the old quota system we had where we used to get areas opened up with so many bushels per acre you had on your permit book on specific crops. And it was a system that worked well for many, many years.

But as times changed, the Canadian Wheat Board had to look at a different system, and they did that. They reacted to the farmers' needs and wants and they come out with a contract system. And I know there's been some problems with it, but I think as we get a little more used to it, it's going to smoothen out a bit better.

It certainly gives the Wheat Board an opportunity to address niche markets when they can identify a specific product and call for it; if they know it's out there they can get it. It's easier for them through the contract system to go out and get niche markets and fill that market. And it also gives the Wheat Board a better opportunity . . . or better access to specific grades and specific quantities of particular types of grain at a given time, when they can call and allow farmers to haul in, at a specific period of time, a little more grain than they normally would.

Because sometimes, under the old quota system, they might call, expecting all farmers to haul, and for some specific reasons, maybe weather or health or whatever, they might miss a quota or two. And of course the Wheat Board didn't know that that was not going to happen, and so there was times they were getting short of grain.

So they moved and they changed the quota system from a quota system to a contract system, and I think that's worked out very well.

A lot of people will say, well the Wheat Board seems to be very inefficient and slow to react, and high cost. And I think, you know, that's not necessarily true. I talked about the changes in the system as far as farm-to-elevator movement. The cost to the Canadian Wheat Board, to the individuals who use it, is about three and a half cents a bushel, Mr. Speaker. Three and a half cents a bushel is not a tremendous amount to pay for the total cost of the operations of the Canadian Wheat Board.

In fact, like I mentioned before, if canola was underneath it, that would substantially reduce . . . the more grain they'd handle, it would certainly cost . . . the price per bushel would go down.

So with the cost of running the Wheat Board at three and a half cents a bushel, so what do we get from that? We have commissioners that are appointed, who have specific areas of the world that they're in charge of for marketing our grain and making contacts in the world, and selling our product. And that's paid out of the three and a half cents a bushel.

We have a weather monitoring system that monitors the world and the crop . . . weather in the world and the crop conditions throughout the world on an hourly basis. And we get all that for three and a half cents a bushel.

We get market analysts that sort of try and figure out what's going to happen to our markets and when best to sell and when best to try and make our sales.

We have a car allocation system within the Canadian Wheat Board. The three and a half cents also finances the activities of the advisory committee.

And I think most importantly out of what the Canadian Wheat Board does — it's not necessarily a known fact, certainly in western Canada — is they fund 50 per cent, along with the federal government funding 50 per cent, of the Canadian International Grains Institute. That's an institute in Winnipeg whereby they bring their customers and possible customers, probable customers, into Canada, and they can show what our product will do. They bring them to Canada, and they show what various mixtures of flour and types of breads and buns and doughnuts will do for our flour.

So that I think is very important. We bring people from other countries, and we show them what our product will do. And that's how we have to market our product. We can't just go out and say, gee, we've got a nice product. Why don't you buy it? We've got to show nowadays exactly what it is, what our product will do. And the Canadian Wheat Board is very involved in sort of trying to promote what products we do have and show their flexibility and how they can contribute to other countries' needs.

I want to talk a bit about the Canadian Wheat Board's accountability. We hear statements in the country about, well the Wheat Board's not accountable. Well I want to mention four areas where I think that they are very accountable.

And the one area is, every year within each Canadian Wheat Board advisory district there's country meetings where the individual that we elect to represent us on the advisory committee sponsors a meeting, along with officials that come out from the Canadian Wheat Board, and talk about the grain industry and give various presentations on where the grain industry is at and where it might be going. And it's, you know, certainly there to answer questions. These are usually day-long meetings, and it's very, very informative. I've been to quite a few over the years since they've been happening. It's been about 15 years now, I believe.

They also put out a production called *Grain Matters* that goes to all Canadian Wheat Board permit book holders that talk about — in print — sort of where the grain industry is at and sort of what might be coming down in the future.

I think the other, fourth area, that I certainly use is, whenever I've got a question or want some information, I pick up the phone, and I phone the Canadian Wheat Board in Winnipeg, and I say could you mail me out information on . . . And I've never been refused anything yet. It usually comes quite quickly, and it's easy to get, you know, information about things that the Wheat Board are doing — and not necessarily all things because some things are market sensitive, and I don't think we should expect that sort of information.

(1600)

And then there's the final report. It's the final report that's due yearly at the year end, after the year end. It's an audited report. It's not mailed out broadly, but it is available. Some people in the industry will certainly get it if they're on a list. It's available through the library system, and I guess most importantly it's available to anyone on request for no cost.

So I think when I look at the accountability principle, I think we soon come to realize that the Canadian Wheat Board has been doing a good job for farmers, and they've been answering the questions and making changes to make . . . that make the Canadian Wheat Board more accountable and more flexible to the changing times.

Okay, I guess obviously we wouldn't be having this debate if the Canadian Wheat Board wasn't under attack. And who's attacking it? First of all, who's attacking it from within Canada? It's certainly not the majority of farmers. But I seem to be hearing a lot of noise and animosity towards the Canadian Wheat Board from what I call by the johnny-come-lately grain brokers and some of the trucking industries within the province.

It's the middle person, the person that wants to buy and sell on margins, not the farmers, that are out there wanting to dismantle the Wheat Board. It's individuals who want to try and make a quick buck. And who knows how long they're going to be there?

And I want to add, by the way, that some of these brokers are prepared to mail out to an individual who's prepared to give them about 350 bucks a year — that's sort of the rates that I've been finding — up-to-date information on market analysis.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd have to sell 10,000 bushels of grain at the cost of the Canadian Wheat Board — at three and a half cents. And I'm paying 350 bucks to get this information. I'd have to market 10,000 bushels of grain to get the same value for my dollar from what the Canadian Wheat Board's giving me, plus more.

So where's the pressure coming from, from outside of Canada? Well from the media reports we get, it seems to be principally from the United States. It seems to be principally from the grain industry within the United States.

And why do they want to do away with the Canadian Wheat Board, or make it more transparent? If they can make it more transparent, I think they believe that they can compete against it much better. When I hear them saying that the Wheat Board is no good, I think then automatically it must be doing a pretty good job for us as farmers if an external force is saying it must be done away with.

So I think the Canadian Wheat Board is out in the market-place doing a much better job than the marketing systems in other countries. And that's why it's under attack and that's why we have to fight for it.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Carlson:** — Should the Wheat Board change? Well Ralph Goodale promised a year ago a committee of eminent western people that would look into the operations of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I've been waiting patiently for — I'm not sure it's a year ago, maybe it was last fall — I've been waiting patiently now for something to happen. And the board has gone through some changes and there's likely more to come and more needed.

Back in 1990, Mr. Speaker, there was a complete review of the Canadian Wheat Board. Some of the recommendations were implemented and some have not yet been implemented. Most noticeable within the recommendations was to examine the governance, the governance structure, and to look at some possible alternatives that we could implement as a governance of the way the Canadian Wheat Board operates.

Mr. Speaker, that hasn't been looked at yet and I want to spend a few minutes today on . . . or just make a few comments on governance. I think it's very important that we have a serious look at the governance, not necessarily the . . . not the way the Canadian Wheat Board operates as far as single-desk selling but the governance of it.

I think that the Canadian Wheat Board could be set up where it would be much easier to move with the changing times. Right now, to set the initial price of wheat, they have to go and submit a price, or a price range, to the federal cabinet to get the initial price set. And sometimes that's long; sometimes it takes a long time to get that to happen.

And of course the earlier you set the initial price . . . years back the initial price used to be set in March, April, prior to seeding, so it would give the farmers an opportunity to determine what types of crops they should seed. And of course we all know it wasn't that many years ago the price dipped a fair bit after they set it, so now the price is set later on in summer to give more of a reality of what's happening as far as the price of grain is going out there.

But I think if the Canadian Wheat Board was given more flexibility, they could react to pricing; not only an initial price, but maybe more importantly, on interim pricing. When the initial price has been announced and a new crop year opens and by October, November, grain prices have gone up a fair little bit, it seems to take some time to get the reaction, get the whole system working to get the prices elevated up. It's got to go from the Canadian Wheat Board to the federal government; the federal government has to approve the changes.

So I would like to see a system whereby the governing body of the Canadian Wheat Board would have a little more leeway and a little more responsibility, that they could make them adjustments as they see fit and as they believe the way the market conditions are happening.

So anyway I guess the fact that the study was done . . . and I

guess my argument is that, you know, it wasn't that long ago. I mean 1990 was not that long ago. It wasn't 1960. It wasn't 1950. It was only five years ago and that I'm sure that a lot of the recommendations that were made at that time were still relevant today; they just haven't been acted upon. And so I guess my argument is that it wouldn't take a lot of money to at least have a look, to at least have a look at some of the recommendations that are there and maybe have an opportunity to make some changes.

I guess in closing, I'd just like to say that we all know that times change, people change, and we need new ideas to meet the new realities. But the main principles of the Canadian Wheat Board — price pooling, single-desk selling — must be maintained.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I'd like to move, seconded by the member from Pelly:

That this Assembly reaffirm its support for the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly and the concept of single-desk marketing system that provides maximum returns for farmers; and further, that we oppose the concept of dual market system.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to second this motion and enter into this debate.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start out by apologizing to you and to my fellow members in the House here for my rather raspy voice; I unfortunately picked up a cold some place over the weekend, and it's settled in my chest. And in the words of my grandfather . . . I keep thinking how fortunate I am that it has settled in my chest and that I am a New Democrat because, Mr. Speaker, my grandfather used to say that a cold will always settle in the weakest part of the body. So, Mr. Speaker, if I was a Liberal, I'd likely end up with a head cold.

But with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to get back to the issue at hand, and that is our government's support for the Canadian Wheat Board.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Wheat Board is modelled after an agricultural marketing cooperative. It is a commercial marketing agency responsible for the sale of wheat, barley, in the international and domestic non-feed markets.

That, Mr. Speaker, sort of outlines in a very broad sense the importance of the Canadian Wheat Board and why it is important to farmers, particularly in western Canada, and farmers in Saskatchewan.

As you may or may not know, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Wheat Board has a jurisdiction for marketing of wheat and barley on behalf of western Canadian farmers. The Wheat Board's jurisdiction covers Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the Peace River districts of British Columbia.

And that, Mr. Speaker, primarily, is the districts that are

represented in western Canada, and makes the Canadian Wheat Board a very important tool to Saskatchewan farmers in particular, as the pooling concept of the Canadian Wheat Board allows the return to the Saskatchewan farmers . . . to maximize those returns.

That applies I think, Mr. Speaker, to all farmers, young and old, but perhaps even plays a little special interest to younger farmers, less established farmers, and those farmers starting out in the industry in particular. Because as we all know the agricultural industry and the business of farming has really developed over the last few years from what it was 25 or 30 years ago, which was basically a way of life, to what it is today, a large business. And with a lot of capital, a lot of financing involved, and a year-to-year operation of that farm, a lot of capital involved in simply putting that crop in and taking it off.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, there is a demand in the fall time by farmers to have cash to meet their financial obligations, either with the local bank or the suppliers of products that they use such as fuel, fertilizer, seed, repairs, etc., that they use on their day-to-day operations on their farm.

So when that crop comes in, Mr. Speaker, there is a thrust, a movement by farmers, to sell that product as soon as possible to start to realize some of this revenue return so that they can meet the financial obligations. And this is where the wheat boards play such a critical role, Mr. Speaker. It will allow farmers to sell their grain into the market-place at that time and take the payment they receive that time, the interim payment, and give the farmer the comfort and the knowledge that he's not selling on a spot market or a one-time market or taking a price for his product at a time when there's high supply and perhaps even low demand for it, and taking it at the present price, because ultimately he will end up, at the end of the day, getting the best possible price for that product that he's produced.

Why, Mr. Speaker? It's simply because the Canadian Wheat Board pools the revenues for sales into four separate pool accounts — wheat, durum wheat, feed barley, and malting barley. And each producer receives an initial payment upon delivery of grain to the elevator, and at the end of that year, the pool account is closed. The operating expenses are deducted and the surplus is sent out to the producers in a final payment. And that is done on a proportion based on the amount of delivery of each farmer.

That way, Mr. Speaker, the farmer gets a fair return for the product he has produced. He knows that even though he has to sell it perhaps right from the combine or right after the fall harvest is done, and he will not receive the lowest price simply because there is the most amount of grain around at that time and the least demand.

He knows that that product will be feathered into the market-place to the importers and to the domestic use and that he will, at the end of the year, receive the best possible price at all receivable in that market time frame.

And that, Mr. Speaker, allows him the opportunity to base his financing his farm on a fairly legitimate financial base, because

he knows the approximation of what his final payments are going to be. He has a very good idea of his cash flow for his farm that year and he's able to meet his obligations accordingly.

And yes, Mr. Speaker, I suppose that there has been some movement in this country over the last little while to do away with the powers of the Wheat Board and bring in a dual marketing system. And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I think that we all who are rational and clear-thinking people, realize that a dual marketing system simply would not work along with the Canadian Wheat Board. It would end up in ultimately the demise of the Canadian Wheat Board, which is perhaps, Mr. Speaker, what certain individuals are after.

They're more interested in short-term politics than they are in the long survival of Canadian farmers and Saskatchewan farmers in particular. And, Mr. Speaker, it saddens me to see that, because history has shown us what agriculture was like in this country, what agriculture was like in North America, and what happened to farmers in Saskatchewan here and in Canada in the 1920s and early '30s before the Canadian Wheat Board came along.

I know that there are those in our midst, Mr. Speaker, that are suggesting that farmers should have a plebiscite vote on whether or not we want to keep the Canadian Wheat Board. Well I will suggest to those people, Mr. Speaker, that there was a vote taken. The vote was taken in the fall of 1994 when the members of the Wheat Board Advisory Committee all stood for election.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that all but one of those that were returned and re-elected — all were staunch supporters of the Canadian Wheat Board. That, Mr. Speaker, I think speaks very clearly as to what Saskatchewan farmers want and western Canadian farmers want in representation to the Canadian Wheat Board.

I think it's a clear indication the Canadian Wheat Board is a strong identity supported by the vast majority of farmers across western Canada. And I think it's proven itself over time. I don't think there's too many people who will really disagree with that when they reassess the benefits of the Canadian Wheat Board.

There's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that any agency in any organization has to be updated and modernized from time to time. And I'm not saying that the Canadian Wheat Board doesn't have to be updated and modernized from time to time. And I believe that there are things that have been done and things that can be done and things that will be done to make the Wheat Board more responsive to the market-place and more responsive to the needs of Saskatchewan and Canadian farmers. And those things . . . Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of confidence in the history of the Canadian Wheat Board, in the fact that changes and responsible moves have been made in the past, then they will be made in the future to maintain the strength of the Canadian Wheat Board and to maintain its very vital role that it plays in the welfare of Saskatchewan farmers.

(1615)

I think some of the efficiencies that have been brought into place to date, Mr. Speaker, has been the ability for the Canadian Wheat Board to call on certain grades of grain and certain commodities at different times to meet the market demands. This, Mr. Speaker, in turn, identifies greater efficiencies within our transportation system so that we have a Canadian Wheat Board and a transportation system working much like the hand in the glove, working together to create efficiencies in the long term which benefit not only Saskatchewan farmers, but benefit all people in Saskatchewan by having an even stronger agriculture economy and a stronger provincial economy.

Mr. Speaker, the make-up of the Canadian Wheat Board and the principles of it is really quite simple. The farmer or producer, farmer, when he delivers his product to the elevator system, receives an initial payment for the product he produced. It's not a price support. The initial price is a percentage, and usually it's about 80 per cent of the expected market returns during that crop year. That's the initial price that the farmer receives.

Now the other 20 per cent, Mr. Speaker, is paid out at the end of the crop year when the pools are closed, and the costs of operating the Canadian Wheat Board are deducted. And those costs, Mr. Speaker, are approximately three and a half cents a bushel. Those costs are deducted, and the balance is paid out to the farmer in a final payment.

Now on occasions, Mr. Speaker, but only on four occasions since 1935, has there been a deficit in those pool accounts. And it is at that time, Mr. Speaker, that the federal government has kicked in and supported the Canadian Wheat Board by picking up that deficit. That deficit had been picked up the Canadian government, Mr. Speaker, where all taxpayers in Canada has contributed. But I am proud to say, Mr. Speaker, that that has only happened on four times since 1935. And I think that's a record that the Canadian Wheat Board can be very proud of and a record that Saskatchewan farmers in particular can be very, very proud of.

But the Canadian Wheat Board also plays a very major role, not only in the marketing of Saskatchewan-grown grain, but also in providing information, Mr. Speaker. The Canadian Wheat Board provides a considerable and an increasing amount of information concerning marketing operations. And unlike the private grain companies, the Canadian Wheat Board is obligated by law to publish an annual financial statement. And its producers receive regular pool returns and gives producers a clearer idea of what the final return will be and what they can expect for the commodities they have grown.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is what I say is a very, very efficient operation because not only does the Canadian Wheat Board supply us with the ability to market our grain into the international and domestic markets and giving us as farmers the greatest return, but it also provides us with information to allow us to make good, honest, business-like decisions on the crops and the commodities that we'll be producing in the future.

We'll be able to make those decisions based on the information that they clearly outline as to what will be the market signals for the crops to produce for the future based on supply and demand

and weather and so on and so forth and crops being produced in other countries, as well as the marketing subsidies that we have been impacted upon by other countries such as the United States and such as the European Common Market over the last number of years, which has put the Canadian Wheat Board in a rather unfair situation where we're competing with farmers' pocketbooks up against the treasuries of countries such as the United States and the European Common Markets.

But despite that, Mr. Speaker, we have fared quite well. And it is interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that throughout that period of time from 1935 until today, the Canadian Wheat Board has always been a fair competitor in the market-place although some countries such as the United States has on occasions suggested that the Canadian Wheat Board is an unfair competitor.

But in fact, Mr. Speaker, whenever these accusations have been levied against the Canadian Wheat Board, they have been vindicated of such accusations. And most recent as 1994, when it was suggested that the Canadian Wheat Board's dealing in durum product in the U.S. (United States) was unfair competition to the U.S., it was vindicated by the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement panel that was set up to settle such disputes. And that, Mr. Speaker, I think speaks for itself, that the Canadian Wheat Board is a very solid, strong, ethical organization that deals with the highest of ethics but with the best interests of Saskatchewan and Canadian farmers at heart, ultimately, Mr. Speaker, delivering to the Saskatchewan farmer and the western Canadian farmers the best return for the products that they produce.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, that the previous federal Liberal government . . . pardon me, federal government for the Tory government altered the powers of the Canadian Wheat Board during their term and during their mandate, first by removing oats from the Wheat Board's jurisdiction. And, Mr. Speaker, I must admit farmers in my constituency . . . and many of those farmers up there raise oats on a regular basis, and they do it basically more or less as a tradition, Mr. Speaker, because oats is very suited to the climatic conditions of particularly the northern part of my constituency. And many farmers grow oats on a regular basis there and were very, very upset with the moves of the former Tory federal government to eliminate oats from the Wheat Board without any consultation to the farmers at all. I mean they just simply, with the stroke of a pen, removed it and left many farmers in my area quite distraught over the idea that they were now forced to grow a product that they traditionally grow and would now not have the ability and/or the protection of the Canadian Wheat Board to market that crop through.

But, Mr. Speaker, nevertheless it was done. And as a result of that, we ended up with the Wheat Board with one less product to market. And as a result of that, the oats ended up on the open market. And I think over the period of time, Mr. Speaker, we've seen oats just bounce all over the place.

I do recall at one point in time, at the fall time, oats was something like 68 cents a bushel at the Hyas elevator, and some year later it was about \$1.70 a bushel at the same elevator. And

those farmers who were overburdened with the oat crop of that year and were forced to sell it into the elevator system that fall, they received some 60 cents a bushel for it, and that was it. I mean that was it. They get the one shot, and they were done. Those farmers who were in a financial position to be able to hold that crop longer were able to reap a little better return, getting a dollar plus a bushel for it some 6 or 8 or 10 months later.

So that's the unfairness of the open market system, Mr. Speaker, and that's the joy of the Canadian Wheat Board . . . is that it allows the farmer to sell the product into the system and receive a good average price, regardless of what time of the year he was forced or did make that market decision to sell that product.

And, Mr. Speaker, under the term of the former Conservative government, we also have seen instituted a short-lived continental barley marketing system that would have permitted farmers to bypass the Canadian Wheat Board and sell their barley directly into the United States. That, Mr. Speaker, was short-lived simply because the vast majority of farmers in western Canada, and Saskatchewan in particular, didn't want to see that happen because they knew that it would simply erode further the powers of the Canadian Wheat Board. And eventually if you chew away the foundation of any organization long enough, Mr. Speaker, the whole house will collapse. And that's the concern that many farmers in Saskatchewan have today . . . is that if we erode the powers of the Canadian Wheat Board to such an extent that its foundations start to crumble, then we will lose the Wheat Board in its entirety.

And if that was to happen, Mr. Speaker, we would find ourselves in truly an open market system that simply does not work in the best interests of the ordinary and average farmer. And there are those, I admit, Mr. Speaker, there are those in Saskatchewan who would like to see this happen, but they are more driven by the political agenda. They are probably more driven by the opportunity for them to manipulate farmers, manipulate the stocks that are grown by the farmers to their best interests rather than the interests of the average cross-the-piece farmer throughout Saskatchewan.

And through it all, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan has been a very vocal supporter of the Canadian Wheat Board and the principle of single-desk marketing. For us, it is simply a matter of fairness and doing what is the best for the largest number of farmers. Through pooling, all farmers share in the benefits of the sales into the highest priced American market, as well as sharing the pain associated with the competition, sometimes head-to-head competition, against the Americans and the Europeans on their subsidies.

And that, Mr. Speaker, has been very evident over the last number of years as we've seen the United States with their trade enhancement program and the European Common Market with their subsidy programs distort the price of grain internationally, forcing Saskatchewan farmers and Canadian farmers in general, but Saskatchewan farmers in particular, to compete head-to-head with those subsidies. Our farmers found themselves in a rather awkward position because they were competing with their small pocketbook against the treasuries of

the United States, treasuries of Germany and France and Great Britain and many of those European countries that subsidize their farmers quite substantially.

And I find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, that . . . during that same period of time that Saskatchewan farmers were able to resist and adapt to the challenges at hand. And throughout this process, Mr. Speaker, painful as it was, very painful in some cases . . . but throughout this whole process, Saskatchewan farmers emerged as the most efficient farmers in the world. They identified ways and means to survive and to meet the challenges of the European Common Market and to meet the challenges of the United States trade enhancement program and develop their farm to withstand those international market pressures.

And it is that efficiencies, Mr. Speaker, and the determination by Saskatchewan farmers that has built an even stronger agricultural industry in this province. They've looked at diversification. They've looked at growing alternative crops. They've looked at ways and means to stabilize their operations and get the greatest return from the market-place. Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, any industry has to be able to survive on its own, and agriculture is no different than any other industry. Agriculture has to be able to change with the changing times, change with the globalization of agriculture and the globalizing of markets. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say the Saskatchewan farmers have risen and met that challenge, and they have been able to develop a farm that is strong and being able to withstand the buffeting of the international market-place.

But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Wheat Board has played a very important role there, a very important role in allowing them the security of knowledge that they would, by selling their products through the Canadian Wheat Board, that they would get the greatest return available to them in the market-place that year. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, vast majority of farmers right across this country, the vast majority of farmers in my constituency are very, very much in favour of retaining the Canadian Wheat Board as the identity that it is, by retaining the Canadian Wheat Board as a single-desk marketing agent so that it works in their best interests.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's position is that the Canadian Wheat Board's mandate or structure should not be altered without the involvement and approval of the Canadian Wheat Board clients. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that the Canadian Wheat Board clients, the farmers of this great province of ours, spoke very loudly last fall when they went to the polls and returned the advisory committee in the massive numbers that they did with a clear, clear message that they were interested in retaining a Canadian Wheat Board in its present form as a single-desk agency to marketing our product.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan supports the current structure of the Canadian Wheat Board, and we recognize that, like in any other large bureaucracy, there are problems related to efficiencies and sometimes needs to be addressed. For example, the organic grain producers and other niche marketers want more workable system through which

they can market their products, and that's understandable, Mr. Speaker, and to that ends the Canadian Wheat Board has been able to handle those and set up a systems and set up branches of its own operations to help handle those specialty crops, those niche crops, and be able to satisfy the niche markets as they appear around the world and particularly in North America.

(1630)

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I think that we can all be very, very pleased with the ability of the Canadian Wheat Board to adapt to the changing market-place and to adapt to changing times, to adapt to a changing market demands. And with that, we're seeing those things happen basically as we speak, Mr. Speaker.

And the efficiencies of the Canadian Wheat Board, I think, is second to none. What really pleases me, Mr. Speaker, is that it's an organization which represents all farmers, and that we all, through our advisory committee representatives, have input into the system. And if we have an idea of how we can make it more efficient or if we have some suggestions to some of the problems that we believe that they're having, we have a system of getting those thoughts through to where they can come to some real benefit to all of us.

But in all these instances, while problems evidently work themselves out, public confidence in the Wheat Board is, I think, quite strong, Mr. Speaker. I know that there are those people who are calling for a so-called free market system. And that system, Mr. Speaker, is something that has been, like I said, more profit-driven or personal-driven or politically-driven than really the driving of the average wants and needs of the average farmer across Saskatchewan.

And there is, Mr. Speaker, an interesting quote that I would like to share with my colleagues here in regards to the wishes or the demands of certain individuals in regards to the free market system. When I hear complaints about the bureaucracy of the Canadian Wheat Board, I usually reply by quoting Dwayne Andreas, the head of Archer Daniels & Midland who told *The Financial Post*, and I quote: We'll never have free trade in farming. And that's a statement that he represents would be . . . when presented, rather, Mr. Speaker, that when suggested and made to him as to how the international market-place in agriculture commodities could be best adapted to meet not only the producers' demands but the consumers' demands, he suggested the Canadian Wheat Board is well-run, well-governed, and a well-organized Canadian organization.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, that speaks quite loudly for the merits of the Canadian Wheat Board. And I think it has not only served the Canadian farmers and Saskatchewan producers real well; it has served the market-place real well internationally. It has met the demands of the importers of our products that we produce here in Saskatchewan: wheat, barley, etc. And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it has set forward a very strong reputation — reputation for being able to provide quality products in quality time in an atmosphere, Mr. Speaker, that is competitive to any other where in the world.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I can't help but continue to sing the

praises of the Canadian Wheat Board, and to, without a doubt, extend my support for this motion. And I want to close, Mr. Speaker, simply by saying that the Canadian Wheat Board has served us well in the past, and I know it will serve us well in the future.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, as time goes on, changes happen, circumstances change, but principles stay the same. There's no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that the Canadian Wheat Board will continue to go through change to adopt itself to the changing market-place, but I know, Mr. Speaker, that the principle of the Canadian Wheat Board will always stay the same. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Swenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I've listened with a great deal of interest to the two members of the government who've given us their version of the history of the Canadian Wheat Board and why we should all have such a vile subservience to that particular organization. And I guess it speaks volumes, Mr. Speaker, about what's wrong with the system today.

These government members — and the last one that spoke is a farmer himself so he should know better than to stand up and tell the kind of story he just did — know full well that farming in this province is changing dramatically. In his part of the world up there, red spring wheat and durum is non-existent, and barley, sometimes because of market forces, isn't planted a lot, but lots of canola and peas and mustard and lentils. There's all sorts of things going on, Mr. Speaker, in the world today that have gotten absolutely nothing to do with the Canadian Wheat Board — absolutely nothing to do with the Canadian Wheat Board.

So then he comes in here and he tells us that we have to bow down and worship the Canadian Wheat Board because otherwise we're doing something wrong. That it's always either black or white; that there's nothing ever in between. It simply allows this large bureaucracy that I and other farmers in this province have to pay every red cent to maintain in Winnipeg, and yet I let the government of the day appoint the people that run it. I don't have any say in the governance of that organization at all, but I'm simply supposed to bow down and let the Canadian Wheat Board do whatever they wish, keep my money for the better part of a year before they pay it out to me, and not ask any questions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when I describe that, that sounds like a classic New Democrat. I would just simply allow them to take my money, not say anything, not ask any questions because it's part of my philosophical rhetoric that I spouted for so darn long that I don't know any different. That's a typical New Democrat, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why we can't have a reasonable discussion in this Assembly about what the role of the Canadian Wheat Board should be. There's no one in my party, Mr. Speaker, said we should do away with it. Canadian Wheat Board plays a very valuable role.

I've been in China when the Canadian Wheat Board was over there selling grain. Often times you have to have government-to-government relationships in order to sell product. Everybody knows that, understands it. Nobody's saying, do away with the Canadian Wheat Board.

But there's an awful lot of people in this province, Mr. Speaker, say, I need options. Today the cash flow requirements of farming mean that your cash flow requirements are different than they were when my father farmed, my grandfather farmed, because the needs to service your operation aren't the same today. And that's why you've seen this explosion of acres around canola, around peas, around the various other diversified crops in this province.

Why the push? The Minister of Economic Development stands in this Assembly every time he gets on his feet and he tells us we've got to diversify, we've got value add, we've got to have more things manufactured here.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that if I mill flour in this province, I can't sell it outside the boundary? If I want to sell outside the boundary of this province, I got to go to the Canadian Wheat Board and I got to pay world price for it, take it back to my farm and mill it, and then ship it around. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's absolutely ludicrous. Absolutely ludicrous.

But what do I hear out of these people, the member from Melville and the one from Pelly? The same old vile subservience. Never discuss the issues at hand; just the same old political rhetoric. There's an election going to happen and I got to talk to those goofy old NFUers (National Farmers Union) in my riding and I got to tell them that I stood up and I fought on their behalf for the Canadian Wheat Board.

Well, Mr. Speaker, these members know full well the Canadian Wheat Board was brought in in 1934-35 by a Conservative government and it did not have a monopoly. It did not have a monopoly at that time. The monopoly was put in place during the Second World War. And, Mr. Minister, was that monopoly put in place to help farmers? No. That monopoly was put in place to help two things: one was Great Britain, who did not have money to pay for wheat for bread; and the other was to feed the people working in the war industries in eastern Canada.

Mr. Speaker, within a week of the Canadian Wheat Board being given a monopoly, the price of wheat to the western Canadian farmer dropped over 60 cents a bushel — 60 cents a bushel from what he was getting before the monopoly and afterwards. That's why the Canadian Wheat Board today has that monopoly. That was imposed by order in council, order in council of the federal Liberal government of the time — didn't even go through the legislature; imposed from on high by politicians, Mr. Speaker, not farmers. If you'd held a vote at that time during the Second World War, I'm not sure that you would have had the results, Mr. Speaker, that these guys so proudly crow about today.

I mean, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, UGG (United Grain Growers), all of these pooling groups that had developed in the '20s and the '30s to protect farmers, were operating quite nice,

thank you, when the Canadian Wheat Board was not a monopoly. And these members know it full well. These members know it full well. And yet they have the gall to stand in this Assembly and tell us an entirely different story, an entirely different story.

Mr. Speaker, the issue before Saskatchewan in 1995 is one of how do we maximize return for the people that work the land in this province — the province with the most arable land in all of Canada. Sixty per cent of arable land in this country is in this province.

How do we maximize returns? How do we keep people on the farm? How do we keep our rural communities alive? How do we keep our schools alive? How do we keep the hospital there? Well, Mr. Speaker, the answer to the question is that you have to have more productivity and you have to have more return and more cash flow in rural Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, there isn't a farmer out there today that puts all his eggs in one basket, because you simply can't afford to. You cannot afford to simply haul your wheat to the elevator, let the Wheat Board give you an initial payment and then say, many months down the road I'll give you the rest of your money. And I won't pay you any interest on it — I won't pay you any interest on it; you have to trust me with your money.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that trust, that trust in the Canadian Wheat Board — which I have no direct control over, by the way — has made people question certain things. They question the size of it, they question the policies that it implements, and they question why today Ralph Goodale and his federal Liberal friends can appoint all of the folks that run the Canadian Wheat Board without consulting farmers in this province.

We have dramatic change coming, Mr. Speaker. The Crow rate is gone. Transportation and grain-related issues are going to be high on the agenda. And yet this same minister who has trashed the Crow rate has the power to appoint all of the individuals who govern the Canadian Wheat Board.

And I would have thought somewhere in this mix I would have heard a New Democrat speak up and say that's not right; that the farmer should have control of the Wheat Board; the farmer should have control over how much money the Wheat Board spends; and the farmer should have control over the policies of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Have I heard that from any New Democrats? No. They simply say that we should bow down and not ask questions, because it salutes our political philosophy. Well that's not good enough in 1995, Mr. Speaker, not good enough at all.

What this Assembly needs is a good, honest debate about how we return control of the Canadian Wheat Board to the farmers of this province. That's what this Assembly should be debating. And there are a number of issues, Mr. Speaker, surrounding that.

Can the Canadian Wheat Board exist as a single-desk seller to overseas markets and yet have domestic sales in North America

open? That's a legitimate question. You've got a free trade agreement, Mr. Speaker, that began with the United States and Canada and now includes Mexico, is going to include Chile. You have whole hemispheres now involved in trading relationships where they're drawing down tariff barriers.

One of the reasons that we now have a tariff barrier again with the United States on grain exports is because of the monopoly of the Canadian Wheat Board — the monopoly.

(1645)

Why is it, Mr. Speaker, that New Democrats are so fearful of asking those questions? Why is it? It always amazes me that the farmers of that caucus do not have the gumption, do not have the fortitude to stand on their feet and talk about those issues, ask those questions. It always amazes me that they would rather be sheep instead of leaders. That they would rather not ask those questions. That they would simply stand up and parrot some line that's been around for the last 50 years that quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, in today's world might not have quite as much relevance as it had in the 1930s.

But instead we've just been subjected to an hour and a half of the same old story. Mr. Speaker, I believe, as a farmer, as a fourth generation farmer in this province, that the Canadian Wheat Board can exist quite well, thank you very much, in competition with whoever else is in the grain business.

And the reason I say that, Mr. Speaker, is that the experience prior to 1943, '44 was that they did quite well, because there are farmers out there who do not want to undertake the necessary expenditure, the necessary expenditure and time involved with marketing all of their crop.

And you can tell that this stuff bothers them, Mr. Speaker, because pretty soon you hear them chirping from their seats. And these are people that obviously don't have the courage to stand up and ask the real questions of 1995. Because they'd rather hide behind the rhetoric of the past — hide behind the rhetoric of the past instead of asking the questions that have to be answered.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there have been examples all over western Canada of individuals who have gone out, sought out, and often paid for market development all on their own. And one of the reasons we don't have a pasta plant in this province is because how can you reasonably ask farmers to invest their own money in a pasta plant if they cannot be in the line-up to deliver durum wheat to that plant.

If they have to go and dump it in some company's elevator, who then charges elevation and handling charges — for their bottom line, by the way — and then turns around and directs it to the pasta plant, how in the world can you ask a farmer to invest in it? It makes no sense.

And that's one reason that we don't have pasta plants here but they have them everywhere else in the world, Mr. Speaker. Why in the world should a farmer go out and do all of this market development, spend his own money, in many cases, when the

Wheat Board turns around and says, no, you can't do that; I have monopoly jurisdiction; you'll have to play by my rules or you won't play at all.

How in the world does that encourage diversification that the member from Elphinstone is always yapping about in this Assembly? I don't understand it.

This province, Mr. Speaker, has all sorts of value added enterprises around rural Saskatchewan today because individuals went out and found markets and convinced their neighbours to grow specialty crops, clean that product, bag that product, move it into export position, put it in a container.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if we all had the mentality of the members opposite, the New Democrats, there's none of that would have happened. They would simply have said, no, goodness, I can't mess up the system at all; I've got to just stay in my own little niche here; and I've got to drive my two-ton truck to the elevator and I've got to open the end gate and I've got to dump my wheat in the pit, and then hope — hope, Mr. Speaker — at the end of the day that I get a fair return for my product.

Now that's a real system, Mr. Speaker. That's what built this country, isn't it? You know when people came out here and broke the land and they didn't have a railroad, they didn't have anything, but they were willing to take a chance to build something new. They weren't prepared to adhere to the system of the countries where they came from, or eastern Canada. No, they were going to do something new.

But you know, this party here, they don't want to do anything new. They don't want to see us develop. They simply say, you've got to let the Canadian Wheat Board, unquestioned — unquestioned — proceed along on its glorious path.

I don't know how a farmer, any farmer, would not want to have control of the marketing agency that he pays for. It just boggles my mind why I would want to support several hundred bureaucrats who are governed by appointments from Ottawa, and I have to pay every cent. You know, if the Canadian taxpayer were paying their damned salaries, Mr. Speaker, I would feel good about it. But they aren't; I'm paying. I have to pay every thin dime of their wages, of their expenses, of their trips, of their administration, of their computers — every thin dime I pay for. It isn't the taxpayers, it's me. And I don't know why these people would want to perpetuate that system.

Mr. Speaker, we should not be electing an advisory committee; we should be electing the committee. The board of directors of the Canadian Wheat Board should be elected by farmers. But do I hear that coming from New Democrats? Not one word.

Mr. Speaker, the employees of that organization should have to go through a process where they justify their job. They should be able to justify their job and their performance for me, the shareholder of the company. And instead, you know who they listen to? Multinational grain companies, multinational railroads. You know, between the big grain companies and the big railroads all deciding what they want, that's who the Canadian Wheat Board listens to today. You know, I want my

cars allocated over here, and I want to make sure my terminal in Vancouver is doing all right over there. And I want to move some grain down to Montreal, and I don't care what it costs. I'm going to do it in the winter shipping season when I've got to put every last bushel over a railroad instead of down the seaway. And what happens? I pay the cost, Mr. Speaker. The farmer pays the cost, with no accountability back at all.

And, Mr. Speaker, we should ask these questions if for no other reason, no other reason, that a little bit of competition for the Canadian Wheat Board just might smarten a few people up.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to see the demise of the Canadian Wheat Board because I believe that organization has the expertise and the knowledge to sell my product in market-places around the world that I as an individual or a company can't do. I believe that. I fundamentally believe that.

The Canadian Wheat Board has got the connections and the expertise and the backing of the Canadian government, and they can sell on my behalf in places that I could never dream of selling as an individual, as an inland terminal association, or as a large grain company. And I need that service, Mr. Speaker. Every farmer in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba, and the Peace River district needs that.

But you know what, Mr. Speaker? If what's good for the goose is good for the gander, maybe farmers in Ontario who have never been subjected to the Canadian Wheat Board or farmers in the Maritimes or farmers in Quebec, maybe we should all play on a level playing-field.

You know, why is the Canadian Wheat Board area restricted to the Prairies? Well I'll tell you why, Mr. Speaker. When that monopoly was put in place it was for the benefit of eastern Canada, of factory workers, of people in Toronto and Montreal and Halifax. It wasn't put there for the benefit of us out here.

And, Mr. Speaker, the same problems exist today as they did then. And I for one as a practising farmer, as a permit book holder, who's going to seed his 25th crop this spring, don't like the fact that I don't have any control over that organization and yet I have to pay every dime that goes into it. And that's unfair, it's undemocratic, and it's not something I would expect for social democrats to stand up and defend. I would not expect social democrats to stand up and defend a system that deprives individuals the right to control their own destiny.

I mean that's like saying your local board of your co-op should be able to hire and fire and do whatever it wants, and you can't go to the board meeting and have your piece because you're a member. That's what's happened to the Canadian Wheat Board.

And it's the truth and they know it's the truth. And you know what? If they checked their own polling they would find that the majority of people in this province agree that something's wrong. And they know it, they know it.

Because you know what, Mr. Speaker, their pollster probably cost more than ours does, and they probably paid for them through taxpayers' money. And they know what the figures say;

they know what the figures say.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.

And it's a very clear majority of people believe that a dual market could work in western Canada if it is structured properly. And no one is saying that the Canadian Wheat Board should be destroyed. That's an absolute fallacy. And nor should it be destroyed. And we as farmers should do everything we can to make sure that it survives, but under our direction and our leadership; not Ralph Goodale in Ottawa appointing the people that run that organization.

And until those changes are made, Mr. Speaker, until those changes are made we will not have a Wheat Board that's responsive to the needs of the people that it's suppose to serve. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Maple Creek:

That all words following the word "board" be deleted and replaced by the following:

and support a dual marketing system for wheat, barley, and durum.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order.

**Mr. Goohsen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm really happy to enter the debate here this afternoon and to second the motion by the member from Thunder Creek. Because in listening to his comments, it makes eminent sense that at this period in time after so many years of a monopoly controlled by the Canadian Wheat Board, that we would suddenly face the reality of the need to talk about the Canadian Wheat Board.

I want the members opposite and the people of this province to know that we are not advocating the end of the Canadian Wheat Board. We're advocating here that we take a look at how it works, that we talk too about some responsibility to the people that are being served by the Canadian Wheat Board.

We want the Canadian Wheat Board to be opened up to the people that it serves. We want the books opened up and we want some competition in this area so that people can make some decisions for themselves.

We want an elected board. There's nothing wrong for asking for elections to determine who does our business for us. We want farmers to be in control of the Canadian Wheat Board. There's nothing wrong with that. I don't think any farmer in Saskatchewan would be against having elections to elect people to do what has to be done.

Mr. Speaker, quite simply put, it's time to examine the Canadian Wheat Board. It's time for the people of this province to have a look at the business that is operating their business. We've got to have an open, accountable look at what the Canadian Wheat Board does. It's finally time to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I move that we do now adjourn.

Debate adjourned.