

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 residents of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to put a moratorium on the closure of the Plains Health Centre until they conduct a comprehensive review into the health crisis which we are currently experiencing.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures to this petition are from the communities of Storthoaks and Gainsborough. I so present.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition to present today on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

And these petitions come from the Redvers and Storthoaks areas of the province. Mr. Speaker, I so present.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, to present a petition as well to the Assembly, reading the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

This petition is signed by individuals from the Redvers area of the province of Saskatchewan. I so present.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to put a moratorium on the closure of the Plains Health Centre until they conduct a comprehensive review into the health crisis we are currently experiencing.

The petitioners, Mr. Speaker, are from the community of Alida, Oxbow, Redvers, Wawota, and Carnduff. I so present.

Mr. Heppner: — I too rise to present a petition. And I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to put a moratorium on the closure of the Plains Health Centre until they conduct a comprehensive review into the health crisis we are currently experiencing.

And this is signed by the good people from Carnduff.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of people concerned about the imminent closure of the Plains Health Centre, asking to conduct a comprehensive review into the health crisis we're currently experiencing.

People on this signature are from the communities of Alida and Storthoaks, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition to read today.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to put a moratorium on the closure of the Plains Health Centre until they conduct a comprehensive review into the health crisis we are currently experiencing.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Everyone that has signed this petition is from Storthoaks.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition as well to present on behalf of Saskatchewan people, dealing with the issue of a moratorium on the closure of the Plains hospital. And I'm pleased to present on behalf of Saskatchewan residents. These folks are from the Carnduff, Storthoaks area of Saskatchewan.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present petitions on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed from the good folks in Lafleche, Assiniboia, and Glentworth. I so present.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise again today to present a petition:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are primarily from Regina here, and I so present.

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present petitions on behalf of people who are concerned about the pending closure of the Plains hospital, and the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

Those who have signed these petitions, Mr. Speaker, are from the community of Regina.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also present a petition on behalf of concerned citizens with respect to the closure of the Plains:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that the essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

The signatures on this petition are all from Yorkton, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

Mr. McPherson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I join with my colleagues today in bringing forward a petition in regards to stopping the closure of the Plains hospital. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to save the Plains Health Centre by enacting legislation to prevent the closure, and by providing adequate funding to the Regina Health District so that essential services provided at the Plains may be continued.

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

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed the petition appear to be all from the Regina-Dewdney area of the city, where that member is in serious difficulty. I so present.

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 on the

following matters: the twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway; saving the Plains Health Centre; and calling an independent public inquiry into Channel Lake.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and to the rest of the Assembly, I would like to introduce a number of individuals. Seated on the floor is Daisy Anderson, and beside her, her son, Ron Anderson.

And also with them — I would ask them to rise — in the Speaker's gallery, Mr. Speaker, is Dennis White. If you could just rise, Dennis. And also seated beside Dennis is Mrs. Anderson's daughters, June Tarr and Maxine Ponsford.

We are pleased to have Mrs. Anderson and her family in the Assembly today, Mr. Speaker. It was 87 years ago that Daisy Anderson's father, Arthur White, was part of the construction crew which built the dome of the Legislative Building.

This is especially significant as today we enter the construction phase of the restoration project for the Legislative Building, the largest project done to this facility since construction was completed in 1912.

People such as Arthur White helped build more than the building, Mr. Speaker; they helped build Saskatchewan. And I would ask all hon. members to join with me in welcoming Mrs. Anderson and her family to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and all members in the House, a number of guests that are seated in your gallery. I'd like to introduce, first of all, the newly elected Leader of the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Elwin Hermanson, and his wife Gail . . .

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Seated with Elwin, of course, is his wife Gail. Next to Gail is Dennis Raeburn, the president of the Saskatchewan Party, newly elected as well. And next to Dennis is one of the candidates, who has been introduced a number of times in the House, Mr. Yogi Huyghebaert, and his wife Phyllis. And also seated next to Phyllis is the spouse of the third candidate in the leadership race, Mrs. Carole Gantefoer. Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would want to join with the Leader of the Official Opposition in congratulating Mr. Hermanson on his victory as Leader of the Saskatchewan Party and his selection as the leader of the so-called Saskatchewan Party. It's a Saskatchewan Party for today in any event.

And I also want to congratulate the member from Melfort, and Mr. Huyghebaert, who contributed to the democratic process. Democracy, I think, demands as we know, people who are

highly interested and motivated in elevating the public life and the quality of life in the province of Saskatchewan and our great country. And Mr. Hermanson's victory, I'm sure, will be a step in that direction, and the contribution of these two gentlemen has been also very important.

So I look forward very much to the discussion of ideas and conflicting ideas which will take place in the weeks and months that ensue.

I wish Mr. Hermanson luck, but obviously not too much luck.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you to the members of the Assembly, I'd like to welcome all our guests here today. But one in particular and that's the president of the new party, Mr. Dennis Raeburn.

Mr. Raeburn is well-known for his long-time involvement with the federal Conservative Party, except for a brief stint that he spent working for me during the last election. So I'd like to welcome him in his new role today as the president of the party.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, also joining us in the gallery today are Shirley Hauta and Judy Jabusch, both citizens of Saskatoon. I just point out for the information of all of the members sitting here that Shirley was one of the people that co-managed our election . . . very successful election campaign in 1995 in the constituency of Saskatoon Nutana.

Shirley's been involved in the party for a long, long time. She comes from long and historical CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) and NDP (New Democratic Party) roots. She has not gone from the Conservatives to the Liberals to the Reform to the Conservatives. She has stayed as a solid member of the CCF-NDP Party.

So I'd welcome both of our guests to the legislature this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Volunteer Recognition Awards Banquet

Mr. Langford: — Mr. Speaker, last night the member from Redberry Lake and I were pleased to represent the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Government at the North Central Regional Recreation Association's volunteer recognition awards banquet.

Eight awards were given for volunteer work in recreation and in arts. Six are constituents of mine. The meal was good. MC (master of ceremonies) Pat Jones did an excellent job. And the recognition of these outstanding volunteers were very deserving.

The awards went to Irene Diehl from Marcelin, Debbi

Hydamacka from Meath Park, Blake and Stella Jones from Christopher Lake, Sylvia Jones from Shellbrook, Ron Lysyk from Meath Park, Daryl Rudichuk from Wakaw, and Phil Weimer from Blaine Lake.

Mr. Speaker, I only have time to mention their names. Their communities know and appreciate how valuable their work was.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Volunteer Recognition

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as well to make some comments about volunteers in Saskatchewan and recognizing the efforts of the south-east regional volunteer program as well.

Mr. Speaker, I was privileged to attend the volunteer recognition banquet in Whitewood yesterday. The program yesterday was hosted by the Moose Mountain, Pipe Si-Cana, and Wheatland Souris Regional Recreational Associations, Zone One Sports Council, with the cooperation from Municipal Government.

And, Mr. Speaker, you may be aware of the fact that governments have moved away from backing the regional awards banquets, but I would like to commend each one of the areas for the work they have done in keeping on and the recognition that they continue to give to voluntarism, to volunteers who have certainly contributed a major part to our communities.

And a particular note yesterday of the number of awards that were presented in heritage from Whitewood posthumously to Harold Davis, a gentleman who has done very much in the area of preserving our heritage and working on the museum in that community.

In the area of recreation, and I'm specifically addressing my constituency, Jean Morrow of Langbank for her work in sports and recreation, coaching ball teams, and being involved in so many areas.

Coach of the year, Barb Swallow from Maryfield, who is also well-known for her expertise in curling; and administrator of the year, Tony Balogh from Kipling. And certainly there are many others that could be recognized.

But I want to say thank you to the south-east regional sports association for all their work and efforts and commend them and wish them well in the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Film Industry Expanding

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This year our government introduced a 35 per cent tax credit to boost the Saskatchewan film industry and it's working. As the direct result of the film industry tax credit, Cinepost of Saskatoon joined with a number of other media companies on April 14 to form a new company, publicly traded company, called Newhaven.

Newhaven will produce *Now and Forever*, a movie with a two and a half million dollar budget, in Saskatchewan. A \$42 million movie deal, *The Englishman's Boy*, produced by Minds Eye Pictures of Regina has just been signed. Minds Eye also produced *The Lost Daughter* starring Richard Chamberlain, and is shooting a made-for-TV movie in Indian Head starring Harry Hamlin.

Another Regina based company, Partners in Motion, has plans for several projects including *Survivors*, *Beyond Medicine*, *Bird Man*, and *Northwest Assignment*. Ron Goetz, manager of Partners in Motion, says the company has plans to expand its staff from 10 to 80 to handle the additional extra work the new projects will create.

Both Ron Goetz of Partners in Motion and Kevin DeWalt of Minds Eye are optimistic that Saskatchewan's \$23 million film industry will expand to \$100 million in the next two or three years.

The 35 per cent tax credit, combined with the creativity of members of Saskatchewan's film industry, is working towards further stimulating our economy by injecting new money and creating jobs. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Passing of Lawrence Yew

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great sadness that I rise today to speak on the passing of a great man. Mr. Lawrence Yew of Canoe Lake passed away this past Saturday in Edmonton, Alberta. I know that simple words cannot and will not convey the deep remorse and sadness of all northern and native people of Saskatchewan when the news of his passing reached home.

Lawrence was known as a man that fought hard and long for northern people. Last week Lawrence travelled with me to Regina to discuss the Primrose Air Weapons Range issue with several government members. In spite of the incredible challenge to his health, Lawrence made one last journey to this Assembly to fight for a cause that he believed in. Mr. Speaker, whether Lawrence was serving as MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly), whether he was serving as administrator in Pinehouse, or working with the fishermen's cooperative in Canoe Lake, he always cared and helped people consistently. He was a very noble man.

To his wife Vicky, his daughter Jolene, his family, and the community of Canoe Lake, I sincerely thank you for sharing Lawrence with us.

I would like to assure his family that when all the accolades have faded, his plaques and achievements stored away, Lawrence's memory will always be with us.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

May he rest in peace.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Restoration of Legislative Building

Mr. Flavel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you will be happy to know that the position you hold has a direct connection to our honoured guests that were introduced earlier by the minister of SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation). A connection of some interest to you and your safety.

Eighty-eight years ago, as the minister said, Mrs. Daisy Anderson's father helped construct the legislative dome. Mr. Arthur White worked with Mr. Frank Chester and John McLeish, the two men who left the message in a bottle in the crawl space of the dome in 1910.

Mrs. Anderson, a constituent of mine, and her family toured the building with the minister this morning, and as a commemoration of her association with this magnificent building that we are privileged to work in, she was presented with a framed photograph from 1911 of the construction workers building the dome.

The connection to you, Mr. Speaker? Today restoration work begins on this building, the preparation of which led to the discovery of the bottle, which led to the finding of Mrs. Anderson.

And what is the area first restored and redressed and re-strengthened and renewed? Mr. Speaker, it's the dome which you and your officials line up to enter the Chamber each day . . . under which you enter the Chamber each day.

As the engineer's report says, the dome area is in danger of structural collapse without immediate repairs. So I'm glad that Mrs. Anderson and her son Ron, Maxine, June, and Dennis are here today to help launch the restoration of this priceless, historic building — and the preservation of the Speaker — as we know it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Party Leaders Elected

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate two new, recently elected leaders. I would like to congratulate Mr. Hermanson, the new leader of the Saskatchewan Conservative Party, and Nancy MacBeth, the new leader of the Alberta Liberal Party.

And it's funny how in this world of politics we have two former Conservatives, Jean Charest and Nancy MacBeth, now as leaders or soon-to-be leaders of a provincial Liberal Party. Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a Reformer turned Tory, but my mother always warned me that there was no such thing as a reformed Tory.

I express my regrets to Mr. Gantfoer in his valiant fight to make the leadership race interesting. The final question though is, Mr. Speaker, now with Mr. Hermanson as leader of the Tory Party, will he force all his MLAs to go to reform school?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Meadow Lake Tribal Council Victorious at Indian Winter Games

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you are no doubt aware, the Saskatchewan Indian Winter Games were held last week in Regina. Young athletes from across the province came to compete in the 18th year of the event.

The athletes from the Meadow Lake Tribal Council combined for the best team performance of the games. The Meadow Lake Tribal Council team had 243 members pitted against over 2,000 athletes from other tribal councils. They finished first over all, accumulating 301 points in hockey, broomball, badminton, volleyball, and basketball.

MLTC's youth and sports development coordinator, Yvonne Wolverine, was confident of the victory as MLTC teams have won the summer games for the past two years. Athletes from both sexes, ranging in age from 10 to 18 years, won medals in hockey, broomball, and volleyball among other events.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate both the organizers of the Saskatchewan Indian Winter Games for promoting healthy lifestyles among our aboriginal youth, and to the athletes of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council for their victory at the games.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

High School Drama Awards

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Swift Current is noted for its athletic teams, its great rodeo, its booming economy, its innovative people. But what is not as evident is its cultural contributions.

The Swift Current Comprehensive High School's production of *Sticks and Stones* won several awards at a recent drama festival in Rosetown. Among the awards the young actors and producers received were: best visual production, best technical production, and best overall production. Melissa Thingstad was also honoured as runner-up for the best performance award in the seven-school, eight-play festival.

The troupe from Swift Current Comprehensive High School now moves on to compete at the Saskatchewan Drama Association provincial drama festival in Regina at the end of April.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all involved and wish them the best of luck in Regina. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Regional Hospital Emergency Services

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my

question today is for the Minister of Health.

Mr. Minister, the Saskatchewan Party has learned that there was no anesthetist on call on the weekend at North Battleford hospital. That's because your government is refusing to compensate anesthetists for on-call services. That means no emergency services could be performed in North Battleford over the weekend and any emergency surgery cases had to be rushed to Saskatoon, an hour and a half away. Mr. Minister, that is unacceptable.

First you close down 52 rural hospitals. Now you are cutting services in regional hospitals like North Battleford, Swift Current, and Yorkton. Mr. Speaker, the NDP health care system is breaking down at every level and it's Saskatchewan people who will suffer.

Mr. Minister, what are you doing to deal with this problem and what are you doing to ensure that emergency surgery is available in regional hospitals like North Battleford?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, unlike almost every other provincial jurisdiction in Canada, this government has negotiated and signed a successful contract negotiation with the Saskatchewan Medical Association.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Under which, Mr. Speaker, 26 million new dollars is provided to the physicians of our province, in addition a \$5 million addition to provide for emergency care.

In respect to the situation in North Battleford, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure that member and all members that the Battleford district and the SMA (Saskatchewan Medical Association) I'm sure will come to an agreement in that circumstance.

But before I take my place, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, who's of the Tory Party, may want to explain to this House what's going on in Tory Alberta, oil-rich Tory Alberta, where headline after headline tell us: "Hospitals poised for strike; Alberta MDs threaten job action; Alberta doctors set up pressure." That's in the province, Mr. Speaker, where the residents are obliged to pay an \$800 premium every year for their medical service.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the people of this province will be satisfied with that answer.

Mr. Minister, staff at North Battleford hospital have told us this did cause a problem in at least one case. The North Battleford hospital was unable to treat one patient who had suffered a broken leg because there was no anesthetist this weekend. That patient had to be sent to Saskatoon.

Mr. Minister, we're just lucky there weren't more cases. This is a disaster waiting to happen. It's a direct result of your decision to have anesthetists out of the on-call services agreement. Mr. Minister, the only people who seem to have unlimited access to anesthetists are you and your NDP government. You all seem to be soundly sleeping through this health care crisis.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: what are you doing to ensure that anesthetist services are available on weekends in regional hospitals like North Battleford, Yorkton, and Swift Current, and what are you doing to deal with the crisis before us?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I repeat, this government has signed a negotiated contract with the Saskatchewan Medical Association, of which we are very proud. And I am confident that the North Battleford Health District, and the SMA on behalf of its anesthetists, will work out this current situation to provide services.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on a daily basis, whether standing or from their seats, these folks in the Tory Party are raising questions about health care; but what they do not do very often is suggest their solutions. Now I'm going to ask them today if they would define some of their solutions. Is their solution to do what the Alberta Tories do and put on every family in the province an \$800 premium . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Now the Chair is unable to be able to hear the minister provide his response and I'll ask for the cooperation — order — I'll ask for the cooperation of the House in providing the minister the opportunity to be heard.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, is the Tory solution to the problems they continually raise, is it to do the \$800 premium per family that the Alberta Tories have done to the people of Alberta? Or is it as their new leader, Mr. Hermanson, suggests, that they would begin to de-insure services, Mr. Speaker — to begin to de-insure non-life-threatening procedures. I hope that the new leader of the Tory Party today will define for the people of Saskatchewan which procedures he intends to de-insure. Is it cataracts? Knee surgeries?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the minister is really interested in hearing what our policy is, maybe he can consult with the Premier, call an election, and we'll let him know what the policy is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Minister, one of the problems with the NDP health system is that health districts' hands are tied when it comes to spending their own money. You tell them the areas where their money is to be spent, and this often leaves them with very little choice as to where they spend their money.

Mr. Minister, you like to make health care districts shoulder the blame for service cuts and bed closures, but they are left with no choice when your government refuses to let them spend their own money as they see fit.

Mr. Minister, we have a piece of legislation on the Table that we will be introducing this afternoon regarding block funding. Mr. Minister, or the Acting Minister of Health, will you ask the Premier if you and your colleagues can support this block funding to allow health care districts to utilize the funds in the best means possible to address the concerns in their area?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I was very, very pleased to have the member from Moosomin stand in the House this afternoon and say that he and his party are very anxious to get to an election, because there's going to be a by-election, my friends, there's going to be a by-election in Saskatoon pretty soon. And we're of course assuming that your new leader will be running in that by-election. Now that will be the time for your new leader and your party to lay before the people of Saskatchewan just what it is you mean.

Now I'm going to quote directly from the *Leader-Post*. It said in the *Leader-Post*, regarding the position of your new leader on health care:

Hermanson says he wouldn't impose health care premiums or user fees, (now that's a step forward) but (and here's the but you could drive a truck through) he would look at raising additional revenues in the health system by removing some procedures for non-life-threatening illnesses from the medical system.

Now I recall during my time in Health that non-life-threatening procedures that he would like to de-insure could include — could include — cataract surgery, hip replacement, knee replacements. We'll be very anxious to see what your position on these issues really is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SaskPower Proposed Investment in Guyana

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for SaskPower. Mr. Minister, when you turfed Jack Messer last month you said the two main reasons were Channel Lake and Guyana. Milt Fair said the same thing, Channel Lake and Guyana.

It's pretty clear what Jack did wrong in Channel Lake but it's less clear what he did wrong in Guyana. According to all your public statements, SaskPower did all the proper due diligence on the Guyana deal. He only bailed out because of political instability.

Mr. Minister, exactly what did Jack Messer do wrong that would cause you to cite Guyana as one of the reasons for his departure. Did he mislead the board? Did he act without proper authority? What did he do wrong to get fired for Guyana?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the member opposite that I appreciate the opportunity to rise today. But first I want to, as the Premier did earlier, congratulate him on a very valiant effort, and I say that sincerely, that an excellent job in the democratic process was done.

But I want to say to you, to the member for Melfort, as it would relate to Channel Lake and the position of the separation between Mr. Messer and the Power Corporation, as I said at the time that Mr. Messer left, that it was a combination of a number of issues. And when asked if Guyana was one of them, we said yes it was, that Channel Lake was one. But it was a number of different issues.

But I think what the public is more interested in is that member and the new leader of the Conservative Party's interest in privatizing the Crowns. That's what is a great issue when I'm holding public meetings around the province. They want to know whether you, sir, still have the opinion that the Crown corporations should be privatized.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that just doesn't make sense. If you did everything right in Guyana, then why did you fire Michael Hogan over Guyana. If you did everything right in Guyana, why did you fire Jack Messer over Guyana. Jack Messer's causing a lot of political instability all right, but it isn't in Guyana, it's right here in Saskatchewan and you know that.

You can't duck from the Guyana deal because you were over there and you're responsible for it. Will you own up to what went wrong in Guyana, Mr. Minister. Why did you fire Jack Messer and Michael Hogan?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite that as it relates to the research and due diligence done on Guyana, the documents have been tabled in the House.

What happened here is we had a letter of intent signed between SaskPower Commercial and the Guyanese electrical company. The research was done, and at the end of the day it was decided, because the economics weren't right, that the deal wouldn't go forward. I don't know what could be more clear to the member opposite.

Is he saying that the deal with Guyana should have went ahead? I know he is opposed to the Crown corporations and wants them privatized. But today he's confusing the issue by saying we should have completed the Guyanese deal. Which side are you on, and what do you want?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Possible Sale of Crown Life

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

Mr. Minister, the Channel Lake fiasco has made it painfully clear that the NDP government has no idea what's happening in our Crown corporations and other Crown-owned assets. So it may come as a surprise to him that the Government of Saskatchewan owns a controlling interest in Crown Life Insurance.

Well, Mr. Minister, since it is part of your portfolio, you should have noticed by now that Crown Life is on the take-over list by a number of larger life insurance companies in Canada and the United States. And many people in the business community are telling us that Crown Life is for sale by the owner — that means you, Mr. Minister.

Will you confirm that the Government of Saskatchewan is actively investigating the potential of selling its interest in

Crown Life Insurance Company?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I want to say to the member opposite, she will know that the Crown Life is an institution and a company that was brought here under the Devine administration. A lot of work by community leaders in putting together what is a large corporation with a large number of jobs in the province.

But I will give you the assurance that our officials in CIC will follow this issue with the same intent they followed in other areas — in other areas. For example, the sale of the Bi-Provincial.

And I would like the member opposite to tell us about that. Where you were urging us to sell that interest for 22 million, and we sold it for 310 million. Yes, the members opposite, do you remember that?

What I can tell you is that on that deal with Bi-Provincial we made several hundred million more than what you were recommending to us. And I haven't heard a call for an inquiry on that issue. No call for an inquiry from the press or from you on Bi-Provincial.

But I want to say to you that when it comes to the dealing with Crown Life, our officials are watching it with a great deal of interest. And I'm sure that whatever recommendation comes, we will be well served by those officials.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Plains Health Centre Closure

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Liberal opposition has received more than 5,000 letters in the past few weeks from people who are extremely concerned about the proposed closure of the Plains hospital. People are equally concerned that New Democrat MLAs who campaigned in the 1995 election to save the Plains have refused to speak out on behalf of those they are supposed to represent.

My question is to the member from Regina Lakeview — the Justice minister. I understand, sir, that you, like many Saskatchewan residents, had a family member who underwent lifesaving surgery at the Plains. Surely you must have some feelings about the Plains. How can you sit there silently, allowing this government, your government, to shut down the hospital that a member of your family and many families from this province owe their very life to?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that the Plains hospital has served a very great function for health care for the people of Regina and southern Saskatchewan. But we are now talking about the 21st century and we are talking about new construction at Regina General, new construction at the Pasqua Hospital in Regina — the net result of which will be no reduction in hospital beds — a modern, state-of-the-art medical facility which will be the pride and the jewel of southern

Saskatchewan, if not this province, and in fact western Canada.

We are moving into a 21st century health care which will serve the people of Regina and the South better than ever before. And if the hon. member doubts me in that, then I invite him to join me in another tour of Regina General and Pasqua, and join us in the future. And if the hon. member has any other doubts, I ask him to join me in urging his federal Liberal colleagues to stop cutting back on health care and start defending it, as we are.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Mr. Speaker, when we asked some serious questions this past Friday about some serious issues on behalf of people of Saskatchewan, we got frivolous answers. We got references to the Grimm brothers and fairy tale stories. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is not a frivolous matter. One has to question what happened to the pledges that those New Democrat MLAs made when they were elected to serve their constituents.

For instance, the member for Regina South promised in his 1995 campaign literature that he would, and I quote: “work to keep the Plains Health Centre open.” The people these New Democrat MLAs are supposed to represent deserve to know why those members have failed to utter so much as a word of protest.

To the member from Regina Centre: you made the official announcement that the Plains will be converted into a SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) campus. Have you talked to your constituents? Do you realize they have major concerns, or are you so arrogant that you simply don't care?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order. Before the Executive Council representative responds, I want to remind the hon. member that questions put in question period must be directed to members of the Executive Council in — order, order — must be directed to members of Executive Council in the authority that they hold within Executive Council. And that is the guideline for question period. I'll allow this answer to be . . . this question to be responded to. It's difficult for the Chair to draw the conclusion until the question's been answered, but I do want to give the hon. member fair warning that questions must be directed to members of the Executive Council in their authority.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I'll take the question on behalf of the government. Mr. Speaker, in answering the question, let me give it in this form. I have before me a clipping of the Regina *Leader-Post* dated March 13, 1998.

I should preface that by saying that there's a more recent one dated April 18, 1998 on the issue of the Plains. And spokespeople from the Regina Health District, particularly Mr. Mark Evans, says this, quote: “Evans said the Liberals are providing the public with ‘an inaccurate perception’” on this whole issue.

But I return to the original quotation of March 13, and this is a letter written to the *Leader-Post*, which says this in part, quote:

I'm confident, however, that when the process is complete we will have the best acute-care services in the province. These services will benefit not only those who live in the Regina Health District but (will be helpful to) all the residents of southern Saskatchewan.

No services will be lost, closed or downgraded with the closure of the Plains Health Centre.

Who wrote this letter? The former Liberal candidate in the provincial election of 1995, Pat Edenoste, supported by Anita Bergman, the past president of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party. That's what the Liberals say about the Plains hospital.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I don't know why these folks aren't hearing from the same people that we're hearing from, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order, order. Order. All hon. members will come to order from both sides of the House. Order, order. Order. Order. I will ask all hon. members to allow the Leader of the Third Party to put his question.

Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Isn't it ironic how frivolously both these people treat this very serious issue. They make fun of it, they make racket and noise so nobody can hear the questions that the people of Saskatchewan are asking.

New Democrat members who are supposed to represent rural ridings have remained silent as well. And maybe there is a reason. And this is a question for the Premier, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP member for Estevan told media after being elected in 1995 that, and I quote: “I had an opinion until I had it brainwashed out of me.”

Mr. Speaker, he had an opinion but it was brainwashed out of him. Maybe it's time to call David Duchovny from the X-Files to uncover this conspiracy of silence and deprogram NDP members.

Mr. Premier, the Liberal opposition is sponsoring a Save the Plains meeting in Indian Head tonight. Would you come out and listen to the people? Would you do what is right by placing a moratorium on this closure until after the next election?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Leader of the Third Party is quoting to me purported statements made by candidates who ran for us in the 1995 election. I am giving to this House, and to the Leader of the Third Party, a direct quotation from Pat Edenoste, who sought the nomination for the Liberal Party in the 1995 election.

When I say that she ran, she serves on the Regina District Health Board. She not only is a Liberal but she serves on the district health board. She says, Mr. Speaker, in a quotation: “No services will be lost, closed, or downgraded with the closure of the Plains Health Centre.” Anita Bergman, the past president of provincial Liberal Party, who also ran, said the same thing.

And what do the Liberals say when I give them back the answers? They say those two people will no longer be candidates in the Liberal Party. That's what the member from Shaunavon . . . Wood River said. That, Mr. Speaker, is not consistent with the health care facts, nor is it a very good show of democracy either.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government can't move fast enough trying to send health care into a tailspin by closing the Plains. This weekend edition of the *Leader-Post* contained a request for proposal to convert the Plains hospital into a SIAST campus.

The NDP has ignored more than 100,000 people who signed petitions opposing the closure of the hospital. NDP MLAs have demonstrated they don't believe in democracy, Mr. Speaker, by refusing to speak on behalf of constituents they are supposed to represent.

Mr. Premier, what do you say to these thousands of thousands of people who think — and know — that you're wrong, dead wrong, Mr. Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, we in this government try to listen to the representations of the public on all issues. Sometimes they cannot answer them fully, I understand that. Sometimes we don't even answer them correctly, but we do our best and I think our record is as good as any provincial government in Canada.

And I can tell you one thing, in the area of health care it is better than any other provincial government. And I can tell you one other thing — it is always, always better than the record of the Liberals and the Conservatives and Tories who historically have fought health care in this province, tooth and nail. You probably were there at the time of the KOD — the Keep Our Doctors committee.

You are now advocating two-tier health. You advocated it, your doctor advocates . . . doctor-leader advocates private health clinics, and you and the Tory parties advocate two-tier and privatization of the health care system. That is your position, Tories and Liberals, Liberals and Tories; it's not ours.

We are defending health care, and we're building the best health care system for the 21st century that this province can afford, and the Plains will be an example of that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Children's Advocate's Inquiry

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, public outcry arising from last September's death of 19-month Karen Quill at St. Louis resulted in the Minister of Social Services instructing the child advocate to conduct an independent inquiry into her death.

Mr. Minister, you gave me the indication this inquiry would be

completed in about three months, which was last December. In a telephone conversation with the child advocate, I was informed the inquiry would be completed at the end of March. Mr. Minister, have you received the results of the child advocate's inquiry into Karen's death, and if so, I call on you to table those results in the Assembly.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I have not received from the child advocate yet her final report. I expect within three weeks to a month . . . the indication that I have from the child advocate's office is that the final report will be available within three weeks to a month, and as soon as it is available, all members of this House and the general public will have access to it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Karen's accident, as it was slated by the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) investigation, most likely happened as a result of being neglected because her foster mother was overwhelmed and overburdened.

Mr. Minister, it is incumbent on you as the minister responsible to act upon the lessons learned from Karen's death. It is necessary for a category entitled "abuse and neglect" to be added to the child death classification system. This inclusion would act as a measuring stick and an alarm bell, indicating whether or not our system is effective.

Mr. Minister, will you see to it that abuse and neglect is included in the child death classification system?

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, since my appointment as Minister of Social Services, the tragedy in St. Louis and other significant events that have affected my department have been, clearly for this House and I think for the people of Saskatchewan, some of the most difficult issues that we have to deal with.

I'm awaiting the report of the child advocate on the St. Louis tragedy. The child advocate may speak to the issue that the member raises here. I will certainly give consideration to the suggestion that the member makes.

When we do the definition of cause of death, of course we use the categories which are determined by the provincial coroner. We do not establish those — they're established by the coroner. But we would want to work with the child death review committee, taking into account the member's suggestion, and of course all of the recommendations that will come, I'm sure, from the child advocate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Canadian Wheat Board and Canadian National Railway Settlement

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I stand before the Assembly today to congratulate the Canadian Wheat Board and CN (Canadian National) on the fact that they

were able to reach a settlement over the level of service complaint being heard by the Canadian Transportation Agency.

The Wheat Board filed the complaint to the CTA (Canadian Transportation Agency) on behalf of western Canada's grain producers to recover losses incurred by the producers as a result of poor service provided by the railways over the '96-97 winter shipping season. The slow movement of grain to port in '96-97 resulted in producers having to pay millions of dollars in demurrage charges and caused considerable damage to Canada's reputation as a reliable supplier of high quality grains.

The Government of Saskatchewan, represented by the Department of Highways and Transportation, along with several farm groups and individual grain producers, intervened in support of the Wheat Board to ensure that the Canadian Transportation Agency was aware of the full impact of the transportation problems.

Mr. Speaker, the action taken by the Wheat Board is of significant importance to western Canadian farmers. And while the amount of the settlement by the CNR (Canadian National Railway Company) was not disclosed, I am encouraged by the assurances of the Wheat Board that the settlement will consist of cash compensation plus rate adjustments.

Mr. Speaker, not only are producers being allowed to recover some of their losses, but the settlement also sends a clear message that the railways can be held accountable for the level of service they provide; a message that producers are not willing to stand by and accept financial responsibility for problems resulting from poor services by a third party.

While the settlement is significant, we must recognize it is only part of the solution. All stakeholders in the system must work towards long-term solutions and improvements in the grain handling system to ensure that similar problems do not occur in the future.

Minister Upshall and myself will continue to work on behalf . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order, order. Now the hon. minister will recognize, of course, that she's not to use the proper name of other members in the House when speaking in the House. I will also want to remind the hon. minister that in making ministerial statements, you must be making reference to a new government direction or policy or program and would ask her to inform the House of that as well.

Hon. Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Agriculture and Food and myself will continue to work on behalf of the grain producers to ensure that this message gets through to Justice Estey while he conducts his grain review. Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to propose solutions to Justice Estey and the federal government — solutions designed to ensure that Saskatchewan farmers have access to an effective, efficient, accountable, low-cost transportation system.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring this message to the Assembly this afternoon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to respond to the minister's statement regarding the Canadian Wheat Board and CNR's settlement. The minister says that while the settlement is significant, I think the important question here in all of this is, that the farmers across this province are asking, is where they don't have the details of this settlement, it's a little bit hard to judge the settlement when we don't have that kind of detail. And I'm disappointed that if the minister had that kind of information that she wouldn't share it with the farmers of Saskatchewan.

Too often the concerns of farmers are just of this nature. The Canadian Wheat Board says: trust us; we're doing a good job for you. The government says: trust us; we're doing a good job for you. But none of the detail is available for the farmers of this province to judge for themselves whether or not you're doing any kind of a job on behalf, on behalf of them.

The CTA hearings were important. I had opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to make a presentation on behalf of the opposition to that hearings in Saskatoon. And it seemed to me that when you got to speak to the issue that many, many people were not only looking and pointing fingers at the Canadian . . . or pardon me, at the railways of this country, but they were also pointing their fingers at the Canadian Wheat Board and saying, what was your role in the problems of grain delivery last year.

And there was considerable evidence that the Canadian Wheat Board was calling forward the wrong kinds of grains and it was causing all kinds of congestion at the port and ringing up large demurrage costs. And while the government opposite may be prepared to put their head in the sand when it comes to the Canadian Wheat Board's responsibility in terms of this whole fiasco, we are not prepared to put our heads in the sand in terms of just blindly supporting them on this.

And I would say to the minister opposite, rather than just simply blindly supporting them on this initiative, why didn't you say something like, what are the details? How much of a payment is going to be received by farmers? Is there going to be any discount in terms of long-term freight costs?

It just simply isn't enough from this government, Mr. Speaker, and we would ask them to . . . when the Estey report comes down, I hope you have some better answers at that point.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aldridge: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too was curious about what new government, provincial government direction or new government policy was being made today in the minister's statement. I noted that we're to take this government's assurance, because it was the Wheat Board's assurance, that cash compensation and rate adjustments are to be significant dollar items for producers in the province. For now I guess we take their assurances but we're yet to find out in fact.

But as I say, was curious what sort of new provincial government policy or direction was being taken here.

I do note that the minister makes reference also to the Minister of Agriculture, that they have a stake in the discussions related

to the well-being of producers, grain producers in the province being the case here. And I would just have to point out to the government one more time that I think there is a significant role that this provincial government could take in using their powers of persuasion on grain elevator companies in this province to place a moratorium on the closure of a lot of these elevators on branch lines until after the Estey Commission's review, in order to prevent any further deterioration of opportunities that exist to develop short-line railways in this province.

So certainly this government could have a significant role to play. I didn't hear them commit to that today. I'd be very interested to hear them commit to that very aspect of what I think would be crucial in terms of maintaining some sort of a bottom line for grain producers in this province; to maintain some sort of a possibility of some viability in short-line railways in this province until after this Estey Commission review is completed.

Unless the government is prepared to do something like that, all they're doing, all they're doing is just presenting lip-service to the farmers of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. I do want to bring to the attention of the House that the ministerial statements are intended to be an opportunity for members of Executive Council to advise the Assembly of new directions or policies of the provincial government. And as I listen to the — order, order — as I listened to the remarks of the hon. minister this afternoon, it was not clear to the Chair what the new direction or policy is that she was reporting to the House.

However, having permitted the statement to be made — order, order — however having permitted the statement to be made, the Chair concluded it's only fair to provide the members of the opposition opportunity to respond to it.

But I do want to ask for the cooperation of members of Executive Council in the future to ensure that when making ministerial statements that they do meet that criteria. Further ministerial statements?

(1430)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 211 — The Health Districts Amendment Act, 1998 (Block Funding)

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill No. 211, The Health Districts Amendment Act, 1998 (Block Funding).

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a first time and ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 212 — The Health Districts Amendment Act, 1998 (Fully Elected Health Boards)

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill No. 212, The Health Districts Amendment Act, 1998 (Fully Elected Health Boards).

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a first time and ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to supply the answer to question 39, and by leave of the Assembly, to supply the answers to questions 40 to 46, to convert question 47, and to provide a response to question 48.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip requests leave to do those things simultaneously. Is leave granted? Leave is granted and the response to questions 39 to 46 and 48 are tabled. And the question 47 is converted to motions for return (debatable).

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 24 — The Wascana Centre Amendment Act, 1998

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill No. 24 amends The Wascana Centre Act. This Bill implements the budget decision to maintain the 1998-99 statutory funding for the Wascana Centre Authority at the same level as last year.

This is the fifth year that the province has maintained funding at this level, permitting the Authority to continue an excellent level of service in developing, conserving, and enhancing the Wascana Centre.

This Bill establishes the statutory funding contributions from the city of Regina, the University of Regina, and the province, for 1998-99. This funding will be 1.421 million. This amendment replaces the assessment-based funding formula with a fixed funding level and provides for a review of funding at least every five years. The share of funding between the city, the university, and the province remains the same.

In addition to the funding provision, the Bill contains administrative amendments to update language in the Act, permit the board to delegate power, authorize the Authority to enter into agreements with rural municipalities on boundary changes, correct the boundary description, direct the Authority to undertake a master plan review in 1998, and highlight research and development associated with the University of Regina as a function of the university in the preamble.

I take this opportunity to commend Wascana Centre on the excellent job they continue to do in developing and managing the Wascana Centre on behalf of the city, the university, and the province.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 24.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few comments before I allow this piece of legislation to move into committee. Because I don't see it as a piece of legislation that really has a lot of detail or debate other than clarifying some of the issues, and certainly giving the Wascana Authority the assurances that the funding levels that they've had in the past are going to

continue or will remain, enabling them to provide the services they have over the past number of years.

And while I think for the Wascana Authority that's something positive and it's good news and it's good to note where their funding will be, the question, as we raised with the Meewasin Valley too, is the fact that the government has moved from the assessment-based funding to this standard funding. I think for many people who have been caught up in the whole process of the new assessment program and are facing higher taxes, they will wonder, well why Authorities such as Meewasin or Wascana Lake versus some of the other businesses or even private citizens of the province.

And I think in regards to the funding, the fact that it's at a level gives confidence to the Wascana Centre Authority to certainly continue to provide services to the community and to the surrounding area, and with that we don't really have any arguments.

As well the minister did mention the fact that there are some housekeeping areas to the Bill, the fact that the Bill is addressing some areas where they need some clarification, and in that regard, Mr. Speaker, that really we don't have any debate in that regard.

We feel certainly it's appropriate to modernize language. And, Mr. Speaker, as I look at some of the language, we're talking about substituting he or his with he or she and him or her. Now whether or not those are all the types of language that the Saskatchewan taxpayers are all that concerned with, I doubt it very much, but it's little things like that that are being clarified and we don't have, we don't have a problem with that as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, in regards to The Wascana Centre Amendment Act, I think rather than slowing up the process, it seems to me that the types of issues or the concerns we may have and we may want to address could be just as appropriately addressed in Committee of the Whole, and with that, I would allow this Bill to proceed.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

Bill No. 25 — The Pipelines Act, 1998

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Pipelines Act, 1998. This Act replaces The Pipe Lines Act now in place.

The major changes in the proposed new Act are as follows: one, it allows for simplification of the licensing process for approval to construct, alter, operate, suspend, and abandon pipelines. Secondly, it clarifies that the Act includes all oil and gas pipelines and all pipelines transporting any substance used in the production of oil and gas. Thirdly, it exempts from the Act, pipelines regulated by the National Energy Board Act and the gas distribution pipelines regulated under The SaskEnergy Act. It also allows cabinet to exempt any pipeline or any portion of a pipeline from any provision of the Act.

Further, that it clarifies that pipeline companies are to use

expropriation procedures under The Expropriation Procedure Act. It also allows expropriation procedures to apply to certain exempted pipelines. It allows the minister to declare a pipeline other than a natural gas pipeline to be a common carrier and provide non-discriminatory access. It requires that all parties notify the pipeline company if they are planning any ground disturbance within 30 metres of a pipeline.

It makes the Act consistent with The Oil and Gas Conservation Act regarding maximum fines imposed for contraventions to the Act and regulations. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, the Small Explorers and Producers Association of Canada, and the pipeline operators were consulted on the changes and are in support of them. As well, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities and the appropriate surface rights groups have been consulted with respect of the new Act and amendments were made to accommodate certain concerns.

With those brief comments, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Pipeline Act, 1998.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few comments in regards to The Pipeline Act, 1998. I'm certainly pleased to see the minister bringing forward this piece of legislation, although I would have to say that I think there are some issues that we would look forward and are looking forward to addressing, some questions that need to be raised.

I understand that this Act replaces the pipeline Act passed in 1978. It applies to construction, operation, and alteration of all pipelines not covered under the National Energy Board Act or The SaskEnergy Act.

The old Act simply stated that the legislation applied only to those pipelines that were completely within provincial jurisdiction. This exemption for pipelines under The SaskEnergy Act may be worthy of questions; however it appears at least on the surface that SaskEnergy may be playing with . . . by a different set of rules than others and there may be some reasonable explanations for this but we certainly look forward to quizzing the minister in this regard. It also covers pipelines wholly situated within a plant, or a pipeline that is exempted by regulations for whatever reason.

Mr. Speaker, under the old Act a permit had to be issued by the minister before the construction or operation of the pipeline. The new Act refers to a licence. Under the old Act, no reference was made to an application fee for a permit. With the new Act, it's expressly stated that a fee must be paid to the department when applying for a licence. The fee is not stated. As to what it will be, prescribed in regulations and that is an area of concern, Mr. Speaker, because when you start talking about fees and you leave it for the regulations, the unfortunate part is fees that are involved in regulations rather than stated in legislation can go up at the drop of a hat, and anyone who may be affected by it may not recognize the changes that can take place so readily. So we will have some questions in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, as well, a company intending to construct a pipeline other than a flowline line but is otherwise exempt from this Act, but desires to have the authority to expropriate land under this Act, may apply, it says, for a licence.

It seems, Mr. Speaker, as well, that the old Act made reference to highways when discussing the process for construction of pipelines. I believe the new Act refers to roads instead and states that the minister and the minister alone may give approval for a pipeline to be built on or across, over or under, a road. It appears, Mr. Speaker, that the RM (rural municipality) does not have to be consulted or even informed of such construction, and that's an issue and a question that we would certainly want to pose to the minister as we get into further discussion in regards to the current Act.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of questions in this Act. There are a number of issues that we would want to raise, and I thank the minister for the opportunity at least to discuss some of these concerns. But in light of the fact that we do have some areas of concern, we do want to have . . . take more time to review the legislation and make sure that we are appropriately dealing with any concerns, or all the concerns that may be raised by the industry or by individuals, or even by rural municipalities, as a result of the ability to go under roads or the fact of changing from highways to roads

It would certainly be appropriate, I believe at this time, for us to move adjournment of debate. I therefore move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 26 — The Oil and Gas Conservation
Amendment Act, 1998**

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise again in this Assembly to move second reading of the oil and natural gas . . . The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act. This amendment establishes the authority to suspend and reinstate the requirement for natural gas producers, users, to obtain gas use and gas removal permits.

The amendment also provides for penalties on late and incomplete submissions of drill cores and samples to ensure greater compliance with the submission requirements. Current legislation requires all consumers buying gas directly from a producer to obtain a gas use permit and all producers selling gas out of province to obtain a gas removal permit. These requirements, or permits, were necessary in the mid-1980s at the time of the deregulation of natural gas markets in order to provide confidence in the security and reliability of natural gas supplies.

Some 11 years later, after natural gas deregulation was implemented, consumers are confident that the market-place works. Natural gas permits are no longer necessary. Permits are not required for other non-renewable resources or commodities produced in the province.

This amendment will formally suspend the permitting process once the legislative amendments are enacted. This amendment also provides the minister with the authority to reinstate the permitting process should it be required in the future.

(1445)

The purpose of these changes is to reduce administrative

burdens both for the industry and the department as part of the ongoing commitment of the Government of Saskatchewan to regulatory reform.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment also ensures the timely submission of core drills and samples to the department by prescribing penalties on late and incomplete submissions of cores and samples. Cores and samples collected by the department are a key source of information used by industry in developing their oil, gas, and exploration and development plans.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this amendment is supported by industry and has as well been identified as part of the government's regulatory reform.

With those brief comments, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, Mr. Speaker, just to make a few comments in regard to this piece of legislation. And certainly at the end of my remarks to move adjournment of debate to allow for some further, in-depth review of the legislation in order to address any concerns that may come out of this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, according to the government this Act is supposed to, number one, establish the authority to suspend and reinstate the requirements for natural gas producers and users to obtain gas use and gas removal permits; and number two, provide the penalties on late and incomplete submissions of drill cores and samples to ensure greater compliance with submission requirements.

The first change, as I understand it, allows the government to prescribe penalties for late and incomplete submission of drill cores and samples to the Department of Energy and Mines. The government says this will add consistency to the regulations that already allow the government to impose penalties for late or complete . . . or incomplete filing of reports and information to the department.

And certainly when it comes to filing reports, Mr. Speaker, I think that we're all aware of the fact that it's important to have your reports in on time; although I would have to acknowledge the fact that I have difficulty getting my reports in on time all the time. And it's not always easy just to always comply with the regulations. But certainly when it comes to gas and oil in this province, I think there are . . . it needs to certainly have regulations and rules and guidelines in place. And if it's fair for one, it's fair for all.

So we will take a look at this issue and the reasons the government has, and whether or not there have been in the past a number of companies that may not have followed the guidelines in place. So I think, as I understand from the minister, this is just clarifying the process.

The new Act also gives the minister the power to suspend or reinstate the use of natural gas permits for producers selling gas directly to customers. These permits were instituted when the

industry was deregulated in 1987 to ensure that gas under contract to customers was indeed available. According to the government, this is no longer necessary and such permits are no longer necessary.

However, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to note, instead of abolishing the use of these permits altogether, the government instead simply decided to suspend them. If the government feels they are again necessary in the future, it appears they will again be reinstated.

Even with the suspension of these permits, the government still has control over the industry, since it can impose the need for permits at any time. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the legislation doesn't make it very clear whether some companies may be required to have permits while others will not. It appears to give the minister the power to impose the need for permits on a case-by-case basis.

And that's a bit of a concern to us, Mr. Speaker. It's an issue that we certainly want to address. We think it's . . . if the rules are set and the rules are placed there, I believe the rules should be the same for everyone involved. I believe everyone, including companies, want to know that they're playing on the same playing-field. And if the minister has the power to impose the need for permits, you would have to ask, Mr. Speaker, does that give the minister the ability to have some influence on permits or on the companies that are involved in the province of Saskatchewan?

And certainly the exploration or the development of oil and gas . . . and when we look at the record of this government and the fact of the limitations they put on businesses, such as The Labour Standards Act or the CCTA (Crown Construction Tendering Agreement), Mr. Speaker, there are some concerns, some issues that we have and will continue to have.

And we want to address some of those concerns even in this piece of legislation, to indeed make sure that the government is not moving from what they say would be . . . would simplify the process and actually making, creating more red tape or more opposition for business to work in the province of Saskatchewan.

With those comments in mind, Mr. Speaker, I think it's appropriate that we indeed adjourn this Bill as well, allowing for further debate, further question, and detailed review of the piece of legislation. Therefore at this time I'll move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 19

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. MacKinnon that **Bill No. 19 — The Physical Therapists Act, 1998** be now read a second time.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to Bill 19,

The Physical Therapists Act, this legislation is important because it deals with the body responsible for regulating and disciplining, if need be, the physical therapists in Saskatchewan. And I think as the minister pointed out the other day, it creates a body that really has the authority to review very carefully if any disciplinary action is taken against any physical therapist.

And as I understand it, physical therapists have been consulted and are in agreement with the piece of legislation. In that regard, we don't have a major problem. We do have a few questions that we certainly look forward to addressing in Committee of the Whole.

The public, Mr. Speaker, as well needs a transparent avenue of recourse should they believe they have been wrongfully treated by a health care professional. And it appears these changes take us further in that direction. And I think that's appropriate.

I think in regards to the public, in dealing with health care, with care-givers, the public need to feel that they're dealing . . . that the physician, or in this case the therapist that they're dealing with, they certainly can deal with in confidence; and if they have some questions or concerns, that they have a body that they can turn to for some guidance at a time when they may feel that some of the actions that have been taken or the way that they've been dealt with may not be what they consider appropriate. So I think that the Bill certainly brings out and addresses some of those concerns.

Upon further examination, I believe it is a positive step to remove political discretion over discipline determined by the council. If the profession is to be self-regulated there should not be undue political interference. But I do have some questions regarding how many times this discretion has been used in the past.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that this Act does raise some serious questions that I will be raising in Committee of the Whole. Questions such as how much additional money will the new appeal process cost? And that's certainly appropriate that that's a concern, that's an issue that's raised.

Will the new process mean lengthier investigation time for serious offences? I think it's appropriate, Mr. Speaker, in regards to any time a concern is raised, an investigation of a possible wrongdoing, that appropriate time is certainly allowed for the process to be conducted fairly. And the fact that at the end of the day, whether it's a customer or a health care-giver, that they have felt they have been treated fairly by the system. So we'll certainly want to make some enquiries in that matter.

I'm also going to be very interested to hear the government's reasoning for removing therapists' right to charge a fee for service. And when we look at the health care system in the province of Saskatchewan, we look at the needs for more beds, we look at the waiting-lists that people are on, in some cases there may be a place, maybe there's an argument . . . maybe the government shouldn't just run out and say well no, we're not going to allow it.

I know we have the argument about universal health care, but at the same time, Mr. Speaker, I hear many people themselves suggesting that maybe we all need to accept a bit of

responsibility; and I feel, the idea that we've got universal health care, people almost expect that the services will be there for them immediately and don't recognize the fact that we're still paying for it as taxpayers. We still pay for it as individuals through our tax dollars.

So there may be a few questions in that area we want to address with government as to their reasons in regards to removing the therapists' right to charge a fee for service. So those are a few questions I think we can deal with effectively and address more carefully and correctly in Committee of the Whole rather than standing and trying to raise the questions without being able to get a response, through second reading.

So therefore at this time, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to take my place and allow this piece of legislation to move to committee.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

Bill No. 1

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Crofford that **Bill No. 1 — The Arts Board Amendment Act, 1998** be now read a second time.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to speak today to the changes that the government is making to The Arts Board Act. I would like to mention at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that it is quite surprising but none the less good to see the government listen to the real people in the arts community, and those that support it, for a change.

It is also surprising, Mr. Speaker, because since the members opposite have come to power they have been more concerned with building an empire for key players in the arts community than they have been about encouraging and supporting the large pool of talent that we have here in Saskatchewan. If we were going to support the Saskatchewan artists we must not single out those individuals who choose to make a living with their talents from the rest.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, Saskatchewan's greatest resource has always been and will continue to be the dedication and talent of our people. The arts community is no exception. We need to encourage that talent and create an inclusive art community which does not create artificial boundaries between who is and isn't an artist. That is what the government's previous legislation seemed to do.

So we are supportive of the government's decision to remove those boundaries in the legislation but I would like to say that we are only cautiously optimistic about the impact these changes will have. As all members know, removing such boundaries and breaking down turf protection can be a very difficult thing. Wording change in the legislation is a necessary first step but it is undoubtedly a very small first step, as my colleague mentioned the other day, to help break down the current bias the Arts Board has towards professional artists. A bias we fear promotes exploitation of the system by key players in the arts community.

To help break down this bias, the government must commit to

appointing a significant number of amateur artists onto the Arts Board. Unless they include these individuals in the process to determine how money is spent, we are doubtful that we will see any real changes in the allocation of grants. It will be necessary to change attitudes as well as legislation, and the best way to do this is by including a broad cross-section of the arts community on the board.

So I would repeat, Mr. Speaker, that we are supportive of this change but would recommend to the government, if they are committed to unite the arts community and help all Saskatchewan artists, it will take more than a wording change in your legislation.

The Saskatchewan Party is very supportive of Arts Board donations being allocated according to the wishes of the donors. I know a lot of people, Mr. Speaker, who would donate to the arts community if they were given assurance by the Arts Board that their money would go towards a certain community or art form. Unfortunately this is not what has happened in the past. Rather, the Arts Board has had free rein to spend this money on excursions to Europe or New York to plug themselves into the international arts scene.

Mr. Speaker, it is highly questionable what positive impact this has for artists at home. But it is even more questionable whether the individuals who donated their hard-earned money approve of such trips. Somehow I highly doubt it. So we are very supportive of donors having greater power over how their dollars are spent, but we are a little sceptical of whether the government supports this concept.

Let's take a quick look at the changes before us in the Assembly. The amendment states:

Any contribution to the endowment fund may be subject to the general direction of the donor, but the Arts Board shall have the exclusive power and responsibility to make decisions respecting the beneficiaries of the endowment fund.

The Arts Board should listen to the donor, but at the end of the day, they can do with their money whatever they want.

Mr. Speaker, that seems to me a funny inclusion in a piece of government legislation — the Arts Board can listen if they want to. Does this mean to suggest that prior to these changes, the Arts Board paid no attention to the donor's wishes? That they have been spending money purely on their own agenda? I know that some of this has happened, but I would like to think that there was some sensitivity in the past to the donor's wishes.

So I would just like to say, Mr. Speaker, that I find it odd that such a weak clause would be included. You either support the concept of donor control or you don't. We do. But as I have said, this legislation gives no indication that the government does. I do find it interesting however, that the minister responsible for the Art Board stated the reason for amending section 26 of the Act is to reassure donors that their money they give to promote art in Saskatchewan is not going into general coffers of the government.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the members opposite listen to their

own explanation. The people of Saskatchewan don't trust you with their money. Many of them don't believe for a second that you would not redirect their heartfelt donations into your infamous pot of gold. Pretty sorry state of affairs, if you ask me, Mr. Speaker.

Nonetheless, we are supportive of all the monies donated to the arts going towards the arts and going to support areas of the donor's choice. It just begs the question: what was happening before? If not, where was this money going?

As my comments show, the Saskatchewan Party questions the government's commitments to these steps but supports the general concepts laid out in the amendment Act.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

(1500)

Bill No. 15

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. MacKinnon that **Bill No. 15 — The Gas Inspection Amendment Act, 1998** be now read a second time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Out of breath here from running to make sure I got here in time for this debate, Mr. Speaker, because this is an important piece of legislation, also especially for anyone who has happened to have any gas work done in their houses lately, whether it's a new hot water heater, as in my own case, or a gas stove, or any sort of a gas appliance. We all have to deal with the gas inspectors.

Mr. Speaker, in this particular Bill it's very . . . we're pleased to see that the government is trying, finally, to cut down on the red tape that Saskatchewan residents have to deal with. Red tape has always been an encumbrance to everyone and it's in all of our benefit, whether it be government or individuals, to eliminate as much of that red tape as possible. And hopefully in this particular piece of legislation a very small bit of that will be eliminated.

But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, when we're dealing with gas inspections we have to find the proper balance between safety and the bureaucracy. They're not synonymous, Mr. Speaker, although most bureaucrats think that their actions are designed for safety — generally the safety of their own positions.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at gas fittings and gas inspections, most of this work, the fact is all of this work, is done not by the gas inspectors but by a person who is qualified — a plumber, a heater, an installer of furnaces and other gas equipment. They actually do the work, Mr. Speaker, and then the gas inspector comes along and says, yes, it's done right; no, it's not.

It really makes you wonder though when the plumber or the person, the gas fitter, comes along and installs a piece of equipment for you, and then says it's ready to go, sometimes the gas inspector will come along and tell you whether it's safe or not.

Now you're going to be using it in the meantime, and it may be a considerable period of time before the gas inspector actually comes along and uses it. In fact I've heard of occasions where it's been so long that the appliance has wore out before the gas inspector actually shows up to finally inspect it. So it makes you wonder why we actually do have a gas inspector on a lot of occasions, Mr. Speaker.

This is an attempt to cut down on the waiting-list for those needing the services of a gas inspector in Saskatchewan, because in the past some people have had to wait an inordinate amount of time to activate appliances which used gas, natural gas.

For new installations it's a serious problem, Mr. Speaker, when, to be able to turn your furnace on in the winter, you have to wait for a gas inspector to finally show up if your building is, let's say, a new house, Mr. Speaker. For people who are changing units out, they still need those gas inspectors, but the person installing it has the opportunity to hook it up and make it ready to run.

With this amendment, Mr. Speaker, gas permits are now only necessary when there is a breaking of the gas piping. Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if you have much experience in natural gas fittings, but any time you change out an appliance, you break the gas fittings. They're not broken in the sense of deterioration and failure, but you break the pipe apart, generally at a union, and change the piece of equipment out and reinstall it, hook it all back up again, and it's ready to go. And it's just as safe after the change-over as it was prior — hopefully even safer because you have a new unit that you've hooked in there, Mr. Speaker.

So you have to kind of wonder just what the government is meaning when they term breaking of the gas piping, and a gas permit is only needed at that time. Because every time you change it out, you're breaking that piping, Mr. Speaker. So I'm hopeful the minister in charge will be able to give some proper explanations on this.

The new Bill acknowledged that the installer of gas equipment may, in fact, have a better knowledge of the equipment than do the representatives of the gas utilities because of the factory and specialized training. As a result, SaskEnergy is no longer required to actually activate furnaces or other gas equipment, leaving it up to the installers to activate equipment properly and safely.

Well we have, Mr. Speaker . . . We allow our children to be taught with school teachers, some of which are certified, some are which are not. When a teacher is certified they're entitled to write their own exams, and give the exam to the student, and grade it, and the student either passes or fails accordingly. Well, Mr. Speaker, we have people who are certified in this province to do gas installations. Why would you not allow that person to install the piece of equipment and certify that it's safe for operations?

We say that our . . . the teachers who are certified are good enough and competent enough and qualified enough to educate our children, our future. And yet we're not prepared to say, Mr. Speaker, that the person who installs, starts up and says this is

safe for use, to finally say yes, it's fully qualified, to go ahead on a gas range let's say, Mr. Speaker. Surely if these people are qualified and certified to be installers, they should also be certified well enough to do their own gas inspections, Mr. Speaker.

The new Act gives gas inspectors broader authority to order that improvements be made. The current Act refers only to fire hazards, whereas the amended Act simply uses the term, hazards. It also makes reference to potential hazards and to dangers to persons on the premises or to the premises. Again this is an area, Mr. Speaker, where hopefully the minister will outline the difference between fire hazards and hazards.

Now fire is oxidization of a fuel supply. If you look at an explosion, that's just a rapid, even more rapid oxidization of a fuel supply. So we need to determine, Mr. Speaker, exactly what the minister and his officials mean by the term hazard as opposed to the previous term of fire hazard.

I guess potentially one of the hazards that wouldn't include fire would be gas leakage and suffocation or asphyxiation. Certainly a danger and every winter there are . . . we hear of incidents where people become ill or even the incidents have proven fatal when gas equipment has either leaked gas — raw gas — or leaks out fumes from burnt gas. So potentially that is what the minister's Bill is addressing, but we need to find that out, Mr. Speaker, and to determine exactly what the minister is talking about.

So I would ask that the minister give some consideration in this particular Bill to expanding the certification of the gas installers so that they may do the inspections, and that the inspectors would then perhaps do a random sampling of those installations to determine that the requirements of the Act are being met, rather than simply having to have every installation inspected at some point in time.

We have very few inspectors. They don't get around for a considerable period of time after the installations have been put in, and I think it would be much more efficient if some changes were made in that area. And we will be asking the minister to look into that, Mr. Speaker.

So we believe that while there are some concerns and some questions in this particular Act, that we can allow it to go on to committee and hopefully the minister will then answer those questions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 9 — The Parks Amendment Act, 1998

The Chair: — I would ask, before we start, the minister to introduce his officials, please.

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with us today Les Cooke, associate deputy minister of SERM

(Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management); Don MacAuley, over here, director of parks and facilities; and Bruce Martin, a parks policy specialist.

Clause 1

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman of committees. I would like to agree, but at the present time we have some questions that we need to ask first to find out exactly what this government is up to. It looks like they're taking over a whole bunch more land again. Hopefully this isn't land bank under a different name, under the park program.

So, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister, you have quite a number of various land descriptions taking place in this Bill outlining the boundaries of the parks. I wonder if you could explain to us what each one of these sections means and if it's simply a correction, that the land description was in error initially, if it doesn't encompass any new lands, and then that's sufficient — just say it's just a correction of boundaries. But if it encompasses some new lands, can you please describe what those new lands are and what they were previously being used for?

(1515)

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Mr. Chairman, I thank the hon. member for the question. The references made to Meadow Lake, Candle Lake provincial parks, and basically all references except for Macdowall bog and Douglas Provincial Park, those are housekeeping. There were errors; so there's no new land added to Candle Lake, Meadow Lake, those parks. So it's just Macdowall bog and Douglas Provincial Park where there is actual new land additions to the parks.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, thank you, Mr. Minister. That makes it a lot simpler in dealing with . . . if it's just a correction of the titles, then it's not a problem.

When you deal with Douglas Provincial Park, I believe you're adding an additional 3,200 acres to this park. How long has this particular piece of land been in the Crown's purview? How long have you had possession of it? And what was this land used for prior?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — The 3,200 acres which you refer to has been Crown land for as long as any of us can remember and it borders on a community pasture there. Over the years, periodically, grazing has been allowed on the land, and certainly with the 3,200 acres added to Douglas Provincial Park, we will be using grazing as a management tool on the grassland. So just because it is being added to the park does not mean that grazing will be eliminated.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Now you and I have had some discussions and will have some discussions in the future on grazing when it comes to provincial Crown lands.

When you use the term "grazing," are you looking at an annual grazing of some kind? Would it be for the entire grazing season, or part thereof? Are there restrictions on the grazing, such as a fixed number of animals, that would be different from what the community pasture would be involved in? Are there any special

requirements for this 3,200 acres?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — The grazing which will occur will certainly be controlled and managed. We have, for an example, endangered burrowing owls in the portion which is being added.

So what we will be doing, working with the community pasture nearby, we'll be working with Department of Agriculture and Food to determine how and what grazing rates may be put in place. For an example, there may not be grazing every year. We may wish to have the cattle removed a little earlier if it's a dry year. Our prime priority is to manage the ecosystem with the aid of grazing.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Indeed, grazing as a management tool is very important and I'm pleased to hear you state that, because there has over time seems to have been a conflict between Environment and the wildlife people in the Environment and agriculturists when it comes to grazing.

Traditionally, the Environment department and the environmentalists there have felt that domesticated animals should have no relationship or interaction with wildlife. And in my opinion, Mr. Minister, that is absolutely wrong. If you take North America 500 years ago there was a large bovine herd throughout central North America and they had a considerable impact and interaction with wildlife — the rest of the wildlife.

We don't have buffalo today roaming at large, bison roving at large. But we do have domesticated, cloven-hoof animals, cattle that replaced those buffalo, those bison, and serve the same purpose, Mr. Minister. So they are an integral part of our environment and therefore should be included as part of our wildlife considerations and not simply be excluded because they are domesticated, and I'm pleased to hear that you're going to use grazing.

Now the question arises though: when will that grazing take place? Once we hit estimates we'll be having a discussion about some grazing in other areas where you are putting limits on when that grazing can take place, limits on the number of animals that can be in those grazing pastures that are significantly less than what most agriculturists in the area, most cattle ranchers, would estimate as the proper numbers to maintain a good quality pasture and still provide . . . still put on the maximum number of animals for that pasture.

So what kind of numbers are you looking at for this grazing area? I'm not totally familiar with the type of land that it is, but if say ranchers in the area of the community pasture are running 25 head per quarter section in the community pasture, will you be allowing 25 head per quarter in the 3,200 acres that you have in addition to the Douglas Provincial Park? Will you be allowing them in, let's say June 1, or will it be August 1 or what kind of time frames are you allowing in that area?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you. The whole issue of grazing, of course has to be looked at basically on individual quarter sections. The land, much of the land, is very light and sandy so it would not carry as many cattle as a quarter section of dark soil and high moisture levels. So what we will be doing . . . and certainly as a tribute to ranchers and the PFRA (Prairie Farm

Rehabilitation Administration) and other government agencies involved with grazing, we have seen a vast improvement in the management of our pastures and grazing. We have things such as rotational grazing and such like. We are committed to work with Agriculture, as you suggested, in determining carrying capacities — there's a formula with a number of criteria — and we will certainly use that as a guideline. If however some particular wildlife species could benefit by a little lighter grazing capacity, we want to consider that as well. So we will be working with the industry in determining this and working with the agriculture community.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. When you used the term, lighter grazing, it raises my antenna and it makes every farmer squirm because they've experienced some of your lighter grazing. I have . . . people contacted me from the Alameda area where some of your lighter grazing is about to be put in practice this year. And whereas a quarter section of land in that area would normally carry between 20 and 30 head of animals per year, your lighter grazing recommendations from your department in that area is 10 animals every 3 years, so roughly 3 animals per year.

That's significantly lighter grazing, Mr. Minister, and I would suspect that the people who were previously using this 3,200 acres as community pasture lands are going to be somewhat concerned with that. So what kind of consultation have you had with the users of the community pasture, if they were grazing these lands previously, to determine the actual impact that this change is going to have on those kind of operations?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Well first of all, the land has not been used for grazing for a number of years. It was not community pasture land, although there was some leases, and I think on a few occasions part of the 3,200 acres was managed partially by the community pasture.

We are committed to work with, as I pointed out, the landowners in the area, Department of Agriculture, and we must remember this is provincial park not a community pasture. But we are going to accommodate livestock and use it as a management tool, and we will be using criteria determining the carrying capacity, and we are prepared to work with the agriculture industry on this.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I wonder if you could then give me a run-down of who was using this particular land? You say some of it was in the community pasture, some of it was leaseholders, and some of it hadn't been grazed. So who was using that land and why was it not being utilized in some manner?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — We don't have the exact breakdown, but we can certainly get that written information over to you. We can go back five years and let you know who has been using what areas and what areas have been lying idle, and we will certainly be glad to provide that technical information to you.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. What consultations did you have with the operators of the community pasture or the producers who were utilizing the community pasture and what about consultation with any leaseholders of the other pieces of property?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Mr. Chairman, we met and received the cooperation and blessing from the rural municipality of Maple Bush — that's RM 24 — with local residents, with Saskatchewan Water Corporation, as this borders on Lake Diefenbaker, and with the Department of Agriculture and Food. So we, as I say, received the cooperation and blessing of all of these groups of people on this addition of the land.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Did you discuss this change with the people who were holding leases on a portion of this 3,200 acres?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Mr. Chairman, there were no . . . there's no active leaseholders on this 3,200 acres, but we will go back five years and let you know who has had an interest in that parcel.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, thank you, Mr. Minister. You mention that part of it was being used though as a community pasture; the community pasture is obviously run by the Department of Agriculture but there are producers who utilize that community pasture. Was there any consultation with the producers who were utilizing that community pasture?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — We don't have the exact size of the number of acres that was being used as part of the community pasture but we believe that it's less than a quarter section, probably a hundred acres or something. And we are working on an agreement where the community pasture, provincial pasture, probably will incorporate this hundred acres or so in their ongoing operation; so we're prepared to do that. But we'll get you the exact figures, as I say, when we get the written response.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, thank you, Mr. Minister. If you take out the hundred acres that still leaves 3,100 acres. What kind of arrangements will you be making for grazing on that property? Will it be a lease? Will it be through the community pasture, through the Department of Agriculture? What kind of arrangements are you going to be making to handle the grazing on the other 3,100 acres then?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Because there is no active leases on that 3,100 acres, we may solicit contracts/leases on our own, we may work through the Department of Agriculture. But first of all, we've got to do an assessment to determine if we need some grazing, how much. And we will be . . . this is part of our overall management plan.

The fact that there's no active leases means that there was no grazing, at least in recent years, and we are certainly prepared to look at the grazing in conjunction with the management of the grassland.

(1530)

Mr. D'Autremont: — When you look at the grazing, you've talked about the criteria for grazing, the qualifications. Can you outline for us what that . . . those criteria would be, what those qualifications would be. You're going to do an assessment you say as to potentially the carrying capacity of that land. If the assessment comes back that . . . Are you going to be using your criteria for this assessment? Are you going to be using Department of Agriculture's criteria? Who is setting the criteria

to make the determination of what the carrying capacity and the grazing rotation should be on this land?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — What we are certainly prepared to do is look at the recommendation, say, from local grazing co-ops, pastures, Department of Agriculture and Food.

Saskatchewan Research Council has assisted us in determining carrying capacities. And again, we must remember this is a provincial park not a community pasture; so we may have 95 per cent of the recommended agriculture carrying rate, and this can vary.

We want to manage the grassland as you pointed out. Cattle certainly can be used as a management tool.

So we're not closing any door. We want to hear what Department of Agriculture recommends, the local people. And again, this will vary on the 3,200 acres because some is quite sandy and very fragile, others might be productive grassland. So we're looking at all avenues and certainly open to any recommendations and suggestions.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Well my concern is that 95 per cent doesn't sound too bad of an agricultural-based assessment. But if it's 30 per cent of that then I have a concern. And I'm sure that the local producers in the area would also have a concern if they had previously had access to that land.

That's sort of the circumstances that I'm familiar with down in the Alameda area where there's been a dramatic reduction in the supposed carrying capacity, as allowed by Environment, on those particular lands.

When you look at the burrowing owl and the piping plovers, what kind of impact will that have on the grazing capacity of those lands? Will you say that quarter section A is excluded from grazing because a burrowing owl nest is there? Or will a portion of it, say perhaps, be fenced off — 10 acres or 20 acres, whatever would be appropriate — to say that where the burrowing owls are but the other 140 acres is eligible for grazing?

Will you be making those kind of exceptions to the rules, let's say, or how will you deal with those kind of situations where you have burrowing owls on a particular piece of grazing area?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Mr. Chairman, with respect to the burrowing owl, that is one species which does benefit and do better with some grazing. So we'll need grazing or haying or some mechanism of keeping the grass cut low for burrowing owls.

The piping plover nests along the sandy beaches, and certainly these beaches are utilized not only by cattle at times but people on all-terrain vehicles. What we might do is fence off a portion of the beach to keep vehicles as well as livestock out, but this, this is again part of our management plan.

There are other species like Sprague's pipits which do require tufts of grass and higher vegetation than say the burrowing owl or the killdeer. So we want to strike a balance, and again we're

going to work with Agriculture to achieve this.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mentioning accessed water, Mr. Minister, will the animals placed in there for grazing have access to the shore line of Diefenbaker Lake or will they be restricted from that shore line?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Again the access of livestock to the reservoir will be something that we'll have to work out. For an example, if there's cottage development near the site we will probably restrict the livestock, but obviously the cattle need water. We may have dugouts further back, away from the shore line. And we want to, in addition to protecting, say, piping plovers, make sure the erosion is reduced as well from trampling. With being a new reservoir, the shore line is very unstable.

So it's part of our management plan, and we will be working with the local people to see how we best control the livestock along the shore line of the reservoir.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Certainly any livestock in the area would certainly need water, access to water. When you talk about dugouts, who would be responsible then for maintaining those dugouts and ensuring that there is a water supply in it? Would the parks department be pumping the water from the reservoir to the dugout? Would the producer who is leasing the land be responsible for that? Who would be responsible for it if the animals are not allowed access to the reservoir?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Well this is getting right down into the management, hypothetical management. And obviously we can use dugouts, the shore line of the reservoir, or wells; and obviously if there's cattle in there — which there is not now for the large part of the area, I'm not sure whether there's dugouts there right now — but this would be part of the overall management plan.

If there's no source of water, there will be very little interest in grazing the area as well. So it's something we will be obviously looking at.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well, Mr. Minister, in your master plan to take over the province's agriculture and property, I think it's important that we know what you're planning on doing with this.

Mr. Minister, when we look at the burrowing owls in the area and the piping plovers, because there's . . . piping plovers in particular because we have a relatively new shore line there in the last 30 years or so. Has there been an increase in or a change in the status of these particular species, and has there been a rise in their number since the introduction of the Douglas Park?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Depending again on water levels, and it varies annually at Lake Diefenbaker as well, but on certain years we have a fairly good number of piping plovers. But if the water levels are high, the beach is not available, the birds obviously go somewhere else to nest.

And with respect to the burrowing owl, unfortunately despite our best efforts in working with landowners and protecting

thousands of acres of grassland from being broken up — certainly grazing occurs on that — the burrowing owl numbers continue to plummet. And this is very disturbing.

As I say, we want to make sure that we ensure that this habitat, if there's burrowing owls nesting there when you determine what owls are there and try to keep them there with artificial nest boxes and such like.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. You seem to have a bit of a catch-22 position here. If the water's up, there's no piping plovers; if the water is down, then there's no water for cattle. And so then they don't eat the grass off and the burrowing owl's in trouble.

So you're going to have to do something about that, Mr. Minister. That's what you have dams in place for, I guess — to sort of regulate the level of that water so that you can have the best of both worlds. And there's nothing wrong with building dams, as you well know, Mr. Minister. You know, dams are good, especially in this dry country we call Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well we have to look at the economic advantages to all of those particular types of situations and weigh them on an individual basis, Mr. Minister.

I do have some concerns though, and we'll carry it on in some of the other areas, about the grazing. I think it's very important that grazing be allowed on those particular pieces of land and that the restrictions do not become too onerous on the producers who want to use them.

I do know something about grazing and about burrowing owls. But when you come to bogs, like the Macdowall bog, I'm a little bogged down on that one. In our part of the world the only water that we have is at the Alameda dam, so we don't get a lot of bogs in our country.

I wonder if you could tell me and tell the people, the public, exactly where the Macdowall bog is.

Hon. Mr. Scott: — The Macdowall bog is appropriately named Macdowall after the community of Macdowall, which is about 25 miles south-west of Prince Albert. And bogs are something we do not have a lot of, especially in southern Saskatchewan. And they are I guess areas where the groundwater is very close to the surface, providing very wet, moist conditions for a variety of plants especially, but also some animal species as well.

The Macdowall bog, although a small area of 57 hectares, 140 acres or so, contains a number of rare orchids and other rare plant species which have been familiar to university plant ecologists for many years. And they've identified a number of plant species there which are rare and endangered and unique, and we feel that it's up to the people of Saskatchewan to protect this area in the form of a park, ecological reserve classification. And this is certainly what we are planning to do.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Was this land Crown land previously, or who was the owner of it and how did it come into the government's possession?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — This quarter section is Crown land and has

been managed by SERM for many years. There is a grazing lease on the quarter section but because of a railway track and a creek the actual grazing only occurred on the area away from the bog, and of course cattle got into bogs. They may not get out of there either, so the cattle have enough sense to stay out as well.

So we've consulted with the lessee and he is in full agreement along with many other people in the area, and the scientific community, that this area is well worth preserving. And the lessee will continue to graze on the portion of our parcel of land which is not included in the bog area.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Will this lessee also face the requirements that the lessees will face of the Douglas Provincial Park — the same kind of requirements based on the circumstances locally — but will the same criteria be necessary to go through for evaluations?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Unlike the grasslands being proposed for the Douglas Provincial Park there's very little grazing opportunity in a bog. The animals may get mired down, and we certainly don't want that to happen.

And it's a very fragile area. As you pointed out rightly so earlier, livestock can be used as a management tool on grasslands. This is a bog which is much different. So we don't anticipate any grazing in the bog area.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Perhaps you could give some consideration to people who raise moose or something. They are bog dwellers and perhaps they could find some browse in that particular area.

Mr. Minister, is there any cost associated with bringing this piece of land under the park's protection?

(1545)

Hon. Mr. Scott: — No.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well always glad when the answer is no to cost. Hopefully the answers aren't no to everything.

Mr. Minister, how much land in Saskatchewan today is considered protected in comparison to where we were 5 or 10 years ago?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — We can certainly provide more written detail a little later on that. But roughly about 5 per cent, give or take a bit, of the land base in Saskatchewan has some form of protection. And there's about two or three dozen forms, ranging from provincial parks, ecological reserves, wildlife development fund land, Habitat Trust land, heritage marshes, Ducks Unlimited projects, community pastures, more recently. And as you will see, many of these parcels of land are multi-use, in particular with grazing.

So we are at about 5 per cent. And as you are aware, the study which was done back in the '80s determined — the Brundtlund Commission — that a minimum of 12 per cent of an ecosystem must be preserved to ensure species survival and diversity. So we have a long way to go. And we will continue to work

towards this goal and are committed to do so, and this 140 acres is one more step in that direction.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. What was the process by your department to declare a certain area protected, such as the Macdowall bog? And were requests made to you by the general public or by special interest groups or environmental groups to protect that particular piece of land or any other piece of land. How does that work?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — As I mentioned earlier, the Macdowall bog is a very unique area, a very small area, and it's been familiar to scientists at the University of Saskatchewan, such as Vern Harms, Dr. Vern Harms, who has been studying the area for many years. And he, along with other people, have identified rare plants which are very rare in Saskatchewan; not found anywhere else in the province.

And groups like Nature Saskatchewan, and local chapters in Saskatoon and Prince Albert, regularly visited this site because of its uniqueness, and so it's because of their interest and knowledge of the area. And when the local people realized what they had there they also supported having the site designated.

Now before we designate a site we do a lot of public consultation not only with the interest groups but also with the local people and the community, and right down to the lessee that may be affected.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. In the consultations, were all of those groups in favour of this, such as the local RM and the local producers, the lessee — if he maintained his lease I'm sure that then it wasn't a problem. But were the local people in favour of this, such as the local RM?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — As near as we can gather right now it was overwhelming support. We did not hear any dissenting voices during our consultation process.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Okay, thank you, Mr. Minister. You talk about it being a place of quite a number of rare plants, or at least rare in Saskatchewan. I wonder if you can give me an outline on what kind of rare plants were there and whether or not they are unique to Saskatchewan or whether those particular plants are just . . . their availability in Saskatchewan, or the fact that they are in Saskatchewan is just unique for Saskatchewan but there are significant numbers of them outside in some other location.

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Well this will be fun here. We do have a number of rare plant species found here. All of these are rare in Saskatchewan; some are rare nationally. And I'll try to pronounce some of them such as the narrow-leaved sundew, northern twayblade, hairlike beak-rush, common butterwort, prickly salaginella, American bog rush, white adder's-mouth orchid, glaucous grass-of-parnassus, bog adder's-mouth orchid, and slender spike rush.

So these plants all require very moist conditions and a very high groundwater level. And like I say, we don't have that many areas like this in Saskatchewan. And at the same time they can't be sitting in water, so the conditions are very unique. And that's what makes this area and this 57 hectares — 2, 4, 6, 8, here's 10

species alone which are considered to be rare in Saskatchewan, and some of them are rare in Canada.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I wonder if you could give me the Latin names for those.

Mr. Minister, I wonder if you could indicate which ones are unique to Saskatchewan and not in the rest of Canada, or are rare in say perhaps Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta, and which ones are rare across all of North America.

Hon. Mr. Scott: — I don't have that breakdown on the pamphlet here, but again we can provide that to you. And we'll also provide the Latin names and I'll have you read them back to me.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I should have you know that I did some reading in Latin when I was an altar boy, so it won't be the first time I've read Latin.

Mr. Minister, does the bog have a useful purpose at present such as being available for recreation purposes, being available for hunting? Are there restrictions to who can have access to it, or is it available to the public?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — The area is closed to hunting and also off-road vehicle access for obvious reasons. Certainly anyone is allowed to go out there. It's illegal to pick and transport these rare plants out obviously, and there will certainly be no development such as picnic sites or anything like that which could infringe on the area.

It's basically a scientific site, and people who are really interested in plants can go out there and observe these plants and make note of them. But for the general public there will be, there is access, but there's no facilities to encourage public access at that time. There's no recreational opportunities, like I say, picnic sites or trails *per se*.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Will there be any consideration given to allowing hunting in that area?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Again you make reference to the hunting. Because it's very inaccessible bog soil, there's hunting around the area but basically there's very few hunting opportunities in the bog. For an example, much of the area would be too soft to even carry a deer across it so we have no intentions of opening up a season on common snipe which might be in the area, or anything like that.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well I think most of the sniping, Mr. Minister, takes place in here, not out in the bog.

Mr. Minister, my researcher has asked me to ask you to explain a term called calcareous fen. I wonder if you could explain that please.

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Well whereas many of the bogs in Canada are acid-based bogs, and calcareous means it's calcium-limestone based, again which makes this particular area unique. And from the productivity of an area for organisms, the calcium-based bogs are much more productive, usually contain a greater variety of plant and animal species.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I guess that bog is safe then unless we get acid rain. Mr. Minister, you talked about various plant life in the bog that is rare. Are there any endangered animals that might also be using that area?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — At this stage in the game, the scientists have only really had an opportunity to look at the flats in the area, but certainly this, over the years, and by protecting the area, we will ensure the opportunity is down the road to examine the insect life at the bog, and plant and animal species.

And obviously bogs are an important area for frogs, and on a global scale frogs are in trouble including in Saskatchewan here in some areas. Their numbers are declining; we're not just sure for all the reasons yet.

Again the whole purpose of setting this aside is that we will be able to do more studies and find out that there is other unique and rare species there in the form of insects, amphibians, and such like.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Perhaps one of the other potentially endangered animals in Saskatchewan that might use that is the moose.

Mr. Minister, you added two additional parcels of land to the park system with the 3,200 acres at Douglas Park. With 141 acres of Macdowall bog, are you looking at any further purchases or any acquisitions or additions of land to the park system in the near future? And if so, what parcels of land do you have in mind?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — We do not have any specifics to inform you about right now, but part of our representative areas network is flagging unique native natural areas throughout the province. Some of these may about a provincial park, and as such, we might decide the best way to protect this area is to . . . or classify the area is to put it in with a provincial park.

But we are, as I say, working community pastures and all wildlife agencies and agriculture community as well to try to complete our representative areas network. As you're probably aware, we announced 1.8 million acres of PFRA pastures as qualifying for an example of our representative areas network. This shows that agriculture and wildlife can and will work together, and we're very appreciative of the landowners, the lessees, and PFRA in particular in achieving this goal.

(1600)

So with 2.2 million people using our parks every year, parks are very important to people, and we will continue to add to parks where we can and improve opportunities for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. It is indeed important that we maintain an ecological system that allows those of us who live in the cities to get out and observe the plants and animals in their natural habitat. And it's equally important for those of us who live out in the country to maintain some of that habitat and to also have access to it in other areas.

But I do have a concern when it comes to the interaction of

agriculture and the parks and the environment, and as I expressed earlier, I think it's very important that we do continue to have grazing as part of the management process on a number of these lands. And that grazing process should not be unduly restrictive as it seems to be becoming in some circumstances, and we'll talk about that later under estimates.

So, Mr. Minister, I think that these will be valuable additions to the parks in Saskatchewan and I look forward to perhaps visiting them some day and standing along that railroad track, but not in the bog.

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Well thank you very much and I appreciate your support. The environment, natural areas are very important to the people of Saskatchewan whether we are rural or urban. And we are very happy to have this announcement here in this session of the legislature.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

Clause 5

Mr. McLane: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, welcome to you and to your officials. Nice to be here this afternoon.

I just have a couple of questions that you could comment on, Mr. Minister. I wasn't in the House earlier so I'm not sure that you covered any of this, but maybe you could answer a few questions anyway.

One is regarding, I guess, regarding the moose population in north-eastern Saskatchewan. I wonder if you could comment on some of the numbers that your surveys are finding and what you're planning on doing with that for the coming hunting season.

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Well it simply . . .

The Chair: — Order, order. Before we carry further, all general questions should be under clause 1 and we are now past that. We are on clause no. 5 which is the Macdowell bog, and questions have to be related to that. Now if the member would like to ask leave of the committee to go back to clause 1, then he could do that.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would ask the leave of the Assembly to ask some general questions under clause 5.

Leave granted.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So I think the minister heard my question. Mr. Minister, would you care to respond to that?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you. Mr. Chairman, it's certainly no secret that there was a lot of hunting pressure on moose populations in north-east Saskatchewan and the Hudson Bay area — I guess east-central Saskatchewan you might say.

What our aerial surveys have shown that wherever there is road access where people could have easy access into an area, the moose population was down. But once you got back 20 miles or whatever from these areas, our moose population was fairly good.

Now to counteract that, of course we have eliminated the use of lights for night hunting. And there's no other real opportunity to hunt at night other than with the use of lights, so we've closed that door. We are also working with Indian bands in the Cumberland area for an example. They are equally concerned about the demise of the moose population as is everyone else. And we hope to, by this fall, have some way of getting a better handle on the number of animals shot, who was hunting in a particular area, and the number of animals being taken out of an area.

So this will be an ongoing effort with first nations people wherever there are problem areas in the province and we will pursue these with every opportunity.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you. Do the numbers appear greater in north-western Saskatchewan in the numbers of moose than they do in north-eastern or north-central Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — That is correct. Our surveys in the divide forest in the west side of the province actually showed a slight increase in moose numbers, as did our surveys in Moose Mountain Provincial Park and Duck Mountain Provincial Park. We're very pleased with this information. So basically, except for where there are roads and access, the numbers are stable or up a little, which is very encouraging.

Our goal and mandate is to manage this resource and not let it be put in severe jeopardy, and we will continue to do that.

Mr. McLane: — Mr. Minister, are those survey numbers that you have, are those made public at this time?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Mr. Chairman, the information is public and we will supply you with the copy of the results that we've come up with in this past winter.

Mr. McLane: — Thank you very much. I'll be looking forward to seeing those numbers. Just a question regarding the numbers, and of course some six to twelve months ago you and your department, your government I guess, Mr. Minister, received a great deal of pressure from individuals right across this province. And certainly we were happy to pass on concerns through petitions and those types of things that we had out across especially northern Saskatchewan, north-eastern Saskatchewan.

What kind of damage was there done to the wildlife population from people coming across the border from Manitoba into eastern Saskatchewan, people coming across the border from Alberta, and certainly people coming up across the American border into southern Saskatchewan, looking at areas like the Cypress Hills for example. Any estimate on numbers of animals that were lost, that went out of this province, whether it be to Manitoba, Ontario, Alberta, or the northern States?

The Chair: — Order. I want to remind the hon. member that

we are on Bill No. 9. The estimates of Committee of Finance where these questions may be more relevant will be coming up as soon as we report out of here. And I would ask that these questions be maybe held until Committee of Finance and we'll go back to the Bill No. 9. Committee of Finance will come up later in the day and those questions are certainly relevant for that time, but not relating to Bill No. 9

Okay, so we will continue with Bill No. 9.

Clause 5 agreed to.

Clause 6 agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well thank you, Mr. Chairman of Committees. I'd like to thank the minister and his officials for coming in today and for answering our questions, and I look forward to their written responses on some of those questions, including the pronunciation of the Latin names.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 9 — The Parks Amendment Act, 1998

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

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a third time and passed under its title.

(1615)

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

General Revenue Fund Environment and Resource Management Vote 26

The Chair: — I would ask, before we start, the minister to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have sitting beside me here Les Cooke, associate deputy minister; behind me, Shelly Vandermeij, executive director of corporate services; next to her, Dennis Sherratt, a director of fish and wildlife; and back in my chair, Dave Tulloch, a team leader of corporate development unit.

Subvote (ER01)

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to the minister and his officials. Just a few comments I'd like to get into at this early stage, and we'll certainly get into some debate later on. But I was listening with keen interest to the debate just a few moments ago in the Assembly in regards to fencing and grazing of Crown lands and management of property.

And one of the concerns that's been raised on a number of occasions when it comes to grazing, and it's certainly something . . . And I'm pleased to see Mr. Sherratt still involved because we've chatted with him about this for an awful long time; about the fact of the wildlife development

funds and the number of lands that they've purchased over the years, and the fact that there's been a real reluctance to move into allowing for controlled grazing on those properties. And I was pleased to hear some of the comments earlier on, talking about a move in that area.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Speaker, in regards to wildlife land and control grazing, how far the department is going in addressing this concern and where we're at today and whether or not, as lands are certainly purchased through the wildlife development fund, one of the . . . I know in the . . . a colleague from Canora indicated his son actually got a summer job last year just running around and pulling down fences. So that took away the opportunity to just put livestock on wildlife development land.

And I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, if you can kind of explain where we are, if there is a program in place to address some of these concerns, how much land might be accessible through control grazing. And especially in view of the fact that this spring already is a strong indication, unless we get some real significant rainfall in the very near future, certainly the area I represent, a lot of that we were fortunate we had a late winter snowfall that's added some moisture. But there's a good portion of the province that isn't as fortunate, and chances are that we could have some shortfalls when it comes to grazing areas.

And what is the department currently doing? Where are you at as far as addressing some of these concerns when it comes to wildlife development land and allowing controlled grazing, and what kind of consultations have gone forward with even the wildlife organizations in addressing this concern?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In response to the question, we do have a number of parcels of wildlife development fund land for an example, scattered throughout the province. Currently haying is allowed on about 40,000 acres, and certainly this is beneficial to the surrounding landowners as well.

We have not ruled out the idea of grazing on some of our grassland quarters. And we are working with SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) groups, like the wildlife federation, to determine how this might best be done. Obviously there could be a demand in an area. We need to know how to select individuals to go on there. We may not want grazing all year, so we may look at things like electric fences, temporary fencing to accommodate grazing in an area.

I might add too, that we're also in the process of developing lure crops on lands where wildlife damage is prevalent year after year.

So we certainly want to work with the agriculture community, and certainly will be continuing on with activities such as haying. But we have not reached the threshold yet where we will be opening up our wildlife development fund lands for grazing at this time, but we certainly haven't ruled it out either.

Mr. Toth: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, I would certainly encourage you to continue the process. I know it's been a long, arduous process discussing this because there's individuals on both sides of the issue that have real strong

feelings as to whether you should graze or allow grazing, or whether or not it should be no access to grazing whatsoever.

But I personally feel that there can be a number of benefits with some controlled grazing. I think there are benefits that could be brought into wildlife lands and certainly, even environmentally speaking, in the province when it comes to those lands.

Mr. Minister, you mentioned about haying. Has your department looked at haying on the basis . . . Do you sell the hay? Do you basically tender out the haying and sell all the hay? Or have you looked at means whereby you would maintain and have some of the hay so that . . . you just talked about lure crops. I think in some areas if you had access to and especially wildlife lands, if you had some available, even towards the centre of a quarter or an area that is wildlife land, if you had some hay available there it may be a means of providing hay and feed for wildlife if winter tends to be a rough winter.

Now this past winter was not a rough winter, so as a result we certainly didn't have the damage to vehicles, at least in my area, that I've seen in the past. Although in fact I think most people were beginning to think that we didn't have hardly any deer left around until just even less than a month ago, and it's surprising how many deer are showing up, coming out of the bush. So it indicates that we still have a pretty good population out there.

But, Mr. Minister, I guess the issue and the question has been raised for quite a long period of time. Rather than waiting and finding out maybe you're short and maybe there's a need for some feed supplies, does your department maintain some of the feed stocks and store them for that purpose?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Again, every case where haying is conducted, it would depend upon the type of hay. And native grasses, which is much of our WDF (wildlife development fund) land, is not very appetizing to deer, such as second-cut alfalfa would be, so in those cases we would probably sell the hay to the farmer.

However, if there's a lure crop and we hire a farmer to operate that for us, we would, if there was deer in the area and crop damage was an issue, we would take a crop share of that alfalfa. And in other cases, we'd have to actually go out and purchase food which would be attractive for deer.

Mr. Toth: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. And I guess that's one of the strong cases in point of allowing some of the grazing by domesticated animals. Because certainly wildlife like new growth and that opens up that opportunity.

When you're talking about lure crops, and I think you may remember some of the debate even last year, and I raised the question about cultivation and planting . . . putting some contained crop like alfalfa on some wildlife land and using that not only as a lure crop but in possibly haying part of it rather than letting it grow old, and maintaining, even on a share basis . . . so that department has access to some good quality feed if that's needed. Is that what you're talking when you're talking lure crops? Are you talking, on wildlife development lands, some marginal cultivation to put a lure crop right on that piece of property or are you talking lure crops outside the boundaries

of wildlife land?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — We have about 20,000 acres of alfalfa on lands. Quite often we buy a quarter section and maybe 40 acres cultivated. So what we would do in that cultivated land, we'd seed oats and get our cover crop, and then have the alfalfa there. And we lease this out on a long-term basis with the landowners and they will re-seed it every five, ten years, whatever the case might be. So it's actually right on wildlife development fund land. And we aren't about to go and break up native prairie, for an example, to grow alfalfa, but wherever there is cultivated acres we will seed that down if there is certainly a need for lure crops and winter feed for wildlife.

Mr. Toth: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. And in regards to the fact that you're talking of certainly cultivated areas on a parcel of property that you may be purchasing, I certainly think that's appropriate. And I commend the department officials for their initiative in recognizing this not only meets the need of feed supply but also derives some revenue to meet some of the other, ongoing needs.

But I would certainly encourage the officials as well to not rule out the fact that there may be parcels and property that can come up or you may end up with substantial wildlife damage in surrounding properties. Just because it doesn't have any cultivated areas on . . . just adding some of that, it's possible . . . and using that as the lure, as the basis for a lure crop, rather than asking landowners to put that up beside. So I'm just bringing forward that as some recommendations and suggestions for your department to follow up on.

Mr. Minister, another area I'd like to move into a little bit, and that's in regards to the whole area of elk and wild game farming in the province of Saskatchewan. Just recently we met with individuals from the Elk association. And some of the questions they were raising; and there are some arguments, they're bringing some arguments forward, about moving the domesticated elk or farming elk into the area of the Department of Agriculture, outside of SERM. And we had a bit of discussion with the Minister of Agriculture the other day.

I'm wondering, Mr. Minister, in regards to the concerns that are being raised, some of the issues that are coming forward — and I'm sure that you and your department officials have been also approached — what is the department doing? And what are some of the reasonings for it that the department would be taking certain initiatives, and especially not recognizing or allowing the move of domesticated elk into the agricultural field, as it has certainly become a very major agricultural economic base in the province of Saskatchewan? And I think that the producers are looking at that as agricultural economy versus wildlife. And so where is the department in regards to some of those issues that have been raised?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you for the question. This is a very timely topic. As you're well aware, we are developing a game farming policy for Saskatchewan. To give you a bit of history, back about 10 years ago or so when game farming became established, it was totally managed by SERM. And over the years Agriculture — and rightly so — had an interest in the industry, marketing meat and identification of animals and such like.

And as my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, pointed out last week, SERM has a very valid role in the game farm industry. We will be continuing to be a participant in the management of the industry, and we have a good working relationship with the executive of the elk breeders association. We'll be meeting again with them this week on this.

And as you rightly pointed out also, the game farm industry has certainly flourished. And I believe it's certainly, in part, to the responsible approach that we have taken to the industry. Now some critics may say that the industry has been hampered, but I don't know how you can say an industry has been hampered, growth has been hampered, when we see roughly a 20 per cent increase in the industry every year.

(1630)

And what we want to ensure, along with the Department of Agriculture and the game farming association, elk ranchers, elk breeders association, is that we have the best guidelines in place, because people have a lot of money invested in game farming. We want to . . . We do not want to take any risks about the introduction of disease, and we want to see the industry continue to grow.

We have a valid interest in the industry and we will maintain a presence there and work with the Department of Agriculture and the landowners as well as the associations as well.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, when it comes to wildlife . . . or I shouldn't say wildlife but game farming in the province of Saskatchewan, and certainly the area of elk management and the elk herds that are progressing in the province, and certainly growing in the province, I think Saskatchewan probably leads the way, if I'm not mistaken, in the number of producers.

But there are some issues that arise as well in regards to boundaries and some of the limitations, some of the concerns in regards to transporting game animals across provincial boundaries. And I don't know if . . . where we have some very stringent limitations in regards of bringing Alberta elk in. I know there are some concerns coming out of Ontario yet. I'm wondering what restrictions are still in place. And if there are limitations in place in regards to the movement of elk interprovincially in Canada at this time and what they are, and the reasons that would be there in regards to those restrictions.

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Because of the potential for disease, various provinces have protocols, controls on, and a number of years ago — I guess perhaps because of lax regulations — Alberta had a large die-off, infection . . . not infection, but a die-off of elk from TB (tuberculosis). At least the animals had to be put down and it cost the taxpayers a lot of money.

Saskatchewan, we are very fortunate that disease has not been prevalent. We've had a few isolated cases. We've acted on them very quickly and we were able to, because of our record keeping, determine where the elk came from and where the infection may spread to. And we want to certainly maintain that.

One of the more controversial issues right now is the

importation of elk from Ontario, and I think that many of the elk breeders will currently agree that we do not want elk coming in. There's a potential for two diseases to be transported into Saskatchewan, and what we are doing is, through Agriculture Canada and other sources, developing a form of testing the animals for the presence of these diseases before we bring them in. We hope to have that in place within a year. And for those who have purchased elk in Ontario and cannot bring them home, we certainly sympathize with them, but at the same time we want to protect the stock that we do have here.

As it stands now, Alberta and Saskatchewan are not even sending elk back and forth across the borders. We used to, but because of disease and other problems, the borders were closed. We're hoping to open up the border with Alberta in the near future.

And just another example of how our industry has expanded in the last 10 to 15 years, we have probably more elk behind fences in Saskatchewan than we do in the wild, which is around 10,000 animals. So we again believe that this success has been largely attributed to the controls and monitoring and good protocol that we have and we want to continue to work with the industry to maintain those, and improve them if there are problems in certain areas.

Mr. Toth: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, if indeed there are some 10,000 animals in the wild, I think there are a number of hunters that are looking for refunds because I've talked to a number of individuals who haven't . . . over the last few years have been drawn and haven't even seen an animal; so they're beginning to question suggestions that there are that many animals in the wild.

But beyond that, Mr. Minister, when it comes to elk movement, are you saying that actually elk can move out of Saskatchewan quite freely? That the other provinces recognize that we're . . . Basically the trade in elk, mostly is taking place within provinces and you're currently working on a national testing program that will meet standards that everyone can agree on? That would certainly open up the doors down the road to allow for that interprovincial trade. Is that basically what you're saying?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Again we are very fortunate here in Saskatchewan and I think it's largely due to the responsible actions taken by our elk breeders and certainly the government as well. But we have the, probably one of the most disease free, highly sought after population of game animals here in anywhere in North America. And every province and state has its own protocol.

Now for an example, the state of Montana, if an individual bought a Saskatchewan elk and Montana would allow it in, we would certainly allow the animal to go out. And with the exception of Alberta, pretty well the borders are open for Saskatchewan elk to go out. And this is because we basically have a very good protocol and are recognized as disease free, and we want to certainly keep it that way.

The other angle for SERM's involvement in game farming is that virtually every other jurisdiction, whether it's the U.S. (United States) fish and wildlife service or the Government of

Ontario or whatever, it is the wildlife departments that monitor this, and so that's another argument for our presence to be maintained in the elk farming, game farming industry. And we certainly share our information with the Department of Agriculture and work very closely with them as well.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, a question that has risen in recent months, and it was brought to my attention again yesterday, and I'm not sure how much your department . . . involvement your department has with this, but it's in regards to DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) testing.

And there's a number of concerns in regards to the DNA testing of animals, trying to establish parentage and relationships with young to old, to identify them as that being the parent, whether it's the male or the female.

And there are a number of concerns in regards to the current testing, the fact that a number of breeders have sent material in for testing and they find that it's coming back and it really doesn't mean anything. It's costing them an arm and a leg and they're having some major problems with it.

And I'm wondering if your department is involved at all or if . . . who's managing this, and whether this is a concern that's being raised with your department and how you're approaching the whole issue.

Hon. Mr. Scott: — You made reference to the DNA testing. We're not thoroughly familiar with that, but I understand that individual ranchers may approach the university to do some DNA testing. And DNA testing is pretty well foolproof to find out, you know, where your offspring might come from.

One test that we do, and it's not totally successful, is to check an elk for red deer genes. The two species can interbreed. And because red deer can interbreed with elk, we certainly do not want red deer in here because inevitably animals will escape. And even elk with red deer blood in them, we are concerned about that. And I believe many of the game farmers are as well, as they want to keep high quality, pure elk in their strain.

So there is a test for that. It's not totally foolproof when you get down to 10 per cent or so, but there's always scientists working to improve testing capabilities and new approaches, and we will certainly be pursuing that.

Mr. Toth: — So what you're saying then, Mr. Minister, your department really hasn't been involved or hasn't been asked for some direction in regards to some of the testing. It's specifically taking place, individual producers with the lab at the university. And as far as the DNA testing, while we'd like to believe or we're led to believe that it's fail-proof and that it certainly meets the challenges out there, if it is, then something isn't working right.

And it's an issue that is a major concern. I've chatted with — you'd know him quite well — I've chatted with Ryan Clark. I think he's, of all the producers in this province, quite well known and has done a lot of research when it comes to elk production. He's gone to other parts of the world where there's a lot of game farming, to do some research. And raised the question with him as well.

And I guess the concern that comes about is maybe how the testing is going on, how the markings are made. And unfortunately for the individual producers who have been trying to seek and identify parentage and the pureness of those animals, they haven't had very positive results to date that I'm aware of. And I guess that's why I was raising the issue, because I'm trying to find out where do I go to get some more information and try to determine . . .

And I guess at the end of the day, is this an area that your department may find itself involved in, or have you been approached by the industry to set some guidelines or to at least give some direction as well? Or do we just go through Agriculture? How do we follow up and try to get more information as to the whole process of DNA testing and how it currently is evolving in the province of Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — There certainly is more work to be done on the DNA testing, as foolproof as it may appear on the surface. New Zealand is the most advanced country on DNA testing. We will be working with New Zealand in getting the newest information brought forward to us, and probably the Department of Agriculture will be leading on that, although we'll certainly be working with them on it.

Just getting back to the red deer testing, one of the reasons that a Saskatchewan elk may sell for \$40,000 and an Ontario elk for \$10,000 is because of the red deer blood in the elk, and as I mentioned earlier, the pure elk are much more valuable than the hybrids and so that's why we have the red deer test. And if we are suspicious that there may be red deer blood in a shipment of elk from somewhere, we'll do that test and act accordingly.

(1645)

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, if you're offering \$40,000 for a bred female, I'd say sold. I'm not sure — I know there are some animals out there — but the general is still more the range of the 20 to 25, and I'm still waiting to make a little profit on the animals I've got and I guess hoping the industry holds up a little bit. One of the challenges certainly facing the industry I think this year is the uncertainty about the Asian velvet market. They haven't seen the Asian buyers come on stream since the downturn in their economy. Usually it's about June when they start marketing.

And I know there are some concerns out there right now because they're really uncertain as to what they may see when it comes to the velvet market, but certainly the elk industry I think is here, as we've seen in the bison sector. And one thing about the bison people, they have gone a step further to the fact that a lot of the product that they are making available now is being used for human consumption. They're developing quite a market.

And I'm not sure if down the road that may not be an area the elk industry may have to find some means as well, other than the breeding stock, because it seems we've seen it in the past with livestock coming in from Europe. And a lot of the animals that came in from Europe a number of years ago, and the high prices, and you reach a saturation point and you reach a point where the industry basically levels out, and then you have to find some other means to derive the revenue.

So I know that the industry is going through a number of changes, and there are a number of concerns out there. And I would just encourage your department just to . . . and pleased, I guess, as well to say that we've enjoyed chatting with the elk association certainly and the bison association and they've indicated they have been more than pleased with the involvement and the year they've had from your department and we'd commend you for that.

Mr. Minister, there are a number of other issues that I'd like to get into as well. Unfortunately I have a commitment in a few moments — actually not just a few moments, but it may be just a few moments and I don't want to, don't want to just cut my time on highway traffic. I'm not exactly sure if there's somebody might be out watching, and you know how public officials are — you better make sure you allow enough time. So in order to allow my schedule to work out, I certainly would look forward to addressing you at a later date but I believe the member from North Battleford has a few questions he'd like to raise this afternoon as well that he can follow up on.

Thank you so much.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and your officials. I'd first of all like to ask you if you can give me an update on the Meeting Lake community pasture, which I understand there is a process in place for it to be moved into treaty land entitlement. Can you tell me where that is at?

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And in response to the hon. member from Battleford, yes. The Meeting Lake pasture is in the process of being converted to . . . as part of a TLE (treaty land entitlement) and reserve status. We will get you a written response on that, but as near as I can recall, the pasture patrons have agreed to the process and I understand that there will be some kind of a leaseback. But we'll get you more details on that.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, may I also inquire, and perhaps this would be in your written response, but I have to say that in regard there and the Bapaume pasture, I am receiving reports which frankly I'm in no position to assess, to the effect that patrons are being offered sizeable payment in exchange for a yes vote on the TLE process.

Hon. Mr. Scott: — As with all of the TLE processes, it's up to the band to decide how much they will pay for to get access to a particular parcel of land. If the lessee is prepared to be bought-out, I guess so be it, but that is the process. And again,, we can give you an update status on the Bapaume pasture as well.

Mr. Hillson: — But basically what you are saying is that if, if a first nation chooses to offer a payment to the patrons, then that's no different than say if they were buying private farm land and they're offering a purchase price. It's on the same level and that is completely in order.

Hon. Mr. Scott: — That is correct.

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Minister, I am receiving complaints to the effect that some people are sitting on outfitter leases that they're doing nothing with. And that for the payment of \$250 a year,

which is of course a very small token payment, large amounts of land are sitting there, nothing is being done with them, and other people who would be interested in getting into outfitting are prevented from doing so because there is no lease land available. And furthermore, the people who are sitting on these \$250 leases are demanding payments of hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars before they will assign their leases.

So the effect is that we have large tracks of land being tied up for a mere \$250 that could be productive in the sense of allowing the outfitting industry to progress in this province. And I wonder if you would comment on that if this is a valid concern or not.

Hon. Mr. Scott: — Yes, certainly what you have identified is a problem in certain areas. This fortunately is not widespread but what we have is a handful of outfitters that have a lease on a parcel of land, as you indicated, and for whatever reason they're not using the property.

At the same time, we have people wanting to get into the outfitting business. So what we are doing . . . And we've had a very good working relationship with the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association and we are looking at protocol and how we might deal with these problems. For an example, if an outfitter does not use his lease for three years in a row, what is the reason and why is he hanging on to it?

So we want to work with the outfitting industry to try to come up with a standard resolution to these problems.

The committee reported progress.

MOTIONS

Substitution of Members on Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, with leave I move, seconded by the member from Regina Centre:

That the names of Ms. Suzanne Murray and Mr. Buckley Belanger be substituted for that of Ms. Pat Lorje and Mr. Jack Hillson on list of members composing the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

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