

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present on behalf of a number of residents in Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to make a commitment to develop a long-term plan with respect to the Saskatchewan film library, ensuring that under no circumstances will any more films be destroyed; rather that the films be given away to schools, sold, or provided for on a fee-for-services basis.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures come from White City, Pilot Butte, Lumsden, Regina, and a number of other communities in Saskatchewan. I so present.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition as well to present to the Assembly and the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to make a commitment to develop a long-term plan with respect to the Saskatchewan film library, ensuring that under no circumstances will any more films be destroyed; rather that films be given away to schools, sold, or provided on a fee-for-service basis.

And in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition comes from the Fort Qu'Appelle area of Saskatchewan. I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition, reading:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to make a commitment to develop a long-term plan with respect to the Saskatchewan film library, ensuring that under no circumstances will any more films be destroyed; rather the films be given away to schools, sold, or provided on a fee-for-service basis.

As in duty bound, your petitioner will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these signatures are all from Fort Qu'Appelle.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a new petition to present.

To the Hon. Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan in legislature assembled, the petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly sheweth:

That residents of the province of Saskatchewan are opposed to the practice of night hunting by any citizen of the province and that night hunting at any time of the year is extremely dangerous to those who are hunting and others in the vicinity; and that night hunting is an extremely unfair and unsportsmanlike form of game hunting and that the majority of citizens are not allowed to practise night hunting.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to work with aboriginal and Metis leaders in the province of Saskatchewan in an immediate effort to end the destructive and dangerous practice of night hunting in the province for everyone regardless of their heritage.

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

This petition, Mr. Speaker, comes from the Kamsack area.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I as well would like to present a petition to the Assembly addressing night hunting.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to work with aboriginal and Metis leaders in the province of Saskatchewan in an immediate effort to end the destructive and dangerous practice of night hunting in the province for everyone regardless of their heritage.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners that signed this come from Kamsack and Togo, Gravelbourg, Bateman, Mr. Speaker, a number of names on this. I so present.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition to do with night hunting. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to work with aboriginal and Metis leaders in the province of Saskatchewan in an immediate effort to end the destructive and dangerous practice of night hunting in the province for everyone regardless of their heritage.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The petitioners, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Kamsack, Togo, and Runnymede. I so present.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present. Now I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly will be pleased to cause the government to work with aboriginal and Metis leaders in the province of Saskatchewan in an immediate effort to end the destructive and dangerous practice of night hunting in the province for everyone regardless of their heritage.

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

And these come basically from the area of Kamsack. Thank you.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions in regard to the issue of night hunting. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to work with aboriginal and Metis leaders in the province of Saskatchewan in an immediate effort to end the destructive and dangerous practice of night hunting in the province for everyone regardless of their heritage.

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

Signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the Kamsack and Togo area.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan concerned with night hunting.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to enact legislation to completely ban the practice of night hunting in Saskatchewan.

The signatures on the petition are mostly from the Moosomin constituency around the Redvers area. Thank you.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present a petition from citizens of the Saltcoats constituency, mostly in the village of Kamsack. And the prayer for relief reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to enact legislation to completely ban the practice of night hunting in Saskatchewan.

As in bound in duty, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I so file.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions that I would like to bring forward today. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to enact legislation to completely ban the practice of night hunting in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition all seem to be from the Invermay and surrounding area; that would be in the riding of Canora.

The Speaker: — Order, order. The hon. . . . Order. Order, order. All hon. members will be aware that — order — all hon. members will be aware that debate is not permitted in presenting petitions.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have some petitions to present on behalf of people concerned about the practice of night hunting. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to enact legislation to completely ban the practice of night hunting in Saskatchewan.

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

Those who have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Buchanan and Kamsack. I so present.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present today on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to enact legislation to completely ban the practice of night hunting in Saskatchewan.

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

This petition is signed by the people in the constituency of Saltcoats and the people are basically, on this petition, are from the community of Kamsack.

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 cause the government to amend The Workers' Compensation Act to allow injured workers to bring legal actions against health care professionals in the event of alleged negligence or other misconduct.

And the following petitions as addenda to previously received petitions respecting:

The reversal of a decision to force hunters to pay the entire cost of big game damage.

The reversal of the municipal revenue-sharing reduction.

Making an exemption under the labour standards respecting agreements between Saskatchewan families and their care-givers.

Establishment of a task force to aid the fight against youth crime.

Changes to the Saskatchewan big game damage compensation program.

The review of the social impact of gambling.

The rebuilding of Highway No. 155.

Rising farm input costs.

And the banning of stripping in establishments where alcohol is served.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day 54 move first reading of a Bill entitled the wildlife amendment Act, 1997.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day 54 move the first reading of a Bill entitled the Crown corporations rate review Act, 1997.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day 54 move first reading of a Bill entitled the recall of members Act, 1997.

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I notice in your gallery a gentleman who has come, I think with some friends, from the Melfort area, Mr. Bill Sellness, who I had the privilege of meeting at a Christmas party last year and I certainly want to welcome Mr. Sellness to the Assembly today and those who have accompanied him down here.

And I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are some members and some guests in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, that I'd like the Assembly to welcome here today.

First of all we have a lady from Watson, Mrs. Elsie Kotyk, whose husband of 51 years is continuing a courageous fight with hepatitis C. Mrs. Kotyk, please welcome her.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Also, Mr. Speaker, we have Fran Mamer and her son, Scott, who is also a hepatitis C victim. Would you please stand and be recognized?

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Also with them is Mr. Bill Sellness, who is representing the hepatitis C victims throughout this province who are seeking compensation. I'd ask Bill to stand and be recognized, please.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Also sitting with those people is Dr. Jim Melenchuk, Leader of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party. Jim, please stand and be recognized.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

November Employment Statistics

Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, and welcome back, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure I share the views of all members on this side of the House in saying what a pleasure it is to be here for this special session of unity at this holiday season.

This is also a great opportunity to come together and to discuss the issues that Saskatchewan people are concerned with, and to celebrate some of the remarkable achievements and gains our province has seen during the past year, particularly in the area of job creation.

Recently Statistics Canada released its November job numbers, and once again, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan had the lowest unemployment rate in Canada at 5.5 per cent, which of course is well below the national average of 8.6 per cent.

But, Mr. Speaker, percentages can be misleading and while we recognize that there are still some people who want jobs and cannot find them, we can celebrate the fact that in November of this year there were 474,500 people working in Saskatchewan. That's an increase of 22,000 jobs over the same time last year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thomson: — And of course, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to note that Regina had the lowest unemployment rate in the country at 5.2 per cent, and also that our sister city of Saskatoon was third lowest at 5.9.

Mr. Speaker, I know that this season many parents will understand that their children may be a little late getting home for Christmas because many more of them have a job this year than last year. In fact there are 80,100 young people working in Saskatchewan at last count — up 8,600 from the year before. That's a very good number and very welcome at this time of year. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debut of Saskatchewan Party

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as all members know, 1997 has been a stellar year for sports fans in Saskatchewan. This year we saw Sandra Schmirler and crew win yet another world curling championship before qualifying to represent Canada at the 1998 Winter Olympics.

And, Mr. Speaker, we saw the Saskatchewan Roughriders defy all expectations and make it to the Grey Cup.

And, Mr. Speaker, in what's been called Saskatchewan's favourite blood sport — politics — 1997 has been equally memorable.

Mr. Speaker, in a move knowledgeable fans have been waiting for for years, members of two teams in our political league which played essentially the same style of game, came together in an all-out effort to dethrone the current league champions.

Mr. Speaker, the current champs remind me of the 1997 Dallas Cowboys — old, past their prime, and not able to score the points like they used to. Contrast that with the young upstarts in the Saskatchewan Party, who are sure-footed and are driving hard for the end zone.

Mr. Speaker, of course there's still a third team in our league which may or may not play in the finals, depending upon whether Coach Ralph can get them to stop fighting over who sits where on the final bus.

The Saskatchewan Party is poised to knock off the perennial champs. But before the 1999 final, we're looking to expand our team. We consider this week . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Performance Plant Inc.

Mr. Whitmore: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to talk about Ag-West Biotech, who is investing up to \$280,000 over three years in Performance Plant Inc., a new plant biotechnology company from Kingston, Ontario.

Performance Plant Inc. has established a research and development laboratory at Innovation Place in Saskatoon, where initially seven scientists and support staff will work on a number of projects aimed at improving crops such as canola, mustard, as well as lettuce, and other horticultural crops.

The work of Performance Plant Inc. involves modifying metabolism of plants to give them improved agronomic characteristics which are of value to the farmer and to the grower. In many cases the modified plants will be better able to withstand environmental stresses such as drought, cold, and salinity.

Saskatchewan's sustainable economic growth is proving long-term jobs and a bait for high quality health, education, and training services. These in turn help create the kind of environment that attract innovation and growth-orientated businesses like Performance Plant Inc.

Investments in the ag-biotech sectors bring us many benefits: new jobs in research and development, new products from expanded markets, and advancement in plant and animal technologies that increase productivity for Saskatchewan farmers.

Each innovation leads to further diversification and economic growth. Innovative companies such as Performance Plant Inc. is the key to economic success in Saskatchewan in the new century. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Humans Rights Anniversaries

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the loyal opposition. Mr. Speaker, two important

anniversaries were celebrated in the field of human rights in Saskatchewan last week.

Firstly, it was 50 years ago, in 1947 to be exact, when the first human rights legislation was enacted in this province. The Saskatchewan Bill of Rights guaranteed fundamental freedoms: the freedom of religion, the freedom of speech, the freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and association, freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention, and the right to vote.

Secondly, it was 25 years ago that the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission was created. This agency was given the power to investigate complaints of human rights abuses and to resolve them.

As Liberals, we celebrate both anniversaries and we salute the work of the Human Rights Commission. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that no member of our party would ever move a resolution at a convention proposing to abolish the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission; and if by chance someone attended one of our conventions and somehow moved such an outrageous resolution, that it would be voted down overwhelmingly. It wouldn't be tabled, as occurred at the new Tory convention last month. At a Liberal convention, this type of resolution would be defeated. There would be no doubt about where Liberals stand on human rights. We are in favour of human rights. The work of the commission is important. The commission stands up for the rights of the disabled, the rights of the religious minorities, the rights of cultural and racial minorities, the rights of women and men. We support the . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Yellowhead Twinning

Mr. Jess: — As we all know, in Saskatchewan we have 26,100 kilometres of roads and highways, and 158,900 kilometres of municipal roads — enough to circle the globe several times.

We also know that just 6 per cent of that network carries 75 per cent of the traffic. A major part of that 6 per cent is the Yellowhead highway, and a very busy section of that Yellowhead goes through my constituency between Saskatoon and North Battleford.

I am happy to announce, Mr. Speaker, that as of last Monday, the complete Yellowhead highway between Saskatoon and the Battlefords is twinned.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jess: — Not only is this four lanes, there's a new Borden bridge over the Saskatchewan river to go along with the other new bridge built in 1985, both of which replaced the very attractive arches of the original Borden bridge built in 1937.

This project, Mr. Speaker, is part of a five-year, \$70 million example of something that should be happening far more often — the federal-provincial cost-shared program to upgrade, repave parts of Highways 1, 7, 11, 16, and 39. The Yellowhead section

was the largest portion of the agreement, with some 40 million being spent in my constituency of Redberry Lake.

Now if the federal government would commit to a national highway program, we would be like every other industrialized country in the world. I want . . .

The Speaker: — The hon. member's time has expired.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Humboldt Youth Awarded Junior Citizen of the Year Award

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a young person from my constituency from the community of Humboldt, Terri Simon. Terri was one of four individuals to receive a Junior Citizen of the Year award at the annual convention of the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association held last September.

The Saskatchewan Junior Citizen of the Year award program recognizes outstanding youth between the age of 8 and 18 who help the community, support an environmental cause, or has overcome a personal hardship or challenge. Terri is an individual who fits this criteria. She maintained a 95 per cent average while working part time and volunteering at the local nursing home. Terri was involved in school activities, helping with the yearbook, grad fund-raising, and playing badminton. At the same time Terri did a lot of housework and cared for her mother, who has a number of illnesses including diabetes, arthritis, heart and lung disease. Throughout all of this, Terri was cheerful and very positive. So congratulations, Terri, on this achievement - Junior Citizen of the Year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Producer-assembled Grain Train in Eston

Ms. Stanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to share yet another example of how prairie farmers are innovative, efficient, and community-minded. On December 9 of this year, around 500 farmers gathered in Eston, Saskatchewan to load no. 1 and no. 2 durum on their own producer-assembled grain train. Long lines of 3-ton, tandem, and semi-trailer trucks could be seen participating in the loading of the 80-car train which then hauled the grain to the west coast.

The farmers that participated in this historical event belong to the West Central Road and Rail Committee. This organization and the people who farm it are to be commended on their determination and ability to solve problems collectively. That's how this province was built, Mr. Speaker. They typify the Saskatchewan spirit of cooperation and prove that by working together we can solve problems that otherwise are insurmountable.

The West Central Road and Rail Committee is made up of producers and individuals from business, communities, and local governments who share common interests about the impending loss of their rail lines and elevators. In the absence of Ottawa taking charge of transportation, prairie farmers will have to work together and take action themselves. The success

in Eston last week convinced me that we can do it and the West Central Road Committee will be likely leading the way. Congratulations to all involved, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Recall of the Legislature

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Well, Mr. Premier, here we are. First session in six years and why are we here? Are we here to address the NDP's (New Democratic Party) destruction of the health care system? No. Are we here to bring a new system deal to the NDP rate hikes to SaskTel, SaskEnergy and SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance)? No. Are we here to pass legislation to outlaw night hunting? No. Are we here to debate the NDP's half-baked scheme to buy the Guyana Power Company? No.

Instead of dealing with these pressing issues, we are here to deal with the Premier's personal agenda, this guy's urgent need to make amends for the way he screwed up this country's constitution.

The Speaker: — Order, order. The hon. member will recognize that he'll want to use language in the House that is befitting debate in the Assembly and I'll ask him to simply withdraw his most recent remark and directly put his question.

Mr. Heppner: — Okay, we'll insert the word, messed up this country's constitution.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I requested the hon. member to first of all to withdraw the remark and then proceed directly to the question.

Mr. Heppner: — I withdraw that remark. And we're looking for the way that he messed up this country's constitution in a kitchen back in 1981. As it says on Quebec's licence plates, I remember. Well, Mr. Speaker, I remember . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I will give the hon. member for Rosthern one last opportunity to put his question directly now.

Mr. Heppner: — Okay. And the question is, to Mr. Premier, whether he will set aside his personal obsession with the constitution and allow this legislature to debate, each and every fall, the issues that are far more pressing to Saskatchewan people?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the legislature and members of the Legislative Assembly are free to debate anything that they wish to debate or to raise. I would hope that this is done in a way which is positive and constructive, but sadly I think — given the tone of the first question of this fall session — that's not likely to be the case from this so-called Saskatchewan Party.

It may be that the Saskatchewan Party, or the Tories by any

other name, opposite, don't believe that saving Canada is an important mission. They may not think that the uncertainty surrounding Quebec affects the dollar or the currency or the passport. They may think that it's not important to the Saskatchewan farmer to solve this matter, that it's not important to Saskatchewan small-business person to solve this matter.

I say they can think that. But the people of Saskatchewan know that it is important business to work to save this Canadian nation and country — not the Tory way of destruction, not the negativism, not the yelling that's going on by you folks opposite there; the two of you who got together in the middle of the night and made a secret deal, concocted a deal — it may not be important to you, but it is important to Canada and this legislature is going to speak in this regard.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Night Hunting

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the Premier recognizes that he will have a new role to play after the next election as Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Minister — my question is to the Minister for the Environment — it's funny how fast, Mr. Minister, you leapt in front of the television cameras last week, all big-eyed, like a deer-in-the-headlights look, hoping to dodge the bullet. Your little announcement on Friday about night hunting hasn't done a thing to address the issue. Last February when I brought it up, you said there wasn't a crisis. You said there was no need for action; you were going to meet and review.

Well, Mr. Minister, it's been almost a year and you're still slinking about in the dark. In the meantime, Saskatchewan people are in danger because you haven't banned night hunting. Our big game populations are being wiped out. Our province stands to lose \$60 million a year in hunting revenue.

Mr. Minister, why have you ignored the people of Saskatchewan, and the warning signs, and allowed night hunting to escalate in Saskatchewan to this point, while other provinces have passed laws dealing with it years ago? What's your excuse?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the opportunity to comment on this very important issue. Contrary to what the hon. member opposite may believe, under The Wildlife Act we have section 41 regarding the use of lights for hunting prohibited.

No person shall, at any time, use a searchlight, spotlight, flashlight, jacklight, night light, headlight or any other light or cast a ray of light for the purpose of hunting any wildlife.

Well obviously if night hunting is still going on, it is because . . . it's not because we do not have legislation; it's because of treaty rights, which we are going to respect, and it's because of court decisions, which we are going to follow.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Minister, if it's in the law why don't you enforce it? Because you don't have an excuse. Your actions have been impotent. Your solution is to talk about bringing in legislation several months from now, long after our wildlife numbers have been further depleted and the ban on night hunting is still not happening.

Well, Mr. Minister, that may make it safer for some citizens but it doesn't do a lot to save our moose and elk and deer. You want to ban night hunting with lights, that's good. That's a step in the right direction, but why wait?

I've just given notice of a Bill that would deal with this issue immediately. It would ban all night hunting in Saskatchewan, period. It will carry hefty fines of up to \$50,000 for persons violating the law. Mr. Minister, this will do the job that you should have done a long time ago.

Mr. Minister, will you support this legislation? Will you do what's right and protect both Saskatchewan people and our wildlife? Will you pass this Bill?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the hon. member was as interested and knowledgeable about the issue as he lets on to be, he would have recognized the 1964 Supreme Court of Canada decision which said that aboriginal people can hunt day or night by any means. And a number of court decisions have reaffirmed that.

So rather than the heavy-handed approach, which we know will not work, we are working with the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) and Metis Nation. We're very pleased to be working with these groups. They too recognize this concern of night hunting — of safe night hunting that is — and we will work towards resolving this within the next few weeks.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Compensation for Hepatitis C Victims

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister, I first brought up the issue of compensating hepatitis C victims when Louise Simard was the NDP Health minister. Mr. Minister, you are now the third Health minister since she's left and still your government has done nothing.

Mr. Minister, I am healthy and continue to ask questions year after year, but hepatitis C victims are dying; they're fighting for their lives; and they shouldn't have to fight you in court as well. The Krever Commission says it's only fair these people should be compensated.

The lawyer for hepatitis C help in Saskatchewan, Mr. Sellness, is here and some of his sufferers today. And they are here to seek fairness from you, Mr. Minister. They're asking today for fairness.

Mr. Minister, you could have led the pack of provinces in helping hepatitis C victims if you wanted to. But instead, you have to play follow the leader once again. It's been announced that Quebec is the first province to set up joint plans to compensate hepatitis C victims.

Mr. Minister, will you do the right thing and follow Quebec? Will you immediately put together a compensation package for hepatitis C victims?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the member opposite in respect to the question, first of all it has been a very, very unfortunate situation, as the member knows, that we have in this country people who have been infected by tainted blood.

As the member opposite knows, over the last several months in this country we've been establishing a new blood agency. The new blood agency is going to address itself in a very comprehensive fashion and way to ensure that into the future Canadians will have a safe blood system, that it will be transparent and would be accessible.

In respect to the issue of hepatitis C, the member knows that the resolution that was put forward in Quebec speaks to the issue of looking at how compensation will occur in the future. There are three important issues that the member needs to remember there: one is that there has been no commitment by the Government of Quebec for compensation; secondly, nor has there been any commitment on the part of the federal government for any kind of commitment; and finally, all the Canadian ministers will be looking at this for a decision resolution within short order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Crown Corporations' Foreign Investments

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan).

Mr. Minister, these days you've probably racked up more frequent flyer points than Donald Trump, flying off to all corners of the world with your political flunkies looking to blow millions of Saskatchewan taxpayers' dollars. And who are you accountable to? — no one. You hop on a plane with your patronage buddies, like Don Ching and Jack Messer and Carole Bryant, with absolutely no accountability to the people who pay the bills. Taxpayers have a message for you, Mr. Minister. It's not your money.

Mr. Minister, taxpayers don't want their money, collected through huge rate increases, spent in Guyana or Australia or the Caribbean or anywhere else. They want their money to stay here in this province, invested in our hospitals, our schools and universities, our roads, and most of all our people.

Mr. Minister, how can you justify this lack of investment in Saskatchewan, while you're spending that money all over the world?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to rise in the first day of this renewed session, on such a beautiful, wonderful day outside, with El Nino providing wonderful temperatures.

But I want to say to the members opposite, that when they talk about, when they talk about rate increases and the charges that our utilities charge in the province of Saskatchewan, I'm going to be tabling for that member opposite, so that he can get his line straight and maybe gain some credibility, that we have the lowest — in most cases — rates of any utilities in Canada, bar none.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — And I want to say on the issue of credibility to that member, because he raises the issue of credibility, I want to quote when he was asked about crossing the floor, whether he intended to cross the floor, and I quote, he says, the member opposite who asked the question: "I absolutely can say I never, ever considered, never mind participated, in any discussion, that is to cross the floor."

Now you, sir, if you want credibility in this House on this issue or others, maybe you want to straighten this one out first before you go on with your supplement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Mr. Minister, you've got a lot of straightening out to do for your political fellows. Don Ching said the other day that SaskTel plans to invest 150 to \$200 million of Saskatchewan taxpayers' money all over the world without any accountability at all.

Mr. Minister, you're taking this money from Saskatchewan taxpayers and you're, without any checks and balances, are going to invest this money anywhere you and your political flunkies feel that they'd like to do it. Mr. Minister, earlier I served notice that there is going to be, in my Bill, the proposal that you're held accountable under a rate review process for investment and proper utility hike review.

Mr. Minister, will you support that motion, or that Bill, that will call for real accountability by your government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I want to say that I thought the editorial in the *Leader-Post* of December 6, captured the spirit of Saskatchewan on the issue of Crown corporations when it said: "Crown export of its expertise is welcome."

And I want to say that this is what the majority of people are thinking in the province. Now you mention Mr. Ching and his secret announcement of the investment. I want to remind you that he made it at Crown Corporations Committee meeting with your people sitting there and the press reporting on it. That's how secret it is.

But I want to say to you about your secret deals. Here is a report, Liberal MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) denies defection rumours, and I want to quote. This is the member opposite speaking: "I was elected in Melfort-Tisdale as a Liberal and will continue to represent Melfort-Tisdale." Credibility? Sir, you're going to have to work on that a little.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I'll ask all hon. members from the government side and the official opposition to come to order. Order. Order.

Compensation for Hepatitis C Victims

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when Harry Kotyk of Watson underwent heart surgery a few years ago, he had no idea he was going to contract another disease. He was infected with tainted blood. Now he has only days to live and his main concern, Mr. Speaker, is the mountain of bills his wife of 51 years will be left with after he is gone.

The Krever report has recommended that the provinces and Ottawa provide compensation to hepatitis C victims. Ottawa is willing, the province of Quebec is willing, and the stumbling block is the province of Saskatchewan. This NDP government, Mr. Speaker, is once again stalling. It is a wonderful day outside today, Mr. Speaker, but it's not so wonderful for Mr. and Mrs. Kotyk.

Mr. Minister of Health, the Liberal opposition will be moving a resolution, following question period, calling on all members of this Assembly to unanimously support the principles of compensation in this report. Will you and your colleagues on the government side support this motion?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And to the member from Arm River, as I said earlier to the member from Moosomin, this is a tragic situation as the member knows, that Canadians today are experiencing the issue of tainted blood.

As a Health minister for Canada, or for Saskatchewan, and as Health ministers across the country, we are coming together to address the issue in a very, very broad way, and a very specific fashion as well. As I said earlier, we're going to have in this country, a new blood system that will attempt to ensure that never again in this country will we see and experience like the folks that you talk about are experiencing today.

By the same token, Mr. Member, I have recently, as of this afternoon, spoken with Mr. Rock, who tells me that there isn't a specific amount of dollars of any kind on the table. Now if you can provide that for me, I would be pleased to see that.

Secondly, I would like to say to the member that the resolution from Quebec speaks to the issue of examining in a broad way what the compensation package for Canadians will be who are hep C infected. That will be the position that this province will take, and I would suggest to you that that will be the position that all Canadian provinces will be taking.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Harry Kotyk can't wait any longer, Mr. Minister. His life is short. There are other people in this province in the same position as he is and his family. Why can't this province, for once in its life, not take a lead role in this? Why can't you say to those people: yes, we're willing to look at it; Saskatchewan's going to be the leaders here; the NDP government's going to take the lead instead of sitting back?

Mr. Minister, I ask you again, will you support our resolution later this afternoon, and will you immediately start a package of remuneration for these folks that so desperately need it?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just first to the member, as the member knows, in Saskatchewan we have been leaders in medicare and health reform for ever. And this is another example, Mr. Speaker, of where it will require, where it will require for all of the provinces in Canada to ensure that people are treated fairly, compassionately, and equally across the piece.

I don't believe for a minute that the member opposite is suggesting that Saskatchewan should do something that would be indifferent to what other Canadians should experience in terms of compensation as it relates to hep C.

As the member knows, we're meeting again in the end of January. At the end of January all of the provincial ministers will be coming together, along with Mr. Rock, to ensure that we have a systematic, fashionable, appropriate compensation plan for all people who are affected with hep C.

And to the resolution that you speak about later this afternoon, Mr. Member, I will be supporting it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While I'm extremely happy to hear that, Mr. Minister, and that is a start, however there are people . . . Mrs. Kotyk is here today in our gallery. Her husband is at home dying and they need help. He needs to die in a peaceful manner, knowing that his wife and his family will be looked after. He's sustained tremendous bills and costs from this illness. They don't have the time, Mr. Minister.

If you don't believe me, Mr. Minister, I challenge you and I'll ask you, if you will, will you accompany me to Watson to meet Mr. Kotyk and his wife and their family and sit down and talk and see if you don't think that compensation is a need immediately there. I offer the challenge to you, Mr. Minister. Will you do that?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, I don't need to be convinced that there are people in Saskatchewan who are suffering from hepatitis C to the same extent that the Kotyks are. I don't need to be convinced of that.

I have already said to the member opposite that people who are infected in this province by hepatitis C and Canadians who've been infected by the tainted blood are going to receive, are going to receive some type of a compensation. We don't know

what that compensation will be today because there are a variety of different ways in which hepatitis C affects people today.

There are different kinds of procedures at which we need to look at that will further extend the kinds of treatment that these individuals will require into the future. And the question isn't only about a financial compensation package, I'm sure the member isn't suggesting, but there'll be education. There'll be a requirement for additional health services across the country. There'll need to be an enhancement of the blood system in a variety of different ways.

This isn't a simple issue that provides only an opportunity of a small payment. And I understand — and I'm sure that you understand that, I'm sure that the Kutyks understand that, and I know that all Canadians who are affected by this way understand that, and you need to allow us to complete the process with our federal friend.

The Speaker: — Next question. Next question.

Report on Betaseron

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There seems to be a lack of compassion which exists in the members opposite. When this government finally brought Betaseron under the scope of the exception drug status, it was only after repeated calls by the Liberal opposition and MS (multiple sclerosis) victims being forced to beg for these drugs on the steps of the legislature.

Now a freedom of information request has confirmed that the former Health minister sat on the findings of a report on Betaseron for nine months before making it public, while MS victims continued to suffer attacks; while their health deteriorated, the member from Saskatoon Mount Royal hid the findings of this report.

My question for the Premier: we have to assume, Mr. Premier, that you instructed your minister to sit on this report. If not, will you not be . . . will you be calling for his resignation for his failure to live up to his responsibility to the chronically ill of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as hepatitis C is a very difficult issue to address, as was MS, and the member opposite knows that there are a vast number of reviews that have been done, a number of studies that have been done on the value of the drugs, of Betaseron for MS patients in terms of rehabilitation and convalescence and treatment — the member knows that. And this government at no time has ever said — and closed the door — that we would not cover Betaseron from the first time that we looked at it.

And again in September of this past year, I said to the member opposite and all MS patients that at this particular point in time we would not cover Betaseron. And the rationale behind that, Mr. Speaker, was that we have a new drug on the system, which was Copaxone. And I wanted a full review and examination of the benefits that these drugs would provide to Saskatchewan

MS sufferers.

As a result of that, that's why you've seen the delay. Was it too long? Absolutely it was too long, Mr. Speaker. Are we going to have another method of dealing with this? — yes. We now have the task force on high-cost drugs to ensure that in the future we don't experience the same kinds of issues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. In spite of repeated requests from the Liberal opposition during the last session of this legislature, the former Health minister refused to confirm he had received the report on Betaseron and what the findings were. Obviously he did not want to confirm the report at a time when the legislature was sitting and the federal election was looming.

Mr. Speaker, and, Mr. Premier, it smelt like a cover-up then and it smells like a cover-up now. How can you look in the mirror, Mr. Premier, when petty political games were played while MS victims were suffering attacks, their health was deteriorating, and they were forced to beg for Betaseron on the steps of the legislature.

Now we have a similar situation with victims of hepatitis C. Do you have no more compassion left, Mr. Premier?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite should be reminded that the recommendation of the Formulary Committee was not to approve Betaseron. And the examination of the Department of Health and this government was to look fully to see how we might be able to enhance the lives of people who were affected with MS. And at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, why isn't the member opposite standing up in this House and talking about what we have done for MS patients in this province. Why isn't he doing that? For we've covered Betaseron, with only four other . . . three other provinces in this country. Six other provinces do not cover Betaseron. Why doesn't the member talk about that?

And why doesn't the member opposite talk about the fact that we are the only province in Canada that covers Copaxone — the only province in Canada that covers Copaxone. Instead the member opposite dwells on process, on which this government and the Department of Health, it tried to ensure due diligence so MS patients in this province were well covered.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of Pages

The Speaker: — Hon. members, before orders of the day, the Chair has a number of tasks to complete. And the first thing I want to do is to introduce to the members the pages for the resumption of the second session of the twenty-third legislature.

And I'll ask if the pages will stand as I introduce them, or if they're standing if they would wave. Daniel Abramson, Rebecca Fiissel, Kristina Potter, Graham Condo. And, hon. members, tomorrow Aamna Afsar will join these four pages.

I wish to advise all hon. members that the pages are volunteers from visitor services branch and the Legislative Library. Hon. members, your pages for this session.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — The Chair wishes to table the, pursuant to section 14 of The Provincial Auditor Act, the annual report on operations for the year ended March 31, 1997 by the Provincial Auditor.

Also, pursuant to the Speaker's decision of August 21, 1997 regarding the status of opposition caucuses, I hereby table the decision and relevant documents.

Also I table the audited financial statements and schedule of assets of the government caucus office for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1997.

As well I table audited financial statements and schedule of assets of the opposition caucus office for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1997.

Order. Also I table audited financial statements and schedule of assets of the third party caucus office for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1997.

I also wish to table a members' accountability and disclosure report for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1997.

Also pursuant to section 14 of The Provincial Auditor Act, I table the Provincial Auditor's 1997 Fall Report, Volume 1. And in accordance with the provisions of The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, as well as The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, I submit the fifth annual report from the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Also pursuant to section 14 of The Provincial Auditor Act, I table the Provincial Auditor's business and financial plan for the year ended March 31, 1999 . . . Order. Order.

I also table the audited financial statements and schedule of assets for the Progressive Conservative caucus for the period from April 1, 1997 to August 7, 1997. Order. Order.

Also pursuant to section 14 . . . Order. Order. Order. I'll ask — order — I will ask all hon. members on both sides of the House to . . . Order. I'll ask the hon. member for Melfort-Tisdale to come to order, please, and the Deputy Premier. And I will also ask the House Leader of the third party to come to order as well. Order.

Pursuant to section 14 of The Provincial Auditor Act, I table the Provincial Auditor's 1997 Fall Report, Volume 2. Order. And also I table the library report for the period ending March 31, 1997.

The Speaker: — Why is the Government House Leader on her feet?

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — To propose . . . Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to move the following procedural enabling motion by leave of the Assembly:

That private members' motions be designated as a special order on December 15, 17, 18, and 19, 1997 for the purpose of members of the opposition to move private members' motions, with the topic of debate to be chosen in sequence each of the said days by the opposition, third party, and independent members, with order of rotation fixed so that the opposition topic of debate will take priority on December 15 and 18, the third party topic of debate will take priority on December 17, and an independent member's topic of debate will take priority on December 19. And except that on December 17 and December 19, the second topic of debate taken up in the sequence shall be designated by the opposition.

And further, that debate on any private member's motion moved pursuant to this order be subject to time limits as follows: that debate on a private member's motion moved by a member of the opposition, for a period of no longer than 60 minutes; that debate on a private member's motion moved by a member of the third party, be for a period of no longer than 45 minutes; and that debate on a private member's motion moved by an independent member, be for a period of time no longer than 25 minutes.

And further, that at the expiration of the time designated for any private member's motion made under this order, the Speaker shall interrupt proceedings, unless sooner concluded, in order to put every question necessary to dispose of the said motion.

And further, that the notice of motion provisions provided under rule 18(2) be suspended for the purposes of this order so that private members' motions moved on December 15 may be made without notice, but thereafter all other private members' motions made under this order shall be required to have notice pursuant to rule 45.

And further, that on December 16 a special order be designated for the purpose of a government motion to be moved without notice, and debate on the said motion shall continue no longer than until 4:45 p.m., at which time the Speaker shall interrupt proceedings, unless sooner concluded, in order to put every question necessary to dispose of the said motion.

And further, that the mover of the said government motion will have a maximum of 30 minutes to speak to the motion, to be followed in sequence by a member of the opposition, followed by the member of the third party, both of whom will each have a maximum of 20 minutes to speak to the motion. Followed thereafter by independent members, who will have, cumulatively, a maximum of 15 minutes to speak to the motion, with the balance of time being available to any other member, who may speak to the motion for a maximum of 5 minutes.

And further, that this order will expire upon adjournment of the Assembly on Friday, December 19, 1997.

Leave granted.

(1430)

MOTION TO ESTABLISH A SPECIAL ORDER

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — I move, seconded by the Opposition House Leader:

That private members' motions be designated as a special order on December 15, 17, 18, and 19, 1997, for the purpose of members of the opposition to move private members' motions, with the topic of debate to be chosen in sequence each of the said days by the opposition, third party, and independent members, with order of rotation fixed so that the opposition topic of debate will take priority on December 15 and 18; the third party topic of debate will take priority on December 17, and an independent member's topic of debate will take priority on December 19; and except that on December 17 and December 19, the second topic of debate taken up in the sequence shall be designated by the opposition, and further;

That debate on any private member's motion moved pursuant to this order be subject to time limits as follows: the debate on a private member's motion moved by a member of the opposition be for a period of no longer than 60 minutes; that debate on a private member's motion moved by a member of the third party be for a period of no longer than 45 minutes; and that debate on a private member's motion moved by an independent member be for a period of time no longer than 25 minutes, and further;

That at the expiration of the time designated for any private member's motion made under this order, the Speaker shall interrupt proceedings, unless sooner concluded, in order to put every question necessary to dispose of the said motion, and further;

That the notice of motion provisions provided under rule 18(2) be suspended for the purposes of this order so that private members' motions moved on December 15 may be made without notice, but thereafter all other private members' motions made under this order shall be required to have notice pursuant to rule 45, and further;

That on December 16, a special order be designated for the purpose of a government motion to be moved without notice, and debate on the said motion shall continue no longer than until 4:45 p.m., at which time the Speaker shall interrupt proceedings, unless sooner concluded, in order to put every question necessary to dispose of the said motion, and further;

That the mover of the said government motion will have a maximum of 30 minutes to speak to the motion, to be followed in sequence by a member of the opposition, followed by the member of the third party, both of whom will each have a maximum of 20 minutes to speak to the motion, followed thereafter by independent members, who will cumulatively have a maximum of 15 minutes to speak

to the motion, with the balance of time being available to any other member, who may speak to the motion for a maximum of 5 minutes, and further;

That this order will expire upon adjournment of the Assembly on Friday, December 19, 1997.

Motion agreed to *nemine contradicente*.

SPECIAL ORDER

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Night Hunting

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to address something that's very important to the people of Saskatchewan and that's the issue of night hunting, on which I'll be moving a resolution at the end of my remarks.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very time-sensitive issue. It's important right now for a number of reasons, Mr. Speaker. First off, because of the safety of Saskatchewan citizens; secondly, because of the depletion of our natural resources, our big game. And some people would say, Mr. Speaker, that it's an issue of fairness.

Mr. Speaker, we've heard from the government this past week and in question period today a little bit about what their response is to this issue. And I think the term, little, is appropriate in this particular case, because it is an extremely little response.

We brought this issue up, Mr. Speaker, during the last session back in February. The minister at that time didn't believe it was an issue. It wasn't a crisis. There was no need for action. He was going to meet and review the situation with his department and with people affected. It's taken him a year almost, Mr. Speaker, to finally say we're going to do something.

He's not exactly saying what he's going to do, but he is going to do something in February, so a year from the time that we first brought this issue forward. And it wasn't just an issue that came forward in February, Mr. Speaker.

This was an issue that came forward the fall before, during hunting season of that year, when it became evident that there was a serious depletion of big game at that time; that night hunting was one of the causes of that game depletion.

But after this fall, after the NDP's convention, the minister did come out fairly quickly and make a statement, because the NDP membership at their annual convention supported a move to ban night hunting. Now some people have attributed that to the minister's move. I think, Mr. Speaker, it was more likely the fact that we were going to have this fall session and the minister didn't want to get caught in the headlights.

Well, Mr. Speaker, his response last week was indeed just that. He was caught in the headlights like a deer and didn't know which way to turn, and he finally had to say something. And he finally responded.

Now he doesn't know what he's going to do with his response. Some people are saying he said this. Some people are saying he said that. No one in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, knows what this minister intends to do, if he intends to do anything.

I think it's very incumbent on the government, on the cabinet, on the Premier, to do something about this particular issue. The minister has talked about restricting spotlight hunting, and he's mentioned truck lights and other night-scopes and those kinds of things.

Well, Mr. Speaker, he's talked about . . . I heard him on the radio this morning saying that in southern Saskatchewan hunting with artificial lights would be restricted, would be banned for everyone.

It went on to say that in the North though, however, it may be possible to hunt at night. Well, Mr. Minister, Mr. Speaker, if it's a danger to Saskatchewan citizens in southern Saskatchewan to hunt at night, isn't it also a danger to citizens in northern Saskatchewan if someone is hunting at night?

The minister talks about it being bright up north in the night. Well there are days, Mr. Speaker, in southern Saskatchewan when with a full moon and snow on the ground, it can be fairly bright. But not every evening, not every night, Mr. Speaker, has a full moon, has snow on the ground, and is bright. But the minister in his comments seemed to indicate that any night up north would be fine for hunting.

One of the problems that the minister's comments bring forward is this will not take into . . . won't take effect until next year; so we have another entire season to go through before any regulations, any restrictions are put in place. And he still leaves undefined the meaning of the terms, unpopulated area, and it still leaves the leeway of Metis hunting, Mr. Speaker.

But who is penalized by this? The people who are penalized are those today who buy hunting licences. The minister has talked of restricting certain areas. Well in restricting hunters in certain areas, the only people he has the ability to restrict under the current regulations are people who buy hunting licences. Everyone else is still entitled to go ahead and do exactly the same hunting they were doing previously.

And his rationale for this course of action, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that he believes the courts will not allow any regulation that might infringe on treaty rights. Well, Mr. Speaker, that might be the case, but in Manitoba and Alberta they have put in regulations that ban night hunting, and as of yet they have not been challenged in the courts. And they have those laws in place now for approximately three years.

Well, Mr. Speaker, at least we would get three years worth of reprieve, three years worth of safety for Saskatchewan citizens, three years for which our wildlife to recover if these kind of laws and regulations were put in place in Saskatchewan.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba legislation forbids the discharge of a firearm anytime after one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise. It seems to be effective, Mr. Speaker, because the poachers, the night hunters from Manitoba, do it in Saskatchewan. They don't do it at home —

they do it in Saskatchewan.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, our wildlife resources are being depleted at four times — four times — the normal rate. We have heard reports, Mr. Speaker, of widespread Indian and Metis groups coming across from Manitoba to hunt in Saskatchewan. In fact we've heard reports of people coming in from Ontario to hunt in Saskatchewan, and Alberta, to hunt in Saskatchewan, because in their own jurisdictions there are rules and regulations in place which do not allow for indiscriminate hunting. We need the same kind of rules and regulations as are across the rest of Canada, Mr. Speaker. Why is Saskatchewan an island unto itself? Why is Saskatchewan becoming an island denuded of large game animals, Mr. Speaker?

Last February, in a response to reports of depletion at that time, the minister said, it's not a crisis. We are not in a position to say any one cause is responsible for declining game populations at this time.

Well, Mr. Speaker, he may not have been in a place to make those comments at that time, but if he had contacted his department and asked the questions — because the information was coming from one of his own department representatives — they were saying that indiscriminate night hunting, indiscriminate hunting by Indians and Metis, were the cause of the game depletion. Year after year after year, Mr. Speaker, we have seen a declining number of licences issued to hunters and yet the big game populations are decreasing dramatically, particularly up in the Hudson Bay area of the province, Mr. Speaker.

This was a problem a year ago and nothing has been done about it to date. It will be a problem a year from now if that minister isn't prepared to act, Mr. Speaker. And he has to act immediately, because while the government is sitting on their hands, Mr. Speaker, people's lives are at risk. People don't let their children go out to play after dark for fear of being shot. People are having their cattle shot, Mr. Speaker, during the night from night hunters. And no action is taken, Mr. Speaker, no action at all in these cases, because nobody comes out to check.

When someone in a rural area phones the game department and says somebody is out night hunting in my pasture or the field across the road or wherever the case may be, what's the conservation officer's response? Generally, Mr. Speaker, there is no response, because they say, what's the point of me coming out? I can't do anything about it anyways.

And now, Mr. Speaker, we see the case where the conservation officers are not prepared to go out at night because the government refuses to issue them side-arms. That's a separate issue, Mr. Speaker, but what it does is allow more and more people to abuse the law and night hunt. The minister stood up in question period and said they have a rule no. 41 in the Act that says no one is allowed to use a spotlight or any other artificial means to hunt at night. So, Mr. Speaker, when is he going to enforce it? He certainly isn't doing it now and I suspect he will not be doing it in the future, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the other part of the issue is the destruction of our wildlife reserves. If the minister doesn't act soon, Mr. Speaker,

he will not have to act at all — there will be no big game left in Saskatchewan. Moose and elk in Saskatchewan will be similar to the dodo birds in Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker. They'll be history.

We will talk about them fondly but we will not see them. Your children and mine will not be seeing them. And we're not that far from it. We have a chance though, Mr. Speaker, to allow those stocks to replenish, but only, Mr. Speaker, if we get the indiscriminate hunting under control, if the government is allowed to manage the wildlife resources like they should be, Mr. Speaker — like we all expect them to be.

Mr. Speaker, we met last week with one of the chiefs of one of the bands. He believes that there is a problem here; that there needs to be a solution found. But, Mr. Speaker, he admits that we can't wait too long either; that it has to be done as soon as possible. But yet the minister simply says we're going to talk about it. Well we can talk and we can talk and we can talk, but if all you're going to do is talk, Mr. Speaker, there is no resolution.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the solutions to this, the minister's is to penalize those who are already purchasing the hunting licences. Mr. Speaker, that is not a good solution; that's an impossible solution.

(1445)

You have to go back to the cause, to the root of the problem, Mr. Speaker, and that's indiscriminate night hunting, which needs to be banned across Saskatchewan, not just in half of Saskatchewan, not in a small portion, not in designated areas, but the entire province, Mr. Speaker.

Night hunting across North America has been agreed to be unacceptable. It needs to be unacceptable in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Therefore I'm calling on the minister, on his colleagues, on the Liberal members, on the independent members, to support our caucus in the following resolution.

And I would like to move this resolution, seconded by the member from Rosthern.

That this Assembly condemn the government for not dealing with the ongoing problems of night hunting in Saskatchewan and the effects this dangerous practice has on the safety of Saskatchewan people, the depletion of our province's wildlife and our ecosystem, and the loss of millions of dollars in tourism to our province; and further demand the government immediately follow the province of Manitoba and ban all night hunting in the province of Saskatchewan instead of continuing to ignore this issue.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as we said, I'm happy to go ahead and second that particular motion.

There a number of things that I think that we need to be aware of. In the discussion of night hunting, that has been excellent cooperation on behalf . . . on the part of our aboriginal communities. They agree that night hunting is a problem. They

agree that there is a safety problem over there. They agree with the fact that with the night hunting you have game that may be not always be brought in. They agree with the danger to the residents of the area.

And so it's surprising, with all that agreement that's out there for the concerns for night hunting, that this government has taken literally years to start to put the whole program together and to even admit at this particular point that there is a problem and that they may actually be doing something about it.

Game numbers are always a concern to people living off the land and people living near the land. And I think in a province such as Saskatchewan, which is as open and as free as it is, it is a concern to every single individual in this particular province.

It is not in the interests of either the aboriginal or the non-aboriginal communities to see wildlife depleted. And it matters not where we go in this particular province of ours, on a holiday or on a trip, that we run into some of the beautiful sights that we have. Whether we're down with the elk in the Cypress Hills and we say this is truly unique, this is a very special sort of a place. Antelope in the south-west part of the province as well. Whether we talk about moose in the North or deer throughout our whole province, it's something that we're very fortunate in this province to have and every single individual in this province has a responsibility to make sure that wildlife is not depleted.

Merril Fiddler, communications director of the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan local 269, said, and I quote: "Metis people are as concerned about wildlife as anyone else."

So when we have that kind of a statement from communications directors, why has it taken this government so long to even think that there's a problem, to even think about maybe they should take some form of action. And as we've seen, the action they've taken is too little too late and won't do much good in the future either.

There are widespread reports of Indian and Metis people coming from Manitoba to Saskatchewan to night hunt. And we've talked particularly about the area in the north-east corner of our province. And we know it's true. But it's not just in the north-east corner of the province. It happened to elk last year in the Cypress Hills. There is no antelope season in Saskatchewan this year, and yet they were still being hunted. And what did our government do? The same thing they did last year — nothing.

And so we have numbers that are so low that there can't be a season on it, and yet they're not enforcing any of the protection of the wildlife that needs to be done.

All native groups know that spotlight hunting is not a part of traditional hunting — never has been. But where is this government? — just doesn't want to wake up to the problems that are out there.

In the answer that was given earlier on, the minister said something about the various treaties that were out there. Well we need some definitions. We need a definition of the Metis Nation that is not as vague and undefined as it is right now. No one knows how many there are in the province. No one knows

what the effect on hunting in Saskatchewan's going to be.

To allow any group to be unrealistically encompassing in membership is questionable at best. But when this places support requirements on the rest of society; when businesses, from outfitters to tourism, are damaged; and the very natural resources that make Saskatchewan special are in danger, then it is no longer just questionable, it is also unacceptable.

Jim Deroucher, provincial president of the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan, describes the Metis status application process as a kind of honour system. Now that in itself is honourable and will work very well for all the people of Saskatchewan who are honourable. But as Shakespeare himself said, everyone may not be. And so that opens a very large door for misuse.

No census of the Metis population has ever been done. And you, Mr. Minister, do not know how many people are out there hunting. You have no idea. The government response is, and I quote from the minister:

If Metis people abuse their aboriginal hunting rights by killing too many animals, the provincial government may declare some areas of . . . province off limits to hunting

And then comes an interesting part.

In the worst case scenario, if the moose or whatever are completely wiped out, we will close . . . hunting in that area to allow the population to build back up.

So it looks like we're going to go to the place where we have nothing left of the population and then we'll shut down hunting. Well I suggest to you, that is a very barn-door operation — when what we will do is wait till the last animal is gone and then we'll decide there's no hunting in the area.

How utterly ludicrous to do that. Why wait till our wildlife population is gone? Why wait till our outfitters are broke? Why wait till our tourism falls flat on its face? And why wait till we've destroyed a major part of what all of Saskatchewan is about, and that is our natural resources?

And that particular quote from the minister comes from *Star-Phoenix*, December 14 of '96. I think what we must make sure that what happens here is that a few hunters are not penalized for the actions of a few other ones. We must make sure that what happens is fair and just for everyone.

It is urgent that the province have comprehensive laws to deal with all residents in a fair manner. Metis and natives claim hunting rights under the Constitution Act and the Natural Resources Transfer Act of 1930. However, according to Metis lawyer, Clem Chartier, both allow infringement of hunting rights for justifiable grounds, one of which is conservation.

And one of the key things we're talking about in this whole thing is conservation. When our wildlife populations become endangered, the numbers are going down and we have to stop all hunting altogether, as has happened with the antelope situation, then those justifiable grounds, the ground of conservation, is in fact there.

Aboriginals claim a need to retain the right to hunt for food and we have no argument with that, but this was put in place when there were no social safety nets. No hunting at that time would have brought about the death and starvation of those whole populations. They needed to be able to be allowed to hunt.

We must however, deal with our resources as they are today and the people of this province as our society is today. In Manitoba, Metis have been required to prove that they use hunting as a major source of food and we need to do that in Saskatchewan as well.

And the government, it appears, are using the courts and Metis rights as the excuse not to do anything. Other jurisdictions have acted on these issues and they have acted successfully. Therefore I ask the support of every member in this House for this piece of legislation.

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to speak on this very important and current issue. It is obvious that this is a very real concern with the people of Saskatchewan, obvious in many ways, including the number of petitions which were presented, tabled here today by the members opposite.

I can assure that the members opposite and everyone else that I share the concerns expressed by the people of Saskatchewan. We have received a very clear message that enough is enough when it comes to unsafe night hunting and we are working towards that. We are continuing to work towards resolving this very complex and even volatile issue out there in Saskatchewan.

However, I do oppose the motion as presented by the members opposite because a total ban on all night hunting in Saskatchewan will not work. And we in fact have . . . our Wildlife Act states in section 41:

No person shall, at any time, use a searchlight, spotlight, flashlight, jacklight, night light, headlight, or any other light or cast a ray of light for the purpose of hunting any wildlife.

So we have this law on the books, Mr. Speaker, but apparent . . . obviously the courts and treaty rights, aboriginal rights, have superseded this legislation. So what we must do is find a solution and that's what we are doing.

The treaties, Mr. Speaker, which were passed over a hundred years ago now, clearly stated that aboriginal people, that treaty Indians, have the right to hunt and fish day or night and by any means. Now some have questioned, in those days when the treaties were signed, the aboriginal people hunted with bow and arrow, so they should still be doing that. Well the response to that, Mr. Speaker, is when farmers started farming here a hundred years ago, they used horse and oxen and one-furrow ploughs.

The courts have indicated that as technology and more information comes forward, the aboriginal people can use these, this technology and new ways of doing things, like anyone else.

In 1964 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled, in what was called

the Prince decision, that indeed aboriginal people have the right to use lights for hunting at night and that decision has stood. There's been other challenges since that time, and in 1990 the Grumbo . . . or sorry the Sparrow decision was ruled by the Supreme Court of Canada. The Sparrow decision was very significant. The Sparrow decision said, if there was good reason, for an examples, public safety or conservation, treaty rights may be encroached upon, but only minimally and this can only be done after adequate consultation. So that is the avenue we are looking at.

On top of this, Mr. Speaker, we have the Grumbo decision of 1996, where the court ruled that Metis have the same rights as treaty Indians for the purposes of hunting and fishing. So unlike the courts in Manitoba, which ruled they do not have that right, this has created a bigger additional problem for us, but we are . . . we have appealed that decision. The appeal was heard in June and we are awaiting for the results of that appeal.

As I referred to the Sparrow case, Mr. Speaker, this is what we are looking at. Obviously there is a problem out there, safety and conservation. And we do respect the treaty rights and we are looking at how we can solve this problem. And certainly consultation is clearly outlined as one of these processes. So we are at the stage now where we've been working with the various first nation bands for over a year on this important issue. And we commend the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and their leaders, along with the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan and their leaders, who have come to the table, who also recognize this is a very serious problem and they too want to end unsafe night hunting.

They are concerned about safety and conservation, like everyone else. And they have also publicly condemned the use of lights for hunting at night and they have said this is not an original treaty right — this is not an original practice carried out by aboriginal people.

(1500)

So we are working to resolve this very important issue with the FSIN and it is our goal to ultimately end unsafe night hunting, which would include the use of any lights in Saskatchewan, while respecting the treaty rights.

Conservation is certainly a very important issue in addition to the safety. We will be carrying out very extensive aerial surveys, if and when we get some snow to do this work in the new year. All reports indicate that in some areas the moose population is down considerably and there's other pockets where there may be problems. We will be addressing this, and if need be we can create a game preserve which will eliminate all hunting. And we will not wait until a species is completely wiped out; we will make sure that the population is still viable. But if we have to, we can take the steps to curtail any hunting.

We believe that the cooperative approach of working together is much preferred and is our only hope, rather than the heavy-handed approach that has consistently failed in court. We look forward to consulting, as required, with the FSIN and the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan, and certainly other groups like SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation. We will have a solution

to the unsafe night hunting issue following meaningful consultations, which will end with the FSIN chiefs' conference around February 1. Within a couple of weeks after that we will have a solution to this.

I guess in closing, we will continue to respect treaty and aboriginal rights, but we are also committed to ending unsafe night hunting in Saskatchewan and we look forward to seeing this day a few weeks down the road. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support the motion put forward by the member from Cannington regarding the problems associated with night hunting.

Mr. Speaker, I have had a number of Humboldt constituents bring to my attention their complete disapproval with night hunting. They have spoken of their fears connected to the obvious dangers and they're wondering why government would allow the extremely hazardous condition to continue on.

In addition, the big game population is being seriously eroded and the people of my constituency would like the government to do something now in order to expedite the process as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to also rise in support of the motion.

Mr. Speaker, I personally have only hunted one season in my life and that was because my father-in-law was an avid hunter. And when I was first dating my present wife you had to do the things that you had to do in order to impress a potential father-in-law, and one of them was to go hunting. Mr. Speaker, it would probably be a lot more riskier now if he could take his son-in-law; after 30 years it may be a different situation.

But, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that really, really concerned me in my one season of hunting experience with my father-in-law was the whole issue surrounding safety. Mr. Speaker, it struck me that even when you have hunters properly attired in the daylight with reflective coveralls and things of that nature, many times when you're in the bush and you're tramping, looking for an animal to hunt, you very often are misled by what your eyes see, and every year unfortunately and tragically, there are a number of hunting accidents — and some of them fatalities — in the hunting season in daylight hours, Mr. Speaker. And certainly that is always an issue that we have to have before us first and foremost.

And, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the situation is compounded by a hundredfold in night hunting. Certainly that if a person with a spotlight captures an animal in the rays of that spotlight, you can see the animal, and you freeze the animal and you shoot. The problem is you don't see anything that's beyond the range of that spotlight and we all know that the bullet goes a lot further than the range of the lights.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister saying that they're really concerned about the safety issue, but the safety

issue didn't just suddenly happen this weekend. The safety issue has always been there. The safety issue should have been something that we'd talked seriously about all along. And, Mr. Speaker, that is the problem here. There's a number of problems with this issue and the first and foremost one, in my experience, is the issue surrounding safety.

Mr. Speaker, it strikes me that when we look at some of these fundamental issues that there can be surely no argument about, that surely we should find a way to be able to act very quickly and very effectively in order to address the seriousness of that issue.

Mr. Speaker, people are genuinely fearful. In the areas where the hunting is actually occurring, it's been reported that people see lights at night in a haphazard and a random way, and people are almost certain before any shots are fired that what's happening is people are spotlighting for game animals.

And so what we have, Mr. Speaker, is people then on their farmyards who see the lights and are fearful for what it means for the safety of themselves and their families. And so what happens, you got to go into your house or you got to go into your basement in order to protect yourself from the fact that a random, stray bullet potentially could do serious damage beyond the range of those spotlights.

And so, Mr. Speaker, it strikes me as strange, as what we've been doing is talking for over a year about something as fundamental as safety. Surely something could have been done a lot sooner, particularly when we recognize that other provinces have recognized this great danger and have banned all hunting at night, period; discharge of firearms in the instance in Manitoba, period. And not just for hunting, period, because they recognize how dangerous to discharge a firearm at night may be.

And, Mr. Speaker, what this motion talks about is the discharge of firearms for hunting purposes, because there may be instances where a farmer has to shoot a skunk that's terrorizing his chickens or something of that nature that is justifiable and is reasonable. But hunting never can be.

The other thing that I think is very important to think about in the whole safety issue is what it does to people generally when they realize that this is going on.

Mr. Speaker, what's happened is people have become so fearful and so upset about this very issue, and so upset about the fact that the government has been so extremely slow to take any action at all — and then only now when pressured not by the logic of safety, but being pressured by the signatures on petitions; not by the logic of safety, but being pressured by the fact that we've been raising this issue for sometime — finally the government acknowledges that it's at least talking.

And that, Mr. Speaker, simply is not good enough in people's minds and so you end up with people saying, if the government is not willing to act, we've got to take matters into our own hands. And it concerns me a great deal.

And I notice in an article from the P.A. (Prince Albert) *Herald*, October 22, 1997, where Candle Lake residents are quoted as

saying they're ready to take on poachers. And Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote from that. It says:

"Night hunting has taken off again this fall," . . . (Not for the first time, again.) "From mid-September to mid-October is the worst time because it seems that night hunting is the favourite time for Indian and Metis hunters, and the . . . (conservation officers) are not responding to calls.

"If SERM . . . is not going to enforce the law then it's going to be up us to do it."

Mr. Speaker, that concerns me a great deal. When you have people so concerned about their safety that they're willing to consider taking the law into their own hands, Mr. Speaker, that's a concern to me and it should be a concern to all citizens of this province.

And this government should be held responsible for not only not doing anything this whole while, now coming up with a very, very half-hearted effort while people's safety is at risk here, Mr. Speaker. Safety is a constant that we have to deal with and we have to deal with effectively and efficiently, and I urge all members to support this Bill because it'll deal with the issue today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy today, Mr. Speaker, to include a few words with this debate in terms of defending motherhood and apple pie. Obviously those of us in south-west Saskatchewan, from the Cypress Hills, would want to do that.

I think I would be remiss, though, if I missed the opportunity to not congratulate the Nekaneet Band, who reside in my constituency, on their forthright moves in the past and I think shown even today in trying to cooperate with and live with the neighbours in our community.

It is true that night hunting is a bad thing and it is true that some people do that sort of thing, but I would say that the fathers of the Nekaneet reservation have shown an example to all of us in the past few weeks wherein they have said that they will adopt a program of non-drinking in order to show the way by example to the young people in the band.

They've had some problems with drinking in the band and that sort of thing by the young people and so they took the initiative and said we're going to abstain to show the young people how to live.

That is the kind of cooperation the Nekaneet Band has shown in everything that's come up in terms of getting along with the community in the past and would do so in the future. I have no reason to suspect that they wouldn't go along with sitting down and negotiating some kind of a plan with the minister so that we no longer will see this as a problem.

They don't want anybody to get shot in the dark. They only want to feed their people, and have the right to do that. And the folks down there are definitely willing to work along with

everyone else. There have been complaints from the conservation officers about people coming in from outside reservations and depleting our gene pool, especially in the larger animal categories. Animals with the big horns, of course, are the attraction for hunters that pay big bucks to be out there, and that is another issue that needs to be addressed.

We got to talk about how we're going to preserve some of the gene pools out in our herds throughout the province, but it's not my band in the Cypress Hills that causes the problems. And I just want the people of Saskatchewan to know that if they want somebody to set an example of cooperation and getting along, they should talk to Larry Oakes and his band because they certainly are good people.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, again, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to add my voice to the very real concerns my colleagues have over the night hunting issue in Saskatchewan. The effects this dangerous practice has on the safety of the people in Saskatchewan, the depletion of our population of our province's wildlife and our ecosystem, and the loss of millions of dollars in tourism to our province is not being addressed by the wishy-washy response the government gave to night hunting.

I'm not surprised, because taking a stand on anything except taxes and cutting services has been something they've done for the last six years, but it is disappointing.

Mr. Speaker, living in a constituency with three reserves and large tracts of forest with wildlife, the issue of night hunting is one that affects many of the people of my area. These people have to live with the consequences of night hunting, while many of the fellow members of the legislature and their constituents have only a vague idea of the true consequences.

Maybe we should have gone about explaining the problem in a different way. Maybe we should just have talked about the loss of money and it would have got more attention.

Most Saskatchewan people can see that those of aboriginal ancestry have a right to hunt for sustenance as part of their treaty agreement, and some may question the meaning of sustenance. Is someone who's making over \$25,000 a year considered living on sustenance or is that only if you are on social services?

While we could debate the issue of the true meaning of it, the real point is that the issue of night hunting and depleting the animal population and placing those who live within the proximity of forests in danger of . . . in their own homes that are in danger.

You may scoff at the idea of living in the close proximity to reserves or forests as being dangerous, but the facts are there. I've been approached by many constituents who are living in fear. Just last week one of the gentlemen in our area who lives close to a reserve heard shots at night and was telling me he'd bought a brand new tractor and placed it in the shed for the winter. The next morning when he got up there was a flat tire on the tractor and there were bullet holes in the side of the shed. Fortunately the bullet was in the shed and not in his home.

Many people choose to live in rural Saskatchewan because the

sense of security that they have there, and yet now they are beginning to be afraid for their lives. Our homes are considered a source of security from the outside world. Should families that are living close to forest and native communities have to fear for their safety because government is unwilling to pass a law that would discontinue the unsafe practice of night hunting?

(1515)

It is not only the residents who live close to reserves or forests who are concerned about night hunting, our enforcement officers are as well. A couple of weeks ago I went on a ride along with the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) and they expressed their concerns about the practice of night hunting and the ramifications it had on the safety of residents.

Mr. Speaker, I hope it doesn't take a fatality before this government is willing to do the banning that is necessary. The provinces of Alberta and Manitoba seem to be more interested in protecting the residents of their provinces than this government. They have placed the ban that we need on hunting.

The issue isn't only one of safety. It is one of defamation of our wildlife population due to unsportsmanlike hunting practices. If this government continues to drag its feet on this issue we will no longer have a moose population to protect.

The government says they will do a study on the moose population this year and if the accounts from the hunters in my constituency who have hunted for 20 or 30 years are accurate, I'm sure they will find that this population is in serious danger of being decimated in north-eastern Saskatchewan.

The hunters that are living there know what's going on. Many hunters went to their favourite hunting spot for a week or two this fall and didn't see any signs of moose. When they're stopping at the stores, in the hotels and the restaurants, and talking to fellow hunters the talk centred around the lack of game.

And when the hunters leave, the talk centres around the future of the towns where the animals are all gone and what will happen when hunters no longer come to our area.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that when the treaties were signed giving aboriginals the right to hunt the intent was not to give them the right to endanger lives. I'm sure that when we do some changing in here I think that the people in my constituency are saying let's look at the treaties. They have to be . . . we have to look at them and appreciate the intent in which they were written. But we also have to work with everyone in our area, and everyone has to live within what is happening with our . . . with the population as well.

Another factor that must be considered in the night hunting is the decrease in tourist dollars to rural Saskatchewan in the eastern part of our province. Tourism is considered Saskatchewan's fastest growing and fourth largest industry, yet the government is quite willing to drag its feet and let rural Saskatchewan businesses suffer at the decrease in tourist dollars created by the hunting season.

I spoke to the owner of the Fishermans Cove in Greenwater

Park near Porcupine. This is an area where there is usually an abundance of moose and the area businesses rely on the annual hunting season. For those of you who have never been there, Fisherman's Cove offers meals, a lounge where hunters gather in the evenings for accommodation, and a store for gas and supplies.

They report this year the number of hunters were down and the dollars that were generated during hunting season were decreased. Those who came were disappointed with the lack of animals in the area and many expressed concerns about night hunting. Many were also concerned with the increase of hunters from out of province.

Mr. Speaker, the concerns and the priorities at Fishermans Cove are not isolated. Many of the small hotels and restaurants were also affected by a reduction in business due to a reduction in hunters and game. Many of you read the three-part series in the *Star-Phoenix* on night hunting, about the concerns of people in the Hudson Bay area, and they are very real concerns.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the government to take action to protect its people and its wildlife population and it's time to pass legislation that bans all night hunting.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased as well to enter this debate about night hunting, in view of the fact that it's a concern that's been raised by a number of my own constituents.

Mr. Speaker, almost immediately when the courts overruled and allowed for Metis hunting in the evening, gave them basically the same privileges as aboriginal peoples in our province, well I've had calls to my office from people concerned about their very safety, certainly in the evenings. And the fact that in our area, outside of an area that was very close to where the aboriginal community would have formerly hunted, the fact that it became more local, many people were becoming very concerned as some of my colleagues have already mentioned.

They brought up the fact that they could see spotlights in the area that they had never seen before. Dusk had fallen, or even, say, in that later part of the evening, in that 10 or 11 o'clock range, they'd hear gunshots and there was a fear, if they were outside, what if a stray bullet happened to go through the farmyard?

Because in most cases when you talk about night hunting, and especially when you're dealing with individuals who may not be familiar with the area and they're out night hunting, Mr. Speaker, the concern is the fact that they're shooting sporadically. They're not really aware of what might be on the other side of that spotlight, what direction they might be firing, and they might be firing in fact right into a farmyard.

And so it's an issue that has come to the forefront and that people have been very concerned about and I think, Mr. Speaker . . . This article talks about night hunting, "Partial ban on night hunting not enough." The comment, the first paragraph or sentence reads:

The province will ban night hunting in most of Saskatchewan by the end of February, a move critics

charge will be too little, too late.

Mr. Speaker, even just talking to a number of individuals in my area who are avid hunters and who have been out hunting, they said this fall was one of the most difficult falls to hunt in and part of the reason was, Mr. Speaker, the fact that we have enjoyed a very special fall. It's been one of the nicest falls we've had on record. The temperatures have been nice and so, as a result, the game have been basically back in the bush and it's taken a lot more work to try and find that animal — that elusive animal — that you're after.

But as well, Mr. Speaker, we're also noting that we're not seeing the amount of animals that we have, even that we saw last fall. The number . . . I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that SGI is probably more than pleased not just with the elements we've had this fall, but even with the winter we had last year as a result of the reduced numbers of animals and that reduction has certainly led to, I would have to perceive, a lesser volume of wild animal claims on vehicles. And I can certainly attest to that fact that even for the amount of driving I do, Mr. Speaker, that I have not seen the same amount of animals.

So when you add the weather elements combined with the increased activity and hunting certainly of the Metis people in our province . . . and I would suggest as well that in many cases I hear more complaints coming as a result of people coming up from other provinces into our province as a result of the loose hunting laws we have in our province, And I have talked to certainly Metis people themselves who are quite concerned about this problem.

So I think it's more than fitting that here we are December 15, in the fall of 1997, that we are debating this issue because it is an issue that is on the forefront and in the forefront of people's minds — an issue that they feel quite strongly about.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about local residents I think we forget as well about individuals who may be travelling up and down our road system, our rural road system, and if you have someone out night hunting . . . As someone said to me the other evening they saw lights about half a mile away just bombing around the field and their fear was: are these hunters? Are they looking to stir up deer? Are they going to be shooting? What's going to happen? Are they going to be shooting in our direction? It's not just the residents living in farmyards, what about the person travelling down the road who may end up in a scary situation.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I think it's time the Minister of the Environment and responsible for natural resources in this province certainly stood up and addressed this issue. Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation has raised it for a number of years and hunters have raised it for a number of years, Mr. Speaker. Resource officers are raising the issue because they're finding themselves in the position that cut-backs and government spending have basically taken people out of the field and as a result we have, if you will, just a freedom to abuse the laws. And unfortunately we don't even have the laws that the resource officers can utilize to indeed address the situation of night hunting.

Mr. Speaker, if we look at Manitoba, we see in Manitoba that

they ban all discharge of firearms at night regardless of persons' Indian or Metis status. And it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge that that law has not been challenged. There are fines of up to \$50,000 or a year in prison or even the impoundment of your vehicle. Mr. Speaker, when you look at the costs that people are putting into buying rifles, buying their licences, the types of vehicles they use, it certainly becomes quite an impediment, and certainly an obstacle to be looking at very carefully. If indeed you're out hunting and you disobey the rules in Manitoba and all of these circumstances come into play, it's a fair cost to you as a hunter.

One exception though, they have . . . if Indian and Metis persons can prove they were subsistent hunting, and that's the one thing that Manitoba does allow — sustenance hunting.

Mr. Speaker, I would think in this province as well our aboriginal people and our Metis people firmly believe in that, and I think when you look at . . . when you talk to them, you will find many people feel quite satisfied that in daylight hours they certainly do have an opportunity to hunt so that they can provide for their families.

So, Mr. Speaker, some of the arguments that the minister is giving, some of the arguments that the government is bringing forward, I don't believe, really hold water. I believe that there are areas the minister could move in, the Premier could move in, and his government, to address this issue today. The fact that the minister has said that they are looking at it and they hope to have some legislation here in the spring does not address the immediate concern. And the fact that this . . . the night hunting is going to be a problem that will go on through the winter months and become more of a problem and I think, Mr. Speaker, it would be . . .

I guess what we need to do and what we're asking the government, asking the minister, is to show some leadership. We're here right now, the session has been called, we have the opportunity to debate this issue even in a greater manner. We would ask the minister if he would bring a piece of legislation to the floor of this Assembly today. We would certainly, over the next few days, be able and be more than willing to debate the issue if it was meaningful and it really addressed the concerns out there.

So, Mr. Speaker, in order to give some of my colleagues an opportunity to address this issue as well, I will end by suggesting that the people are behind this issue. The public of Saskatchewan believe that it needs to be addressed. I believe the government is hearing that and I believe the minister responsible and certainly the Premier could give some real leadership and show that a fall session can do something meaningful and can address concerns that really are on the minds of individuals.

And I certainly stand with my colleagues in support of the resolution that's been brought forward. I would ask all members of this Assembly to work with us to address this issue by passing this resolution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, today to speak on the night-hunting issue, which I've been at meetings in the last two,

three weeks out in the Kamsack, Togo, Runnymede area where white people are very upset. But to stop there would be wrong, because the other night at a meeting there was Metis people there. And these people are every bit as upset as the white people are, in fact maybe more, because what the lack of the minister taking the bull by the horns and then acting on this has done, is created a shortage of wildlife for these people even every bit as much as the white people. So the problem is not just the white people out there; it's the aboriginal and the Metis.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday the Environment minister finally got off his hands and took the first step to end night hunting, or so his announcement would have the people of Saskatchewan believe. But, Mr. Speaker, it's like putting a Band-Aid on an eight inch cut; the bleeding continues. It leaks out both end of the bandage and that's exactly what's happening here.

The promises made by the minister are far too little too late, from a government the people of Saskatchewan no longer trust to do what they say, let alone what is right. There is no need to wait until February, Mr. Speaker, to bring about changes to The Wildlife Act, when there is a private member's Bill on the order paper which will do all that and more.

I also find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, in talking to an outfitter this morning that said, knowing the minister very well, that at one point the minister didn't even allow for gophers to be shot on his own land. So I know he knows the problem is serious; he agrees with what we are saying and yet someone on that side of the House is forcing him to drag his feet. And again we see the bureaucracy, and the majority on that side doesn't really let the ministers on that side of the House do what's right for the people of Saskatchewan.

The Bill presented by the Saskatchewan Party would make all night hunting in the province illegal; not just hunting with the use of artificial lights. It also strengthens the penalties for night hunting to a maximum of \$50,000. This is important because, according to outfitters such as Len Romaniuk from Candle Lake, only banning night hunting by spotlight will be very difficult to enforce.

Conservation officers will have to prove that with headlights, that headlights were on at the same time the trigger was pulled. Just about impossible, Mr. Speaker. A conservation officer was telling me, the other morning he spotted at 8 o'clock in the morning in the town of Kamsack, a half-ton with four deer and some elk in the back of the truck. Well at eight o'clock in the morning, Mr. Speaker, it's just barely daylight. If he would find that same thing, with the spotlight part of the Bill being introduced, he would be completely, totally useless to do anything about it because he wouldn't be sure whether a light was used or not. He would have to let the culprit go.

So despite the government announcement on Friday, it is clear their intentions do not go far enough to ensure safety of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. The bottom line is that night hunting is not safe and all forms of it should be banned.

Both Manitoba and Alberta have recognized the importance of all-inclusive night-hunting legislation. The changes in our private member's Bill are similar to the changes made to Manitoba's legislation in '94. The only excuse the Romanow

government can come up with . . .

(1530)

The Speaker: — Order, order. The hon. member will recognize that he's not permitted to use proper member's names in the House and must refer to all members by the position or title they hold in the Assembly, and I'll remind him of that and allow him to continue.

Order. Order, order.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the only excuse that the government can come up with not to ban all night hunting is because they do not have the political will to deal with the treaty rights of first nations and Metis people. The Environment minister would have us believe that he cannot legislate a total ban on night hunting because it would not hold up in a potential court challenge.

Even Saskatchewan government constitutional lawyer, Mitch McAdam, was quoted in the *Star-Phoenix* saying that although a court precedent from the '60s suggest natives retain the right to night hunting, it's since that time that cases have started talking about safety requirements. The government must consider the safety of all Saskatchewan people over the unregulated hunting rights of a few. Unregulated night hunting is also a major contributing factor to the depletion of big game in Saskatchewan at the rate four times the average.

This not only has major ramifications on our ecosystem but also hits us in the pocketbook. Big game hunting brings in over 60 million annually to Saskatchewan tourism industry. There have been many instances where Metis and aboriginal people from Manitoba come into Saskatchewan with big trucks and slaughter animals at night and return to Manitoba with refrigerated trucks of big game in the morning.

According to Duck Mountain Provincial Park manager, Rick Shussel, people from Manitoba are not familiar with the local area and they don't have a clue where those bullets are going in most cases. This does not seem to bother the minister though. He is content to sit back and wait for the court of big game . . . the count of big game to be taken in the spring.

The minister has said that if this count shows that if the big game has been substantially depleted, with the danger of not recovering for several years, that he will move to designate protected areas in the province as a reactive measure. Spring is too late, Mr. Speaker, to take serious, proactive issues to protect our wildlife. Why not pass the amendments to The Wildlife Act the Saskatchewan Party has put forward to ban all night hunting in the province? Therefore I support this resolution, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to enter into the debate on this very important issue before Saskatchewan people. And as someone who is a non-hunter in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but represent people in a constituency that there's a great deal of hunting, this issue frankly came as quite a surprise to me and I'm surprised that the minister, who is a well-known conservationist here in Saskatchewan, would not be taking some more serious steps in

this area.

I could not believe it. I have to plead some degree of ignorance when it comes to hunting, as I said, but I could not believe that we have actually people wandering around out in the bush with high-powered rifles in the dark, shooting at things. I just couldn't believe that that is an actual . . . something that society would put up with, Mr. Speaker. And I'm not surprised that the members opposite are shocked at that kind of admission when you have people out doing those kinds of things. It isn't an issue we believe necessarily about whether you should or shouldn't have the right. It just simply is unacceptable to have people out hunting at night with high-powered rifles, not to mention the conservation officers . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Pursuant to a special order passed by this House earlier this day, the time on this debate has expired and the Chair must now put the . . . Order. And the Chair must now put the question.

The division bells rang from 3:35 p.m. until 3:37 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 15

Krawetz	Bjornerud	Toth
D'Autremont		

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now it's impossible to take the vote in an orderly manner if the members are shouting across the floor. Order. And I ask all our members to cooperate in taking the vote.

Boyd	Draude	Gantefer
Heppner	Osika	Hillson
McPherson	Aldridge	McLane
Haverstock	Goohsen	

Nays — 30

Flavel	Van Mulligen	Wiens
MacKinnon	Shillington	Tchorzewski

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Now I will ask the hon. members in the opposition to allow the vote to be taken in an orderly manner and so that it can be heard. Order.

Johnson	Whitmore	Goulet
Lautermilch	Upshall	Kowalsky
Crofford	Calvert	Teichrob
Pringle	Trew	Lorje
Bradley	Scott	Nilson
Hamilton	Stanger	Sonntag
Kasperski	Ward	Jess
Langford	Murrell	Thomson

The Speaker: — The special order continues.

Hepatitis C

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great pleasure to stand in this Assembly today and talk about an

issue, Mr. Speaker, that is very much in the minds of most people across Saskatchewan and that is the issue of hepatitis C.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I will be moving a motion, but I would like at the start of it to read some of the text of it to give the Assembly some idea of what we're going to be talking about. Certainly the basis of this motion is certainly to see that the people of this province receive the fair and healthy treatment that they deserve; and certainly our health care system has been suffering a bit in this province under the regime of the NDP.

In our motion that we'll be moving at the end of my remarks, we talk about the Krever report, Mr. Speaker, and maybe I'll just quote a little bit from the motion:

And in view of Judge Horace Krever's report, in which he states that a system which produces such consequences that it had nevertheless foreseen has, at the very least, the moral obligation to take into consideration the matter of the legitimate compensation of the victims of these inevitable events;

Firstly the Governments of Saskatchewan . . . consider, as soon as possible, setting up a compensation plan for (the) victims who were given contaminated blood or blood products, including the victims of hepatitis C; including interim compensation to be provided until the final details of the compensation program are agreed to;

And secondly we'll be talking about:

That the governments of Saskatchewan and Canada consider including secondary victims in the compensation program; establishing the program so that other social benefits received by the victims are not compromised; and ensuring that there is access to care and to just and equitable allowances established according to the severity of the disease, following a consultation with the organizations representing the victims.

Mr. Speaker, that is the gist of our resolution which again, as I said earlier, we'll be moving at the end of my remarks.

If I could, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to bring the people in this room to a few thoughts as to what if. And I guess as we look into our own lives and the people that we love and spend our lives with, let's think for a moment about a four-year-old child — could be our son or daughter, could be a grandchild — becomes ill, is taken to a hospital, given treatment. Part of the treatment is to receive a blood transfusion and the child recovers quite nicely from the disease that it was taken to the hospital for.

Some months later all of a sudden this child, this four-year-old child, becomes ill again with a new disease, and the parents are told that they received, that their child received, some tainted blood and that this child now has hepatitis C. How would we feel, all of us in this room?

Mr. Speaker, let's talk about our spouses, our wives, or our husbands become sick, go to hospital, as part of the treatment to treat their illness receive tainted blood, unknowingly. Original

illness is cured, they go back home to their families, everything is fine. Some years later they receive a letter that it was possible because they received this blood transfusion, that they could have contracted a disease. How would we feel, Mr. Speaker, if that was our spouse — how would we feel?

Mr. Speaker, how would we feel if our mother or father became ill, went to hospital, received treatment, part of that treatment was a blood transfusion, were released, and many years later received the letter that they had received possibly blood from a tainted blood supply and could at sometime in the future come down with hepatitis C — how would we all feel?

(1545)

What if our grandmother or grandfather had occasion to be in a hospital in years gone by, Mr. Speaker, and had received a blood transfusion as part of the treatment of that disease or illness that they had, and now in the twilight years of their life had either contracted hepatitis C or the family was still wondering if that was a possibility, because they had received the letter that said that they may have received tainted blood and could contract some form of disease as a result of that. The very people that founded this province, Mr. Speaker, our grandparents, how would we feel watching them die from a disease that was through no fault of their own they had received?

What about our best friend — we all have friends — what if our best friend had gone through the same process — been ill, received treatment, received a blood transfusion and at this point in our life he was told that the blood they had received from the blood transfusion through no fault of their own had been tainted, and now were either dying from the diseases they had contracted or were wondering if maybe they would or what was going to happen? How would we feel?

How about a business partner, Mr. Speaker, who had gone through the same, whole process — been ill, been in hospital, received this blood — received tainted blood — and now was dying. How would we feel? What would happen to the business? How would this partner operate his share of the business? Who would pay his bills, unable to work?

It's a question, Mr. Speaker, that I ask everyone in this building today to address, and the people, if there are people watching, that what would they do? Well most of us would feel sorry; we would have compassion; we would do the right thing. We would try and help them. And certainly we would want our government to take the lead role in ensuring that these people were looked after in a society such as the one we have in Saskatchewan.

Does Mr. Kotyk of Watson have to spend his last days in this life worrying about will his family be looked after, Mr. Speaker? He shouldn't have to. He lived his life; he worked hard; he raised a family, has a loving wife — he shouldn't have to worry about that. He should be able to have his last days knowing full well that in Saskatchewan his family will be looked after.

What about Bonnie Sorenson, whose small child has contracted this disease. She doesn't know whether he'll live a normal life

or any resemblance of it, whether he'll be able to continue in school, will he be able to finish his schooling, will he ever enter the job force, the workforce — we don't know all these answers, Mr. Speaker. But why should she have to worry about what's happening to him?

She gets calls from the teachers at her school where her child attends, asking maybe they could get her child to bed earlier at night because he seems to be tired at school — teachers not understanding that this is part of the symptoms of the disease that this child has. And so she has to be worried that even though her child gets 13, 14 hours of sleep at night, at school they think possibly they're not very good parents because the kids are up all night. It shouldn't have to be that way, Mr. Speaker.

What will happen to these young people? What will happen to Scott? These people have come here today to be with us, talk with us, let us understand what they're up against. And certainly we're asking this government to have some compassion as they're dealing with this issue.

Part of the problem I think that a lot of us have with not knowing whether this government will take a lead role and find the compassion and do what's right, is because of some past performances that the NDP have done. This very government that is a self-proclaimed saviour of medicare, Mr. Speaker, has really not shown that since the onset of health reform back in the early 1990s.

Mr. Speaker, let me point out a few examples of why I say that. As health reform was initiated by this government without a plan, as many people have come to realize in the last couple of years because of the actions of this government and what hasn't happened in the health care system, let us talk about the underfunding and the downloading to the health districts, Mr. Speaker, in this province by this government to reach that glorious balanced budget on the backs of the people of this province, on the backs of the sick, on the backs of the elderly, Mr. Speaker.

And then when the crisis occurred, when the districts were . . . the only way to survive was cut funding, cut services — government cuts funding, the districts cut services. Waiting-lists grew. Doctors leave the province. People are left suffering.

The pressure put on by the health districts, by the people of this province, and by the Liberal opposition, got the government to realize their mistake and had no choice but to inject \$40 million into the health care system. But only under pressure did they do that.

Mr. Speaker, we can talk about the doctor shortage, which we still have today in this province not only in rural Saskatchewan, but right across Saskatchewan, and that of general practitioners and that of specialists.

What did the government do when doctors were leaving, when doctors were leaving rural Saskatchewan because there was no relief for them? They said, here's some money, and they threw some money without a plan again, threw some money in and said well, send a doctor in and we'll give him 25 grand to set up a practice — only if it's a multiple practice that's there. Single

doctor practice — no way, can't be done. Threw the money. That's going to fix the problem. Well, Mr. Speaker, it hasn't fixed the problem but again they tried to fix it only because they were pressured.

And most lately, what about the MS people in this province. Try to talk about we're doing what's right. Try to talk about doing what's right, Mr. Speaker. Bring the drugs on that these people need and let them have a normal life. Don't pick and choose. Don't have a two-tier system where some people can't afford the drug, other people can; some people's drug plan provides it for them in the workforce, others don't. That's not what medicare is all about, Mr. Speaker.

But only when the pressure was brought down by the people, the MS Society, people suffering with MS, and the Liberal opposition, only then did they say okay, let's do something. Tremendous pressure. So you can understand, Mr. Speaker, why some of us are sceptical that this government is willing to take a lead and do what's right for the people in this province.

Now we're finding there's all sorts of problems and guidelines that people can't meet to access the drugs that they need and the MS drugs. We'll be raising that over the course of the next four or five days and probably longer than that, because I doubt whether this government will change anything over the next few months, but we can only hope. So that's why a lot of us are sceptical about this government taking a lead role and doing what's right with hepatitis C.

And I guess when you look at some of the decisions, Mr. Speaker, that the provincial government has made over the last few years, it's all about priorities. Every government has priorities and this government certainly has priorities. Unfortunately it hasn't seemed to be the everyday citizens of this province. It certainly hasn't been the sick and it certainly hasn't been the elderly, Mr. Speaker.

The question we would ask? Has the government put aside some money to fix this problem, to look after these people? Most people would say yes, they should have because we've known about it for a long time. The discussion has been ongoing. We've talked about it. So as part of a budget process, I would think that you would say, well sometime we're going to have to have an expenditure here to look after this problem, to look after these people that have contracted hepatitis C through no fault of their own, to ensure that their families, they're not having to suffer needlessly.

Also if you look at some of the priorities that the governments have had, where they're spending huge amounts of money, millions of dollars, right across the world in third world countries, money spent in Guyana, how much compensation would that provide for these people?

How about in New Zealand, Mr. Speaker, where they're going to spend excess of \$30 million, knowing full well that for the next number of years there's going to be a 3 to \$5 million loss every year, and hopefully at five years down the road we could see a turnaround and an increase in profits. Maybe there won't be any profits in five years, who knows, but how much money would this provide for compensation for these people?

What about the patronage? What about Jack Messer's salary and perks. What about Don Ching's salary and perks. And what about all the other hundreds and hundreds of patronage appointments, Mr. Speaker, that they've done. How much compensation would that provide? I know the members opposite don't like to hear about patronage but it's a fact of life. They do it daily. How much compensation could we provide for these people with hepatitis C to ensure that they don't have to suffer needlessly, Mr. Speaker, and that their families will be looked after?

This government jumped very quickly to ensure that David Milgaard was compensated — didn't hesitate for a minute. There was no pressure had to be put on by the public or anyone else. Just, bingo — we'll do it, provide his compensation because he was unjustly treated.

Fine. So what about these folks? Why don't they jump right now and say yes, there's a problem here. We will fix it. We want to look after their families. We have people dying. We have compassion, and we want to ensure that they have to suffer no more needlessly after their loved ones are gone.

Take a lead role. Why can't Saskatchewan take a lead? It's great. We'll sit around and talk for weeks and months with the other provinces, what they're doing. I'm hoping, Mr. Speaker, that someone will have the courage to take the initiative that they have in Quebec and take a lead role and say we'll look after our people. What incentives are there for people who want to come to Saskatchewan if we have a government that's not compassionate, that won't look after its people in good times and in bad? Not very much, Mr. Speaker, not very much.

I think there are approximately 400 hepatitis C victims in Saskatchewan who contracted it through the tainted blood supply, Mr. Speaker. That's not a very huge number of people. However, think about the people that are connected to these. Think about their children. Think about their parents. Think about their cousins. Think about their friends. Think about their colleagues: people they maybe work with; people they grew up with. It touches a lot of people, Mr. Speaker — touches a lot of people, touches all of us.

The former minister of Health stated on May 15, and I quote:

Where negligence is established on the part of the government, we will consider settling such a claim. And each claim will be considered on its merits.

I think the key there is, Mr. Speaker, each claim will be considered on its merits. Look at individual cases. Look at what those people are going through. Work with them and talk to them. As I said, we're talking 400 people. Is that so hard? Is that so much to ask? I don't think so. I don't think so.

Go and talk to the Kotyks and see what they're going through, Mr. Speaker. And ensure that Mr. Kotyk can rest in peace for the rest of his days.

Go and talk to Bonnie Sorenson and find out what needs to be done to ensure that her son can live a normal life and that people understand how these children receive this disease, how they got this disease, and what they have to do to understand it.

And communicate to the people that are in the workforce so that they know what needs to be done. Why is the government so reluctant to do that, Mr. Speaker?

(1600)

The Krever report has recommended that Canadians affected by tainted blood should get no-fault compensation from the government. Recommendation is there, that's what these inquiries are for. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that everyone in this Assembly today would certainly support this resolution and would certainly feel compassion for these folks that need it so desperately now.

And I would call on the government to put aside their politics, do what's right for the people of this province, do what's right for the people that have contracted hepatitis C, and get on with it and set up some interim financing for these folks that need it — while there's still time — and continue on a long-term game plan.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I do so move, seconded by the member from North Battleford, and be it resolved that:

In view of the human tragedy caused by the transfusion of contaminated blood and blood products and the untold losses suffered by the victims and their families;

And in view of the Legislative Assembly's sharing of the sorrow and its hope to be able to lessen the repercussions of this tragedy;

And in view of Judge Horace Krever's report, in which he states that a system which produces such consequences that it had nevertheless foreseen has, at the very least, the moral obligation to take into consideration the matter of the legitimate compensation of the victims of these inevitable events;

Firstly, the governments of Saskatchewan and Canada consider, as soon as possible, setting up a compensation plan for victims who were given contaminated blood or blood products, including the victims of hepatitis C; including interim compensation to be provided until the final details of the compensation program are agreed to;

And secondly, that the governments of Saskatchewan and Canada consider including secondary victims in the compensation program; establishing the program so that other social benefits received by the victims are not compromised; and ensuring that there is access to care and to just and equitable allowances established according to the severity of the disease, following a consultation with the organizations representing the victims.

I so do move.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair would like to take a moment to review the motion regarding its permissibility.

Order. The Chair has had an opportunity to review the text of

the motion submitted by the hon. member for Arm River and I do not find it, in its precise form, admissible for debate in the Assembly. I refer hon. members to Bourinot's *Rules of Order, Third Revised Edition*, page 46, in which it says, and I quote:

To the extent possible a motion should be worded in affirmative terms and it should express fully and unambiguously the intent of the mover. It should not be preceded by a preamble . . . phrases such as . . . ("whereas . . ." or "In order to . . ."), since these represent opinions which are arguable or make statements which may or may not be factual.

This is further reinforced by rulings in this House dated March 28, 1972 and February 2, 1973. And it is the ruling of the Chair that the phrases "and in view of" constitute preambles to the motion. If the hon. member wishes to move the motion without the preambles beginning with "be it resolved that the governments of Saskatchewan and Canada" the Chair will consider that motion acceptable. And I'll ask the hon. member for Arm River to clarify his intentions.

Why is the Government Whip on his feet?

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible) . . . moments to consult on this issue and perhaps come back with a motion that would be acceptable.

The Speaker: — That is in effect what the Chair has permitted, and I asked the hon. member for Arm River to clarify his intentions regarding the moving of the motion in an acceptable format. I'm willing to allow a moment for the hon. member to consider that.

I'll direct that the clock be stopped for this momentary recess.

Mr. McLane: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I could change that motion and read the following:

Firstly, the governments of Saskatchewan and Canada consider as soon as possible setting up a compensation plan for victims who are given contaminated blood or blood products, including the victims of hepatitis C, including interim compensation to be provided until the final details of the compensation program are agreed to;

Secondly, that the governments of Saskatchewan and Canada consider including secondary victims in the compensation program, establishing the program so that other social benefits received by the victims are not compromised, and ensuring that there is access to care and to just and equitable allowances established according to the severity of the disease following the consultation with the organizations representing the victims.

And I so do move, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order. Now the Chair appreciates the willingness of everyone to assist in the process — order, order — however the Chair would like to acknowledge that to some degree perhaps confusion has been a factor of having . . . dealing with business as a result of this special order created earlier this day and so the normal period of

notice that is required was set aside by a special order of the House. And the Chair would also like to acknowledge the cooperation of all hon. members in permitting the motion provided to be dealt with in a timely way by debate of the House.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few moments this afternoon to bring the House information as it relates to the work that has been done on the hep C issue. I'm going to stick primarily to the issue as it relates to hepatitis C and not speak at length about the quality and the value of the health care system in Saskatchewan, which I'm sure that I'll get another opportunity as time passes in the weeks to come, Mr. Speaker.

But I'm a little concerned, first of all, Mr. Speaker, that there would be some intent here or at least wisdom shared of that nature that this is a political issue that relates to the government on the province of Saskatchewan. Because clearly this matter is not about political parties. This is an issue that addresses itself to a very, very serious incident that occurred in this country of which we all need to take responsibility for.

(1615)

At the time that hepatitis C and people were infected by this unfortunate incident, Mr. Speaker, we were not the government of the day, but that doesn't preclude for a minute that we should not take responsibility to ensure that we try to fix that and repair that in a comprehensive fashion across the country.

Mr. Speaker, today I have the opportunity of sitting as the Chair of Canadian Health ministers in this country for the next year, only because it's our turn in Saskatchewan to take on that responsibility not because it's somewhat . . . it's not because I lobbied for the job or somebody lobbied for me to have that job. But the fact is that we are going to work collectively as ministers across the country to deal with this very, very serious issue.

To suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we in Saskatchewan should step out in front of anyone else and provide some kind of resolution or solution to this issue without joint cooperative participation by all the ministers across the country, or all provinces across the country and the territories and the federal government, in my opinion, would be irresponsible, would be irresponsible from the point of view that we need to collectively work out how it is that we're going to establish in this country a safe and secure and comprehensive health care . . . or a blood system for all Canadians. And to date, as I mentioned earlier today during question period to the members of both opposition parties, that we've taken a long step in trying to repair the difficulties in this province as it relates to the blood issue.

Now in Justice Krever's report of which he's worked diligently for, for the last four years, he puts forward the notion and recommendation that there should be no fault here; that it isn't tied to the provincial governments; that it's not necessarily tied to the federal government; that the Red Cross isn't the people who we should be naming; but collectively, we should draw on our wisdom and put together a package that will serve Canadians well.

And as a result of that, we're coming together as provincial ministers from across the country to talk about how it is that we're going to resolve this major issue as it relates to the individual who the member from Arm River talks about, as it relates to the individual of a young lady and her lad here in Regina, who he and I have both talked to, and many, many other people in this province of whom we want to do good for.

The member from Arm River talks about there being 400 people in this province who are affected by hep C. I don't know where the member gets the number from because we in the Health department don't know whether it's 400 or whether it's 600 or whether it's 800 or whether it's 200. We do not yet have a solid indication of the number of people in this province who are affected by hep C.

And accordingly, nor does any other province in Canada know what that number is of people who are infected by hep C. And so as a result of that, we need to complete that examination and prepare ourselves for how it is that we're going to deal with people who are in fact infected by hep C.

Is it problematic for individuals and families? Absolutely it is — a great deal of hardship that families and individuals experience today. And we understand that and appreciate that and try not to delay the matter any longer than we can.

But it would be, I think, irresponsible for any one of us, be it the federal ministry or the provincial ministers to set up a strategy that would not be comprehensive for all of the people across the country. Today the member from Arm River talks about a resolution that was brought to the Quebec legislature and where in fact they have moved a resolution to proceed with compensation.

Well in my discussions with Minister Rochon — and there's been now three — he tells me that they're doing what we're doing here in Saskatchewan, that we're going to be examining what type of a comprehensive package we can put together for Canadians, in partnership. And he tells me that he hasn't got a commitment from the federal government in terms of a financial package, has not had the discussion with the federal Liberal minister about what the participation should be, and clearly, there needs to be participation.

I don't for a minute believe that the opposition parties suggest here that we in Saskatchewan should be assuming the full responsibility of compensation for everyone in Saskatchewan on our own. I don't believe that they believe that. Nor does the federal Minister of Health believe that. He believes, the federal Minister of Health believes that this should be a partnership. That all of the provincial ministers, and all of the provincial governments and the territories, and he and the federal government should participate in a package. But he says to us like I say to you: what's the criteria that we're going to be using?

Justice Krever says you should use a no-fault criteria which is a significant shift in this country in terms of how we compensate people. Because in the past we've compensated people on the tort system and people had to prove in fact that they had been wrongly done to. But Justice Krever says something different. Justice Krever says that we're going to compensate people in a

new fashion today who were infected or disadvantaged or disabled by a practice in the health system as to it relates to health.

And so we ask the question about the examination to see whether or not this just applies to blood or does it apply to the whole piece of the health package. And what sorts of issues will we have in the future? If we compensate today on a no-fault system for blood, are we then expected to compensate for any other issue as it relates to in the health system? A very integral question, an important question that we need to answer as Health ministers and as the federal ministry. And part of that discussion we're going to have over the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Speaker, when we're asked to take the lead role, we're going to take the lead role in Saskatchewan through the responsibility that I have as the minister for other ministers across the country. And we've set some criteria for ourselves already in terms of process.

We say to the House today that within the next six weeks we'll be meeting and we've decided that that meeting will take place in British Columbia. And when we come to British Columbia we're going to review in detail the recommendations of Justice Krever and asking in the interim that individuals across the country allow us some time to put together a package or a piece or an understanding that will reflect how we might be able to serve those individuals who are in fact affected by the tainted blood.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that as we move forward over the next couple of weeks we're going to be speaking with our friends in the Red Cross, because it will be important for us to assume the assets of the Red Cross to ensure that we have stability within the blood system across the country. And we're going to be speaking with the Red Cross about what the value of those assets are, and as the provincial government, will have responsibility to assume some of those assets and will have some responsibility to contribute towards the acquiring of those assets.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, as provincial governments, we're going to be talking with our federal friends, of which the member from Arm River can help us with. Because when we sit down at the table to talk about a comprehensive compensation package, there'll be a requirement for some assistance from our federal friends.

And as much as they say to us that they're prepared to participate, we're going to need to ensure that that partnership is fully kept. And within this Assembly and within this House I'm going to be suggesting that we get that type of cooperation, Mr. Speaker, and we'll be calling on my Liberal friends across the way to help us with that process as we go along.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close my discussion by outlining what I'd said earlier as it relates to the work that we've done with Quebec. Because in our discussions, because in our discussions with Quebec, they've indicated to us a couple of things. Minister Rochon says to me in our discussions that the discussions that he's had with his cabinet members is that they're prepared to look at a comprehensive package for victims, but they're only prepared to look at a comprehensive

package for victims in the same framework that it applies to the rest of us across the country.

And today we have a commitment from Minister Rochon to join us at the end of January to participate in that discussion so that we have all provinces from all across the country participating in that discussion which, to some degree, Mr. Speaker, is quite unique when we talk about the fact that in the past many of those discussions and many of those decisions have been made outside of the purview of the other provinces and the country.

So I say to you and to the members opposite that this is a major undertaking — in our opinion, achievement — and it blends well to some of the discussion that we're having here over the next four days. Because if in fact, Mr. Speaker, we have an interest and we have a compassion about keeping our country together, which will be the other part of the debate, it will be important for us to recognize how it is that we work in partnership with our friends from Quebec.

And I reinforce today the position that Mr. Rochon has said to me and to the other provincial ministers across the country, that he will be a partner in our discussions at the end of January and he will want to see for Quebec the same kinds of compensation package that we have for all other Canadians.

I want to also reinforce, Mr. Speaker, the earlier comment that I made about not knowing the number of people today who are affected by hep C.

What we have done in Saskatchewan as a leader, because I know the member from Arm River talked a little bit about leadership that Saskatchewan Health plays, we sent to Saskatchewan residents — as best we knew from the records that we have kept — a questionnaire to identify whether or not over the past 10 years they have in fact been infected in any way, shape, or form, or been in contact with transfused blood.

And today we're starting to receive the responses. And many, many folks across the province . . . I believe it's 50,000 letters that we sent out to people across the province, asking them to respond to us and advise us whether or not in fact they've had any contact with the blood system. And we expect that within the next several months we'll be able to have a better understanding and appreciation of exactly how many people are affected by tainted blood in this country.

So in concluding my comments, Mr. Speaker, I want to reinforce one more time that this issue about dealing with tainted blood in Canada is not one that's going to be restricted or directed to any political party. It's going to be done in a fashion that's going to be representative of all provincial parties across the country, irrespective of who it is that governs. And it will be inclusive of the federal government as well.

And with that I'm supporting the motion today, Mr. Speaker, on the basis that we're going to put together our collective wisdom, that we'll work hard as a unified group of provincial ministries and governments and the federal government, to ensure that we have, in the future, a very safe and transparent system of blood delivery in the country.

And at the same time we'll ensure as best we can that those folks who have been unfortunately, unfortunately affected by the blood system and/or their families, that we could provide to them a compensation that would be satisfactory to them and/or their families.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I want to close by saying that I am pleased today to support the intent of the resolution and to move forward in working with my colleagues across the nation to ensure that people are better served by the blood system in the future. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if I could just add a few short comments to the resolution and certainly to the comments by the minister. It's certainly gratifying to hear that after a number of years and specifically . . . in my case I've had the privilege of raising this issue since this government took office in 1991. And I'm pleased to see that the minister has indicated on behalf of his government that they're going to certainly take and follow the lead.

I believe in Quebec it was the Liberal leader who brought forward the resolution and the province of Quebec certainly adopted the rest of that resolution. I certainly believe, Mr. Speaker, that, and our caucus believes that, hepatitis C victims have waited long enough and it's time that this issue was addressed. While we would have liked to have seen it addressed even immediately, we're pleased to hear that there is discussion to debate, to address it further and to come to resolve.

So I'd like to indicate that our caucus is certainly in support of this motion.

(1630)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to rise in support of this motion which, as it's been mentioned, also comes from the province of Quebec where the Liberal Party there took the lead in Quebec and now in Saskatchewan in asking for compensation.

I was pleased with the Minister of Health's comments this afternoon, but I would say that what is most important in this resolution is interim compensation. What I was not quite so pleased with the comments of the Minister of Health were when he started talking about the need for federal-provincial discussions, and the need to talk to other provinces, and the need for commissions, and negotiations, and inquiries, etc., etc.

And I must say that part of the cynicism with modern government is that we know that issues can be shunted off into commissions and inquiries and hearings and we can literally die waiting for results. And it is terribly important that we act promptly and quickly as opposed to saying, well we've got to have some sort of federal-provincial negotiations before we can do anything.

The unity resolution this week, which I might say I am proud to be here on this special session to pass this resolution, unlike the

members from the retread Tories, I'm not ashamed that we've come into special session to pass the unity resolution. I'm sorry that the minister for Rosthern is ashamed of that — I'm not. I'm proud to be here.

But part of the unity resolution is that we're showing we can act quickly and decisively to bring about a desired result for us and for all Canadians. And I think it's important that we make that point on national unity. But it's also important to make that point on other issues, and in this case compensation for hepatitis . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Pursuant to the special order passed earlier this day, the time for debate on this motion has expired.

Motion agreed to.

Public Consultation on National Unity

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the House order passed earlier today, I rise to move a motion, which I will do at the end of my remarks.

I was pleased to have the opportunity to meet with the public to discuss the seven principles presented in Calgary in September. My Co-Chair and I held four meetings in my constituency in Domremy, which is a predominantly French community; in the town of Aberdeen; in Humboldt, and that's a predominantly German community; and in the town of Bruno. Regardless of where the discussions took place, people that did attend had come willingly because they wanted to have their opinions heard. Demographically our groups were two men for every three women, with an average age in the mid-'60s. Younger people were conspicuous by their absence.

And what my constituents told us during those meetings was, keep it simple and keep it direct. As we all know, Mr. Speaker, there is a direct correlation between complexity and manipulation and thus political apathy. The more we continue with intrigues the greater the likelihood of a cataclysmic event. A partnership between Canada and its provinces cannot take place if there are contradictions and misunderstandings. Things have to be clear and unequivocal.

At Meech Lake the premiers were closeted overnight to hammer out the accord. Top-down and secret agreements obviously did not work. The people of my constituency asked, when will politicians learn that orchestration and abuse of the democratic apparatus for the purpose of personal or party gain invites nothing but disgust for the political process. Both Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords failed because of politically attempted manipulations, and I do not want to see us fail again.

My constituents were concerned — and hopeful — that political parties would not focus on their own individual agenda and policies. For if that happened, we would risk delivering a message to Quebec that is convoluted and not at all representative of the original Calgary Declaration. You do not qualify a passionate personal statement of, I love you, with a prenuptial agreement and divorce papers.

We felt and measured a positive response to the seven

principles. People were ready to give and take. There was a willingness to negotiate. Many said the seven Calgary principles were motherhood statements and acceptable to the majority of our participants.

In reflecting on the outlined seven principles, the following analogy was offered. The commandments in the Bible are not the exclusive property of one religion. They are a guide to civilized human behaviour. All religions have a similar code of behaviour; so people recognize the Calgary Declaration is not a constitutional accord or amendment, it was to be a simple statement of principles that we all share, and people understood this quite clearly.

Constituents were consistent in their comments. They stated that we cannot dispute or brush aside the existence of Quebec; however there seems to be something that the separatists are trying to say to the rest of Canada that we are having difficulty in understanding. If this is the case, we must determine what the missing consideration is and how to address it.

No one at our meetings denied that Quebec is different. From the beginning, Quebec has been recognized on a basis of a linguistic head count, but we should not make the mistake of assuming that Quebec is a homogeneous entity. To do so would suppress, or worse still, ignore the rich culture of all groups in that province. Quebec is as much a heterogeneous society as Saskatchewan.

Many constituents expressed uncertainty about the target audience. Was it Lucien Bouchard? Was it Gilles Duceppe? The francophones in Quebec? The allophones inside or outside Quebec? The soft separatists? Who was it? They stated we must determine the target. If we focus on the soft separatists, convincing them that they would be better off within Canada than as a separate entity — that makes good sense. The hazard identified is, if there is any intention to suppress the separatists through fear tactics, that taking the iron fist of their velvet glove approach, that our efforts at preserving Canadian unity would prove futile.

So we must focus on a larger target group, the francophone in Quebec. One of the laws of nature is self-preservation. No rational human being will vote for self-destruction if there are other alternatives. Again this statement is directed as much outside Quebec as it is within Quebec. Quebec wants to make their own decisions about the education that their children receive or the best way to treat their elderly. And it is our observation that nothing in this declaration takes those rights away. Principle 5 clearly places the onus on Quebec to maintain their values.

People in my constituency did not condone the attitude, expressed by some, that says if they want to go, good-bye and good riddance. We would pay a high price, a high price as any Quebecer if they vote to separate. While we want Quebec to remain in Canada, my constituents were not convinced that the separatists want a resolution to this problem. There were questions asked like, is becoming a majority their only goal? We all have the deepest desire to stay united, but if Quebec decides to choose separation it should then be the responsibility of the Prime Minister to negotiate the terms.

Some constituents brought up the aboriginal issue; and one of the common threads in our meeting, there was no clear indication that the voice of our aboriginal people was heard via the seven principles. There was positive support for the resolution of aboriginal concerns synonymous with other concerns.

Many counselled us to listen to the wisdom of our veterans. They fought for Canada. They reminded us of what might have been lost, and my constituents felt Quebec has a much better chance to retain their language and culture within Canada rather than outside of it.

An interesting point brought up by my constituents was that they stated that in the overall scheme of things, it is prudent to be aware of what our global position may look like in the very near future.

The proposed multilateral agreement on investment is to be ratified in May of 1998. This agreement is intended to foster additional investment activity while at the same time providing stability to, and levelling the playing-field for, investors. But along with these benefits, the MAI (multilateral agreement on investment) may also have the effect of eroding the sovereignty of our governments. Dispute resolution proposals in the multilateral agreement on investment could give investors and businesses new powers when they move into a province or a country.

If this happens, we may have to change our focus from linguistic and cultural nationalism to economic nationalism. If and when corporations have the power to make decisions over governments, you can be sure that decisions will not be made on the basis of language or culture, but strictly dollars. We caution our governments that we may lose, and stand to lose more than Quebec, if the MAI is not carefully negotiated.

Mr. Speaker, the Calgary Declaration, we recognize, was not a blank cheque handed to Ottawa and the premiers. Special powers for the provinces are not espoused in the seven principles. Neither was anything said that restricted the powers of any province to enhance their social, economic, and cultural development.

What the Calgary Declaration did present was equality. Equality means different things to different people. Equality to me means we are treated equally if we are the same. But if we are different, then perhaps we should expect some degree of difference in the treatment. For instance, we build ramps into public buildings and put in wider doors to facilitate access for the person in a wheelchair. This is extra cost and differential treatment.

We do not begrudge it because democracy means more than just majority rule. The measure of a democracy is more than just words espousing equality. It is how the minority concerns are accommodated and our willingness to ensure their concerns are encompassed in the greater scheme of things.

In a just and respectful society, the interests of each individual must be thoroughly considered and that individual must have a fair influence on the decision making. In any given circumstance, people who are the same in those respects

relevant to how they were treated in those circumstances, should receive the same treatment.

People that are relevantly different should be treated differently. Benefits or opportunity cannot be denied on the basis of race, gender, religion, and ethnic origin. People acknowledge that equality is expressed in law while fairness is expressed by action. Equality is a goal; fairness is something we must constantly strive for.

At the conclusion of the consultation meetings, my Co-Chair and I noticed that a limited knowledge of the factual, historical background restricted their ability to resolve the questions surrounding Canadian unity. As well, it was noticed that the language used for the principles was problematic. Not everyone interprets the wording the same. Clarification and education will be needed before there could be a complete consensus.

In addition, people demanded to know what the outcome of the consultation meetings and discussions would be. They wondered whether they would be listened to. There was a general feeling of uncertainty as to the political agenda. The wording of the principles was acceptable and it did not offend, but people asked, how are we to put it into practice.

And so there were some recommendations put forward by my constituents and, with all the preceding comments in mind, constituents made the following recommendations: place a high priority on education. More than once we heard that it would be beneficial to have to learn all of our heritage languages at a young age.

(1645)

Education also addresses the concern of learning historical facts that would assist us in our understanding. Elementary prudence requires us to be knowledgeable about our decisions. Unfortunately we seem to be falling further behind these days in our ability to explain to and educate people of our history. It is vital that we promote education and communication.

The second recommendation was that high priority should be given to promotion of interprovincial travel, especially among students. Everyone should be encouraged to visit or share the cultural treat that is Canada to further their education.

The third recommendation was that priority should be given to communication. If we do not listen, we will not learn. Knowledge, understanding, and appreciation are the elements that are necessary to resolve problems associated with unity or any other problem.

Two weeks ago Saskatchewan became the first province to proclaim popular support for the Calgary Declaration. We cannot be complacent. We must persevere to resolve irritants through continued negotiation. The rights of minority groups must continue to be considered and respected. Canada's success as a country and the real possibility that we could cease to be a country is a discrepancy we cannot allow to happen. It is our job to maintain Canada, united. Thank you.

And, Mr. Speaker, at this time, I put forward the following motion, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Greystone.

Be it resolved:

That this Assembly applaud the people of the Humboldt constituency on their commitment to preserving Canadian unity, as exemplified through their insightful comments, suggestions, and their determination to resolve the issue in a peaceable, thoughtful, and fair manner during the public consultation on national unity.

I so present.

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, I would just like to briefly say that I congratulate the hon. member for Humboldt for her excellent speech. I think the sentiments expressed in that were appreciated by all of us.

I think however, if any of us have any difficulties with it, is that while the people of Humboldt may have participated fully in this process, and it is indeed appropriate to congratulate them for this, the fact is from one end of this province to the other, people turned out in large numbers to express their concern about their country and their love of Canada.

And the unanimity with which they spoke, that they want this country to continue and they want Saskatchewan to be a part of it, and they want Quebec to be a part of it, deserves to be recognized not only for the people of Humboldt but indeed for all of the communities in this province. And I think I may say that, from Eastend in the West to Westview in the East, from North Portal in the South to Southend in the North, the people of Saskatchewan supported this process and support this country. And I think they all deserve our congratulations and our recognition as well as the people of Humboldt.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure as well to stand on behalf of the government caucus this afternoon and speak to the motion raised by the hon. member from Humboldt. We certainly are very much in agreement with this motion, but also I'm here to stand and also express our support to the sentiments raised by the hon. member from North Battleford, whom we are also very much in agreement with . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now there seem to be a fair number of members wanting to get into debate here, but it is the hon. member for Regina Sherwood who has the floor, and the Chair . . . Order. And the Chair is having some difficulty being able to hear the hon. member for Sherwood put his remarks to the Assembly and I'll ask all our members to allow the hon. member to debate in an uninterrupted manner.

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, Mr. Speaker, we certainly are very much in agreement with the hon. member from Humboldt in her motion. And we're also very much in favour of the remarks and sentiments expressed by the hon. member from North Battleford regarding the participation of all our citizens in Saskatchewan in the unity process here in November.

And in this light, I would just like to take a couple of minutes, and in my capacity I think as Vice-Chair of the government caucus, to add on behalf of all of us, our congratulations to all MLAs of this legislature, indeed to all our citizen Co-Chairs who, during the first two weeks of November, gave up a lot of time and spent a lot of energy holding public consultations on the principles of the Calgary Declaration. For this we are all thankful of.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to maybe make an early welcome to people, citizen Co-Chairs who are *en route* to Regina or who are already in Regina for the very important debate tomorrow on the resolution of the Calgary accord, and we as government members wish to welcome all our citizen Co-Chairs here tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to take just a couple of minutes, while I'm on my feet, to perhaps express some of these sentiments in French, and if you'll permit me, I will go forward with those remarks.

M. le Président, je voudrais prendre quelques instants de communiquer aux fransaskois et fransaskoises et aux francophones et aux francophiles de la Saskatchewan, au nom de tous les députés de la côté du gouvernement ici dans l'assemblée législatif de la Saskatchewan.

Comme vice-président, du caucus de gouvernement, je voudrais exprimer l'importance nos députés placent sur la question de l'unité canadien. A notre avis, nous croyons que le Canada doit rester le pays que nous connaissons aujourd'hui — un pays avec tous ses provinces et territoires. Aussi, il faut que nous devions travailler sincèrement dans ce domaine.

C'est pourquoi, M. le Président, nous sommes complèment d'accord avec les sept principes de l'accord de Calgary négocié par les sept premiers ministres fédéralistes des provinces du Canada en septembre.

Nous croyons que les principes de cet accord représentent le sentiment de la majorité des canadiens et canadiennes dans chaque province du notre pays. C'est pourquoi nos députés ont travaillés consciemment et sérieusement en novembre dans les réunions publiques et dans le proces de la consultation avec les citoyens et les citoyennes de notre province.

Au nom de tous mes collègues du gouvernement, nous souhaitons un début sérieux et informatif au sujet demain. Merci, M. le Président.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

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