

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

Moment of Silence in Honour of Rudi Peters

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, at this time I would ask that all members would join me in observing a moment of silence in remembrance of our colleague, Mr. Rudi Peters, the late member for the constituency of Battleford-Cut Knife.

The Assembly observed a moment of silence.

The Speaker: — Thank you very much. Please be seated.

There will be a formal condolence motion that will be moved later today.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBER OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

The Speaker: — I hereby inform the Assembly that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Jason Dearborn as member for the constituency of Kindersley. I hereby table the writ of . . .

Mr. Hermanson: — I have the honour to present to you Mr. Jason Dearborn from the constituency of Kindersley, who has taken the oath and signed the roll and now claims his right to a seat.

The Speaker: — Mr. Dearborn, as you take your rightful place in this Legislative Assembly, I'm sure that your time here will be one that serves as a record of honour to yourself and to your constituents. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Let the hon. member for the constituency of Kindersley take his seat. Congratulations.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan concerned about the negative effects that the signing of the Kyoto accord will have on the province of Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary actions to protect our province's economy by working to halt the federal government's intent to sign on to the Kyoto accord in its current form.

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

This petition is signed by residents of Carrot River, Arborfield,

Prairie River, and Aylsham.

I so present, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to present some more petitions dealing with the Kyoto accord. And I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary actions to protect our province's economy by working to halt the federal government's intent to sign the Kyoto accord in its current form.

And this is signed by people from all over the good province.

I so present.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too stand today to present a petition to resist signing on to the Kyoto accord in its current form. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary actions to protect our province's economy by working to halt the federal government's intent to sign on to the Kyoto accord in its current form.

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Minton and Gladmar

I so present.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today to present a petition from people regarding the Kyoto accord.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take immediate action to protect our province's economy and to work to halt the federal government's intent to sign on to the Kyoto accord in its current form.

The people that have signed this petition are from Wadena and Rose Valley.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise on behalf of citizens concerned about the Kyoto accord. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to immediately take all necessary action to protect our province's economy and work to halt the federal government's intent to sign on to the Kyoto accord in its current form.

Signatures on this petition this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Naicam and Watson. And I'm proud to

present on their behalf.

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 cause the government to work with the federal government, First Nations representatives, and with other provincial governments to bring about a resolution in the Lake of the Prairies situation and to ensure that our natural resources as a whole are used in a responsible manner by all people in the future.

The signators, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Esterhazy, Langenburg, Churchbridge, Stockholm, and Bredenbury.

I so present.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise as well to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the negative impact of the Kyoto accord. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary actions to protect our province's economy by working to halt the federal government's intent to sign on to the Kyoto accord in its current form.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Rouleau, Marquis, Moose Jaw, and Pense.

I so present.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the crop insurance premium hikes and coverage reductions which were imposed on the citizens of Saskatchewan and especially of Cypress Hills this year continue to cause concern. And I would read the prayer as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to halt its plan to take money out of the crop insurance program and hike farmers' crop insurance premium rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the citizens and residents of Robsart, Eastend, Consul, Piapot, and Kisbey, Saskatchewan.

I so present.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too rise today to present a petition from citizens in the Estevan area who are gravely concerned about the effects of the Kyoto accord in its present form. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon.

Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary actions to protect our province's economy by working to halt the federal government's attempt to sign on to the Kyoto accord in its current form.

And this petition is signed by folks from Estevan. Thank you.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are very concerned about the devastating effects Kyoto will have on Weyburn constituency. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary actions to protect our province's economy by working to halt the federal government's intent to sign on to the Kyoto accord in its current form.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Minton, Gladmar, and Regina.

I so present.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise on behalf of residents of the city of Swift Current who are very concerned about the impact of the Kyoto Protocol on the economy of our . . . of Swift Current and the Southwest. And the prayer of their petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary actions to protect our province's economy by working to halt the federal government's intent to sign on to the Kyoto accord in its current form.

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

All of the petitioners, Mr. Speaker, are from the great city of Swift Current.

I so present.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also rise with a petition from citizens concerned about the Kyoto accord, from my constituency. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary actions to protect our province's economy by working to halt the federal government's intent to sign on to the Kyoto accord in its current form.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed in total by the good citizens of Coronach.

I so present.

Mr. Brkich: — I also have a petition on the Kyoto accord.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary actions to protect our province's economy by working to halt the federal government's intent to sign on to the Kyoto accord in its current form.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Davidson, Saskatoon, and Girvin.

I so present.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition from citizens of Redberry Lake constituency concerned about the signing of the Kyoto accord. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary actions to protect our provincial economy by working to halt the federal government's intent to sign on to Kyoto accord in its current form.

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

Signed by the citizens of Leask, Marcellin, Blaine Lake, and Borden.

I so present.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I have a petition of citizens concerned about the assessment done this past summer by Saskatchewan Crop Insurance. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to have Saskatchewan Crop Insurance reassess the grasshopper spray penalty assessed to farmers in 2002. And further that the government review the definition of viable farming practices as outlined in present crop insurance policy.

And the petitions, Mr. Speaker, are from the community of Hanley.

I so present.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition today on behalf of citizens who are very concerned that this government has no ability to develop a mechanism to change the regional health care boundaries. The petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure the best possible health care

coverage for the communities of Govan, Duval, Strasbourg, and Bulyea by placing those communities in the Regina regional health authority as opposed to the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Bulyea and Southey.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth petitions signed by citizens from my constituency that are concerned with the signing of the Kyoto accord. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary actions to protect our province's economy by working to halt the federal government's intent to sign on to the Kyoto accord in the current form.

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from Spiritwood and Leoville.

I so present.

Clerk: — I hereby present the following petition for a private Bill by Ms. Jones, and it's for the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool in the province of Saskatchewan.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received as addendums to sessional paper nos. 11, 15, 18, 22, 23, 31, 147, 168, and no. 174.

(13:45)

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present the third report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

And, Mr. Speaker, prior to moving a motion of concurrence, I should like to make a few — I can assure the members — very brief remarks.

We reviewed as a committee the annual reports and financial statements of various Crown corporations that are contained in the report. We also considered relevant chapters contained in reports of the Provincial Auditor. The committee also adopted a number of resolutions that are contained in the report.

I might say we were assisted in our work by committee Clerk Viktor Kaczowski, *Hansard*, the Provincial Auditor and his staff, appointed auditors from various private firms, and also by

the attendance of witnesses from the Crown corporations, and we acknowledge and thank all of the foregoing, Mr. Speaker.

Finally but not least I want to thank all of the members of the committee for their participation and hard work. It is because of their diligence that the committee, I might say, is fairly up to date in its work.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Swift Current:

That the third report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations be now concurred in.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on Wednesday next move first reading of The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2002.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Brkich: — I give notice that I shall on day no. 84 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Crown Investments Corporation: has CIC sold the remaining potato facilities it owns in Broderick?

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too give notice I shall on day no. 84 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Learning: regarding the associate school operated by the province of Saskatchewan located in Hong Kong, referred to in Saskatchewan's Learning *Indicators* report: (1) does the province of Saskatchewan receive any income from the school; if so, how much; (2) in 2002 did any employees of Saskatchewan Learning travel to Hong Kong on business related to this school; if so, which employees and what were the costs involved; and (3) are there any other associate schools other than the one in Hong Kong; if so, where are they?

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 84 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Environment: regarding the blue box disposal bins used by the provincial government: (1) which company currently holds the tender for the manufacture of these bins; (2) what was the tendering procedure used; and (3) what is the value of this tender; were all private fabricating businesses given the opportunity to bid on this contract; if not, who made the decision as to which companies were invited to submit a bid?

Thank you.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 84 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Crown Investments Corporation: how much money has SaskTel spent so far in the year 2002 on advertising; how much money has SaskTel spent so far in the year 2002 on banquets, conferences, and meetings; how much money has SaskTel spent so far in the year 2002 on polling; how much money has SaskTel spent so far in the year 2002 on focus testing?

Mr. Speaker, I have a following set of questions that are essentially the same for SaskPower, SaskEnergy, the Crown Investments Corporation, and SGI; and as well, for the year 2001.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 84 ask the government the following question:

To the minister responsible for Crown Investments Corporation: for the year 2002 how much money did SGI collect in financial penalties from drivers on the negative side of the safety rating scale of the Safe Driver Recognition program?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand in my place today and introduce to you and to other members of the House, 47 people from Spalding, Naicam, and Watson area; people that I've known most of my life. And we had an opportunity to visit earlier this morning and ask questions, and you'll be pleased to know the one question they didn't ask me is how old I am, because normally that's what school groups ask.

I think the group will be pleased not only to visit the legislature but later on they'll be visiting the museum and the light tour. So welcome to the legislature, welcome to Regina, and I hope you have a great day.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, I would like to introduce one of my constituents who's here today, Mr. Gary Carlson, sitting in the west gallery. He's a keen follower of politics and he always likes to be where the action is and that's why he's here. So I welcome him.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to bring my greetings to the visitors from Naicam and Spalding. And anybody who has driven up Highway 6 knows that the sign going into Naicam says, Velkommen til Naicam. So I say, Velkommen til Regina.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hillson: — Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to welcome in the east gallery Mr. David Karwacki, the Leader of

the Saskatchewan Liberal Party.

Mr. Karwacki is the first of what I anticipate will be a veritable army of future MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) I'll be able to introduce in this Christmas session. So I would ask all members to join me in welcoming some future colleagues.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to the rest of this House, Don Ross from the Wheat Pool, who is sitting up in the gallery opposite. And he's a citizen of Regina and been very active in the life of the Wheat Pool for the last number of years. So I'd like you to join me in welcoming him to this House.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past Friday, December 6, people across Canada gathered in vigils, candlelight services, and other ceremonies to commemorate our National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. December 6 is dedicated to the 14 young women who were engineering students in Montreal killed in 1989.

In our province, observations were held at both universities because, tragically, the young women killed were students preparing to launch a career in a field traditionally not open to them. The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women spoke at the vigil at the University of Regina, joining other committed women and men in their determination to end this blight on our society.

Across the province, men and women took part in the White Ribbon Campaign. As well, the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) Rose Button Campaign was developed to raise awareness and to commemorate December 6.

Mr. Speaker, I was both proud to take part in this day of solemn remembrance and encouraged to be joined by friends, colleagues, and fellow citizens of all ages. But at the same time I was saddened by the fact that there still is a necessity for this day. We specifically mourn the 14 students, but violence against women did not begin nor end on that day. As monstrous as that act was, it did not happen in isolation.

The perverted sensibility that spurred Marc Lepine to murder is unfortunately still with us, but working together we are doing and we can look forward to a day when violence against women, when all violence is just a memory.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Recognition of Colleagues

Mr. Hermanson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with mixed emotion that I stand before the Assembly today to honour the late Rudi Peters, MLA for Battleford-Cutknife, and to welcome the Saskatchewan Party's newest and youngest MLA, Jason Dearborn.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, throughout Rudi's battle with cancer he never let his illness diminish his spirit and he continued to serve his constituents with tremendous dignity during the most difficult time of his life. Rudi had a strong desire to serve the people of Saskatchewan and make our province a better place. I know that members from both sides of the House will miss him.

So at the same time we bid farewell to a good MLA and friend, I would also like to welcome Jason Dearborn, our MLA for Kindersley. Jason's youth — at least by my standards — and exuberance bring a new perspective to our caucus and I'm sure to the Legislative Assembly in its entirety. I'm confident that Jason will serve his constituents and all the people of Saskatchewan with the same dedication and determination as Rudi Peters.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Job Growth

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A November to remember for jobs. Saskatchewan's job numbers just keep climbing with yet another record-breaking month, Mr. Speaker. Statistics Canada figures showed the highest November on record for people working in the province. There were 489,000 people working in Saskatchewan, an increase of 24,400 over November 2001.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has now posted four straight months of record job growth and seven consecutive months of solid job growth over last year's figures. We had the highest percentage increase in job growth year over year of any province in November, and maintained our low unemployment rate at 5.3 per cent compared to the national average of 7.1 per cent. Regina also enjoyed the lowest unemployment rate of all Canadian cities at 4.2 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, our province is showing the momentum that comes with an innovative, expanding, and robust economy. Other economic indicators are also positive, Mr. Speaker. The agricultural sector has gained 3,300 jobs; business incorporations, manufacturing shipments, retail and department store sales, new vehicle sales, urban housing starts, potash sales, and natural gas production are all up.

The economists of major banks are stating the economy will continue to expand in 2003 as value-added continues to grow in all our major sectors.

Mr. Speaker, this is . . .

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

**National Day of Remembrance and Action
On Violence Against Women**

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, last Friday, December 6, was the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Although the official day has passed, the issues addressed on Friday are ones that must be addressed by our society every day for violence against women is a daily fact of life for hundreds of thousands of women in Saskatchewan, across Canada, and around the world.

The national day of remembrance is commemorated annually on December 6, the anniversary of the 1989 Montreal massacre where 14 young women were killed because of their gender.

Last Friday, the federal, provincial, territorial ministers responsible for the Status of Women released a landmark report assessing violence against women. Although the report states there has been a slight decline in the number of assaults against women, its authors warn that this decline must be understood in the context that thousands of women never report assaults to the authorities.

In Canada, half of all Canadian women have been victims of at least one act of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16. A Canadian woman is raped every 17 minutes. Aboriginal women are particularly vulnerable to violence. In Saskatchewan, 57 per cent of women who use shelters are of Aboriginal ancestry, yet they're only 11 per cent of the total female population.

Violence against women does not discriminate. It affects women of all age, race, religions, cultures, and socio-economic background. No matter our political stripe, we must each make a political and personal commitment to help end violence against women.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

SaskTel Telcare

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the season when we try to make a special point of doing what we should be doing year-round, and that is sharing with others the blessings we receive as members of a very fortunate society.

With this in mind I was very happy to hear glad tidings of joy, Mr. Speaker, of a ceremony that took place this morning at which employees of SaskTel gave us all a lesson in the spirit of giving.

(14:00)

Since 1950, Mr. Speaker, SaskTel workers have through in . . . through payroll deductions contributed to a fund called SaskTel Telcare. SaskTel adds an additional 50 cents for each dollar donated and over 1,500 employees contribute regularly to this fund. Last year the total raised was \$317,671.75, Mr. Speaker.

This morning at the Canadian Cancer Society building, 18 excellent non-profit organizations in Regina received cheques

totalling more than \$179,000. The organizations included the United Way, the Regina Food Bank, the Salvation Army, the Canadian Cancer Society, and several more.

Mr. Speaker, in total this year SaskTel Telcare will contribute nearly \$325,000 to Saskatchewan community organizations right across this province. This is good news in a province whose future is wide open. These contributions are a credit to these good citizens of Saskatchewan who are the employees of one of our great corporate citizens.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Thank You to the Kindersley Constituency

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the people of the Kindersley constituency for placing their trust in me. I look forward to serving them to the best of my ability.

Kindersley riding has been home to my family since the foundation of our province. We have a wonderful, wonderful set of communities with good, industrious, compassionate citizens whom I am honoured to serve.

Mr. Speaker, currently we're hoping for the full and expeditious recovery of my constituency assistant, Mrs. Carole Stevenson of Eston, who was in a serious car accident on her way to work on Friday morning and is recovering in Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with all of my colleagues in the Assembly towards the common goals of a better Canada and a better Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Growth in Saskatoon

Ms. Jones: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All too often our image of Saskatchewan is coloured by misguided stories such as that which appeared in *Maclean's* magazine earlier this summer. This stereotype of Saskatchewan and its people overlooks the dynamic energy of our economy.

Saskatoon showed a healthy 3.1 per cent population growth over the last four years. Our surrounding towns and bedroom communities were among the fastest growing anywhere, ranging from 82.1 per cent for Shields to 20 to 30 per cent for Osler, Martensville, Dundurn, and Warman.

In 2001 Saskatoon led the country with the highest industrial permit values per capita of all major cities, at \$303 per citizen compared to \$110 per capita for Calgary, Toronto at 126, and Vancouver at 58.

We are seeing a record increase in the value of commercial permits for shopping centres and restaurants. The value of construction in this commercial category is up 145 per cent

compared to the same time last year.

Saskatoon has the second highest rate of job growth among all . . . among the Prairie cities. We have added 2,500 people to our workforce in the last 12 months, an increase of 2.1 per cent. Saskatoon is emerging as one of the most diverse and dynamic economies in the country, thanks to our manufacturing, mining, food processing, and strong high-tech and science-based growth. And that is a fact.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Provincial Finances

Mr. Hermanson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I entered the Assembly, the Premier said it just seemed like a very short time ago when we were here. Mr. Speaker, I guess when your government's out of control, time moves along very quickly. This Premier took office and inherited a \$50 million surplus, budget surplus from Roy Romanow, in his first year of office, and he turned that into a \$500 million deficit. In his second year of office he already tacked on another \$500 million in debt.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP (New Democratic Party) under this Premier is grossly mismanaging the province of Saskatchewan and plunging Saskatchewan into massive deficits like we saw back in the 1980s. Mr. Speaker, why has this Premier and his government mismanaged the finances of the province of Saskatchewan? Why is the NDP taking us back to the deficits of the 1980s?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — On Thursday of last week, Mr. Speaker, on Thursday of last week, for the information of the Leader of the Opposition, Statistics Canada released its final estimate on the 2002 crop year.

Here is the conclusion of StatsCanada on the most recent crop year. Quote:

Western Canadian farmers experienced one of the worst production seasons in the past 25 years. For some farmers in Alberta and Saskatchewan, it was worse than in the 1930s.

Mr. Speaker, two years of the worst drought in Saskatchewan's history seems not to have reached the consciousness of the opposition. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is this: yes, this year we have stood behind Saskatchewan families. We have stood behind Saskatchewan families whose communities were threatened by forest fires. We have stood behind Saskatchewan farm families raising livestock, and through crop insurance we have stood behind Saskatchewan farm families across the province.

Which of the above, which of the above, Mr. Speaker, would the opposition leader not have us do?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty scary. He sounds just like Grant Devine. But do you know what's even scarier? We don't even know the true size of the deficit this year. And the NDP won't tell us.

Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor says the NDP is only providing a partial picture of the government's finances, and a distorted one at that. That's because the NDP keeps telling us that they have a balanced budget, using their imaginary bank account. Mr. Speaker, the auditor says that this is not a proper accounting practice because it allows the NDP to hide a deficit.

The auditor says last year the true size of the deficit was \$483 million, and this year will likely even be worse. Mr. Speaker, will the NDP be honest with the people of Saskatchewan? What is the true size of this year's deficit?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition will stand in this House and stand outside of the House making all sorts of accusations about the finances of the province. Now he wants to talk about Grant Devine — his very good friend, Mr. Grant Devine — who didn't balance one budget the whole time he sat in this chair.

Mr. Speaker, you can take the word of Grant Devine or you can take the word of the Leader of the Opposition, or you can take the word of the Dominion Bond Rating Service of Canada, the bond raters. Now what does the bond raters say about the most recent financial statement produced by the Minister of Finance? The Dominion Bond raters say the following:

We have to keep in mind that the drought is not a controllable thing. It's not that the province has lost control of its spending.

Who will you believe, Mr. Speaker — the Leader of the Opposition and his friend Grant Devine, or this government and the Dominion Bond Rating Service?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's not the people of Saskatchewan that are hiding a deficit; it's the NDP that's hiding a deficit. The Provincial Auditor knows that the NDP is hiding a deficit. In fact now everyone in Saskatchewan knows that the NDP is hiding a deficit. The question is, how big is the deficit?

Mr. Speaker, the NDP created this mess because they decided to grow the government instead of growing Saskatchewan. They decided to even go out and grow Australia rather than grow Saskatchewan. They decided to grow potatoes instead of growing Saskatchewan. And now we see they're growing a deficit instead of growing the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, would the NDP just please give us an honest answer — how big is this year's deficit?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition again stands in this House and questions decisions about public services that we've added to the people of Saskatchewan — ability to fight forest fires, ability to support our farm families in livestock and through crop insurance, ability to deal with the children in our communities that are in need.

And what is the result? What is the result, Mr. Speaker? Headlines like this — in spite of the hurt in agriculture — headlines, “Jobs, jobs, jobs”; “A November to remember.”

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, today in the province of Saskatchewan there are more people going to work in November this year than ever before in the history of Saskatchewan, 489,000 people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, housing starts are up; retail sales . . . starts are up; new vehicle sales are up, Mr. Speaker; confidence in the manufacturing sector, confidence in the potash sector, confidence in the natural gas sector. The only voice that we hear in this province questioning the confidence of Saskatchewan is the voice coming from the Leader of the Opposition and his party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, the question is simple. According to the auditor's recommended practices of determining the size of the deficit, how big is this year's deficit?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — You know, Mr. Speaker, it must bother the members opposite to read the reports of their friends in the Fraser Institute these days, because the Fraser Institute came out with commentary on Saskatchewan's financial management, Mr. Speaker, and what they said was this. They said compared to all other provinces and the federal government, Saskatchewan ranked second for performance in handling debt and deficit.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — That's what their friends at the Fraser Institute say, Mr. Speaker. And the members opposite want to talk about the Provincial Auditor. The Provincial Auditor came out with a report this fall, Mr. Speaker, and here's what it said, and I quote. It said:

Saskatchewan's finances continue to compare favourably with most other provinces.

So, Mr. Speaker, who do we believe? Do we believe their friends at the Fraser Institute, and the Provincial Auditor, or do we believe those purveyors of doom and gloom, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Information Services Corporation

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, last year the NDP racked up a \$480 million deficit. This year the NDP has already piled up a massive \$323 million deficit that is growing by the day. Why, Mr. Speaker? Well one of the reasons is the NDP's habit of getting into business and then losing millions of taxpayers' dollars.

My question is for the minister responsible for Information Services Corporation. ISC (Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan) has blown \$88 million to develop a new automated land titles system that still doesn't work. And according to documents obtained by the Association of Saskatchewan Taxpayers, ISC spent more than a million taxpayers' dollars last year on travel, on advertising, on banquets.

Mr. Speaker, how many sales did the NDP's \$88 million land titles corporation make last year while racking up a million-dollar bill for exotic international travel and all-you-can-eat banquets?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Speaker, the opposition continues . . . can continue to criticize the investment of and the development of a computerized land titles system as much as they want, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the member opposite that out of 32 million transactions since August 2001, over 99 per cent have gone through smoothly and accurately, Mr. Speaker. This is a success story, Mr. Speaker, and this is an investment, Mr. Speaker, which will in turn not only reward the investment of the people of the province, but will enable us to work towards developments in other countries, Mr. Speaker.

The member might like to know, Mr. Speaker, that in the work done to ensure that lawyers and others understand this system effectively and can work with it, seminars take place, consultations take place, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that this works. That is where this money has gone, Mr. Speaker. Would the member have us not work with consumers to make sure that they know how to make the system work?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well that answer was about as off the mark as the program that he's trying to get . . . (inaudible) . . . Mr. Speaker, according to government documents, ISC spent \$180,000 last year travelling around the world to places like Fort Lauderdale, Hong Kong, and Albania. Mr. Speaker, it's hard to understand what business Saskatchewan's computerized land titles company has in Albania where almost no one in Albania owns any property, or a computer.

Mr. Speaker, some of ISC's globe-trotting was for a trip to meet

with EDS (Electronic Data Systems) officials in Australia. The Premier himself travelled to Texas last year to meet with other EDS officials. But EDS, Mr. Speaker, has offices right here in Regina. Why not use that?

Mr. Speaker, what value did the taxpayers get from the million dollars that ISC spent on travel, entertainment, and advertising while ISC has made virtually no international sales and still doesn't have a land titles system that works?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Speaker, the member will know the efforts made by the new president of ISC, Mark MacLeod, to respond to consumer concerns and to ensure that we have a quicker turnaround on those particularly troublesome issues that we've always indicated have taken place.

The member will know that there has been a positive response to Mr. MacLeod's efforts, both from the bar, the real estate industry, Mr. Speaker, and also . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . not that bar, Mr. Speaker, but the Law Society -- and also, Mr. Speaker, with the surveyors. So the community is working together, Mr. Speaker, to make ISC work.

One thing that is clear, Mr. Speaker, is the members opposite are intent on making sure it doesn't work and on making sure that it is more troublesome than they've already identified it to be. Mr. Speaker, they should get onside. They should make sure that this system works, Mr. Speaker, because it is in the best interests of everyone in the province to make sure that ISC is a success.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Government Information Technology Arrangements

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We were somewhat more concerned about the success in Albania than success in the bar, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP hired a company called EDS to computerize the paper-based land titles system in 1998. The estimated cost was between 20 and \$30 million. Now, four years later, the NDP's Information Services Corporation has blown over \$88 million and yet Saskatchewan still doesn't have a computerized land titles system that works.

Mr. Speaker, EDS was also hired by the federal government to establish a national gun registration database. Estimated cost 2 million; actual cost so far \$1 billion and counting. And now the NDP wants to privatize the provincial government's IT (information technology) services through an untendered contract to — you guessed it, Mr. Speaker — EDS.

So, Mr. Speaker, the question is will the NDP's deal with EDS to privatize the government IT services run four times over the budget like it did with land titles or 500 times over budget as it did with the federal gun registration program?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I find this line of questioning very interesting from the Sask Party. I think it shows a complete lack of understanding of what

is in fact happening in this province today.

The proposal that EDS has brought to this government is a proposal that will improve our services, that will cap our expenditures, and will create hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of new jobs in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I want to be very clear about this, Mr. Speaker. We are continuing to evaluate the proposal that EDS has brought to us and we will not be rushed into making that decision either in favour of the proposal or against the proposal until we've done the analysis.

Let me be very clear about this. We will ensure before we enter into this agreement that this will provide better IT services. We're going to make sure it reduces the cost, that we're able to protect the cost guarantees, that we're going to have significant economic development, and that there will be no privatization of unionized employees in the government IT service.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, those are our principles — not theirs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor says the NDP ran a \$480 million deficit last year. The Finance minister admits the NDP is going to run at least another \$323 million deficit this year, and the NDP has been forced to admit the debt of the province is now larger than it was in 1991. Yet the NDP continues to pour millions of dollars into losing land titles corporation, ISC. And ISC officials continue to jet set around the world trying to sell this system that doesn't even work back home.

Mr. Speaker, what is the NDP's plan for EDS and the taxpayers' \$88 million investment? Is the NDP government considering the privatization of ISC corporation and the sale of ISC to EDS or any other private sector company?

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I thought I was clear in my last answer that this was not about privatization. There will be no privatization of unionized workers under this NDP government. Let me be very clear about that. And the member should write this down for his next question when he asks me.

Let me also say, in terms of ISC there is a fundamental difference between what we are dealing with EDS on today in terms of the proposal they put forward and what the member characterizes it as.

This is not about application development. It is not about creating something new. It is about integrating the e-mail services. It's about integrating the help desk functions. It's about making sure that we've got a system of computers within government that can talk to each other. This is about buying an off-the-shelf solution to a problem that we have in government.

And we are going to continue to deal with EDS until we're

satisfied that either we've got a contract that we can sign or we decide to walk away from it. And the members can hoot and holler from their seats all they want; it will not change that process.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Government Participation in Potato Industry

Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the reasons why there is a huge deficit now in the province of Saskatchewan under this government's leadership is that they continue to blow millions of taxpayers' dollars on hare-brained business schemes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on April 3, 1997, the minister responsible for Sask Water took a decision item to cabinet saying that Sask Water would own 49 per cent of the potato storage facilities and a private sector company would own 51 per cent. It turns out that that wasn't the deal at all. The potato storage sheds were actually 100 per cent government owned and taxpayers were on the hook for the whole bill, Mr. Speaker.

By April of 1998, CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) officials, or someone in the government at CIC, was raising the concern with cabinet. Mr. Lingenfelter, the minister at the time, indicated that this wasn't the case at all. And what did the NDP do about it? Did they tell the truth then to Saskatchewan people? No, Mr. Speaker, they did not. They decided to blow more millions of dollars on four more potato sheds.

And the question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, is this: why did the NDP throw good money after bad even after they were warned by CIC officials, and why weren't they telling the truth about this deal?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well first of all, members opposite will not be surprised, when he raises the question he knows that the matter is before the court and I'm unable to answer in very specific detail.

Mr. Speaker, I can say though, Mr. Speaker, I can say and they will know this, Mr. Speaker, that there has been over the years significant investment in infrastructure in that area, Mr. Speaker — something in excess of \$140 million, Mr. Speaker, by way of irrigation infrastructure.

I can say, Mr. Speaker, that we grew the potato industry from roughly 200 acres to 10,000 acres, Mr. Speaker. We have a viable, strong, and vital industry in potatoes out in that area now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, is that member saying, Mr. Speaker, that this government should not have assisted the growers in that area to . . . And who to this day yet, Mr. Speaker, to this day yet ask us to stay involved to ensure that that industry stays strong and vital, Mr. Speaker. Is that what they're saying?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we are saying is that it is unacceptable that this government would pursue these kinds of deals and wind up losing 28 million taxpayers' dollars.

And it's even more unacceptable when we find out that cabinet made decisions based on information that wasn't correct, Mr. Speaker, brought to it by one of its ministers — the current Minister of Industry, Mr. Speaker — who now is proposing a new deal, a new ethanol deal and asking people to trust him, Mr. Speaker.

That's what we object to on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, we can't trust them. With respect to the budget they say it's balanced; we know there's a deficit.

They said land titles would cost 20 million; we know it's going to cost over 88 million and the system still isn't working.

They said there was a partnership on this deal; we know now there wasn't. The taxpayers were on the hook all along.

Mr. Speaker, why did the then minister, the current Minister of Industry, take the wrong information to cabinet in 1997 and why should we trust him today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, let me get this straight then. That member is saying that there should have been no investment by the province whatsoever. Mr. Speaker, after that government and the federal government invest \$140 million by way of irrigation infrastructure, we should have just left it lay there, not do anything, Mr. Speaker; add water and irrigation to crops that had no value, Mr. Speaker.

Instead this government responded to requests from growers in that area to work with them, Mr. Speaker. They grew large amounts of potatoes, Mr. Speaker, and you don't just dump them out on the ground. You put them in facilities, Mr. Speaker, where you can store them.

We worked with the growers in that area so that we could store those potatoes, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have a strong industry that this year, by the way I point out, Mr. Speaker, this year will be profitable, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a document, a cabinet decision item filed in court, a public document from the then deputy premier, Dwain Lingenfelter, to the then premier, Roy Romanow, and to all of the cabinet — and I note, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the current Premier was the then premier's chief of staff — I quote from this document:

That Cabinet receive as information that the CIC Board has directed CIC to lead a financial and management audit and review of the current business arrangements, agreements, contracts, financial reports, and projections that comprise Sask Water's potato storage business, and to return to the CIC board with recommended alternatives . . .

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, the question is simple: will he simply table this audit, this independent review that the government asked for in 1998? Will he table it in the legislature today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, this opposition, Mr. Speaker, is schizophrenic in the notion, Mr. Speaker, that we should sit . . . that we should not invest in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I point out to those members who don't know, Mr. Speaker, and for the public of Saskatchewan who doesn't know this, Mr. Speaker, that we have a strong potato industry. We grow amongst the best seed potatoes here in Saskatchewan, out in that area, Mr. Speaker, in all the world. People across the world come to our province to get seed potatoes that are amongst the very best in the world, Mr. Speaker.

Would those members, Mr. Speaker, have us not invest and partner and work with producers to grow a strong industry that now is well on its way, Mr. Speaker, to being very successful? And I say again, we have a corporation that is profitable this year. What have they got against profit, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is a very important series of questions. We know, we know clearly from the documentation that's been made public in court, that cabinet made their decision based on recommendations from the then minister of Sask Water that clearly — clearly — did not represent entirely the correct . . . the facts of the matter. We know that.

We also know that at the end of the day the taxpayers lost \$28 million, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have had no answers from the minister today. Even Enron executives have been hired to a higher standard . . . held to a higher standard of accountability than what we're seeing over there in terms of the answers. So we're going to give the minister another chance to answer the question.

We know from the documents that a review was done, an audit was done. The government can easily clear up this matter, can clear up all the questions, if only it table that document. Will the minister commit to table that document today in the Legislative Assembly?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Mr. Speaker, I look at the newspapers of last . . . several weeks ago, and they report the job numbers in November, Mr. Speaker. Record job numbers, Mr. Speaker. Part of that, Mr. Speaker, is diversification of our economy. Part of the diversification of our economy, Mr. Speaker, is doing things like we've done with the growers in the potato sector out in the Outlook area, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have a record that we should all be proud of, Mr. Speaker. We have diversification in agriculture; we have the ag-biotech sector, Mr. Speaker. We have all the wonderful

things that have been done in education and health care, Mr. Speaker. This opposition should work with this government, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we have continued job growth, Mr. Speaker.

(14:30)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just ask leave of the Assembly to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Clarification of Response

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to apologize to the member from Thunder Creek and indeed all of my hon. colleagues for the information provided last June in response to a written question regarding whether or not there was an assurance fund at the Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan.

Regrettably, Mr. Speaker, the written response did not identify how customers can be compensated for claims, which may have left the impression that there was no such compensation. While ISC doesn't have a dedicated assurance fund as was indicated in the written response, there are most certainly provisions for clients to be compensated for claims. And I apologize for any misunderstanding.

When I became aware of this situation last week, I wrote a letter of apology to the member from Thunder Creek that included the information needed to clear up any misunderstanding.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

The Speaker: — Members . . . Order, please. Order, please. Members of the Assembly, I wish to table, in accordance with the Board of Internal Economy directive No. 22(1)(g), the members' accountability and disclosure statements for the year ended March 31, 2002.

And in accordance with directive 23(1)(c), I also table the audited financial statements and schedule of assets for each caucus for the year ended March 31, 2002.

And in accordance with directive 10.15, I also table the financial statements for the offices of the independent members.

And I wish to table a letter dated November 13, 2002 received from Her Honour advising the membership of the Board of Internal Economy.

The materials are hereby tabled.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of Pages

The Speaker: — Members, it's my pleasure now to introduce and also to inform the Assembly that the Pages for this portion of the session — and I would ask the Pages to rise when they're introduced — will be Andrea Barraza, Robin Canham, Fabian Contreras, Nikki McNaughton, Michelle McNichol.

Thank you, Pages, for your work that you will be doing during the session.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Vacancy in Battleford-Cut Knife Constituency

The Speaker: — And it is now my duty to record a vacancy in the Assembly in the constituency of Battleford-Cut Knife due to the death of Mr. Rudi Peters.

I believe we are now prepared to go into condolences.

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I would ask leave of the Assembly to move a motion of condolence concerning the late member from Battleford-Cut Knife, Rudi Peters.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave to move a motion. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

CONDOLENCES

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And before I make the motion, which I believe will be seconded by the Premier of Saskatchewan, I would like to make just a few comments regarding the unfortunate and untimely passing of Rudi Peters, the MLA for the Battleford-Cut Knife, this past November 30.

Saskatchewan lost a great citizen and the sitting member for the Battleford-Cut Knife. I believe that this is the first time that this Assembly has lost a sitting member for approximately 16 years. And we lost Rudi Peters at the young age of 63 years.

Rudi Peters lost his battle with cancer. He leaves behind a loving wife, Shirley; a son Kevin; and daughters, Debbie, Wendy, their spouses, and four grandchildren.

In his private life, Mr. Peters carried on the family tradition of farming. In fact, Rudi would share with us that he still lived in the very house in which he was born and he planned and in fact did live his entire lifetime on the family farm.

During his life he devoted time and energy to a variety of community organizations. He was a member of the Rabbit Lake Hall Board and the Meeting Lake Regional Park. And in addition, in his community he volunteered as the chairman of the Mennonite Church of Rabbit Lake.

Before his election to this Assembly, Mr. Peters developed vast

experience in both local and rural government. He served as a rural municipal councillor for 14 years. Mr. Peters was also a member of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities Board of Directors for eight years. But Rudi wanted to get even more involved in the province of Saskatchewan, a province that he loved.

I remember I had spoken with Rudi by telephone, but first met him at a nomination meeting in Shellbrook-Spiritwood where he was seeking the nomination for the Saskatchewan Party. Now Rudi had the unfortunate problem of living across the road in the Redberry Lake constituency and we had already nominated our candidate for that constituency. And it was a very tightly contested nomination, which I believe Rudi only lost by one or two votes. Unfortunately he and his wife weren't able to vote for themselves, living outside of the constituency.

Had Rudi been a lesser person he might have been a bit disillusioned, but Rudi Peters said, I really do want to help this province. What can I do? And we talked with Rudi Peters and said, we still have a vacancy in the riding of Battleford-Cutknife. Are you interested in seeking the nomination in that riding? Which is also quite close to where he lived. And in fact, Rudi Peters did seek the nomination, won it in the Battleford-Cutknife, and was elected to this Assembly back on September 16, 1999.

All members of the House know that Rudi was a very, very dedicated member. He was extremely loyal to his constituents and worked very hard on their behalf. His key concerns, of course, long-time concerns of his, were agriculture, municipal issues, and education.

Rudi fought a remarkable battle against cancer and it was when this House was in session back in 2001 that he made the announcement to our caucus that he had been diagnosed with leukemia. He fought a very courageous battle, took chemotherapy, lost a lot of weight, but nobody could dampen his enthusiasm or his determination to be successful in this battle. And in fact he rebounded remarkably well and was able to come back to work and in fact again sit in this legislature and take part.

Rudi had even contemplated running again and seeking a second term. But one day he came into my office and said, Elwin, I think considering my situation and the time that I need to spend with my family, perhaps I shouldn't seek re-election. But he said, would you please keep me in the loop.

And I think that very much embodies Rudi's personality, his spirit, his wanting to be involved, his wanting to do things.

Just the other day we laid Rudi Peters to rest and almost all of the Saskatchewan Party caucus were present at the funeral. There were members from the NDP caucus present at the funeral and for that we want to express our true appreciation for those who represented the government side of the House. And the member, the member from the . . . from North Battleford also was present at the funeral and I know that that was appreciated by the people of the community, by Rudi's family, and by all of those who very much appreciated Rudi.

The funeral was a very warm celebration of Rudi's life on a

very, very cold day. We were impressed by his wonderful and personal faith in God and the importance his church played in his life. We were particularly impressed by the strength of his family and the tribute that they paid to a brother, a father, and a husband, and a grandfather.

Rudi's family, his community, came out to express their warm appreciation for his life, as I said, did many MLAs.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, with leave of the Assembly, I would move this motion, seconded by the Hon. Premier of Saskatchewan:

That this Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing of a sitting member of this Assembly and expresses its grateful appreciation of the contribution he made to his community, his constituency, and to the province.

Rudi Peters, who passed away on November 30, 2002, was a member of this Legislative Assembly from 1999 until his death, representing the constituency of Battleford-Cut Knife for the Saskatchewan Party.

Mr. Peters was born on January 30, 1939 and raised on the family farm in Rabbit Lake. He married Shirley Janzen on November 10, 1962 and they had three children. Mr. Peters is survived by his wife and their children and four grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the opportunity to second this motion of condolence to the Peters family.

It's a motion that comes from this House not just to Rudi's family — to his wife Shirley and their children and their grandchildren, to his extended family — but a motion that will go to Rudi's community and friends. And though we occupy different sides of this legislature, this day we are united in expressing our condolences.

And if I may say on behalf of government members, we extend condolences to our opposition colleagues who will have had an opportunity to work much more closely with Rudi Peters, who will have developed some very, very deep friendships. Condolences to our colleagues in this House.

That said, we who occupy this House know that we share some very important common bonds, whether it's common experience in the electoral process, common experience in serving our constituents, common experience in the rigours of this Chamber and the rigours of elected office, and a common experience, Mr. Speaker, which I believe unites us in a desire to do what we believe is right for the people we represent and for the province.

And so today we share a sadness in the loss of a colleague and, for some, a friend on both sides of this House. It is entirely accurate as the Leader of the Opposition has said today, when we think of Rudi Peters, we think of a dedication — a dedication to his community and his constituents, a dedication to rural Saskatchewan and to farming, and a dedication to this

House — that if I may say in my experience in this House, was well above and beyond what any one of us would have expected, given the challenges that Rudi faced in these last months. He was dutiful to his service to this legislature, dutiful to the service he brought to the constituents and to the province of Saskatchewan and, obviously, dutiful to the service and the love that he brought to his family and friends. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased on behalf of the government caucus to second the motion of condolence.

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a special privilege to stand today in the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to pay heartfelt and sincere tribute to our colleague and friend Rudi Peters, who sat as a respected member for the Battleford-Cut Knife constituency from 1999 to 2002. Rudi's passing indeed sent a pang of sadness through the hearts of his colleagues, his family, and his friends. We will all miss him and his down-to-earth, positive, and easygoing approach to life. His attitude was truly inspiring as his life exemplified eternal optimism. Rudi in a sense was an educator. He educated all of us on what's important in life, and having a very positive approach to life.

Initially, when he and Shirley . . . his wife Shirley heard the news that Rudi had leukemia, their immediate response was shock, but very quickly after that they adopted a motto and that was, we're going to beat this.

(14:45)

And contrary to popular belief, Rudi did not lose his battle with cancer. He was the first to remind us that he was cancer free. And I encourage all of us in this Assembly to think of him, in fact, as a winner. A winner — why, Mr. Speaker? Because he chose to be optimistic; he chose to meet the challenge of cancer by taking on a positive attitude towards it.

With that attitude and God's grace he in turn challenged all of us to choose life over death. Rudi taught us all what is meant to be upbeat in the face of huge challenges. He taught us to always remember that tomorrow promises hope even when they may be painful today. How often during the past year I heard Rudi say, it's good to be alive; or, my life is so good.

And during the last legislative session I was fortunate in that I had many opportunities to spend time with Rudi and his wife, Shirley, with his brother, Peter, and his sister-in-law, Margaret, chatting over good meals at the end of the day after the legislature closed. Rudi spoke at those times with a great deal of delight about his children, his grandchildren, his wife, and his appreciation and his love of farming.

To Rudi, farming was not a chore; farming was a joy. It was an environment where he could encourage his family to learn practical skills necessary to manage everyday life. Rudi loved to tell jokes and often they were off colour. But he enjoyed doing that, and more than telling them he enjoyed the expression that he would see on the faces of his friends when he did so.

Rudi was very, very proud to be elected as a member of this Assembly and to contribute to improving to the quality of life for all people in Saskatchewan. His wife, Shirley, was a

constant and faithful companion to him throughout this time and throughout all their life. Together they made a decision to give thanks for all they'd experienced together in life and take it easy from here on in. Rudi's motto that he left with us before his passing was, folks there's more to life than hard work so stay lighthearted and enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, I know that members of the Saskatchewan Party along with all members of this Assembly will miss Rudi Peters. We will remember his warmth, his goodness, and his dedicated contributions to Saskatchewan, and we'll remember them with great gratitude and pride. And he will always have a special place in our hearts.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I do indeed consider it an honour to be able to participate in this debate and offer my personal tribute and condolences to Shirley and to the other members of the family on behalf of myself and my party, but I think especially on behalf of the people of the Battlefords who we came to appreciate and to hold in our hearts for his work in the Battlefords as the other MLA for our community.

We will remember him as a man of dignity and quiet humour and diligence and of course finally, this past year, as a man of great courage. And that is probably what will remain most in our minds — the image of a man who continued to perform his duties in spite of what we obviously knew to be great pain and discomfort. But I do not recall ever hearing complaints about that and I don't think his colleagues in the Saskatchewan Party did either. He had been elected to perform his duties. He continued with them in spite of the obvious strain that he was under.

And certainly the most indelible memory I have of Rudi is not in this Assembly, but his participation in the cancer walk in the Battlefords last spring when he led the survivors lap. For that charity he certainly worked very hard for many of the causes and community efforts in the Battlefords. And we worked together. There was no sense of party or partisan difference. We had mutual constituents that we were to serve and work for and that was certainly the way Rudi approached it. And I remember working on many community projects in the Battlefords with Rudi, but most particularly I think the one which will remain in my mind is the cancer walk from the Canadian Cancer Society that he had such a prominent role in last June.

Mr. Speaker, I think we in this Assembly would be remiss if we did not also mention the people of Rabbit Lake. They had about 500 people descend on their community last week and it was typical of what we think of as rural Saskatchewan in the way that community responded. It of course took two halls. The crowd could not be accommodated in one hall.

And at the conclusion of the service we were all asked to attend the graveside, which I wondered about at the time. And then I realized why we had been specially asked for the entire crowd to go to the grave. His closest friends, the people of Rabbit Lake, were not able to take their friend Rudi to his final rest. They remained behind in order to change and redo the hall and bring out the tables and the food in order that they could properly welcome their guests to their community, even in their

sad occasion.

And, Mr. Speaker, as one would expect in rural Saskatchewan, after the 500 of us had finished eating, there was still food left over for another 500.

So I offer my condolences to Shirley and the family. I say that we have lost both a colleague and a friend and someone whose memory will continue to be held dear by all of us.

I too remember last summer when I was working on a joint project with Rudi in the Battlefords. He took me aside and he told me that he would not be seeking re-election. I knew that this hurt him to have made that decision, but I was at least pleased for him on a personal level and I expressed the wish to him that this paved the way for many years of happy retirement. And it is a matter of personal sadness to me that unfortunately that's not the way it turned out.

So I'm pleased to support the motion of condolence before the House this afternoon.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to join with other members of this Assembly in extending our condolences to Rudi's wife Shirley and the family in this remembrance of Rudi as a special friend.

Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of meeting Rudi when I was invited by the then minister of Rural Development, Neal Hardy, to chair a rural . . . a committee on rural development. And Rudi was a SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) representative on that committee. And as some of my colleagues have already indicated, he certainly brought an interesting charm to many of our meetings. And if a meeting got somewhat quiet and subdued and maybe just too technical, Rudi would pipe up and there'd be a little story that would just get us focused a little bit more for the time being.

But what I found about Rudi, he was certainly a very outspoken individual. He was a man who enjoyed serving people, and I think that was seen in the number of people from all walks of life, not only representing SARM and members of the Legislative Assembly, but people from all across this province who gathered to celebrate his life at his funeral last week.

Mr. Speaker, I would venture to say that Rudi enjoyed meeting people a lot more than . . . while he enjoyed representing them and sitting with us in this Assembly, he would just as soon sit down in the coffee shop, or across the table, to discuss an issue than stand up in the Assembly and try and debate that issue. He felt more at home sitting down and meeting with people individually, and talking to them in that fashion.

Mr. Speaker, about a month and a half ago I had the privilege of being in the city and in the caucus office for a few moments and noticed Rudi was in. And I thought it very interesting that Rudi would have taken the time to come to Regina. I could see he really wasn't feeling that well, although you wouldn't tell it by talking to him.

But, Mr. Speaker, the reason he was here is because it was his caucus duty, and Rudi was a person that it seemed that no matter what his situation was personally, if there was a duty he

had to uphold, he was prepared to do it. And we saw that as colleagues; we saw that he made a commitment to his constituents even in the most difficult days of his life.

And on that occasion, Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of asking Rudi, well where are we going for dinner today? And Rudi said, well let's find a good pasta place; I enjoy pasta. So we went down and we enjoyed some pasta and were chatting away and Rudi just . . . his comment was, you know, he says, I'm just enjoying life right now; I'm really enjoying life. I'm enjoying my family. And he said, we're looking forward, we're making . . . at that time he was making plans for Christmas, and the family was all going to be home. And you know, Mr. Speaker, as we were just chatting around the table, you wouldn't tell, just talking to Rudi, that he was facing the last few days of his life. You just couldn't really tell that.

And, Mr. Speaker, but the one thing that really stood out in his mind, he said, not only was family important, but he said, I have to share with you that one of the most important things I've become to appreciate more and more is my faith, my faith in God. And he said, He sustained us, my family and I, many days over this past . . . these past few months.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as we all know, Rudi is no longer with us; his spirit is here. We want to extend our condolences to his wife, Shirley. We know that the first few days after someone passes away — and I think back to my mother leaving us so quickly — that the shock doesn't really hit you until about three, four, two months later, and all of a sudden the loneliness.

We want Shirley to know that she's not alone. There are a lot of people thinking about her. We want her to realize as well that our thoughts and our prayers are with her at this time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to join with other members on both sides of the legislature today to pay respects to Rudi Peters.

I met Rudi some 20 to 25 years ago, Mr. Speaker, when Rudi was a representative, an RM (rural municipality) out in rural Saskatchewan as I was. And we met at SARM conventions. And Rudi went on to further his political career within SARM by running for director for division 6 within SARM.

And I think the respect that Rudi brought to himself and the job that he had done was represented at the funeral that day by the number of past and present SARM presidents and directors and even staff that were there that day and thought nothing but the best of Rudi and the job that he'd done. Everyone that had met Rudi and dealt with him had liked Rudi for the things that he brought to the table.

Mr. Speaker, Peter, Rudi's brother, the day of the funeral I thought did a tremendous job of giving the eulogy. He spoke of Rudi quite often with good humour when he talked about Rudi being somewhat of a prankster as we all had become accustomed to.

And he had the people at the funeral with smiles on their face just thinking back about things that . . . When he talked about

something, you know, you could picture Rudi saying those things and bringing that fun and bright side and that positive feeling to everyone that was around him.

Rudi's son spoke at the funeral and he said — and I thought it was probably one of the most true comments that I've ever heard about Rudi — he said, my dad was not a great politician but he was an excellent and caring representative for the people of Battleford-Cut Knife.

And when you think about that, Rudi would be the very first one to have said, when I stand in my place, I couldn't speak for an hour; I wouldn't want to even try. He would become very nervous. And yet those of us that saw him day after day in his office on the phone talking to ministers responsible, caring for the people in his constituency and representing them and trying to solve problems that they had — he spent endless hours doing that.

And, Mr. Speaker, I remember the night that I believe it was six or seven of us went to a Riders football game at Taylor Field, Rudi being one of them. And I was walking beside Rudi with someone else and we were walking up the ramp, Mr. Speaker, on the far side of Taylor Field. And we got about two-thirds of the way up and Rudi stopped and we knew right away Rudi had some problems. We couldn't figure out what it was because Rudi was a very healthy guy and he bent over the railing and said, I don't know if I can go on.

So we waited and finally Rudi got up, went to his seat. And it wasn't long after, Mr. Speaker, that Rudi found out that he had leukemia and had health problems. But up till that point Rudi had a very positive attitude in life, Mr. Speaker.

But that never changed. In caucus he would be an inspiration to the rest of us when we were having a bad day, be feeling sorry for ourselves over some trivial little thing. And here would be Rudi going through all these problems, not a care in the world; just loved to be alive.

And I think to this moment Rudi is an inspiration to me and I believe to every member on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. So we've all lost a friend and a respected colleague, Mr. Speaker, and we extend to Shirley and the entire Peters family our condolences and best wishes.

Rudi will be greatly missed but not quickly forgotten.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with all of our colleagues in the legislature in offering our deepest sympathy to Rudi's wife, Mrs. Peters; Rudi's children, Kevin, Deb, and Wendy; their spouses; his four grandchildren; his brother, Peter, and sister, Margaret; and all of his neighbours and friends in Rabbit Lake and area as well as his constituents in Battleford-Cut Knife.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the member from Regina Coronation, and myself were able to attend Rudi's memorial service and funeral on December 3. And we observed some interesting events. And I think the thing that was said by Peter Peters, Rudi's brother, was that Rudi was never more happy

than he had been in the last years of his life, serving his constituents and serving as a member of the legislature in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I've been a member of this Assembly for 16 years and in those 16 years you see colleagues come and go, lots of them. And when you think about all of the people that have had the opportunity to serve in this legislature in the past 16 years I'm sure they number more than 80. And what I found most amazing about Rudi Peters is that he did not come here for the power and the glory, to have his name seen in the newspapers and on TV every night. He came here to represent the constituents of Battleford-Cut Knife.

Mr. Speaker, as a minister of the legislature for some nine and a half years, you get to know who contacts your ministerial office. And when Les Headrick I think it was, one of the people who gave the eulogy, said Rudi was a better MLA than he was a politician, I think that my experience can confirm that. Of all of the members of the legislature, it was Rudi and his constituency assistant that had the most contact with my ministerial office. And that tells you something about him. It tells you that he was there advocating and representing and serving his constituents.

And that was borne out on the day of his funeral. I think that there were more than 500 people there. There was a hall that was full, and the senior centre across the street was full. And some friends of mine run the Rabbit Lake general store and cafe, and they told me that there wasn't a coffee to be served that day really because people were busy attending to the events around Rudi's memorial service and funeral.

I think that there is no greater tribute to a person than who shows up to your funeral. And the people who showed up at Rudi's funeral represented all political persuasions. I knew lots of people that were in the room. There were people from all over Saskatchewan, people from my own constituency. Rudi seemed to have lots of second and third and fourth and fifth cousins. And I noticed even the member from Rosthern had a relative there, who I sat beside, who came from Winnipeg.

So it was a day where Rudi's personality, the values that he represented in terms of our province, were truly evident by the people that came to show their respects to Rudi and his family.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the Legislative Assembly in this province has lost a good and loyal member, and for that we pay tribute. And for that, as members of the legislature, we should be thankful that at the end of the day our fundamental job here is not how much press we get, not how many times we read our names in the newspaper. I've come to know that if you're reading your name in the newspaper it's not necessarily good. The real tribute, the real measure of us as legislators is how we serve our constituents, the people back home.

And Rudi was a true and loyal servant to the people of our province.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with my colleagues in paying my respect to Rudi and give condolences to his family.

Rudi, I had never met him before the 1999 election, and his office was across mine . . . across the hallway from mine. The best thing about being an elected member is meeting people who you'd have nothing in common with and sitting down and finding out that they really are friends.

With Rudi, I found out we had more than political beliefs in common. Rudi's family and friends and community were the most important thing in his life. Rudi was always in the office in the morning before I was. I used to wonder if he just slept there overnight. Rudi used my fax machine in my office and it was a daily ritual for me to go through all the papers and take them into the office in the morning and we'd have a chat about work and family and politics.

On June 26, 2001 he wasn't in his office in the morning, and most of our caucus found out that day that he'd been diagnosed with cancer. We were devastated by the news, yet for some reason the world seems to go on no matter what happens in personal lives, so we carried on with the day.

That evening there was a vote in the House that we considered quite important. It was the only vote that I'd ever been involved in that the government lost. But more important than that to us was the fact that Rudi showed up for that vote. We knew that he felt strongly that it was his duty and his responsibility to represent his people at this time and that his own physical well-being came second. He believed that he had a chance to make a difference. And we all admired Rudi for his strength and his attitude that he could beat this disease.

Two weeks ago today, Rudi himself phoned my office and asked if I would meet with one of his school groups because he didn't feel he could make the trip to Regina. Mr. Speaker, Rudi went into the hospital two days later and he never came home again.

So last Monday when I had the opportunity to speak to his class, I told them about Rudi. I told them about his commitment and his respect for them and his belief that because of young people like them, tomorrow would be a better day. I tried to explain to them that maybe they didn't see Rudi on TV every night but Rudi really had a fundamental belief that every one of those people, those young people, could make a difference in this world. And when they left the room, I told them that it was their opportunity and their responsibility to make sure that they would carry on working hard in whatever career that they chose and give it their very best, because that's what Rudi had done.

Mr. Speaker, Rudi will always be one of the heroes to our caucus. He made a difference not only . . . our lives on both . . . colleagues on both sides of the floor, because he had priorities in his life that were more important to him than his own physical well-being. He didn't speak at length on many subjects and he never tried to be in the public eye. But he got our attention because he was the kind of person we'd all like to be. He was caring and giving and dedicated.

So, Rudi . . . and Shirley, thank you for sharing Rudi with us. We're all much better people because of Rudi.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — By leave of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move that this Assembly record with sorrow and regrets the passing of a former member of this Assembly and express its grateful appreciation of the contributions he made to his community and his constituency, that of Mr. James Wilf Gardiner.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, on the completion or conclusion of my remarks, moved by the member from Yorkton and seconded by the Leader of the Official Opposition from Rosetown-Biggar, I would ask:

That this Assembly record with sorrow and regret the passing of a former member of this Assembly and express its grateful appreciation and contributions he made to his community, his constituency, and to this province.

Mr. James Wilfrid Gardiner, who passed away on October 3, 2002, was a member of the Legislative Assembly from 1956 until 1967, representing the constituency of Melville for the Liberal Party.

Mr. Gardiner was born on July 27, 1924 in Regina. He attended the public school in Lemberg, Regina, and Ottawa before pursuing studies in political science at Queen's University in Kingston. He graduated in 1946 and married his wife, Margaret, the same year. Mr. Gardiner is predeceased by his wife and survived by their six children and ten grandchildren.

In his private life, Mr. Gardiner was an active participant in the communities in which he lived. After farming for four years in the Lemberg area, Mr. Gardiner moved his family into town where he occupied an insurance . . . or opened an insurance and real estate business. Later he became the general agent and secretary for the Lemberg Rural Telephone Company, and he served there for many years as the town clerk and as the secretary of the Lemberg school division.

In the years following his political career, Mr. Gardiner continued to work in government as the deputy minister of Co-operation and Co-operative Development. He also embarked on creating a hotel business in Regina and Bienfait areas.

Mr. Gardiner was well known for his volunteer work in a variety of social services organizations ranging from the board of trade to the curling club and to his church. He also played an active role in other organizations such as the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, and the Melville Board of Trade.

With Mr. Gardiner's decision to enter politics, it was said that he was following in his father's footsteps. James Garfield Gardiner was the elected representative of Melville constituency for many years, serving first as a member of this Assembly, including two terms as premier, and later as federal parliament and minister of Agriculture.

His son, Wilf, was first elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1956 and re-elected again in 1960 and 1964. He entered cabinet in 1964 as the minister of Public Works. Mr. Gardiner also held the portfolios of Saskatchewan Jubilee and Centennial Corporation, the Western Development Museum, Saskatchewan Government Printing, Saskatchewan Water Supply Board. Upon leaving elected office, Mr. Gardiner retained his interest in politics and often commented on provincial issues.

In the recording of our own deep sense of loss and bereavement, this Assembly expresses its sincere sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to join the member from Yorkton in bringing condolences to the Gardiner family.

Mr. Gardiner was a farmer, a business person, but more than that even, I think he was a community person that was involved in many, many volunteer positions within his community. The Gardiner family, Mr. Speaker, as we all know, has a long, long history in provincial and federal politics and the name is well known throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I want to join the member for Yorkton, Deputy Premier, in expressing our sympathy to the family of the late Wilf Gardiner.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is truly an honour for me to speak to the condolence motion presented.

Mr. Speaker, the name Gardiner is truly synonymous with politics in Saskatchewan. Wilfrid Gardiner was born into a political environment. His father was the late Hon. James G. Gardiner who was serving in the Saskatchewan provincial cabinet of Premier Charles Dunning in 1924, the year Wilf was born.

(15:15)

In 1926, the statesman who became fondly known as Jimmy Gardiner became the premier of Saskatchewan. Jimmy Gardiner later went on to become the federal minister of Agriculture, a portfolio he held from 1935 to 1957. Following in his father's footsteps, Wilf Gardiner was first elected to this legislature in 1956, re-elected in 1960, in 1964 when he did become minister of Public Works in the cabinet of Premier Ross Thatcher. Between Wilf and his father, the two represented the Lemberg district of the Melville constituency for almost 50 years from 1914 to 1967 with the exception of some five years.

Mr. Speaker, the previous members who have addressed this motion have indicated the participation by Mr. Wilf Gardiner in a variety of experiences during his lifetime and all those experiences were in the service of his community, to his family, and to the people of this great province of ours.

Mr. Speaker, I truly would like to join the colleagues in this Assembly in expressing sincere condolences to the family of Mr. Wilf Gardiner on his passing.

Mr. Hillson: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too consider it

an honour to participate in this debate. I do so as someone who knew Wilf well and I also rise as a former resident of the city of Melville. And although I came to Melville after Wilf's political career had ended, old-timers in the community certainly remembered him well and remembered when, as a very young man, he first ran in the Melville constituency in 1956. And at that time his father, the former premier, was the federal minister of Agriculture.

And Tommy Douglas came to Melville at that time to complain at a CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) rally that he had heard of occasions when the father would buy a car for his son. He had even heard of occasions when a father would give a farm to his son but this was the first time he had ever heard of a father giving a seat in the legislature to his son. Well the people of Melville, as always, appreciated the Douglas wit but not the sentiment and Wilf was duly elected.

I mostly remember Wilf from after his political career and I can tell you that he continued to be a fixture at Liberal conventions, at United Church conferences, and at a host of other community and public organizations. And may I say, Mr. Speaker, I think that is the true test of someone who is committed to public service. It is one thing for those of us during office to show an interest in the affairs of our community, our constituency, and our province. I mean after all, quite bluntly, Mr. Speaker, that's what we're paid to do. That's our job. But when this interest and involvement continues long after one's political career is over, then that is proof that it is very genuine.

So I say he was always a fixture at Liberal conventions. He was also a frequent visitor to this House, as many current members will recall. However, Wilf was not a man known for his care and elegance in dress, and I think there were a few times he had some difficulties convincing security that he really was a former MLA.

I know that his own high point of his political career was in 1967 when he headed up the province's contribution to the Canada centennial celebrations.

He is remembered as his father's son. But I think he also will be remembered for himself — for the man who came to claim his own corner in Saskatchewan politics — and his own memory for the people of the Lemberg-Abernethy-Melville area and the people of this province as a man who had deep and abiding love of this province, a deep and abiding commitment to the organizations to which he belonged, a commitment which he carried on as long as his health permitted and a commitment and an interest which certainly did not wane at the end of his active political career.

And for that I am pleased to have this opportunity to pay tribute to the memory of Wilf Gardiner and to offer the condolences of myself and of my party to the Gardiner family.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to be part of this motion and support this motion of condolences for the Gardiner family.

It's quite interesting at how people will intersect with your life in ways that aren't always explainable. And Wilf Gardiner has been a part of my life for my whole life because he happened to

be a classmate of my mother at high school at Luther College in the early '40s in Regina. And there were a number of very interesting people in that class that she would talk about and Wilf was one of them, in the sense that when I would meet him — I met him later in life — she, my mother, would say, well Wilf is very much the same as he was in high school.

And he was involved with the community, he was concerned about people, he was a good politician. And then I think later he always was part of contributing to what the community was.

And I would have to say that when I got into politics, Wilf was somebody who, because he knew this long connection to the family, he would come and give me advice. And it was not the ordinary kind of advice that you would get, but the advice of somebody who understood all of the different kinds of things that would happen in the community.

So I'm very pleased to offer my condolences to the Gardiner family, and from my family, because of the long connection that we've had. Thank you.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I would ask that this Assembly records with sorrow and regret the passing of a former member of the Assembly and express its grateful appreciation and contributions he made to his community, his constituency, and to the province, Mr. George Joseph Trapp.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Upon the conclusion of my motion, I would ask that the House receive this motion on behalf of the government member from Yorkton, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition from Rosetown-Biggart:

Mr. George Joseph Trapp passed away on November 25, 2002, and was a member of the Legislative Assembly from 1964 until 1967, representing the constituency of Touchwood for the Liberal Party.

Mr. Trapp was born on June 5, 1909 in Kamsack and grew up on the family farm. He attended local schools in Lipton before pursuing his studies at Luther College and Normal School in Regina. Several years later, he completed a bachelor's degree in Education at the University of Saskatchewan. Mr. Trapp was married to Bessie Stewart in 1933, and Mr. Trapp is survived by two children, seven grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Mr. Trapp was a teacher by profession. He taught at schools in Dysart and Cupar and served for 21 years as the principal of the Punnichy school. Mr. Trapp's devotion to his chosen profession was exemplified by his lengthy term as a councillor with the Govan school unit, and his election as the executive member and later president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation.

In 1961 he was named the Canadian College of Teachers . . . or to the Canadian College of Teachers. Mr. Trapp was

elected to the Assembly in 1964 and appointed minister of Education. In later years he served as director of continuing education with SaskPower until his retirement in 1980.

Mr. Trapp was an active participant in sports circles in the community of Punnichy. He also . . . He held positions on the Punnichy Board of Trade, the golf club, and the home and school club. He was superintendent of the Sunday school.

Mr. Trapp served with the Army Reserve during the World War II and later led the Punnichy Memorial Association.

An avid gardener, Mr. Trapp continued to tend to his own garden in the '90s.

In recording our deepest sense of loss and bereavement, this Assembly express its most sincere sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Accordingly moved by the member from Yorkton, seconded by the member from Rosetown-Biggart:

That this Assembly record with sorrow and regret on the passing of the former member of the Assembly and express its grateful appreciation of contributions he made to his constituency, his community, and to the province.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the member from Yorkton, the Deputy Premier, in passing on the condolences on behalf of the Saskatchewan Party caucus to the Trapp family. As the motion indicated, Mr. Trapp represented the constituency of Touchwood which now makes . . . which is now part of the constituency I represent of Last Mountain-Touchwood.

And also I must say that I didn't personally know Mr. Trapp but my family certainly knew Mr. Trapp. I remember my parents speaking about Mr. Trapp. And when Mr. Trapp ran for the Liberal . . . was the Liberal candidate in the 1994 . . . '64 election, back in those days it was customary for the candidate to make arrangements to come to an area and then have someone who was familiar with the area take them about and introduce them to constituents in that particular area.

And my parents were always politically aware but never really actively involved. But I guess it was about that time that my father decided that perhaps he should get somewhat involved and he had agreed to show Mr. Trapp around and so on.

And I'm not sure whether they had met prior to that but I can remember in subsequent conversations saying . . . my father saying that he was very impressed with the ability of Mr. Trapp. And as history has recorded, he, Mr. Trapp, went on to win the election, win the seat, and become the minister of Education in the Ross Thatcher government.

Mr. Trapp, although being born in Kamsack, spent a good part of his life in the Last Mountain-Touchwood constituency and particularly in the area near my home. In fact he taught in Cupar and Dysart; he started his teaching career at a small country school called McDonald Hills. And so, Mr. Speaker, it's fitting that in fact his final resting place is in the small community of

Dysart which was originally and still is part of the Touchwood constituency and Last Mountain-Touchwood constituency today.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I would like to say as I mentioned when I first started speaking about Mr. Trapp, on behalf of the Saskatchewan Party caucus, we would like to offer our sincere condolences to Mr. Trapp's family.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Mr. Osika: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again it is my honour to rise and speak to the condolence motion as a tribute to George Trapp who served as Saskatchewan's minister of Education from 1964 to 1967. I want to express my sympathy to the family and also to point out Mr. Trapp's love of life, teaching, and caring for children.

After attending Normal School and then the University of Saskatchewan where he received his Bachelor of Education, he taught school for 34 years, all in small Saskatchewan communities.

He was a counsellor of the Govan School Unit and was elected president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation in 1959, a position that he held for five years.

Mr. Trapp was the principal of Punnichy School when he was elected to the legislature in April 1964 and became the minister of Education in the cabinet of Premier Ross Thatcher.

Mr. Trapp held the Education portfolio until his electoral defeat in 1967. He then went on to work for Saskatchewan Power where he was director of continuing education and remained in that position until his retirement in 1980.

(15:30)

Mr. Trapp and his late wife Bess had two children, Murray and Marjorie. It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, to note that Marjorie married Gordon Staines, the son of Hubert Staines who had served as the minister of Education from 1941 to 1944 in the cabinet of the Hon. William Patterson — Marjorie's children had two ministers of Education as their grandfathers. George Trapp had a great compassion for children and was devoted to the well-being of his students. He once said, and I quote:

I have never found a problem child, but always a child with a problem.

So, Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues in this Assembly today to offer our sincere sympathy to Mr. Trapp's family and friends. With his passing we have lost a man who had a vision as Education minister that focused on the importance of the well-being of the children in the education system — not just the importance of the curriculum.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I would ask:

That the Assembly record with sorrow and regret the passing of a former member of this Assembly and expresses its grateful appreciation of the contributions he made to his community, his constituency, and to the province, Mr. Arthur Lee Smith.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, upon the completion of the reading of the motion I would move, seconded by the member from Rosetown-Biggart, the Leader of the Opposition:

Mr. Arthur Leslie Smith passed away on November 11, 2002, and was a member of the Legislative Assembly from 1982 until 1986, representing the constituency of Moose Jaw South for the Progressive Conservative Party.

Mr. Smith, known as Bud, was born on June 14, 1919 in Cardross. He received his education at schooling at Marigold in Cardale. Mr. Smith was predeceased in 1966 by his wife, Irene, and in 1985 by his second wife, Goldie. He is survived by his third wife, Mary, whom was married in 1988, his stepdaughters, two grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Mr. Smith's first career was a farmer. He farmed in the Cardross area for 32 years. In the late 1960s he took up carpentry and was employed at Kos Construction for a time. Later he moved with his second wife, Goldie, to Swift Current and he worked at the Healy Hotel for one year before moving back to Moose Jaw.

Mr. Smith had a life-long interest in politics that was evident in his efforts to attract and encourage new members to join and participate in his party's activities. His commitment to a political career deepened when he sought the election in 1975 and 1978 elections. Undeterred, Mr. Smith successfully sought elections to this Assembly on the third attempt in the 1982 general election.

Mr. Smith saw himself as a constituency man and devoted much of his energy to addressing the concerns of his constituents. And particularly, he advocated for improvements in health and social services. Mr. Smith also had an interest in the operations in the Assembly and served for a period as the deputy government whip.

In recording of our deep sense of loss and bereavement, this Assembly expresses most sincere sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

And moved by the member from Yorkton, and seconded by the member from Rosetown-Biggart:

That this Assembly record with sorrow and regret the passing of a former member of this Assembly, and express its grateful appreciation of the contributions he made to his community, his constituency, and to the province.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to speak to the condolence motion of the late Bud Smith. Bud was born in 1919 in Cardross, Saskatchewan, and educated nearby.

Bud's first career was that of a farmer in the Cardross area for some 32 years. In 1966 he was predeceased by his first wife, Irene. Bud Smith worked for a time as a carpenter and then moved with his second wife, Goldie, to Swift Current where he worked for a while at the Healy Hotel before moving to Moose Jaw where he became a bit of an institution.

Bud was always interested in politics and ran for election in 1975 and 1978 before being elected in 1982 as the Progressive Conservative member for Moose Jaw South. Apart from his government and caucus responsibilities which included deputy government whip, Bud did an impressive job for his constituents. Bud was always a strong advocate for improvements in social services and health care and any other issue that he thought would concern his constituents.

Bud is survived by his third wife, Mary, a stepdaughter, two grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. And it's a pleasure and an honour for me to join in offering my condolences and those of my party to them.

I didn't know Bud well but I had met him on more than one occasion and I found him to be, and he impressed me as being, an honest, a sincere, genuine, and caring man.

Bud will be remembered by his former constituents as a man deeply concerned with their issues and he will be missed.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour for me to say a few brief words of acknowledgement of the contribution that Bud Smith made to this House and to the parliamentary system and to my home community of Moose Jaw, and also to express my condolences on behalf of the constituents of Moose Jaw North to his wife Mary, and his family, and his many friends.

I first got to know Bud Smith in the election of 1982. It was my first venture into the world seeking public office and I was less than totally successful on my part, but was in fact totally successful on Bud's part. And it's kind of interesting to reflect back as to how Bud got himself there because I think it was not anticipated that in that election that when it was over that the member of the Legislative Assembly for Moose Jaw South was going to be one Bud Smith.

Bud got himself there because he was a proud and loyal Conservative. And I think it's fair to say he continued with exactly that view of what is best for his world till the day he died.

Bud Smith was a workhorse and he was I think what some thought was perhaps the perennial candidate in a difficult seat to win. And it was a surprise to many that when Bud became the MLA for Moose Jaw South in 1982, if it was a surprise to Bud — and I don't know that it was — you'd sure never know it because the next day he was hard at work.

And it's been referred to by others in the debate on this motion that he was a constituency man. And I would say that that would probably be the most accurate single phrase that would describe Bud and that Bud would say about himself with a great deal of pride. I have absolutely no doubt that the day after the election that in spite of his strong loyalties to the Conservative

Party, that Bud saw all of his constituents as his constituents, without bias, and he went about serving them all well.

He enjoyed . . . I came to learn as I came to the House in later years and would talk to young people who had met Bud while coming to this building to visit, that he took a particular joy in meeting with young people and helping them to understand what goes on here, and always took great interest in their questions and their comments.

It was Bud's way to make other's concerns his concerns; other's questions were his questions; other's needs were his needs. And I think the greatest tribute that I can pay to Bud Smith, hon. member, and I underline the word honourable, hon. member for Moose Jaw South, was that he was one who, quite frankly, gave politicians a good name.

He gave politicians a good name because he was, as has been said, he was a man who was honest, he was sincere, he was hardworking, and he made his constituents' objectives his objectives through his term that he served in this House.

And it is I think out of respect for Bud's particular approach to a service, and his respect for the parliamentary institution, Mr. Speaker, that I would say that we would all be served well if we all served our own constituents with the same kind of commitment and conviction of Bud Smith. The Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan could . . . would never suffer by having too many Bud Smiths, and I simply want to acknowledge his contribution in his time of office to the institution of parliamentary democracy, and also to extend my personal sympathies to Bud's family and friends.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the sitting member for the Moose Jaw constituency that was formerly known as Moose Jaw South, and the constituency that was represented by Mr. Bud Smith from 1982 to 1986, it's an honour to rise in support of the motion of condolence at Mr. Smith's passing.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't have the opportunity to know Bud Smith personally during his political career, but I did have an opportunity a number of times in the community to meet Bud and his wife, Mary, once he was back in private life.

Mr. Smith always struck me as a very kind, honest, very genuine person, and I'm told he was a very talented carpenter. And I know that for a fact because I know a number of people that he did some very wonderful work for. But I'm told by others who knew Mr. Smith better than I, during his political life that he served the constituency of Moose Jaw well and the citizens that lived there.

So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the constituency of Moose Jaw Wakamow, I extend the condolences to Mary and to the Smith family.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to add a few words of condolence as well to . . . in the memory of Bud Smith.

Mr. Speaker, I was one of the few members who had the privilege of getting to meet Mr. Smith. When I was first

nominated as a candidate back in 1985, Mr. Smith at that time was a member of the Conservative caucus.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, if you were to talk to Bud at that time, he would have told you, as he indicated to me, that winning the 1982 election was certainly a very special occasion and it was a momentous occasion I guess for the Conservative Party at that time. But it was also a little disconcerting.

He said when you elect 56 members to the Legislative Assembly, it just makes the job of being a member of such a large caucus just that much more awkward to work with, and you get all kinds of individuals. And I can attribute to the fact that there were different personalities in that caucus of the day and I'm certain that the NDP caucus in 1991 probably felt the same way.

But the one thing I did appreciate about Mr. Smith while I was just a candidate — didn't actually sit with and serve as a member of the Assembly when Mr. Smith was a member — was the fact that Bud was an individual who made everyone feel welcome. And I appreciated the sincerity with which he represented his constituents and the way he spoke up in caucus.

He was an individual who didn't, many times didn't say a lot, but when he stood up, you listened because he had something that was worthwhile saying. And he spoke to you as a friend. And as I indicated, when I first met him he came up and made me feel welcome in a very large caucus when there were a lot of different groups within that caucus but he made you feel welcome as a newcomer on the block, just as a candidate at the time.

And then, Mr. Speaker, after his defeat and just going back to private life, whenever we were around Moose Jaw for dinner or whatever, as has been indicated, Mr. Smith's interest in politics never waned. He was always there. And there again he would come over and he'd say, oh it's good to see you and how are things going and what's new and exciting in Regina these days — I'm just too busy to really have spent the time or to go down to see how things are.

Bud was a down-to-earth individual who made you feel welcome, spoke well and highly of everyone he worked with, and certainly represented his constituents well. And I express my condolences to his family at this time, to Mary, and we certainly pray that you will just find comfort in knowing that there are people who still remember your husband for all his hard work and dedication.

(15:45)

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, just a very, very few words about my neighbour and friend, Bud Smith. I will not need to repeat what many other members have observed in the House this afternoon about Bud's honesty, his ability to serve his constituents when elected, his genuine human decency.

But I want to share with members of the House this afternoon how interesting political life is. When I first sought elected office in 1986 to this Chamber, I found myself running against my good friend and neighbour, Bud Smith. We may vary in . . . this often will be the case, and I expect to the day Bud died we

will have varied in our political persuasions — but when it came to friendship and neighbourliness, we counted each other friend and neighbour; even more so, even more so, colleagues.

Bud was a very good, close friend of my mother's. In fact in that 1986 election campaign, I will never know, Mr. Speaker, to this day who my mother voted for — her friend Bud or for me. And if she's watching, I'll be wondering that tonight.

Bud was truly a neighbour and a friend to many of us in Moose Jaw — a man who was deep in his political conviction, but always civil, and always decent, and always a straight shooter. And there are many of us, including my own family, including neighbours on Iroquois Street, former . . . including neighbours across Moose Jaw who are going to miss Bud Smith.

And so the condolences of this House go to Bud's wider family but very, very particularly to Mary, his wife.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Leave to introduce a motion, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Cannington:

That the resolutions just passed, together with the transcript of oral tributes to the memory of the deceased, be communicated to the bereaved families on behalf of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I ask leave of the Assembly to move a resolution in regards to the final report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission.

Leave granted.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Electoral Boundaries Commission

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member for Yorkton:

That the final report with addenda of the Electoral Boundaries Commission, being sessional paper 422 of the third session of the twenty-fourth legislature laid before this Assembly by the Speaker, be approved and adopted.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the process that this commission went through in establishing the new boundaries, the reasons why it took place, and the results, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, once every 10 years we hold a census in this country that takes in all of the population of Canada, including all of the population of Saskatchewan. And under the legislation that we have in this province, once that census is done, then a

review of the boundaries for the political entity of the province, for the members who will represent the people of Saskatchewan in this Assembly, those boundaries are reviewed based on the criteria that is outlined in the legislation: basically, Mr. Speaker, that there be 58 ridings in the province of Saskatchewan; that all the ridings, other than the two northern ridings, will have approximately the same number of people in each riding; and that there be a variance of no greater than 5 per cent plus or minus.

That was the decision, Mr. Speaker, that was made in 1995, I believe it was, in the passage of the electoral boundaries Act.

Now I personally, Mr. Speaker, have a slight disagreement with part of that legislation, that dealing with the numbers that say that each riding shall have the same number of people, plus or minus. I think we would be better served, Mr. Speaker, if it said same number of voters plus or minus because then it gives an equal weight to each of the votes no matter where they are in the province excluding, Mr. Speaker, the two northern ridings.

And in fact, if you look at the two northern ridings, the one in particular, Mr. Speaker, really doesn't have that much of a difference in population numbers to the rest of the province. They have risen almost to the point where the one riding — and I believe it's the one on the east side, Athabasca, I could be wrong on that, Mr. Speaker — that is almost to the point of being equal to the rest of the province. The other riding is not quite as heavily populated, Mr. Speaker, but does still contain a huge area of the province. The two northern ridings represent virtually 50 per cent of the geographic area of Saskatchewan.

That's a small complaint though, Mr. Speaker, that I have, that I expressed back in 1995 and have continued to express whenever the opportunity has arisen. The entire process though of the decision how to proceed with a Boundaries Commission, I think, took a turn to the better in this commission, Mr. Speaker, in that the Premier and Lieutenant Governor in Council have the ability to appoint representatives to the boundary commission.

This time, the Premier made an invitation to the official opposition and to the people of Saskatchewan that two of the representatives on that commission would be: (a) a representative of the governing party's choice; and (b) a representative on that commission would be someone chosen by the official opposition, Mr. Speaker, with a third person, the chairman, being independent of politics.

And I think that was a very courageous move by the Premier, a very welcome move by the Premier, Mr. Speaker, because selection of boundaries can be very partisan. And that choice allowed, Mr. Speaker, I believe, a boundary selection that was not just about capital P politics.

The selection of an independent chairman, Judge Gunn, Mr. Speaker, and Judge Gunn's decision that the recommendations coming out of the boundary commission should be unanimous, I think goes a long ways to depoliticizing the boundaries selection.

Well, Mr. Speaker, whenever you draw lines on the map you're obviously going to have people concerned that they have shifted

from one side of the line to the other side of the line and you have . . . whenever you draw boundaries, Mr. Speaker, you will intersect communities of interest, and that's unfortunate but it's unavoidable.

The boundary commission, Mr. Speaker, drew its lines as best it thought would represent the people of Saskatchewan, meeting that criteria of having equal number of people in each of the ridings, and in trying I believe to represent communities of interest. But one of the things that you have to recognize in this province is that community of interest don't run on straight lines. There are natural geographic boundaries that represent those communities of interest such as a line of hills or a river.

The one set of lines though that doesn't follow geographic lines that most people across Saskatchewan, especially those in rural Saskatchewan, recognize are municipal boundaries. And a boundary commission needs to take into account, Mr. Speaker, those kind of lines that people are used to dealing with, such as municipal boundaries. In a lot of cases, Mr. Speaker, the commission tried to do that. It wasn't always possible.

So after the presentation, Mr. Speaker, of the initial report from the boundary commission, the boundary commission asked that anyone interested — and obviously members of this Assembly are people who would be very interested — as well as the political parties, Mr. Speaker, both as a provincial entity and within the local constituencies, as well as communities at large and individuals, Mr. Speaker, who were paying attention to this, made presentations before the Boundaries Commission.

Some of those presentations, those requests for changes to the boundaries, Mr. Speaker, were accommodated by the boundary commission; others were not. And I'm sure the Boundaries Commission had good reasons for both of their decisions on both sides — where the changes requested were successful and where the changes that were requested were unsuccessful.

Because it's not . . . you're not in an envious position when you're sitting on a commission like this, Mr. Speaker, where you have to make the decisions because of the restrictions on the numbers that you have to divide a municipality, that you have to divide a community, Mr. Speaker, because you can't accommodate the entire community of interest within one constituency. It becomes a difficult exercise, Mr. Speaker. It's not an easy process.

Mr. Speaker, there were a number of constituencies that were successful. Some of the ones that I can think of, Mr. Speaker, were Thunder Creek, Cannington, Estevan, Swift Current, Cypress Hills, Arm River, and I'm told some of the Saskatoon ridings had representations from the, either the government MLAs or from their party at least to make changes. Those changes the commission allowed to take place.

I know in my own case, Mr. Speaker, we requested a change that a community that had been in the Cannington constituency for as long as I can remember, Mr. Speaker, be allowed to remain in. But that meant adjusting it someplace else to balance. And because the change was taking place with another constituency, only one other constituency, the Constituency Boundaries Commission allowed that change to take place.

A community that had been in the Estevan constituency remained in the Estevan constituency, and a community that had been in the Cannington constituency remained in the Cannington constituency. And I'm hoping, Mr. Speaker, that both communities are happy with that. I certainly know that the Alameda community was happy to remain in Cannington.

Some of the constituencies though that made representations were unsuccessful, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure that those communities were disappointed with the outcome. The presenters who sought those changes were disappointed with the outcome, Mr. Speaker, but as I said earlier whenever you draw lines it's difficult to make everyone happy.

It's always a challenge and, for those of us who like challenges, a welcome challenge when you have an opportunity to meet new people, to go into new communities and learn their interests, their desires, and their visions for the province. It's also sad, Mr. Speaker, when you lose an area, a community, from your constituency because you lose friends that you've developed there. You lose contacts. And, Mr. Speaker, as well, you lose political supporters.

And so while we look forward to the challenge of the new areas that we may have gained in our constituencies, it also saddens us to lose those areas that we've had an opportunity to represent in the past.

Mr. Speaker, while the boundaries change, I believe the changes that were brought forward by this commission work well across the board.

Our party, Mr. Speaker, has stated that we believe that the process was fair, that the decisions made by the boundary commissioners were appropriate, and that we accept the boundary changes that were brought forward, even though we're sad to lose those people out of our areas.

It becomes though at times more difficult to get around the constituencies as they become larger and larger. But, Mr. Speaker, that's a fact of life when we have a population that is shifting from one area to another or a population that is leaving the province, Mr. Speaker.

Perhaps sometime, hopefully soon, we'll be able to turn that around and have people coming back into rural Saskatchewan. And at that point in time our constituencies can start to get smaller again so that we don't have to spend three hours driving from corner to corner, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to that time.

And I look forward to representing the people of the Cannington constituency, the new Cannington constituency, after the next election, if the good people of Cannington again so desire, Mr. Speaker. And I'm proud to have represented the past Cannington constituency. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to take part in the comments on this motion. But unlike my colleague from Cannington, I will be speaking opposed to this motion because of the various things that have happened.

Mr. Speaker, there's no question that change has taken place in Saskatchewan. And there are people who continually ask the question, why are we undergoing a change at this time? Why are we redrawing the constituencies?

And I point out to them, as my colleague has done, that this is contained in the boundaries Act, in The Constituency Boundaries Act that was passed in this Legislative Assembly in 1993. And as my colleague has explained, it does not include the two northern constituencies of Athabasca and Cumberland who are excluded. And it's referred to as south and north.

When we talk about the southern constituencies, Mr. Speaker, we . . . the boundary commission is bound by the fact that it takes the numbers from the census data and it divides that number by 56 to obtain a quotient. And for the people of the province to better understand this, I want to explain to them that this quotient comes to 16,909. And as my colleague has said, that is the total number of people; it is not voters.

That commission can also change that number by plus or minus 5 per cent. So when we look at the area of east-central Saskatchewan — the area that I represent, Canora-Pelly — the area of Canora, Pelly, Kelvington, Wadena, Saltcoats, Melville, Last Mountain-Touchwood, Indian Head, that area of the province has lost about 16,000 people from the last census data. So there's no question that there was a need to redraw the boundaries. And if you look at that number of over 16,000 people, it's understandable then that one constituency would be eliminated from that area of the province.

When we took a look at the data from the communities of Warman and Martensville and Rosthern and that area of the north part of Saskatoon, it was quick to see that that area had gained over 16,000 people. So there was an understanding that, indeed, the constituency would be transferred when we recognized that 56 constituencies would remain in southern Saskatchewan.

But, Mr. Speaker, when the interim report came out and it was published in the paper, in the daily papers in the province, one thing that jumped out very clearly and very shockingly to the people of Canora-Pelly was that the constituencies of Melfort, Kelvington, Wadena, and Canora-Pelly were now becoming thin narrow constituencies. They were not the normally square or normally rectangular horizontal constituency that predominates Saskatchewan. And if you take a look at most of the constituencies, you're right, Mr. Speaker, not vertical but horizontal.

So when people looked at this they said what are they doing, why are they drawing up a constituency that does not represent transportation patterns of our railways and our highways? And, Mr. Speaker, in my area, I'm sure many people have travelled. They know that Highway 16 runs east-west; Highway 5, which is almost parallel to it, runs the same way; Highway 49 runs the same direction. There are railways that run the same way.

There are health districts that have been set up. And I'll make reference to the community of Foam Lake who belonged to the East Central Health Region for decades and decades and now belongs to the Sunrise Region. They are now no longer going to be part of the Canora-Pelly constituency.

It does not take into account school division patterns as we see happening in this area as well that run east-west; does not recognize commercial trading patterns.

But most importantly, Mr. Speaker, when you take a look at the map of Saskatchewan and you look at a map of east central Saskatchewan and you see this green block in the middle of this constituency and people say well, what does the green area represent, Mr. Speaker, that's the Porcupine Forest. And what this constituency drawing has done, the map that has been created, has created a situation where the entire Porcupine Forest will divide the Canora-Pelly constituency into two blocks — residential area north of the forest and residential area south of the forest.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if the goal was to encourage voter participation and involvement in a constituency, how does placing all of those people on the north side of the forest into the same constituency do that?

Now the commission also recognized that there was a problem with the current boundaries in Native reserves. And no question, Mr. Speaker, we pointed that out to them by saying that the reserve of Keeseekoose had the current boundary drawn right through it, right through the middle.

Well that's not, that's not going to contribute to actively involve. So the commission recognized this. And as a result of its final report, it has put the three reserves of Key, Cote, and Keeseekoose all in the same constituency — a very positive move. And we did indicate that to the commission.

So, Mr. Speaker, when the information was published in the paper, the notice of hearings was talked about. And I want to read this into the record, Mr. Speaker, because it quotes a section of the Act. It's section 20 of the Act that I just referred to. It says, in performing its duties pursuant to this Act, the commission shall sit at those times and places the commission considers necessary to obtain adequate input respecting the areas of Saskatchewan to be included in proposed constituencies and the boundaries of those constituencies.

So very clearly, Mr. Speaker, an interim report is developed, and that is what it is. It's an interim report; it's ideas that have been put forward by the commission based on whomever they have asked for technical assistance. That commission then publishes that interim report and travels throughout the province to, I'm assuming, get an understanding from the people of the area as to whether or not they have done the right thing.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I travelled throughout the area of Kelvington-Wadena, Canora-Pelly, Yorkton, Melville, I heard very clearly that the reaction to the report was not positive; that indeed it had, it had missed the mark, if I can use that term.

And there was suggestions from people to see, why don't you look at an alternate map; why don't you propose to the commission something that will make it more workable for the areas affected? And the areas affected that I'm referring to, Mr. Speaker, are the current Melfort-Tisdale, Carrot River Valley, Kelvington-Wadena, and the Canora-Pelly.

So we . . . a proposal was put together, and it was accompanied by letters of recommendation from village councils and town councils. It was endorsed by members of school board and health boards who said that we must look at a situation that addresses what I just spoke about, as trying to create a constituency that was more geographically contiguous rather than long, narrow, and vertical in nature.

So this proposal was put forward, Mr. Speaker, at the September 19 hearing, the very final hearing in Yorkton, at which time we proposed a . . . maps of the area that would not have a domino effect. They would not involve any other parts of the province because we recognize that once you adjust one constituency, it has great effect on all other constituencies.

And that proposal was put forward with those endorsements from . . . even, if I can say so, a motion that was passed by the village council of the village of Invermay who said that it is more important to them to belong to areas that they are served by in the area of health, in the area of education, and transportation.

But the other thing, Mr. Speaker, that was also interesting is that at the very same hearing a proposal was put forward by the executive of the New Democratic Party of the Canora-Pelly Association. And that proposal was very much similar to the one that was proposed by myself. It stated that the area north of the forest was just not . . . it wasn't right to have that area having to join with a much larger populated area to the south, and it basically recommended the same thing — that that area be allowed to stay with Hudson Bay and that area of Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Speaker, you have to remember that a village of Clemenceau, if I can use that example, if you look at the final report, the village of Clemenceau and the area between Clemenceau and Hudson Bay to a distance of about 10 miles south of Hudson Bay, is now part of the Canora-Pelly constituency. That is they are not going to be travelling to Preeceville or to Canora for shopping, Mr. Speaker; their community is Hudson Bay. Yet politically, through this process of representation, they are now going to be served by an MLA that is representing a different area. So the New Democratic Party executive proposed something very similar.

In our discussions with the members, Mr. Speaker, the three commission members, I was surprised by the comment of one of the members who said, your proposal that you're putting forth today really upsets the apple cart in terms of the changes that you're recommending. And I asked him, what do you mean? And he said, well your proposal suggests that over 6,000 people — if I remember his answer correctly, and it is contained in their records — are being affected.

And I said, well no it doesn't, because as of September 19, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier of this province would have decided to call an election, the boundaries that we would have been using would be the current existing boundaries that we have. In other words, nothing had been changed. Until this Legislative Assembly deals with the motion that is before you, nothing has changed.

So I took a look at his numbers, and I said, why are you

suggesting that our report is now making changes to the interim report? What we're doing is looking at what existed and saying, can it be made better? And I've already indicated that the placement of the three reserves in the same constituency, drawing the fact that you have to deal with the loss of population, those were the positive things.

But, Mr. Speaker, in the area of those four constituencies that I've just mentioned, the commission's proposal which we see in the final report means that 68 per cent of the people will be . . . that are going to be left in those constituencies were in their previous commission . . . in their previous constituency.

In other words, 32 per cent are being moved. That is a huge number, Mr. Speaker. And I know that the Chief Electoral Officer has indicated that she's concerned about the fact that less voters have turned out to vote in general elections in the province of Saskatchewan. And I'm sure you're concerned, and so am I, Mr. Speaker, that this is not good, that we need to have more involvement by people. So the commission is recommending that in those four constituencies, 32 per cent are being moved to a different area.

The proposal that we put forward, Mr. Speaker, said that 85 per cent would remain the same — 85 per cent would remain the same to the commission's proposal of 68. So we weren't drawing up something that was outrageous, that was different and hard to understand. It was trying to get a consensus on the trading patterns, trying to get a consensus on where people did their commercial shopping, where their transportations — both railway and highway structures — ran.

(16:15)

And, Mr. Speaker, that proposal was also supported across party lines, because a very similar proposal was put forward by the New Democratic Party. Yet it seems that the only opposition to that proposal was that it was affecting the interim report. And I find that very hard to understand, Mr. Speaker, when the purpose of the hearings was to find out what was . . . what the people thought, what kind of alternate suggestions could be made to that proposal so that when we looked at what we had — which is our current position today — to what we're going to have in this final report, what would be best served for the people of that area. And I don't think, Mr. Speaker, that the final report that has been produced by the commission took those things into account whatsoever.

And I think that the people of Canora-Pelly are going to be upset and be surprised to understand that a commission that did not consult with the people of Saskatchewan beforehand . . . And I talked to village councils, I talked to school boards and asked them whether they had been sent a survey by the commission before the actual interim report was released on July 30. Not one person said they had been contacted, and it produced an interim report that asked for input and yet not one bit on that information was taken into account, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm talking about, I believe, a flawed process. Not the fact that the commission didn't do its work but the fact that there was a situation that allowed the commission to take a good look at the information, to take a good look at what would be best for the people of Saskatchewan and we put forward that proposal. It

was not met with any opposition by the commission members, in fact, there was comments by Madam Justice Gunn that the information that was provided was something that would be taken into consideration.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will not support the motion because I think the process that is in place in the Act is flawed. It needs to have a situation where before the actual preparing of an interim report there needs to be a public consultation process to ensure that the technical people that are involved with the commission understand what is required — they understand that there's a geographical barrier called the Porcupine Forest, that they understand that the areas of transportation and the area of commercial trading patterns need to be taken into account.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those comments I would be indicating that I will not be supporting the resolution.

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want just to speak briefly to the referral motion and to the legislation, The Representation Act, as it relates to the receiving of the final report on the Boundaries Commission. And I want to go back, if I can, just through a bit of history.

This Assembly on June 22 of 1993 adopted legislation that would ensure a number of things. First of all, that would ensure fairness as it related to the decision making of drafting of the electoral boundaries. And what it called for was an independent commission, an independent commission that would allow for the appointment of a member of that commission by members of the opposition which this three-party commission ended up being. One was appointed by the government and of course a member of the judicial system to ensure fairness — to ensure that in fact the commission would draw impartial boundaries.

There was a process that was put in place as it related to consultation. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, it may be that some members of the House are not satisfied but have had ample opportunity to make presentations to this commission as it relates to the new boundaries Act.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I note with interest that there were two members of the present opposition who were part of that debate in 1993. And so I'm assuming that they will be willing to support what I think is a fair and a reasoned process in terms of determining our electoral boundaries.

Mr. Speaker, I think we understood and everybody understood the changing nature of our demographics across this country. People are moving to urban centres. Rural communities are depopulating, not only in our province, but around this country. I think it's evidenced by the fact that there are 35,000 fewer primary people . . . fewer people working in the primary sector of agriculture which means fewer people living in some of those smaller communities. So it would stand to reason that the populations will shift.

And that's the reason that this Bill was enacted with a plus or minus 5 per cent, so that it would ensure that fairness in terms of the principle of one person, one vote which is what this legislation and what these recommendations put to this House will in fact do.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say that people of Saskatchewan want fair representation. I think there's been ample opportunity for public input as it related to the process that we did in putting those boundaries in place.

I think they want the concept of one person, one vote kept whole, which in fact the recommendation by the Boundaries Commission does as well. And I think they are expecting of the representation that they send to this legislature, Mr. Speaker, to recognize that they agreed and they support the principles under which this Boundaries Commission, the Act to provide the division of Saskatchewan into the constituencies, was put in place to do.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that all members of the Assembly have had time and ample opportunity to share their constituents' views not only with the commission but to share their constituents' views with other members of the legislature. And I know there's been a lot of discussion as it related to that. I myself was part of that discussion.

As you will know, there are some minor changes in the area that I represent and I was able to discuss these changes with my people of my political persuasion, people in my political organization. We were able to have a look at whether or not we felt they fairly represented the people of Prince Albert Northcote. I was able to hear through my constituency office from people throughout my constituency.

And in my travels around this province I was able to hear, in no uncertain terms, that people wanted the principles of the Bill enacted. They felt it was the appropriate time to make the amendments, to make changes, and I hope and I believe that that's what will be approved and accepted in this legislature.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it does reflect a changing economy and the boundaries will reflect that. It will reflect the fact that there are more people working in the professional services. I think it will reflect the fact that there are more people that are working in the forest industry. It will reflect the fact that primary agriculture has changed and that the secondary manufacturing as it relates to agriculture is growing. I think it will reflect the fact that our value-added as it relates to agriculture is a new part of our growing industry, and that there have been 25,000 jobs created outside of the primary side of agriculture in just the last short while.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, it's fair to say that people recognize that the job that you may have in 1995 may not be the job that you have in 2002 and that a different source of income, different job opportunities will take you to different places. But what needs to be maintained and needs to be ensured is the principle of one person, one vote, and there needs to be a process where a vote in urban Saskatchewan doesn't count more or doesn't count less than a vote in rural Saskatchewan, and that a vote in rural Saskatchewan is as important as a vote in northern Saskatchewan is, Mr. Speaker.

And so that's why I can say that I supported this legislation on June 22 of 1993, which was almost 10 years ago now.

And I can say that I supported it because it very much supported the principles of democracy. And I want to say that

there was no recorded division. And I want to say that my caucus supported it and the cabinet of that day supported it because it was fair. It protected democracy. It protected this legislature from unfair boundaries drawing, which has been, as we well know, there is some history of that over this country and over the British parliamentary system.

And the days of gerrymander, I think people of Saskatchewan felt, were well beyond us and that we wanted fairness and we needed elections fought on fair boundaries.

People want to, Mr. Speaker, fight elections, not on a boundary system where your vote counts more than someone else's or someone else's more than yours. They want to debate issues and they want the debate. And they want politicians, I believe, to debate issues not based on, is my riding more secure than yours.

I think what they want are economic development plans put forward by political parties. And as we go into elections, we'll debate those issues. They will surely fight elections on government records, which is a reasonable thing. They will surely fight elections based on what opposition's alternatives are. These are what elections need to be fought on. And I want to say that members of this House are very much here to protect the principles of democracy, which is what this legislation does.

Now I want to recognize that no one likes change. I think that's fair to say. Change is always difficult and it's an imposition on the political associations who work on behalf of candidates to manage the political affairs of an election. I think it's an imposition on people when they go to the polls, not knowing perhaps where they need to be in terms of exercising their franchise.

But, Mr. Speaker, what I believe we have here is a process that all members of this legislature agreed to in 1993; to create an impartial boundary, to bring forth an impartial recommendation to this Chamber that protects democracy and that protects fairness and gives all Saskatchewan people an equal say in this Chamber.

I think that no one can argue that the commission did a fine job. I think they did when I look at how the changes were made, for the most part. There's a little swing in terms of the percentage of vote from previous elections. That's one of the things that I noted.

And the boundaries, although some changes were made that will be intrusive, and some communities, as the member from Cannington said, will not be aligned with others that they wish they could be, but overall what we have is a system that brought forth fair boundaries, boundaries that we, members of this legislature, could be and should be supporting.

So I, Mr. Speaker, support the resolution to adopt the final report on the Boundaries Commission.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with my colleague from Canora-Pelly today to express my frustration about the process surrounding the changes to the constituency boundaries.

I want to . . . my colleague from Prince Albert Northcote seemed to suggest that we were not in favour of the changes because it had something to do with representation, and I want to assure him that of course we want to make sure that everyone in this province has equal opportunity to vote. We understand that the process happened because of the census, and there has been a movement of people within the province, so to ensure equal representation, this process had to take place.

Representing people in Kelvington-Wadena has been a great honour for me in the past seven years, and this isn't something that I'm objecting to, the actual changing . . . The people within the constituency isn't a problem.

But as the member from Canora-Pelly so ably stated, there should be an opportunity for some say by the citizens of this great province on where the boundaries should be. The draft proposal for this, for the boundaries, was circulated around the Kelvington-Wadena constituency and people actually shook their heads. They saw that there were three constituencies — Kelvington-Wadena, Canora-Pelly, and Melfort — whose boundaries actually ran north and south. They didn't . . . they did not take into consideration the trading patterns, the professional areas, or the areas of interest. They didn't even take into consideration the fact that they were going to run through, right through the middle, or through the edge of Kinistin Reserve.

The rest of the provincial constituencies are based on east-west trading patterns, as is the transportation patterns. Many of the towns and villages and RMs (rural municipality) in the Kelvington-Wadena constituency and neighbouring constituencies wrote letters of support for a proposal that was put forward by a number of caucus members in both, and members from the NDP Party as well, that offered another proposal.

And people ask me if they thought there would be an opportunity to actually change the people's . . . the boundary commission's mind. And I actually believed it would. I believed that their arguments made sense about trading patterns. I believe their arguments made sense about impacting fewer voters than the proposal that was put forward by the boundary commission would. I believe that because there was a smaller variance in population, that we were actually closer to the quotient than the proposal put forward by the boundary commission, made sense, and actually . . . and that we would be more geographically contiguous.

(16:30)

I guess making sense isn't something that seemed to have happened now with the boundary commission because the interim report really reflects very little change from what was originally suggested. There seemed to be no desire to deviate from the interim report even if it went against the wishes of many of the constituents.

I know that my members on this side of the House will be delighted to represent any of the constituents in this province. Our objections are not with the people in the province. Our objection is with the process that seems to stem around the inflexibility of the commission to look at some of the proposals

that were put forward by the people.

I would like to suggest that the next time boundaries are drawn up that we leave room for public input. It's something that I believe has not happened this time.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting this resolution.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to make a few comments on this issue and will indicate that I am supporting this resolution. I think a lot of work, very good work, has gone into producing the report and I think the members opposite are right in pointing out that there were some real challenges in trying to define what the boundaries might be.

But at the core of all of this was the principle of making sure that our democracy is as effective as it can possibly be; that every person eligible to vote, that their vote counts as much as every other person's. So that was one of the very core principles that was being used in designating what these boundary lines would be.

I think as well in setting up the commission, having Justice Ellen Gunn as the Chair of the commission and for the opening to be there for the Sask Party to put a name forward for a representative on that committee and to have a very good balanced committee with a representative who was put forward by the government as well, clearly we were trying to strike a good, broad balance to get an understanding of what both parties, what all of the key players were needing in this kind of a commission.

I believe that the work that they did in there, basing the analysis on the census, is probably the best that could be done in terms of making sure that every person got an equal vote. And I think that when we look at some of the divisions on the boundaries, as I mentioned earlier, the members opposite, some of them have pointed out, that maybe it didn't follow the natural movement of the communities — we've seen that as well in some of the divisions in the city where a natural community might have been divided.

But all of that happened just simply to make sure that our democracy gave the best representation possible; that each person's vote would count.

Now I look at my own constituency, the constituency of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley. There will be some changes there and some of those changes I have some difficulty with. Mostly it's because of the years of relationship that have been built up with people along No. 6 Highway, people who run businesses there and who farm along that area who I've come to know during the years. Some of those people will be outside of the constituency. And I'll miss that relationship and the challenge and support that some of those people have given.

I will also miss the . . . being able to represent the people of the community of Lumsden. The people out there have been a very, very interesting and supportive group of people. I've enjoyed building the relationship. But in terms of making sure that the rural constituencies are not overly large, there needed to be communities involved in some of those constituencies. Lumsden, being a larger community in the area, was added to

one of the other constituencies.

So ultimately, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the work that was done was done with the proper view in mind — to make sure that everyone's vote counted the same in this province, to try and do that as accurately as possible, to look at the directions of growth in the cities. For example, in the northwest corner of the city we have significant expansion so there will be many new voters in the constituency, and we had to build so that those voters would not distort the view in the next years ahead of us.

So I believe overall that a very good job was done by the commission. It was balanced by the fact that there were representatives of government and opposition on the commission, and that the Chair, Justice Ellen Gunn, did a tremendous job as Chair in trying to help make that balance work well.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to indicate that I will be supporting this motion and believe that we will have good boundaries and a very successful election process in the next provincial election.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hillson: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in support of the motion before this House, and I do have just one suggestion as to how I believe in the future the process could be strengthened. But as many speakers have already alluded to, this is an independent, non-political redrawing of the constituency boundaries and it is the process that we have to endorse and accept.

May I say that on behalf of the Battlefords — and I realize obviously there are 58 ridings in the province, we're only one — but may I say on behalf of the Battlefords, I know that the move to join North Battleford and Battleford again together as one constituency has the full support of the people of my community. And I'm sure of that because of when the commission came through the Battlefords, they actually cancelled the meeting that was to be held in the Battlefords because they had received no indication at all of any opposition to the move to rejoin us and nor have I heard a single, solitary person express opposition to that.

In fact, the opposition we had in the Battlefords was 10 years ago when the decision was made to split our two communities. And that was very unpopular at that time and so we are pleased that that has been reversed.

Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, the Battlefords will now be the largest constituency in the province in terms of population, so I will have more constituents than any other member of this House. However that is fine by me that I may have to serve more constituents than some of the other members, but fortunately that won't be difficult for me.

May I also say that it is the view of our community that a by-election for Battleford-Cut Knife is not a good thing. In view of the fact the vote today will wipe out that constituency, it seems a waste of money to have a by-election to elect somebody for a few months to represent a seat that already no

longer exists.

It would seem to make far more sense, instead of having a by-election, to have a general election. And then the Battlefords, as the people and the other communities of our province, can rule and give their approval or otherwise of a Premier who has now sat for two years with no mandate from the people of Saskatchewan.

So we believe that there should not be a by-election, there should be a general election. And the Battlefords certainly supports that again we will have one representative in this House for both the city of North Battleford and the town of Battleford.

I do have one suggestion though for how I believe the process is flawed, and I realize that my remarks apply as much or more to the federal redistribution that is also going on concurrently with our own. And it is simply this, Mr. Speaker — missing from both the provincial and federal legislation is any consideration of historic boundaries. In my view boundaries should be left intact and only changed insomuch as population shifts demand. The whole purpose of redistribution was supposed to have been that in the first place. The purpose of redistribution was to take account of shifting populations, it was not to totally reinvent the map of our constituencies every 10 years.

Federally they have not only totally redrawn the map — they have not only totally redrawn the map — but they have changed the name of every constituency and in some cases, including the constituency the Battlefords will now be in, the names adopted are meaningless in terms of identifying where that seat is.

Now the hon. member for Canora-Pelly made reference to declining voting rates. And that is true not only in Saskatchewan but throughout the western world. Now it may be a small piece of the puzzle but I believe that we encourage voter turnout when people get to know the community, the constituency they're in, the people they are expected to work with, the people who the member serves; if there is some ongoing, continuing contact there as opposed to continually redrawing the map totally so that people involved in the political process, the party organizations, the members, are continually changing and they never have a chance to get comfortable with one another and to work with one another.

So I believe that both federally and provincially the legislation should be amended so that when we set an independent commission, one of the considerations for that independent commission is the existing and historical boundaries and names of the constituencies, and then they should only be redrawn to the extent that population shift demands. There should not, in other words, be change simply for the sake of change in both the boundaries and the names.

With that suggestion though I think that the independent Boundaries Commission report we have here, it would be irresponsible now to refuse it. It must be accepted and endorsed.

By being endorsed we then can begin the work as members and as party organizations to have candidates and organizations in place for a provincial election, hopefully in the very near future, hopefully before we waste money on a by-election, and other

by-elections as people over there bail. Instead of having by-elections as members opposite bail, we will have a general election so that all of the people of Saskatchewan on the new boundaries can elect a new MLA who speaks for and has their confidence.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will be voting in favour of this report.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of the constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy about their concerns about the decisions made by the boundary commission with regard to the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy.

And my concern is twofold, Mr. Speaker: firstly, the disregard for natural trading patterns; and secondly, the disregard for constituencies following RM lines.

Mr. Speaker, in the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy, there will be nine RMs that are directly affected by the natural trading patterns that have been changed because of the boundary changes to the constituency. Some of these changes affect RMs that are taken out of the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency and even more affect those that will now be put into the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Mr. Speaker, for those that will now be part of the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency with the boundary changes, there are three distinct concerns here. Natural trading patterns for the RM of Terrell, Willow Bunch, and the west side and possibly all of the RM of Harte Butte is Moose Jaw, not Weyburn. The natural trading pattern for the RM of Elmsthorpe and Caledonia is Regina, possibly Moose Jaw, but certainly not Weyburn. And the third one is for the RM of Scott; the trading pattern would probably be 50/50 Regina and Weyburn.

And, Mr. Speaker, the natural trading patterns for two RMs that presently were in the Weyburn constituency but now will not be part of the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency are the RM of Wellington and the RM of Griffin whose natural trading pattern is Weyburn. And one that is of very grave concern is the RM of Laurier which will now no longer be part of the RM of . . . or of the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy, but which will become part of the Estevan constituency.

And, Mr. Speaker, the mayor, Darald Marin, of Radville made representation to the Boundaries Commission and as well expressed his concern on behalf of the town of Radville and the RM of Laurier because of the concern with the changing of Radville and the RM of Laurier being taken out of the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy and put in the constituency of Estevan, which certainly is not their natural trading pattern.

Mr. Speaker, the second concern which I am raising today and which is certainly a concern for constituents in my area is that the new constituency boundary lines are not drawn against RM boundary lines and in many cases they do not even follow along township lines, but are in fact drawn in the middle of a field somewhere.

(16:45)

And, Mr. Speaker, this affects eight RMs that are in, will now be in the new constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy. Mr. Speaker, five of these RMs will have three townships and a third of three townships in the RM of Weyburn, and the rest will be in other RMs or other constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, probably the one that is most alarming is that the RM of Fillmore No. 96 will be divided in four ways. The constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy will have one township and approximately half of another township. The rest of the RM will be split between constituencies of Cannington, Moosomin, and Indian Head. So four MLAs will represent one RM. I think anyone can see that this does not make any sense.

Mr. Speaker, the RM of Griffin will be divided one-third in Weyburn-Big Muddy and the other two-thirds in the RM . . . in the constituency of Cannington. Mr. Speaker, the RM of Griffin will now be represented by two MLAs.

And, Mr. Speaker, the RM of Willow Bunch No. 42 would have approximately three townships in Weyburn-Big Muddy, the rest in the constituency of Wood River, and so now be served by two MLAs.

The information regarding these eight RMs is self-explanatory. The initiative to use coterminous boundaries to deliver services such as health, education, social services within parameters already used by municipal government and provincial governments is widely supported. It makes good sense for delivery of service and enables better efficient use of time and resources. It also provides for a format for ideas, planning, and executing solutions.

Mr. Speaker, the boundaries for the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency completely negate the use of coterminous boundaries. It is moving this important issue backwards. Further the changes do not even respect the historic relationship between MLAs and RMs.

Mr. Speaker, probably though dividing the RMs does a disservice to MLAs and certainly to RM councils, but most importantly, it does a disservice to the constituents of those RMs.

Mr. Speaker, constituencies must have a population within plus or minus 5 per cent of 16,909, and that is an accepted fact. But within this criteria, if we address this criteria, I would have thought that beyond that there would have been, the boundaries would have taken into consideration trading patterns and also regard for RM lines. And that this clearly was not reflected in the decision of the Boundaries Commission, and in this way, has been a great disservice to the constituents of these areas.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy, I will not be supporting this resolution.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, certainly I would like to enter into the debate on the motion since the constituency of Last Mountain-Touchwood will be changed significantly once these new boundaries are adopted.

The constituency presently lies on a north-south axis, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and after the changes are put into effect the

constituency will run on an east-west axis. We will be losing the north half of the constituency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and gaining a large area on the east side of what now is Last Mountain-Touchwood which will take the constituency to the doorstep of the city of Melville.

I guess one of the most significant changes is that we will be losing the largest town in the constituency. Last Mountain-Touchwood is by its very nature a rural constituency, with the largest town at the moment in the constituency is the town of Wynyard which has a population of around 2,000 people. Once these changes are implemented our largest, the largest town in the constituency will be the town of Strasbourg with a population of 760.

So we will be, if you're looking for a definition of a rural constituency, I think Last Mountain-Touchwood will certainly be that definition.

It is with a bit of regret, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I view these changes to the constituency in that the part of the constituency that we are losing was responsible for my involvement in the political process, and is probably the reason why I'm here today.

It was a group, three individuals from the town of Wynyard, who drove into our yard on a sunny January day back in 1999. They had called earlier and asked if we were going to be home and if they could visit us. And Marlene and myself — my wife — we said well certainly, we always will welcome visitors in our home. And these people arrived at our home, we had coffee, and talked politics a bit. And at that point in my life I really wasn't involved in the political process in any official manner.

I certainly always kept a keen ear and eye as to what was happening at both the provincial and federal level, but that was about the extent of it, and really had no idea or no real desire to really get much more involved than that. But these three individuals, they asked if we would buy a membership, and we thought it's about time to get involved at least to that level, and purchased a membership in the Saskatchewan Party. And then from that point they asked some time . . . a few days later, whether we would organize a bit of an informational meeting. And to make a long story short, I am here today discussing this motion, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hart: — So it is with a bit of regret that I see the town of Wynyard being removed from Last Mountain-Touchwood, along with the villages of Wishart and Bankend. And those towns are in the north part of the constituency. But we are also losing some towns who have been long . . . who have . . . as long as I can remember, have been in Last Mountain-Touchwood and now they are being removed, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I certainly regret that change. Towns like Govan and Duval, Raymore and Quinton, along with two First Nations communities of Kawacatoose and Day Star. And certainly I enjoyed working with the people in those areas and will continue to serve them as long as this session continues, Mr. Speaker.

However, having said that, I certainly look forward because I

intend to continue in the political process. And I am confident that new constituency of Last Mountain-Touchwood which will now have towns like Ituna, Balcarres, Abernethy, some of the beach communities of Fort San and Katepwa, along with some First Nations communities of Little Black Bear, Star Blanket, Okanese and Peepeekisis and also the First Nations community of Standing Buffalo which seems to move in and out of Last Mountain-Touchwood, will now return back to Last Mountain-Touchwood.

And as I said, I fully intend to continue in the political process and I'm sure the people of those communities, along with the people remaining in Last Mountain-Touchwood, will see fit to have their . . . and retake or regain their traditional role of always electing a member to the government side of the House.

And I look forward to representing the Saskatchewan Party and a Saskatchewan Party government after the next election, Mr. Speaker. And so therefore I will be supporting the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into the debate on the constituency boundaries resolution.

I think the previous speakers, Mr. Speaker, have done an adequate job of explaining the process and the mechanisms that were used to get us to where we are today and the resolution that we have before us.

I have to admit that I have a certain degree of sympathy with the Opposition House Leader, Mr. Speaker. I agree with him that population should be based on number of voters and not number of people. But perhaps that is a debate best left for another day.

My observation, Mr. Speaker, is that this particular process has probably been the fairest to date. And as indicated by our House Leader, an invitation was extended to the official opposition to recommend a representative to the commission. That invitation was accepted. And I think at the end of the day we have a process that was fair and that the people of Saskatchewan can have a degree of confidence in.

Mr. Speaker, after the interim report was issued I consulted with all of the stakeholders in what would be the new constituency of Carrot River Valley and found that for the most part, people were very, very satisfied with the recommendations. The only issue seemed to be with people outside the constituency wanting to be inside the constituency, Mr. Speaker.

There seemed to be areas that thought they might be better served had they been part of Carrot River Valley. And while that all is certainly very flattering, one has to remember that Carrot River Valley is now the third largest constituency in the province. Only Cumberland and the city of North Battleford have larger populations. So it certainly would have been very difficult to have included more area and increase that population. I think it would very quickly have gotten outside of the acceptable variance.

I think the new boundaries for Carrot River Valley much better reflect traditional trading patterns and reflect a more historic constituency configuration that people are very, very comfortable with.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Justice Gunn and the other two members of the commission on a job well done and indicate that I will be supporting the resolution. Thank you.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to enter into the debate on the resolution put forward with regards to the boundary commission.

It certainly has been an interesting two years, I would say, because we've been expecting for probably a year the Boundaries Commission to be struck. For a number of months we weren't quite sure how many constituencies there were going to be. I was quite relieved when the Premier decided to leave them at 58 and just look at the population and redesign the boundaries.

I do want to give the Premier another pat on the back, I guess I would say, for making the commission as non-partisan as possible; for choosing the people that he chose on the commission. Certainly I heard over and over and over again, in the lead-up to the naming of the commission, the fact that . . . how would it be drawn up? Was it only going to be drawn up with NDP people on the commission? And I want to give him credit for not doing that.

The sentiment of the general public out there, the cynicism of the general public to this government was certainly that it was going to be an NDP-driven commission. And so I want to give him credit on this one issue that he decided to look at it as objectively as possible and name people from each party . . . not necessarily each party but more of an objective viewpoint to redraw the boundaries.

Certainly when you look at redrawing boundaries it's never easy because it entails change, and none of us at times want to see change. And after listening to a couple of the members speak before me, it's not just change, it's the way the change was made. And they have very good reasons why they are concerned in the areas that they represent, and in maybe the greater picture, the way the province was redrawn up. There is some concern with the process that was used, Mr. Speaker. And I think any time that you enter into a redistribution or changing of the boundaries, you're going to run into problems like that, Mr. Speaker.

But I do know that different places that I was at, and when we were talking about should there be 58 MLAs representing this province . . . And some people think that that's too many; some people were in favour of dropping it down from 58. They didn't know whether the province was big enough to hold . . . for 58 constituencies. And the easy answer back is maybe they're right.

It's about this time this province started to grow and match the number of representatives that we have in this province, Mr. Speaker, because for the last 10 years we've been seeing the population decline out of this province. And certainly that's

where the sentiment has come is that people start wondering, we're seeing a declining population — do we need the same amount of representation as what we've had, Mr. Speaker.

And some of the comments and the mixed messaging that's been coming from this government over the last year or so, I can certainly see why there is some real scepticism out there as to whether we're wide open — our future's wide open, or whether we're just too small for certain things. And there is a real mixed message coming from this government, Mr. Speaker.

(17:00)

And certainly the 58 constituencies need to be well represented, but what we need is a population in this province to start growing again which we haven't seen over the last number of years.

I think one of the problems, that when we start redrawing constituencies and the boundaries, is the fact that I know for myself over the last three years we've built up some real relationships with people in the various areas that will no longer be in the constituency of, let's say, Indian Head-Milestone, but I think you could put that over every constituency as the boundaries change. No one constituency was left the same and as a result there are going to be people that are going to be no longer in your constituency that you really felt were great people to work with, gave you great advice. And so that's going to be a real interesting process, once this boundary change starts and once we start reconfiguring constituency associations and that type of thing, how all of that is going to work together, Mr. Speaker.

But I guess, echoing maybe the thoughts that the member from North Battleford mentioned when he was talking about the by-election that was going to be needed in Battleford-Cut Knife, and whether it's going to be on the old boundaries . . . of course it will, the next general election, will be called on the new boundaries. And I guess what I would do is charge the Premier with the fact that as the Premier of the province, run as the Premier of the province on the new 58 constituencies as soon as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The division bells rang from 17:02 until 17:06.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 53

Calvert	Addley	Atkinson
Hagel	Lautermilch	Serby
Melenchuk	Cline	Sonntag
Osika	Lorjé	Kasperski
Goulet	Van Mulligen	Prebble
Belanger	Crofford	Axworthy
Nilson	Junor	Hamilton
Harper	Forbes	Jones
Higgins	Trew	Wartman
Thomson	Yates	McCall
Hermanson	Kwiatkowski	Heppner
Julé	Gantfoer	Bjornerud

Toth	Wakefield	Stewart
Elhard	Eagles	McMorris
D'Autremont	Wall	Huyghebaert
Dearborn	Brkich	Wiberg
Weekes	Harpauer	Hart
Allchurch	Hillson	

Nays — 3

Krawetz	Draude	Bakken
---------	--------	--------

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Speaker, I seek leave from the Assembly to move first reading of Bill No. 82, The Representation Act, 2002.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 82 — The Representation Act, 2002

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — So, Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of Bill No. 82, The Representation Act, 2002.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a first time and, by leave of the Assembly, ordered to be read a second time later this day.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 82 — The Representation Act, 2002

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Representation Act, 2002.

Members of this Assembly will be aware from the debate which has already occurred with respect to the final report of the Constituency Boundaries Commission, that this Bill constitutes the last step in the important process of providing new constituency boundaries for the people of Saskatchewan.

The Representation Act, 2002 does two things, Mr. Speaker. The Bill sets out 58 newly redrawn constituencies for the province of Saskatchewan as the replacement for those constituencies previously established by The Representation Act, 1994. And the Bill also provides that these constituencies will come into force on the day following the day on which the twenty-fourth Legislative Assembly is dissolved for the purposes of a general election.

On behalf of all members of this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, please allow me to extend our genuine thanks to the members of the Constituency Boundaries Commission for their hard work in providing us with a report upon which these constituencies are based.

The Hon. Justice Ellen Gunn, chairperson; Stuart Pollon, deputy chairperson; and Larry Deters, member, served with distinction in performing their roles in the production of constituency boundaries for the province of Saskatchewan in a manner that is demonstrably fair and independent.

Following an extended period of hearings and deliberations, the

Constituency Boundaries Commission provided a final report in compliance with The Constituency Boundaries Act of 1993, in which no constituency in the province of Saskatchewan is more than plus or minus 5 per cent larger or smaller than any other constituency according to the recent StatsCanada general census.

Mr. Speaker, this is an impressive accomplishment that ensures Saskatchewan voters can be certain that a vote cast anywhere in the province is of equal value to that of a vote cast elsewhere in the province. It's a central tenet of a healthy democracy that the electoral process itself operates with the full confidence of the citizens it's intended to represent.

It's with great satisfaction, Mr. Speaker, that I'm able to present to the people of Saskatchewan a Bill to implement new constituency boundaries that truly deserves the confidence of the Saskatchewan electorate.

I'd invite all members of the Legislative Assembly to join me in supporting passage of this Bill. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act respecting Representation in the Legislative Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and, by leave of the Assembly, referred to a Committee of the Whole later this day.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 82 — The Representation Act, 2002

The Chair: — I invite the Minister of Justice to introduce his official.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to introduce on my left someone whom you all will know, but he wasn't sure whether I would know him — Darcy McGovern from the Justice department.

Clauses 1 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

Schedule agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

(17:15)

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 82 — The Representation Act, 2002

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move that Bill No. 82, The Representation Act, 2002 be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

The Assembly adjourned at 17:17.