

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present a petition regarding Crop Insurance Corporation's announcement that 2003 premiums charged to farmers will increase by up to 52 per cent and further. Mr. Speaker, the prayer of the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to have Sask Crop Insurance reverse the 2003 premium increases and restore affordable crop insurance premiums to our struggling farmers.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition come from Lucky Lake, Demaine, and Beechy, and I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of people from my constituency who are really concerned about the high cost of education tax for property owners. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly urge the provincial government to take all possible action to cause a reduction in the education tax carried by Saskatchewan residents and employers.

The people who have signed this petition are from Wadena, Kelvington, Wynyard, and Quill Lake.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with pride to bring petitions on behalf of people concerned about the high cost of education property tax. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly urge the provincial government to take all possible action to cause a reduction in the education tax burden carried by Saskatchewan residents and employers.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to present this on behalf of people of Wadena and Elfros.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me pleasure to stand again today on behalf of residents and constituents of the great Southwest and I present a petition in their regard, or on their behalf, in regard to the Crown grazing lease renewals and the government's hesitation to renew those leases. 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 steps to ensure current Crown land lessees maintain their first option to renew

those leases.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by producers in the communities of Dollard, Eastend, and Shaunavon.

I so present.

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the deplorable and surprising lack of a hemodialysis unit in the city of Moose Jaw. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take necessary action to provide the people of Moose Jaw and district with a hemodialysis unit for their community.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed all by citizens from the community of Moose Jaw.

I so present.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the people of my constituency that are very concerned about the condition of Highway 47. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 47 South in order to avoid serious injury and property damage.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the folks of the city of Estevan as well as people that live at Boundary dam resort whose children travel on the school bus and they have grave concerns.

I so present. Thank you.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have another petition to present on behalf of constituents who are concerned with Highway 22, particularly that section between Junction 6 and Junction 20. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 22 in order to order to address safety and economic concerns.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from Earl Grey and Southey.

I so present.

**Mr. Allchurch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the Crown

land leases. 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 steps to ensure Crown land lessees maintain their first option to renew those leases.

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

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, on this petition are from my hometown of Spiritwood.

I so present.

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

**Deputy Clerk:** — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received.

A petition concerning a reduction in the education tax;

A petition concerning the provision of a hemodialysis unit for the people of Moose Jaw and district; and

Addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional papers nos. 12, 13, 18, 19, and 27.

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**Mr. Wakefield:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day 26 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: will the flood at the McArthur River uranium mine have a negative impact on the revenues of the provincial government due to lost royalties and other factors this fiscal year; if so, what will be the impact in terms of dollars and in terms of projected provincial economic growth in the current year?

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, today I am very pleased to draw to your attention and to the attention of all members of the Assembly, a school group that's very near and dear to my heart. With us today we have 15 grade 8 students from the school in Bruno — I might add, Mr. Speaker, some of Saskatchewan's brightest and best. And accompanying these students are their teacher, Mr. Jeff Marshak, and chaperones, Dan Picouye and Alain Tremel.

I'm hoping that you have a great time today visiting the Legislative Assembly, and I'm hoping that you enjoy question period, as much of it as you get to watch. And I'm looking very forward to meeting with you a little bit later, I guess it's around 2:30.

I'd ask all the members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming these students.

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

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to

introduce to you and through you to the other members of this legislature, two families of home-schoolers seated in your gallery. And they're doing a unit, as I believe it's called, on government and how it works. And we're glad to have them here. I met with them earlier on to try to explain to them what was all going to be happening, but I'm not sure if that was adequate or not.

From Rosthern we have Brenda Stickel and her two students, Austin and Lisa; and here from Regina, Patty Dilliston and her two students, Nicole and Kimberly.

Would the members join me in welcoming them to our legislature.

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

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

##### Energy Performance Contracting Service

**Mr. Prebble:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government believes strongly in our Crown corporations and the benefits that they bring to all the people of this province. But today, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about a joint venture between Saskatchewan Power Corporation and Honeywell Limited to increase the energy efficiency of large electrical consumers in our province, such as schools, municipal government facilities, provincial government facilities, and industrial facilities, Mr. Speaker.

It's called the energy performance contracting service and it provides our larger customers with a plan to reduce energy consumption. And it guarantees, Mr. Speaker, that the full cost of implementing the energy efficiency measures will be covered through energy savings, usually over an 8- to 10-year period.

Mr. Speaker, energy performance contracting has generated \$21 million in economic activity over the last three years in Saskatchewan, and it's provided work for approximately 70 electrical and mechanical contractors. It's also guaranteeing savings in energy at about 20 per cent in the average facility, Mr. Speaker, and greenhouse gas reductions in the same range.

Mr. Speaker, it's just one example of the fact that we have a vision for this province — a plan for Saskatchewan. Our Crown corporations and the services they deliver are central to that plan, Mr. Speaker, and we're not prepared, Mr. Speaker, for the Saskatchewan Party plan which is to do away with those Crowns.

Thank you.

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

##### Quebec Election Results

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate first minister-elect Jean Charest and his colleagues on a very impressive election in Quebec yesterday.

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

**Mr. Hermanson:** — With 76 out of 125 seats, Jean Charest's Liberal Party will form the next majority government in Quebec. The Parti Québécois were reduced to 45 seats and the ADQ (Action Démocratique du Québec) picked up only 4.

What's even more interesting, Mr. Speaker, is the breakdown of the popular vote. Quebecers voted overwhelmingly for change by giving Jean Charest and his party 46 per cent of the popular vote. The PQ (Parti Québécois) received just 33 per cent and the ADQ just over 18 per cent. I can't help but notice that these numbers are very similar to those conducted in a recent province-wide poll here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, while serving as a Member of Parliament I had the privilege of observing Mr. Charest in the House of Commons. At that time he was the leader of a two-member caucus and there was a great deal of speculation and uncertainty about his political future. It became obvious, though, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Charest was a very determined and savvy individual and one only needs to look at his recent political victory to see why.

In a province that for over a decade has been burdened by a social democratic government that has also toyed with the idea of separatism, Mr. Charest's majority government was won on a platform that embraced good government within Canada.

I ask all members of the House to join with me in congratulating Mr. Charest on this recent victory. We wish him and his colleagues all the best as they prepare to move Quebec forward.

Thank you.

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

#### Investment Future Forum

**Ms. Jones:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The modern day economic realities of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan now include information technology, ag-biotech, renewable energy, environmental technology, and tourism. To showcase our varied opportunities, Saskatoon last week was host to an Investment Future Forum, the first of its kind in Saskatchewan.

It brought together interested investors, 22 expanding business ventures, and well-known speakers. By the way, Mr. Speaker, the event was co-sponsored by CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) and Industry and Resources, the two organizations the opposition says should stay out of business.

How successful was the forum? Well, two high-tech companies took advantage of the gathering to announce new research developments at Innovation Place which will further the horizons of human and animal medical science, bring more high-tech, high-paying jobs to Saskatchewan, and further the ongoing co-operation between the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) and the tenants of Innovation Place.

Triage Therapeutics Inc., managed by Winnipeg's Lombard Life Sciences, will further research into promising spinal cord and brain injury drug developments. Pyxis Genomics Canada, Inc. announced an acceleration of its animal health product

platform which is developing new treatments and prevention strategies for human and animal infections. These companies choose Saskatchewan because the scientific and technical expertise is here, the investment dollars are available, and because our future is wide open, Mr. Speaker.

#### St. Gabriel School Drama Performance

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, April 11, I had the opportunity and pleasure of attending a play put on by the students of St. Gabriel School in Biggar. The play was an adaptation of Mark Twain's classic, *Tom Sawyer*.

I'd like to do a little bragging and mention that my son, Marshall Weekes, along with Brittney Bergen, played a shared role as Tom Sawyer, and my daughter, Alex Weekes, played as a town resident, put on a great performance along with 27 young actors from St. Gabriel's. Those 27 were Kiley Sarvas, Elyse Beckett, Tiffany Peters, Ashley Carruthers, Erika Ries, Samantha Keith, Sean Redlick, Nathan Walker, Chance Parenteau, Clarke Taylor, Jonathan Sehn, Nausha Muc, Cole Oesch, Jarrett Moore, Cody Flasch, Lauren deBussac, Jessica Zimmer, Brody Crozier, Cheryl Oesch, Shannon Jiricka, Bronwyn Nestegaard-Paul, Blaire Hoppe, Tamara Nahorney, Felicia Smith, Ashley Ries, Karlee Dielsen, and Courtney Hardman.

Their performances were enhanced with the behind-the-scenes support of the stage crew: Sarah Tavanetz, Sarah Zimmer, Ezra Meszaros, Lonnie Redlick, Danielle Desrosiers, and Jaylynn Smith; costumes by Kirby Sarvas and Caitlin Pickett; and props by Mrs. Rita Sutherland and Mrs. Cindy Weekes.

(13:45)

I would like to congratulate the director, Mrs. Lorraine Heather, and assistant director, Kendra Lanigan, as well as all those mentioned above for their splendid performance of *Tom Sawyer*. And I'm sure Mark Twain would have been very proud of their adaptation.

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

#### Saskatchewan Curlers Win National Title

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not long ago the 2003 National Aboriginal Mixed Curling Championships were held in Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker. This annual event, now called the Chuck Neepin Memorial Bonspiel, was organized by Norman Meade and was attended by 48 teams from across the country.

Mr. Speaker, in keeping with Saskatchewan curlers' current hot streak, a team primarily from Saskatchewan won the event.

Mr. Speaker, the winning team was skipped by Marshall Bear from Little Pine. The third was Maria Moore from The Pas, Manitoba. The lead was Emerald Strongarm from Kawacatoose. Now the second, the second was the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) from Cumberland House, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — How fitting that the member for this House, from Cumberland House, knows how to get some good rocks to where it counts — in the house.

Mr. Speaker, the Marshall Bear rink defeated two-time Canadian senior men's curling champion Ken Grove in the final.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all members of this House will join me in congratulating all the curlers who took part in this event, and especially our Saskatchewan team members. I'm sure members will join me in saying a great big egosi, egosi to these fine curlers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Great Weekend for Canadian Sports

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, it was a great weekend for Canadian sports. We heard from the member of Swift Current yesterday about Mike Weir's super achievement in winning the Masters. And in addition, Mr. Speaker, Paul Tracy won the Grand Prix of Long Beach which was his third kart victory of the year. Also Randy Ferby won the gold medal in men's world curling in Winnipeg.

Even the USA (United States of America) women's curling team, Mr. Speaker, who won the curling gold medal, had a Canadian flavour as two members of that rink were from Canada, and I believe one was originally from Saskatoon.

Closer to home, Mr. Speaker, the Assiniboia Southern Rebels were winners of the Keystone Cup held in Portage la Prairie. They finished the round robin play with a four-one record and went on to defeat Spruce Grove Regals 5-2 in the gold medal game. This was the Southern Rebels' second Keystone Cup victory in three years.

A special thanks to coach Chic Volsky and his coaching staff, all of the managers, parents, and supporters of the Rebels for an excellent and rewarding season.

I would ask all members to join me in congratulating all of these superb Canadian athletes and in particular the Assiniboia Southern Rebels for their outstanding accomplishments.

Thank you.

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

### Electrostatic Precipitators at Boundary Dam

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Spring is here; we're all eager to get outside and revel in our province's wonderful natural resources. And thanks to a multi-million dollar SaskPower project nearing completion at the Boundary dam power station, when residents of Estevan are out at their local parks and recreational facilities this spring, they'll get added bonus of enjoying cleaner air.

I'm pleased to tell members of this House that a five-year,

multi-million dollar project to equip all six boiler units at SaskPower's Boundary dam power station with advanced emissions controls unit has passed another milestone.

Five of the six electrostatic precipitators to be installed are now in service. These electrostatic precipitators will remove more than 99 per cent of particulate emissions from the stacks at the Boundary dam power station. The work to date has already had a significant and positive effect on local air quality, but without affecting the reliability of the Boundary dam power station.

SaskPower and Saskatchewan Environment announced this ambitious project in May 1998. It was expanded last summer to include an electrostatic precipitator for unit six. When the electrostatic precipitator project is complete in July, Boundary dam will meet the latest federal-provincial regulations.

I ask the members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating SaskPower on this project at Boundary dam, as well as its other initiatives to preserve our environment.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Information Services Corporation

**Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister of ISC (Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan) almost blew a gasket trying to portray, trying to portray the costs of the new land titles system, the new NDP (New Democratic Party) land titles system as anything but \$107 million. He was squealing and baying in this Assembly that indeed the costs were not \$107 million, Mr. Speaker.

Well his own officials not long ago, a few weeks ago, were at the SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) convention and they made a bit of a presentation to the delegates at the SUMA convention. And they had a slide in that presentation called, what's the real cost. And then it goes on to say, where does the \$107 million come from. And they highlighted, they highlight the fact there's \$77 million in approved borrowing from the taxpayers, 18 million in operating grants from the taxpayers, and \$12 million in equity from the taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister admit that yesterday he misled the public? And will he apologize to Saskatchewan taxpayers for blowing 107 million on the land titles system and then misleading the public about the actual figure?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, as you can see, I'm operating on all cylinders.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — I want to say to that member opposite that nobody had to go to the SUMA convention to learn about the costs of ISC because I had a press conference along with the president of ISC some time ago, and the member was there.

And what did we do at that press conference? We talked about all of the costs associated with the ISC, Mr. Speaker. We talked about all of the costs and we did so in an honest and straightforward way.

And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the costs of the construction of that system were audited by the Provincial Auditor, and they were found to be \$60.5 million for construction. The member knows that.

The 30 million in costs that they say were to construct this system, Mr. Speaker, were dividends paid to the Government of Saskatchewan which would have been paid in any event as the member should know, Mr. Speaker. And in suggesting otherwise and suggesting that that's part of the cost of the system, that member is not being completely truthful, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, these are his own officials' numbers that were presented to SUMA.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you can believe it, if you can believe it, what the minister just said, is he highlighted as a difference the \$31 million that the new system has had to pay to the government in dividend — that's what he's just highlighted as a difference. The old system paid the same dividend, Mr. Speaker. Did the two cancel each other out? The cost is \$107 million to the taxpayers, Mr. Speaker. And more to the point, more to the point . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order. Order.

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, more to the point, with the previous system the users paid for the costs of the land titles system and it even made a bit of a profit, as the minister alluded to. It made another 11 million or so that it gave back to the taxpayers in the General Revenue Fund.

And now, due to the NDP genius on this file, Mr. Speaker, the government has now written off that dividend it used to get on behalf of taxpayers and it's increased the cost to the users of the system by \$4.3 million, Mr. Speaker.

How in the world can the minister justify this for a system that still isn't working?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, the member just made the point I was making yesterday and again today. If the old system paid the \$31 million in cost in any event, Mr. Speaker, how could that possibly be a cost of the new system, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — That's how ridiculous the argument is. And the problem here, Mr. Speaker, is if that member doesn't know the difference between capital cost of construction and operating cost and dividends, there's not much I can say to help that member, Mr. Speaker.

But I do want to say that when that member says it was for a system that does not work, Mr. Speaker, he is denigrating the dedicated men and women at the Information Services Corporation — who are doing what, Mr. Speaker? They're making that system work and it is working well, Mr. Speaker. It's working very well.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the minister's words — and he's starting to ramp it up a little again — but the minister's words are cold comfort to people like Corey Demassi of Regina.

In 1999, Corey won a \$4,000 settlement in Small Claims Court from another man named Jason Robertson. To ensure Corey got paid, he placed a writ of execution against Jason Robertson's house. But when Robertson sold his house in December 2001 and moved to Ontario, the NDP's fancy new \$107 million land titles system didn't pick it up; it didn't pick up the writ of execution. So Corey Demassi was out \$4,000.

Mr. Speaker, if the NDP's \$107 million land titles system works, why didn't it pick up a simple writ of execution? Why did it cost Corey Demassi \$4,000?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well you know, Mr. Speaker, the other day someone was on the radio and John Gormley was saying how scandalous it was that the new system was picking up too many writs of execution. Now this member is saying, well the new system isn't picking up enough writs of execution.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, the system of picking up writs of execution or not picking them up has nothing to do with the Information Services Corporation. We have had a system for the general registration of writs of execution in this province for 60 years and that has not been brought about by the ISC, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to say also, Mr. Speaker, that what that Saskatchewan Party always does is they always go after the Crown corporations and the people that work in the Crown corporations — never referring to the hundreds of thousands of transactions that are properly done on behalf of the people but, Mr. Speaker, always criticizing because what do they want to do? Sell off the Crowns, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, yes; yes, it's true. It's true the Saskatchewan Party and, more importantly, the people of the province of Saskatchewan have this crazy notion that when you budget \$20 million on an automation project and you wind up spending \$107 million on the project, they have this crazy notion that it should work, Mr. Speaker. That is what the people of the province believe.

Now the reason Corey never got his \$4,000 even after Jason Robertson sold his house is that the NDP's \$107 million land titles system couldn't tell that Jason Edward Robertson, the name that appeared on the title to the house, is the full name of

Jason Robertson, the name of the man on the writ of execution.

The NDP spent all of this money on a system that doesn't work, Mr. Speaker. Now Corey Demassi is out \$4,000 because of ISC's mistake and yet the NDP is refusing to compensate him. Will the minister direct ISC to do the right thing? Will he pay Corey Demassi for the mistake its land titles system has made?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, I want the people of the province to know that what that member said, and what that Saskatchewan Party said, about the cost of the system is not true. I want them to know that, Mr. Speaker.

And I also want the people of the province to know that on April 11, Mr. Speaker, it was less than one day to put a title through the new system, Mr. Speaker — and that Saskatchewan Party says the system isn't working. Under the old system, Mr. Speaker, it sometimes took a month or more to put a title through.

Mr. Speaker, about 90 per cent of the transactions at land titles are now done electronically. And do you know what, Mr. Speaker? People can do them from their businesses and their homes — a feature not available in any other province, not available in Alberta.

The Saskatchewan Party used to say we should have adopted Alberta's system. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? They're putting out a request for proposals to try to build the system more similar to Saskatchewan's system. The Saskatchewan Party will not admit that, Mr. Speaker, but that is the truth because it's a good system and it's working, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Dearborn:** — . . . ISC for months on behalf of two of my constituents, John and Verna Sawchuck of Coleville. Apparently there was a federal writ of execution issued against another John Sawchuck for money he owed to Canada Customs and Revenue. However this federal writ was attached to the land title of John and Verna Sawchuck of Coleville who had nothing to do with that debt.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP spent \$107 million developing this new land titles system and it can't tell the difference between two people with the same name. Mr. Speaker, how can the NDP say its new land titles system is working when it can't tell the difference between two people with the same name?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, once again we hear misinformation about the cost to construct the system.

But I want to say to the House, the first questioner says a writ of execution didn't attach and it should have attached. The second one says, a writ of execution did attach and shouldn't have attached. And then they asked the question, Mr. Speaker: why doesn't the computer know the difference between two people?

(14:00)

Well I guess I would say, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the computer had never met the two people. Because what the computer does, Mr. Speaker, is it looks at the names, and if the name is the same as someone with a writ of execution against the name, then, Mr. Speaker, the writ of execution will attach.

And what do you do about that, Mr. Speaker? You sign an affidavit saying you're not that person. You can sign that at any office or your lawyer's office. There's no fee to register that affidavit. They take the writ off.

And do you know how long the system's worked that way, Mr. Speaker? For 60 years. So it's time to wake up and smell the coffee.

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

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, this is ridiculous. If you just happen to have the same name as someone who owes money, you're going to get nailed for . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order. Order, please. Order, please.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — If you just happen to have the same name as someone who owes money, you're going to get nailed for hundreds of dollars in legal fees to clear liens and caveats and writs of execution against your property. Is that fair?

John and Verna Sawchuck were forced to pay \$325 in legal fees to clear this writ against their property. I wrote to ISC on their behalf to see if they would be reimbursed for this cost. The answer was a flat no.

My question to the minister: does the minister think it's fair that John and Verna Sawchuck of Coleville should pay for ISC's mistake? Will he order ISC to reimburse the Sawchucks for this expense?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, a computer can no more tell the difference between one John Smith and another John Smith than it can tell the difference between the Saskatchewan Party and Stockwell Day and the Canadian Alliance.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — And the fact of the matter is, the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that this question could have been raised many times under the old land titles system where this is a commonplace occurrence. And one of the responsibilities of any lawyer doing a real estate transaction, Mr. Speaker, is to initially do a general registration search, which is available also under the new system, to see if there are any writs attaching against the same name as your client, Mr. Speaker.

Apparently in this case that was not done. It can be done. If there is someone with a similar name and a writ of execution, it can easily be removed, in much the same way as the opposition will be removed in the next election, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, although the minister didn't answer the question, he did make it clear why the Coleville rural poll in the Kindersley by-election recently garnered the NDP exactly zero votes. And there will be plenty more where that came from, Mr. Speaker, if they get the won tons to drop the writ.

Mr. Speaker, it seems other government agencies are able to tell the difference between two people of the same name. John and Verna Sawchuck were able to quickly get a letter from Canada Customs and Revenue Agency stating that Revenue Canada had no claim against them. Apparently Revenue Canada can tell the difference between two people with the same name, but the NDP's \$107 million gong show land titles system can't.

Mr. Speaker, even after the Sawchucks produced this letter, ISC still wouldn't remove the . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. Members, I'd just ask members to hold their voices down a bit so that the question can be more accurately heard.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, even after the Sawchucks produced this letter, ISC still wouldn't remove the claim against their property. In fact, ISC said it was required by law to execute this claim against every John Sawchuck in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, what sense does that make? Why is ISC going after every person in Saskatchewan who happens to have the same name as someone with a claim against their property?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I tried to explain to both of the members that, yes this kind of problem does arise in any land registration system. I tried to explain, Mr. Speaker, that this sort of problem has always existed in the land titles system.

But I want to explain to the members — not that it will make any difference, Mr. Speaker — that any title holder who has a writ attached to their title incorrectly can have that writ removed through the simple use of an affidavit. It's the same system that's always been in place. The application for discharge is free and the affidavit can be signed by any commissioner of oaths. This is a service operated at all ISC offices as well, free of charge.

And my only other comment, Mr. Speaker, is having listened to the member, I'm very sorry that I could not vote in the Kindersley by-election.

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the minister responsible for ISC. The NDP's \$107 million land title system is also failing municipal councils who are responsible for keeping track of land title transfers to update their tax rolls.

Mr. Speaker, ISC is responsible for providing information on changes in land titles to SAMA (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency) and SAMA passes the information on to the municipality in the form of a change-of-ownership notice. Now ISC does provide the municipality with information on who bought the land and who sold the land, but the NDP's \$107 million land titles system doesn't provide a legal land description so there is no way for the municipalities to know which piece of land has changed owners.

Mr. Speaker, how is the municipality supposed to know what piece of land requires title transfer if the NDP's \$107 million land titles system doesn't give them a legal land description?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, you know the Saskatchewan Party over there believes that if they say often enough that they don't want to sell off the Crown corporations, that people will believe it. And if they say often enough that they're not aligned with the Canadian Alliance, that people will believe it. And apparently they think — notwithstanding what the Provincial Auditor says — that if they say often enough that something cost \$107 million to build, that people will believe it. And yes, Mr. Speaker, there are some people who will swallow the line of the Saskatchewan Party.

But what I want to say to the member opposite over there is, one of the things that she should realize is that when we restructured the land titles fees over the opposition of that Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, we did so taking into consideration the concerns of small towns, villages, and people with property in rural Saskatchewan to lower the fees in rural Saskatchewan and also to take into account many of the concerns of small municipal governments, Mr. Speaker. And I regret that that member does not support her own constituents, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what that minister should realize is his own officials went globe-trotting to sell this system. Nobody will buy it.

Mr. Speaker, for months the RM (rural municipality) of Blucher has been trying to get the NDP's failing \$107 million land titles system to provide legal land description. Mr. Speaker, so if . . . so the minister will know — that is section, township, range, meridian on land ownership transfers. It's a system that has worked for many, many decades in our province.

In fact, the RM of Blucher has written to ISC seven times, Mr. Speaker, since January 20. And as of April 3, ISC has not responded to any of those seven letters.

Mr. Speaker, has the NDP's \$107 million land titles system spent so much money that they can't afford to buy stamps or is the NDP simply refusing to make any attempt to fix the serious flaws in its failing \$107 million land titles system?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to know . . . Well first

of all, to answer the question, if it is the case that someone has been corresponding with ISC and has not received a reply, I apologize for that.

And I would want to reply in a very timely way because one of the things that Mark MacLeod, the president of ISC, and all the officials have been trying to do is to reply to people very quickly. And they've changed the turnaround time very much, Mr. Speaker, and customer service is the number one priority of ISC. That has been made very clear, Mr. Speaker.

And in fact I want the House to know that 80 per cent of the corrections required in the system have taken two days this year, down from six weeks last fall. Transactions are going through the system in one to three days this year. We're trying to improve it, Mr. Speaker, because customer service is number one. And the system is working, thanks to the dedication of the people who work there.

And I also want to add, just before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, that unlike the Saskatchewan Party, the land titles system under ISC does recognize names like Grant Schmidt.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what we've learned today is something that we knew going into this, that the system isn't working as it was billed. And the other thing that we've learned, Mr. Speaker, is this — that just a few weeks ago the minister's own officials at ISC went to SUMA and they made a presentation called "Strength Through Diversity SUMA Convention 2003 Building With You . . . from the LAND Up."

And one of the slides says, what's the real cost? And the very first line in that says, where does the \$107 million come from, Mr. Speaker? And then it says, well it comes from 61.4 million borrowed against 77 million in availability, 18 million in operating grants, and 12 million in equity, for a total of 107 million taxpayer dollars, Mr. Speaker.

So to the minister: who's right? Is he right or were his officials at SUMA right?

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the costs of the ISC have been so well hidden that we had a press conference in room 10 to review them. And apparently the ISC officials were at the SUMA convention saying what they are. And then the member stands up and says, we're trying to hide something.

Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. Nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. The member's own question shows that the ISC, for which I am the minister in charge, went to SUMA — open and accountable — said, here's all the costs. But what they did not do, Mr. Speaker, unlike the member opposite, is they did not represent costs of operation or dividends as being costs of construction of a system as that member has tried to do repeatedly, Mr. Speaker.

And in that regard I'm very proud of the fact that ISC and my department and my office have been open and accountable, unlike that Saskatchewan Party over there.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, this morning I chatted with a lawyer from Tisdale, Saskatchewan by the name of Gordon Klimm. And he followed question period yesterday and he heard that minister profess all of the wonderful things about ISC.

He heard him talk about a three-day turnaround, Mr. Speaker. And he in Tisdale, Saskatchewan, on behalf of clients, has been waiting now a full month for a transaction to be completed. He said, were it not for a sympathetic lender a deal on a farm mortgage would be in jeopardy, would have been put in jeopardy by this \$107 million NDP land titles system.

And his question through you, and to the minister, is this: in light of the fact that he's waited a month for this transaction, in light of the fact that fees went up on Monday, what is the minister saying to his client? Is he saying that the three-day turnaround should apply to his client or will his client have to pay the new fees under the new structure, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the member — the member spoke to a lawyer in Tisdale — I had coffee with a lawyer in Saskatoon on Saturday who phoned me up because he wanted to tell me, Mr. Speaker, about his views of the ISC. I got together with the lawyer and talked about his views of the ISC.

His views were somewhat different, Mr. Speaker. He told me that the ISC was working very well because he could perform real estate transactions on-line, seven days a week, 24 hours a day, Mr. Speaker, something that has never been available before.

And have there been glitches in the system as we've tried to build the system? Yes, there have been glitches, Mr. Speaker. Is the system perfect? No, it's not perfect, Mr. Speaker. But in the vast majority of cases is it working? Yes, Mr. Speaker, it's working well and, Mr. Speaker, under the old land titles system we had occasional problems as well. But this is a good system, Mr. Speaker, it's state of the art, and it's working, Mr. Speaker.

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

(14:15)

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, let's walk through this, Mr. Speaker. In 1996 the NDP decide that Saskatchewan, the last province to automate its land titles, should do that. And they put a budget figure on it of under \$20 million, Mr. Speaker.

Well just a few short years later they've spent \$107 million and the system is not working as billed. Moreover the old system and the old fees were enough not only to pay for the system itself, but to make a profit for the people of the province. But thanks to the sheer genius of the NDP, Mr. Speaker, thanks to their genius that surpasses frankly, that surpasses frankly even the boneheaded, multi-million dollar losses of the previous administration, thanks to their genius, Mr. Speaker, now the taxpayers are subsidizing the new NDP system by foregoing the dividend and users pay an extra \$4.3 million.



Mr. Speaker, there's only one thing left for the minister to do. Will he stand in his place and apologize on behalf of the NDP to the people of the province for this \$107 million boondoggle?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member from Swift Current would certainly know about the boneheaded previous administration since I believe he worked for them the whole time . . . (inaudible) . . . adviser.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — I believe, Mr. Speaker, that he was one of the key advisers to that boneheaded administration. And what this tells the people of the province, if they're listening, Mr. Speaker, is here we have someone — in assessing his credibility of what he says — here we have someone who gets up and says the Devine administration was a boneheaded administration; a boneheaded administration. I'm here to tell anybody listening, Mr. Speaker, that that member who just said that was a paid adviser of that administration.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — He comes in here and refers to it in that way, Mr. Speaker. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? Everything else he says has the same amount of credibility as that statement coming from that member, which is zero, Mr. Speaker.

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

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order. Order. I would like members just to come to order a little sooner. I think the time here is quite precious and it's good to let off a little steam, but doesn't have to be let off for the entire afternoon.

#### TABLING OF REPORTS

**The Speaker:** — Members, before orders of the day, it is my duty at this time to table the 2002 annual report from the Saskatchewan Children's Advocate.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of an open and accountable government and table written questions . . . responses to written questions no. 129 through 133.

**The Speaker:** — Responses to questions 129, 130, 131, 132, 133 have been submitted.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

##### Motion No. 2 — Government Approach to Business Ventures

**Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the motion that we're going to

be . . . that I'm going to be moving, seconded by the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy, reads as follows:

That this Assembly condemns the current Premier and the cabinet for a continuing practice of covering up financial losses in its numerous business ventures such as SPUDCO and mega bingo despite numerous promises in the past to be more forthright over such losses.

Mr. Speaker, there's only two scandals mentioned in the motion, but we could have mentioned many, many more in that particular motion. The two that are mentioned are SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company) and the mega bingo deal.

And I'm sorry to see that the House Leader might not be staying for the whole debate because I think he'd be kind of interested in what we have to say about SPUDCO and I'll make sure that we can send him over the *Hansard* of the debate because a lot of what I want to say revolves around his conduct.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of what I want to say about the cover-up of scandal revolves around the conduct of the man who still sits as a House Leader to this cabinet, who the Premier retained in his cabinet after it was made clear by the Premier's own inquiry that that minister, the member for P.A. (Prince Albert) Northcote, not only was responsible for the loss of 28 million taxpayers' dollars but that he then went on, Mr. Speaker, to mislead about that cover-up for six long years, Mr. Speaker.

In what other walk of life can you imagine that a senior management member, a senior team member of a management board or any sort of an organization, could possibly squander \$28 million and then not tell the truth about it and receive no punishment and not be fired by the Premier? In what other organization could that happen? In absolutely no other organization but this NDP government, Mr. Speaker, this NDP government that has completely lost its way.

And it is reminiscent . . . You know, the minister of ISC was talking a little bit at the end of question period, and I was too, about the previous administration. Like all old and tired governments, when they get to the end of their mandate they lose their way, they lose their moral compass. And, Mr. Speaker, it has happened in spades on that side of the House.

In fact you could argue it's happened on that side of the House worse than it ever happened to the previous administration. Because the previous administration . . . I remember the members opposite talking about 6 and \$7 million in GigaText. Well get the figures that we're talking about today, Mr. Speaker.

We're talking about \$107 million in a failing land titles system. We're talking about \$28 million in SPUDCO in the motion, another \$6 million lost in bingo. Two million blown in Australia on a ill-thought-out \$80 million investment, it almost was, in Australia; \$7.5 million in a dot-com in Atlanta, Georgia, Mr. Speaker; another \$2 million lost on *tappedinto.com* in Nashville, Tennessee, Mr. Speaker.

Put the numbers together, you're well . . . you're getting close to \$200 million of scandal and of cover-up and of misplaced

priorities and of misspent taxpayers' resources, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, on the SPUDCO issue, Mr. Speaker, the irony of the SPUDCO issue is that it went to cabinet. And the current minister of ISC, who is smiling wryly from his place, should remember this because he would have been at the cabinet table. It came to cabinet in the late 1990s. The minister of SPUDCO at the time, the minister of Sask Water . . . and he presented to the cabinet something that wasn't true. He represented a deal to build storage sheds as a partnership but it was not a partnership, Mr. Speaker. And within weeks, not only the minister knew it, but the deputy minister to the premier knew it. The senior officials knew it. Certainly the ministers of the Crown would have known it.

What did they do about it, Mr. Speaker? What did that minister of ISC do about it? What did the current Minister of CIC do about it? He became the Sask Water minister thereafter. What did they do about it? What did the current Deputy Premier do about it, whatever portfolio he might have had at the time? What did any of them do about it?

Did they stand up at the next cabinet table and say, this isn't right; this is the kind of thing we railed against only a few years ago; we've got to come clean? We better tell the truth; taxpayers' money's at stake; we're misrepresenting the truth to taxpayers. Did any of them do that? No, they didn't, Mr. Speaker. Not one of them. Look across the way. Not one of them — not one of them — stood in their place and said, this is wrong; we have not been telling the truth and we risk losing millions of dollars.

And the end result, Mr. Speaker, said the taxpayers lost \$28 million and that a minister has been shown to have not been . . . not told the truth or had misled the public about the deal.

And I think in the next election campaign, I'm pretty sure in the next election campaign as those members go door to door, I'm pretty sure people are going to ask them that question. I think they're going to ask them, did you know about . . . you must have known about the deal, that SPUDCO deal, because we've seen the evidence. It's all in the court documents, it's all in the newspaper, it's all in the media. You must have known about the deal. Did you do anything about it on our behalf? That's what the taxpayers will ask.

As taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan, did you stand up and say this isn't right? And they'll have to hang their heads and say, no, we didn't stand up. They'll have to hang their heads and say, no, we didn't do the right thing.

And, Mr. Speaker, if there's any justice, then they'll walk back to their campaign headquarters on election night and prepare to concede to the Sask Party candidate that's running in that constituency against them.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, we now know through the documents and through the information that has come forward on the SPUDCO file that there was one cabinet minister in particular that did express concern.

I think Carol Teichrob came out in the media not long ago and she indicated that at the time she was on the board of Sask Water, Mr. Speaker, and she had grave concerns about the information she was getting from the then minister of Sask Water, the current Minister of Crown Investments Corporation, who, by the way, in this session has refused to answer any of the questions we've asked about SPUDCO — even though he played a key and central role in that scandal; even though he bears the responsibility for the greatest period of time throughout the scandal; even though he bears the responsibility for not pulling the plug on it when he could of.

Now he's not only not answering questions as to why he didn't do that, he's not answering any questions at all. They leave it to the Deputy Premier to answer questions. And he's not even familiar with the file and so, not surprisingly, we don't get any answers.

But I believe she was the Vice-Chair on the Sask Water board, was Ms. Teichrob, at the time that that member was the minister for Sask Water. And she said she went to various members of the government and raised red flags about this deal. In particular she went to the member for P.A. Northcote, I believe, the man that's responsible for this deal, the current House Leader, the current Intergovernmental Affairs minister. She went to him and she told him of her concerns. And so were her concerns taken seriously? No, they weren't. She said as much — basically sent her off; sent her off and told her not to worry about it.

I believe she also went to the premier of the day, Roy Romanow. I believe she also went to him and she told him of her concerns. And what did the premier of the province of Saskatchewan have to say about it? He just sent her away. He said, don't worry about it; he said, don't worry about it.

So, Mr. Speaker, the question then for the current House Leader, and I hope some day for the then premier . . . I hope someone frankly puts a microphone in front of Premier Roy Romanow and finds out about his involvement in this deal because I have a feeling his involvement was significant. The documents seem to indicate that and there should be an accounting for this.

It's a serious issue. It does involve \$28 million, but arguably more important than that, it involves the very, very basic principle of any government — this one included, although you'd never know it by how they act — that the truth matters; that you've got to be straight with Saskatchewan people.

And I hope that soon, and very soon, the Premier of this province is asked some very . . . the former premier of this province is asked some very tough questions. We'll continue to ask questions of these members here. We won't get any answers. The minister responsible certainly won't answer. He's chosen to hide behind the Deputy Premier, which is a strange strategy because the Deputy Premier's answers haven't been very good either. But that's the strategy they've chosen.

So we won't get very many answers in this Assembly, though we'll keep asking questions. But we certainly hope that the Premier of the province . . . the former premier — the premier at the time, Roy Romanow — is asked some questions about

this file.

(14:30)

We know that somebody in the government in about 1998 realized, realized that something was up. And they . . . somebody ordered a chartered accountant firm to do a study into this. And Ernst & Young was selected. I don't know how they got it — that was maybe a tender or something — but Ernst & Young was chosen to do the work.

So Ernst & Young did a great piece of work into the SPUDCO situation to find out, well what was going on. Somebody in the government must at least have been asking that — what is going on with SPUDCO?

And Ernst & Young found out the answers to that and they found out a little bit more, Mr. Speaker. They found out the answers to the most burning question I think that we have now, looking back on it — and hopefully that the government had at the time — and that is: why in the world would we do this? Why wouldn't we just come clean and tell people that the original deal that the member for P.A. Northcote told us about was not the case? Why wouldn't we just come clean and tell the truth?

That's a question that they must have been asking, and it's a question that Ernst & Young asked. Why the deception; why did you portray this partnership . . . or this storage shed deal as a partnership when it wasn't a partnership with the private sector at all?

And their answer was threefold, Mr. Speaker. The answer they found, right from Sask Water officials, threefold. The first one was that the government of the day, through this strategy, thought it could avoid — get this, Mr. Speaker — thought it could avoid its own union-only construction tendering policy.

Mr. Speaker, I look across the way at the erstwhile backbenchers of that party and I wonder what they think about this. And even some of the front-benchers who I'm sure were aware . . . unaware of it, those who have had to defend the government's Crown construction tendering policy. Do you remember that, Mr. . . . We all know that particular policy, and we've had respectful disagreements about whether that policy is good for Saskatchewan or not.

Members on the government side believe that it is; believe that it's important to have union preference tendering in Crown construction work especially. Fair enough. We don't happen to share that view. We think it distorts the market. We think it drives costs up, frankly. We have fought against that. And on that point, though, we can have a respectful disagreement. The members opposite can support union preference tendering from the Crown and we can oppose it.

But, but, Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy then of a government who would publicly defend this as the right thing to do, this union preference tendering, their hypocrisy then to go ahead and purposefully try to avoid that same tendering policy on the construction of these sheds by portraying there to be a large 51 per cent private-sector partner, thereby annulling or exempting themselves, themselves, from the union-only preference

tendering policy of their own government.

Imagine that, Mr. Speaker. I cannot believe that there has not been more outrage from organized labour in the province when they found that out — that the NDP in this province, the party of labour, would set out on purpose, on purpose, to avoid its own union-only tendering policy, Mr. Speaker. You have to ask, why would they do that?

Remember that this was the grand strategy of the member for P.A. Northcote, the current House Leader. This was his grand strategy. So why would he do this? Why would he approve of or conceive of a plan to avoid his own union tendering policy? Could it be that they could build the sheds for cheaper? Could that be the answer? Could it be that he knew that if he avoided that policy, he could build his storage sheds for less money?

Well, Mr. Speaker, whatever the reason, whatever the reason, I hope somebody on that side will intervene in this debate and stand up and explain to this Assembly how they feel, honestly — how they honestly feel, Mr. Speaker, about the fact that their own government was out to avoid its own union-only tendering policy, a policy that it asks its backbenchers to defend with vigour. A policy that it defends itself with vigour in the media, the province of Saskatchewan and yet they wanted . . . they thought . . . they liked it so much that they wanted to get around it to build the sheds.

Mr. Speaker, somebody needs to speak out about it. Somebody over there needs to speak out about it.

So that was the first reason. The first reason was they wanted to avoid their own union tendering policy. Well, the second reason . . . and the Deputy Premier is chirping from his seat. And the Deputy Premier I encourage to stand up and answer these three questions as Ernst & Young did.

But I want to say this, Mr. Speaker, that there was another reason that they wanted to portray this. They wanted to deceive the people of the province and portray it as a . . . as something other than what it was. Well what they wanted to do, Mr. Speaker, is to trick the people of the province of Saskatchewan. That's what Ernst & Young says, for "the optics" of a deal that had a private partner when it . . .

That is a direct quote — the optics, Mr. Speaker. So that's the second reason. The first reason is they want to avoid their own union tender policy. And the second reason is for the optics. So Saskatchewan people will be tricked into believing that there's a private partner when there's no private partner.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is a third reason that Ernst & Young . . . This isn't the opposition, by the way, identifying these reasons. This is Ernst & Young who were hired by somebody deep within the government, hired by the Government of Saskatchewan, maybe even the former premier, we're not sure.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier will be interested to know that the third reason that they tried to set this up as a partnership when they knew it wasn't, was what . . . was why, Mr. Speaker? To try to get around any international trade implications. To try to trick our trading partners — primarily the Americans, you would think, because we know how deep

and dark the anti-American stripe runs through that caucus.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I wonder, Mr. Speaker, I wonder what would happen, I wonder what would have happened if the US (United States) would have got wind of this attempt at deception. And if the US, who are prone to sabre rattle when it comes to trade — we've all been on the business end of that, unfortunately — but, Mr. Speaker, I wonder, if the US would have found out about that and brought some sort of trade action, not only against our potatoes, but against the potatoes that are grown in Manitoba, in Alberta, in Prince Edward Island, there would have been some tall explaining to do by that Deputy Premier that chirps from his seat, and that member for Regina South that is . . . was chirping from his seat, Mr. Speaker. They'd have some explaining to do to the governments of those three provinces that would have been hurt by a trade action brought by the United States. Why? Because the NDP government decided to say something other than the truth.

Now, Mr. Speaker, now, Mr. Speaker, that Ernst & Young report, that Ernst & Young report is given to the government in June 1998. Guess who gets his mitts on it in June of 1998, Mr. Speaker? Well the minister that started it all of course. The minister that conceived of this SPUDCO idea, the member for Prince Albert Northcote. He would have got his hands on this report where Ernst & Young state unequivocally that, here are the three reasons why we tried to trick you on this deal: one was to try to trick you on this deal, the optics; two, to try to avoid international trade implications; and three, to avoid our own union tendering policy.

And so you wonder, Mr. Speaker, when that minister right there, that minister, the member for P.A. Northcote had a copy of that document, what did he do then? We've already established that two weeks after he went to cabinet with the first myth, the government knew all about it — the government knew all about it, Mr. Speaker — and they chose to do nothing.

So they got another chance. They got another chance in June 1998 when Ernst & Young gave them this new report that laid it all out. And they gave it to the minister, the current Minister of IGA (Intergovernmental Affairs), and that minister sitting right over there, the member from Meadow Lake. They gave them that information so they had a chance, they had a reprieve.

They had a second chance to do the right thing, to say, we are putting a stop to this because this is wrong; we are going to put a stop to this. This represents the wasting of millions of taxpayers' dollars, and more importantly it represents a deception of our trading partners, of our labour supporters, and most importantly of the people of Saskatchewan.

So did they do that? Did they do that, Mr. Speaker? Did somebody put their foot down and say, this isn't right? Or were they trying to get their member, their then member from Rosetown, elected — Mr. Wiens? Maybe that's what they were trying to do.

The question is this. Did anybody stand in their place, when they got that Ernst & Young report, and say, this is not right and we're going to stop this; we're going to take our lumps, we're going to say we made a mistake, we made a mistake; the

minister that misled the cabinet is going to be fired, and we're going to say sorry, and we're going to put a stop to it.

I think the people of the province would have probably been pretty receptive to that. I think they'd have been still a little upset with the member for P.A. Northcote, as they are today, most assuredly. But after they fired the minister, and after they said we're sorry that we lost all your money and we'll never do it again, they might have gotten a little bit of credit for that.

And you know, here's the irony of it. Let's go over the . . . Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier of the province, like a turkey at Thanksgiving, in a seat that's destined to be lost in the next election, is grinning, Mr. Speaker. He's grinning, he's grinning when people in his riding and people across this province — and people across this province — have absolutely had enough of NDP deception and the loss of 28 million taxpayer dollars, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — But he's grinning, he's grinning. Well, Mr. Speaker, I wonder then if somebody in the cabinet . . . It's probably not going to be the member for P.A. Northcote because he's into this thing so deep by June of '98, and he is into this thing so deep that there's absolutely nothing he can do but try to continue with the deception, and pour more money at it.

And I wonder how many trips he made to the then Sask Water minister's office and said, you know what, you've got to keep pouring money into this thing because if it ever comes to light, we're dead meat politically; you've got to keep pouring money into it.

I wonder . . . I wonder how many urgent meetings the member for P.A. Northcote had with the minister of Sask Water at the time. But maybe there was somebody on the front benches . . . maybe there was somebody on the front benches that got a hold of this Ernst & Young report and brought it to caucus and showed it to some of the NDP backbench MLAs and said, you know what folks, here's what we've done. We have a minister who's deceived his cabinet colleagues about a deal; we have a minister who has continued the deception; we are losing millions and millions and millions and millions of dollars. And, Mr. Speaker, apparently the government strategy . . . faced with that prospect, the government strategy is to what — is to cover it up.

So maybe that conversation happened. Maybe the member for Saskatoon Fairview — he's relatively new, probably not him — but maybe the member for Dewdney, or the member for Meewasin, or Moose Jaw Wakamow, or Saskatoon Eastview, or maybe the member for Cumberland at the time, maybe the member for Regina South . . . He was in the caucus at the time and I think he would have been offended by the prospect of the government misleading Saskatchewan people for six years and losing \$28 million.

Was nobody in the caucus aware of this? And if the members of caucus were aware of it, did nobody stand up and say no to the minister sitting there, the member for P.A. Northcote, no to the minister of Sask Water at the time? Did anyone stand up and

say no to him — this isn't acceptable?

Well we know the answer to the question, Mr. Speaker. We know the answer to the question. The answer to the question is, no, nobody said anything. They all sat on their hands because if somebody would have said something, something would have been done. If somebody would have done something, something would have been done. But nothing was done, Mr. Speaker.

And so a court case ensues, and wouldn't you know it — wouldn't you know it — bad luck for the NDP. As a result of the court case many, many documents that are filed in court become public. And in addition to that, somebody somewhere in Regina who has absolutely had enough of the Minister for IGA and the minister for Sask Water and the Deputy Premier sends in a brown envelope that very Ernst & Young study.

And because of the court documents and the brown envelope, Mr. Speaker, where we received that study, the truth of this becomes known in 2002, in December.

(14:45)

You know, Mr. Speaker, I can hear — believe it or not — I can hear the minister, the member for P.A. Northcote, yipping from his chair, and I didn't hear exactly what he said but he mentioned the word bonehead.

And isn't that irony of ironies, Mr. Speaker, that that minister, that minister who would deceive his colleagues and the people of the province of Saskatchewan and lose 28 million of the taxpayers' dollars and then sit sanctimoniously in cabinet with a grin on his face, isn't it ironic that he would be using the word bonehead, Mr. Speaker? Isn't that ironic?

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

**Mr. Wall:** — And he, Mr. Speaker, is apparently the best they have. Because the media, the media are dumbfounded after the Premier confirms that he won't be fired for this debacle. So the media asked the Premier, well why in the world wouldn't you fire him for all that he's did? Why wouldn't you fire that minister from your cabinet?

You know what the Premier said? Well he's the best I've got. I wonder how the Deputy Premier feels about that. I wonder how the Deputy Premier feels, knowing that that minister responsible for the worst political economic scandal in the history of the province is the best he's got, Mr. Speaker. I wonder how the Deputy Premier feels.

But, Mr. Speaker, there were so many opportunities for this government to do the right thing. There were so many opportunities for this government to do the right thing, but it sat on its hands. Well worse than that — worse than that — it poured millions more into this. It poured millions and millions more tax dollars into this project to cover it up.

But the court case and the brown envelopes came, and in December of last year the truth came out. And it was quite a two-week session of the legislature we had in December. We watched the reactions of these members opposite as this truth

came out. And as the depth of this scandal became apparent to the backbenches, it was interesting to watch them in question period. It was interesting to watch them after question period, with the Deputy Premier and the then minister of Sask Water and the then minister of Industry, I guess, trying to buck up their members, all the while fully ablated themselves by a scandal the likes of which we haven't seen, including the 1980s.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the information came out, and we asked question after question after question after question after question, and the answer we got is, it's before the courts. It's before the courts, Mr. Speaker.

Well eventually, a few weeks later, after still more questions, the Premier — in Saskatoon I think — right out of the blue says, you know what? We're going to have an inquiry. We're going to have a probe. That's what he says. And we're going to make the probe public. And so, the official opposition congratulates the Premier for that. Encourages him to keep the terms of reference broad, but congratulates him for the probe.

And two weeks later, the probe is given to him by his deputy minister, and the Premier releases it. Now the only problem with the probe is that he didn't keep the terms of reference broad. He kept them very narrow. He kept them very narrow on those three questions from that Ernst & Young report.

Now there were many other questions that haven't been answered, and we're going to continue to ask those questions.

But the deputy minister to the Premier's report said quite clearly . . . He handed over to the Premier his report that said, you know what? Here's the deal, Mr. Premier. One of your senior ministers hasn't been telling the truth. That's what his report said. In a letter to one of those who bid on the construction of the sheds, that's what the deputy minister's report said. And it also confirmed that the taxpayers' price for that little deception is \$28 million.

And we've already been over what happened as a result of that, Mr. Speaker. The accountability of the government opposite, the steps that were taken to address this . . . were what? They swapped Nanaimo bars at a new swearing-in ceremony, and the minister's got a new portfolio. That's the sum and the total of the action taken in the wake of a \$28 million scandal that is the result of six years of deception of taxpayers, their own labour friends, and cabinet colleagues, Mr. Speaker. That is the sum and the total.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — But you know, Mr. Speaker, the deputy minister's report . . . And the Deputy Premier will want to pay attention to this since apparently he has to now answer all the questions because the minister responsible is either unable or unwilling to do it. So he's got to answer some questions about Microgro, Mr. Speaker.

Do you remember Microgro, Mr. Speaker? Microgro was a seed growing business that was really begun at the encouragement of SPUDCO. SPUDCO said there's a real business opportunity for you to get into the nuclear seed business. Why don't you go ahead and do that, and we're going to have a long-term paying

relationship with you, and you can expand your business, and everything will be fine.

But by the time that agreement starts to get going, Mr. Speaker, by the time it starts to get going, SPUDCO's already in trouble. SPUDCO's axles are already pouring out grease. The thing's losing money. It's out of control.

And, Mr. Speaker, and we know now that the minister of Sask Water at the time, the current member for Meadow Lake, at a board meeting, at a Sask Water board meeting, approves of a strategy, approves of a strategy to impact this company's financial statements. There were some people that went bankrupt in that fiasco, Mr. Speaker.

On one hand the government's saying, why don't you get into this business and then on the other hand, the minister personally approving a strategy, personally approving a strategy to impact the financial statements of this company, to bankrupt a Saskatchewan company.

And the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow nods her head. She's nodding her head, and that is arrogance and the attitude that's going to result in this government getting an electoral horsewhipping in the next election.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — Right there, right there . . . the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow, that's the attitude that's going to result in their demise.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we should get back to Microgro. We should get back to Microgro. Believe it or not, believe it or not, the minister — the current minister of CIC and the then minister of Sask Water who sanctioned the strategy — is actually caught at a meeting in Saskatoon by the media. And the media put a microphone in his face and say, you know the Sask Party's asking if it's true that you financially . . . if you tried to impact the financial statements of a company to drive them under so you wouldn't have any more long-term commitment to them from SPUDCO's point of view. And the media asked him if that was true.

And do you know what the minister said? Well no, absolutely that's not true. In fact, the minister said, the minister said, we expedited payment to this group. We expedited a cheque when we got, like, about the third or fourth notice that they owed them money. That's what the minister said.

And the issue seemed to go away, but I think it's going to come back, Mr. Speaker. I think that issue's going to come back because a few days later on the front page of *The StarPhoenix* there is a special by a reporter named Jason Warick who's done some pretty significant work on this SPUDCO file. And he does an in-depth story on Microgro and their relationship with the government of Saskatchewan and their relationship with that minister. And they interviewed the people from this company. And it's pretty clear. It's very, very clear that shortly after he authorized the strategy to impact the financial statements of Microgro, the payments that were due them by Sask Water slowed down and then stopped to the end of that year, to the end of '98. And only in April of '99, after I don't know how

many more letters and after it was too late for Microgro, did the minister authorize a cheque to be paid.

So we're left to conclude what? We're left to conclude that it is precisely the fact of the case that this government, that minister, that also still sits on the front benches, set out on a purposeful strategy to damage a Saskatchewan company so that they wouldn't have to pay them, so they wouldn't have to pay their bills, Mr. Speaker. And for that he too should have been fired over the SPUDCO scandal, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — But nobody gets fired. Nobody pays any prices. What about the bingo scandal? That's also part of the motion today. I'm sure the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy will want to talk a little bit about that. But isn't that interesting. Aren't the parallels interesting between SPUDCO?

Here's another situation, another situation where there is no business plan for an investment in mega bingo linking bingos across the province. And, most alarmingly, there's no cabinet approval for this plan. So off they go, off they go, Mr. Speaker, without a cabinet approval and a business plan. Off the NDP go and they invest in this grandiose scheme to linked bingos. And I don't want to take all the content for the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy, but of course the sad news for taxpayers is, is that the end of the story is this. The end of the story is that we as the taxpayers, thanks to the NDP, lose another \$6.2 million.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when it became apparent . . . No and now we have a Premier by the way who in the wake of SPUDCO says, you know, this wasn't acceptable. I'm not going to hold any of my cabinet to account, but this whole SPUDCO thing was not acceptable, he says. And I am going to ask for a higher level of accountability now in the wake of SPUDCO. Things are going to change. That's what the Premier of the province said.

So the bingo scandal comes along, and we find out, Mr. Speaker, we find out that they learned absolutely nothing from SPUDCO. We find out that there would have been several opportunities — you would presume, if the cabinet ministers had a clue of what was going on at SLGA (Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority) and if they didn't have a clue they should have — several opportunities to put a stop to that madness and to come clean, and to come clean, Mr. Speaker, before the taxpayers lost \$6.2 million.

But did they do that? No, they probably sought the counsel of the member for P.A. Northcote. They probably sought the counsel of the current Minister of IGA who said, you know what? I've done this before, and here's how we do it. Here's how we do it. I got away with \$28 million. I've done this before. Don't say a word. Don't say a word to the taxpayers, and we'll get through this.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers have seen through both of these things. The taxpayers have seen through that. The taxpayers have seen through investments in dot-coms in Atlanta, Georgia. The taxpayers have seen through investments in Chile and Mexico. The taxpayers have seen through the land

titles debacle which the Minister of Industry stood up to defend today.

And let's just very quickly touch on that because it does relate directly to the kind of scandal we're talking about in the motion, Mr. Speaker.

The Information Services Corporation story is a compelling story. It's tragic, and it's sad for the taxpayers, but it's fairly compelling because remember this, that in 1996 the government of the day set out to automate land titles in Saskatchewan, something that we needed to do. We were the last province in the Dominion to do that, and the Saskatchewan Party completely agrees that that was the . . . (inaudible) . . . and the right thing to do at the time.

And they . . . We've got the cabinet item. They even cost out automating the land titles. It was \$19.7 million in that cabinet document. That was the cost to automate land titles in the province of Saskatchewan in 1996, but something happened along the way. And we know that Janice MacKinnon was concerned about it. On December 14, 2000, she got concerned with what happened along the way. Remember the plan. We'll get our land titles automated for \$19.7 million. And I don't know. I can't get into heads of the cabinet at that time. Frankly, I don't want to go there; it'd be a pretty scary place. But I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, but I'm pretty sure, Mr. Speaker, that what they would have done was checked out prices from other jurisdictions maybe. If we buy Manitoba's or Alberta's and bring it back here and modify it for Saskatchewan, we're probably looking at about 19.7, \$20 million.

But something happened on the way from common sense to NDP insanity. And it's highlighted a little bit, it's highlighted a little bit by Janice MacKinnon in this memo, "Request for Information Regarding Saskatchewan Information Services Corporation . . ." December 14, 2000. And I'd like to read some of it for you, if you don't mind, Mr. Speaker:

During the . . . (CIC) Board's review of Information Services Corporation's . . . *Performance Management Document* on December 8, 2000, I expressed my concern about the lack of details in ISC's Document, but more importantly the direction ISC seems to be heading.

When the province decided to proceed with the LAND project, it agreed not only to automate the land titles . . . but also to establish a Crown corporation . . . to carry out the task . . .

There, that's what happened on the way from common sense to insanity. The old 1970s shag-rug, lava-lamp solution of a Crown corporation for everything in the province reared its ugly head, and that's the decision that they made.

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

(15:00)

**Mr. Wall:** — But Ms. MacKinnon goes on, Mr. Speaker. Ms. MacKinnon in her memo goes on. It says:

This decision was made on the presumption that all aspects

of the venture would be profitable, based upon the commercial business case presented for developing, marketing, administering the province's land titles and geomatics . . .

This apparent expansion is of concern (she says) as there are no concrete opportunities for significant new revenue from sources beyond Land and Geomatics . . . SaskTel has the provincial mandate for the development of commercial e-commerce.

Here's the spectre of this. The minister, minister MacKinnon of the day is saying, you know what? ISC is getting so out of hand that it's starting to compete with other Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. So it's 500 per cent over budget. It's 500 per cent over budget. The system doesn't work, and they're competing with themselves. But other than that, it's a pretty good idea, Mr. Speaker.

Here's their other concerns:

Government information technology projects are tendered on a competitive basis, providing no preferential treatment of Crown entities;

The economic goal of growing the private information technologies sector may be put at risk with further expansion of the government in this area; and

The Information Technology Office is responsible for co-ordinating and managing the (IT) needs . . . of . . . government.

So those are the concerns that Ms. MacKinnon outlined at the time. She outlined some other very important concerns about deals like SPUDCO and deals like the bingo scandal and other deals we heard about today like ethanol. What does she say about them? She says:

This government . . . (Mr. Calvert et al. . . . I beg your pardon, the Premier et al.) are returning to the 1970s — to the tried and the failed policies of the 1970s that have been rejected absolutely everywhere in the free world.

That's what Janice MacKinnon says.

The member for Elphinstone's looking surprised, but he ought not to be. It was minister MacKinnon. It was Ms. MacKinnon that said those words. In fact, she said she could no longer abide to hang out with a bunch of — and I'm paraphrasing a bit — she could no longer abide to hang out with a bunch of wheeler-dealers, Mr. Speaker.

Well who are the wheeler-dealers on the government side? And I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that it is a lot easier to wheel and deal with someone else's money, Mr. Speaker, as we've seen from the NDP. But I wonder who are the wheeler-dealers over there? I think most of them gone.

The current Minister of CIC, he's a wheeler-dealer. He doesn't like to micromanage, he doesn't like to answer questions, but he likes to wheel and he likes to deal, Mr. Speaker. And he's here. He's here. I don't see any longer the member for P.A.

Northcote . . .

**The Speaker:** — I would ask the member not to make any reference to the absence or presence of members in the Assembly.

**Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I apologize for that. I apologize for that reference and I'll be much more careful. Mr. Speaker, I see some across the way that perhaps fall under the category that Ms. MacKinnon called wheeler-dealer . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, I don't think the Minister of Environment is a wheeler-dealer. I'm not sure he would have been in that circle of wheeler-dealers, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, but, Mr. Speaker, I think he found out about the wheeler-dealing, the wheely, the wheeling and the dealing. I think he found out about it and what did he do about it, Mr. Speaker? He did absolutely nothing. I think the Minister of Environment knew about the deception at SPUDCO, was aware of what was happening with the bingo scandal, knew about the Information Services Corporation debacle. I think he knew of all of those things and he chose to do nothing.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you this. They made their choice; they have made their choice. They have chosen quite wrongly to get involved in almost every sector of the economy, to risk money that's not their own, to risk involuntary shareholders' money, tax dollars. That's a choice they have made. And it has let down the great promise and potential of this province, greater than any other single policy that any other government pursued.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we've said time and time again, to the extent that previous governments made the same choice they also let down the people of the province. But there will be a new choice very, very soon, coming up in the next election. And people are already making that choice. We've seen the polling of late, and they are going to choose, Mr. Speaker, a path that does not betray the promise of Saskatchewan, that understands that our greatest asset is the people, is our business sector, is our entrepreneurs. And if we just get out of their way they will grow the province.

If we provide honest government, if we get our labour regulations right, our labour legislation right, our regulations right, if we stop competing with them with their own money, if we start telling them the truth and stop wasting money, that they will grow the province. The people will grow the province by 100,000 more of their compatriots in the next 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, the government, the NDP have made their choice. They made their choice in favour of government intervention. On the SPUDCO file they made their choice to stay silent, to deceive. They made their choice to mislead. All of those chances over five years to come clean and they made their choice to deceive. They made their choice on the bingo scandal to try to cover it up.

Mr. Speaker, they made their choice to invest taxpayers' dollars almost anywhere but the province of Saskatchewan. They made their choice to invest in Newcastle over Nipawin. They made their choice to invest in Atlanta, Georgia instead of Admiral, Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, they made their choice to

invest in Chile, in Mexico instead of Humboldt and Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker.

And now we're only a few short months away from the people of this province who will make their own choice. And they will make the choice to be sure, Mr. Speaker, to change the Government of Saskatchewan, to change its approach to the economy, and to grow Saskatchewan in a way we have not seen since 1905, frankly, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wall:** — But the first thing we've got to do — the first thing we got to do, Mr. Speaker — is clean up the mess. The Saskatchewan Party in government is going to have to clean up the mess. It's going to be a big job for the member for Rosetown. It's going to be a big job for the Saskatchewan Party. But we are committed to the job. We are committed to it. We are committed to clean up the mess.

What we have to do before we could start cleaning it up is recognize where the messes are, and that's what this motion's about today. We're recognizing at least where two of the messes are and we'll put them on the list of things that we're going to fix up.

So, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy:

That this Assembly condemns the current Premier and cabinet for its continuing practice of covering up financial losses in its numerous business ventures such as SPUDCO and mega bingo despite numerous promises in the past to be more forthright over such losses.

I so move.

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

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, it gives me great honour to stand today and speak to the motion that was forwarded by the member from Swift Current which reads: that this Assembly condemns the current Premier and cabinet for a continuing practice of covering up financial losses in its numerous business ventures such as SPUDCO and mega bingo despite numerous promises in the past to be more forthright over such losses.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is very obvious to the people of Saskatchewan that their promise of being more forthright certainly hasn't come true. And as they continue to do day after day in this legislature, we find out of the cover-ups that they have initiated. We keep believing that some day that we will wake up and this will be a thing of the past and we won't keep uncovering these initiatives.

But again . . . and, Mr. Speaker, Deputy Speaker, it makes us very, very concerned because the only way we ever find out about this misspending is if we uncover it or someone happens to pass us a brown envelope or sends us an e-mail or gives us some kind of a message and tells us what the NDP are really up to because they believe in this province and they're concerned about the people of this province and the taxpayers and the First Nations people that rely . . . especially when I'm speaking about



mega bingo, Mr. Speaker, because the dollars from mega bingo were to go directly to charities, to the people of this province, and to First Nations people to improve their lifestyle. And this government chose to cover that up for over two years, even when they knew full well that their scheme had failed and that they have lost 6.2 million taxpayers' dollars.

Mr. Speaker, in the annual report when they actually finally shut down mega bingo, there is one line . . . two lines, I apologize:

The mega bingo program is an interlinked bingo game that can be played simultaneously at more than one bingo hall. The mega bingo program was discontinued effective June 2001 and costs of discontinuing the program were expensed during the year.

Cost. No, no reference to the amount of money. And I looked through the annual reports, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and there is no reference to what this actually ever did cost. And at the end of the day, when they lost 6.2 million taxpayers' dollars, there's still no indication to the people of this province what this government lost.

Mr. Speaker, they did this with no business plan, no cabinet approval, no ministerial approval, no due diligence. Mr. Speaker, I ask the members opposite how they can justify this expenditure.

This government chose to do nothing to reveal to the people what they had done. They did nothing to help the bingo operators that they put in jeopardy. They went out . . . And I have to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that day after day in this House as we questioned the minister of Liquor and Gaming, first of all he told us that this was initiated by the bingo operators, then he told us that there was a committee, an advisory committee. Then he told us that there was no cost to charities. Then he told us that he was protecting charities and communities by this initiative, and then he told us that he had approval.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this simply is not the case. We have found out by reading, by speaking to people, that none of these issues were in fact the truth. Mr. Speaker, this was initiated by Liquor and Gaming. It was a failed venture from day one and we have yet, we have yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to have an answer from this minister or any other member of the NDP Party about what really went on with mega bingo.

Mr. Speaker, this is a failed venture and as the member from Swift Current has just spoke about the failed ventures of the NDP, that somehow they think \$6.2 million is small in comparison to what some of their other losses are. And I guess I'd have to agree with that.

When you have a \$28 million loss in SPUDCO and the member opposite, the Minister of CIC tells the people of Saskatchewan this is a success story; when we have a \$107 million loss in ISC and the Minister of Justice stands in the House today and somehow says that we, nor the people of Saskatchewan, know what we're talking about, that they really didn't lose \$107 million . . . And yet his officials claim otherwise. His officials gave a presentation saying that the cost was \$107 million.

Again even today, in light of this fact, we have this minister still trying to deceive the people of the province by saying we don't understand, the people of the province don't understand, that somehow this was not the amount that was spent.

Mr. Speaker, again the people of Saskatchewan want to know who gave authorization for the mega bingo project. Mr. Speaker, if we look back to 1997 when this was originally initiated, it was the minister, the now Minister of CIC that was in charge of Liquor and Gaming at that time. Did this minister stand in the House last week when we asked these questions and say, I was the one that gave authorization? Or did he give authorization? Or did no one give authorization?

The minister of Liquor and Gaming today tells us that they gave approval in the concept. But then after the fact, when the \$6.2 million was tendered according to them, did they give approval for the \$6.2 million? Or is there someone that worked in Liquor and Gaming at that time who was given the authority to expend \$6.2 million — taxpayers' money — with no business plan, no cabinet approval, no ministerial approval, and no due diligence?

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

(15:15)

**Ms. Bakken:** — And the members opposite have absolutely no regard for this loss. This is money, Mr. Speaker, that was to go to charities and was to go to First Nations people. And I can think of a lot of reasons — a lot of reasons — a lot of ways that that money could have been used.

And I am sure that if you asked people across this province . . . In fact, Mr. Speaker, there was a farm, home, and leisure show in Weyburn on the weekend. And people were coming up to me and saying, I drive over the highways in this constituency day after day and put up with that and this NDP government that is supposed to represent me spends \$6.2 million on a failed bingo scheme — and I am supposed to put up with driving on highways like this? It is not acceptable.

I have people saying, this could have been used for hospitals; it could have been used for education. We have a school in our constituency, Mr. Speaker, called the Mini Go School. It is for kids that need some help before they go to school to help them get integrated into society. And last year, last year, we needed money. We needed \$50,000 to help those kids so we could have more students in that program and, Mr. Speaker, it took months of trying and looking for money for that.

And yet, this government, the NDP, takes \$6.2 million on top of all the other failed ventures that we have talked about today and spent it and have absolutely no regards.

And on top of that, Mr. Speaker, we find out last week also that the Community Initiatives Fund, \$7 million was taken out of the Community Initiatives Fund. And what was the explanation from the department? The explanation was, communities don't need it. They have so much money that we didn't need to give this money to Community Initiatives Fund. And yet at the same time we have a list eight pages long that the member from Wood River produced showing communities that wanted this money, that needed this money, and were denied. And those are

only the ones that applied. Never mind all the other initiatives out there that communities could use.

Mr. Speaker, it is appalling to see what this government is doing and how they have no regard for the people of this province and the money — the hard-earned taxpayers' money — that they are squandering.

Mr. Speaker, the bingo hall operators in this province were told that this was a good deal for them. They were told that they should get into this. And originally there was a three-year contract promised to the bingo hall operators of this province because many of them, Mr. Speaker, many of them had to put money upfront.

And as we spoke about on Friday, we talked about the Kindersley Lions Club who it cost almost \$2,400 to get into the failed bingo scheme — money that they cannot recoup. But they went into that believing that they had three years to recapture that capital. However after they got into the scheme, the government came along and changed the contract to a one-year contract. And then before the one-year contract was up, they cancelled the contract altogether with absolutely no regard for the communities that they had got involved in the first place and that they had encouraged to go into the bingo scheme because they said it was going to work.

And, Mr. Speaker, you know, if we want to go back a few years when the NDP got into the VLTs (video lottery terminal) and they started the spiral downward for communities where they could not realize the same dollars that they could raise for charities and, Mr. Speaker, at that time the NDP in 1995 — this same government — they went to communities and they promised them, they promised them in 1995 that they would return 10 per cent of all VLT revenue to communities; that they would be able to, the communities would be able to decide how to spend that 10 per cent. It never happened.

One more example of a failed promise of this NDP because promises mean absolutely nothing to the NDP government. It's all a bunch of rhetoric; it's put on paper; they have absolutely no intention of carrying through on their promises.

The other promise that they made at that time, Mr. Speaker, was that they would cut back VLTs from 4,000 to 3,600. Mr. Speaker, they did follow through on that but not for very long. We have now turned the page again and we're going back up to 4,000 VLTs in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, just to give you a comparison. In Saskatchewan we have about 1 million people and we have 4,000 VLTs. In Alberta, in Alberta we have 3 million people and we have 6,000 VLTs . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well do the numbers. If we did the same as Alberta, we'd have much less number of VLTs than we have, much less. Because they have 2,000 VLTs per million people; we have 4,000 VLTs for 1 million people.

And yet when we had the study done on gambling and problem gambling in this province, Mr. Speaker, it was shown that VLTs are the most addictive form of gambling that there is. And yet what does this government do, what does the NDP government do? They add more VLTs, not take them away.

And, Mr. Speaker, what did the Premier say about VLTs? What was the Premier's stand on gambling? Mr. Speaker, he was opposed to gambling in this province, he was opposed to it. And what did the Premier say when we increased the VLTs from 3,600 to 4,000? He sat in his chair and said nothing.

Mr. Speaker, this government, this NDP government is addicted to gambling. They are addicted more than any of the people that are out there gambling. It is this NDP government . . . This year alone, \$200 million from VLT revenue alone taken out of communities and there is absolutely no commitment by this government to return that 10 per cent that they promised in 1995.

And even today, now they're taking the money away that was put in the CIF (Community Initiatives Fund) fund because communities don't need it. Well I challenge this NDP government, the members of this NDP government to go out into Saskatchewan — Regina, Saskatoon, Yorkton, P.A., Weyburn, any rural community — and ask them if they do not have any need for money out of the Community Initiatives Fund. And I can guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, that you will find that the answer is they would welcome some money that would be returned to them so that they could decide how they could use it in their communities.

Instead of what we see today, even with the Community Initiatives Fund the way it is, Mr. Speaker, the NDP party, or the NDP government, Mr. Speaker, they decide how the dollars are going to be spent, not the communities.

Mr. Speaker, there was . . . At the time that mega bingo was started in Saskatchewan, when the concept was initiated back in 1997 or 1996, we wonder, did this NDP government have a preconceived notion of what they wanted and set up a tender process or an RFP (request for proposal) process so that only certain parties would be able to fulfill it.

Or did they ever stop and think, Mr. Speaker, about looking to other jurisdictions that had already a system in place where they could link bingos, for instance, the province of Alberta. But, Mr. Speaker, the province of Alberta has a satellite system. And, Mr. Speaker, the information that I have is that it would be about 10 per cent, 10 per cent of the cost that this government spent on their mega bingo scheme.

And the other thing that's different about Saskatchewan's mega bingo is that, in Alberta, it is 100 per cent privately owned. What a novel concept. Instead of risking 6.2 million taxpayers' dollars on a failed scheme, they could have initiated this, put it in a private sector, allowed a private business to go ahead with it if they thought it would work, use a satellite system at a tenth the cost. And, Mr. Speaker, today in Alberta, this system is still in place and still working and still generating dollars for charities in the province of Alberta.

In Saskatchewan, not only did we not make money for charities in this province, but communities . . . charities lost money because they put money in to start the bingo and they also lost money, Mr. Speaker. And we lost, for the taxpayers at large, \$6.2 million — \$6.2 million. And somehow the members of the NDP think that this doesn't matter; it's just a good deal.

You know we heard from the minister over and over again how, you know, they did it on behalf of charities. Well what the charities in this province say, don't do us any more favours; please don't do us any more favours. They want this government to allow them to run the bingo halls, which is what they know how to do. The bingo operators know how to run bingo halls.

The responsibility of Liquor and Gaming is not to be in the business of running business halls. It is to regulate under the Criminal Code section 207 and to ensure that bingo halls are run appropriately under the regulation and under the Criminal Code. And they are to inspect bingo halls. But they are not — they are not — to be in the business of running bingo halls.

And we see this time and time again, Mr. Speaker, where this government decides that somehow they know better and they have to get involved directly with business. We seen it in SPUDCO and we all know what happened to SPUDCO, Mr. Speaker.

We seen how they took a growing potato industry in this province . . . We seen how they took Microgro, an initiative of two individuals in this province — one of which is from my constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy — and they caused them to fail. They deliberately caused them to fail. And somehow they think that this is acceptable. Well, Mr. Speaker, it is not acceptable.

And, Mr. Speaker, when the time came, Mr. Speaker, when the time came to shut down the mega bingo, they did this without the approval and consultation of the bingo hall operators. They were given no option; they were shut down. And, Mr. Speaker, this to the very people that they went to and they encouraged to go into this, into the bingo scheme. They shut them down without any of . . . without them having the option, without having a decision made ahead of time.

They formed a committee after the fact, an advisory committee after the bingo scheme failed. I think that was a little bit late to decide to have a committee to discuss the issue with.

If this government, Mr. Speaker, would have taken the initiative before they started mega bingo to talk to the bingo hall operators and ask them if they thought that this would work, to talk to the charities across this province about what could work, but they failed to do that. They went ahead with this scheme, Mr. Speaker, without the involvement and the expertise of the people that had been the drivers of creating and making dollars for charity in this province who had a system that worked.

And because of this NDP and bringing VLTs into the province, they were seeing their dollars that they used to make for charity were going down. And they were looking for a way, but they were not consulted about whether this was the deal that would work to help them increase dollars for charities, Mr. Speaker.

And again we keep seeing how this government, once they get involved in deals, in ventures, they continue to lose taxpayers' dollars. We have SPUDCO; we have \$107 million in ISC; the whole SHIN (Saskatchewan Health Information Network) project, which I believe the last time I checked was at \$80 million and we've yet to figure out what in the world SHIN is

doing. We haven't heard the NDP give us an update on what SHIN is doing. Yet they've spent \$80 million. And the Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker, says . . . I believe she's saying that it works.

Well we would like a report from the Minister of Health about what — or the Minister of Learning, my apologies, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Learning — and about where we're at with SHIN and whether it actually works.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen the dollars that have been lost in Channel Lake, in Australia ventures, in dot-coms, in SecurTek, and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker. And yet we have no apology from this government. They sit in their seats day after day and somehow think it is okay that this is what happened.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the ways that this \$6.2 million could have been spent, along with all the other millions of dollars that the member from Swift Current spoke about today, how they could have been spent to the betterment of the people of this province.

We have the mayors . . . I was watching, Mr. Speaker, last evening the city of Regina. And they're in this huge debate over how they are going to meet expenditures in the city of Regina — whether they're going to have to increase the mill rate or whether they're going to take money out of reserves or whether they're going to have to cut expenditures — and I believe it's for just over \$1 million, Mr. Speaker.

(15:30)

And we had the mayors throughout this whole province that are contemplating how they are going to meet their budget responsibilities. These mayors came to this government, they came to this government and they asked for them to consider that they needed more dollars. Because they went along with this government when times were tough and they needed to cut back and they realized that we needed to get the deficit under control in this province, Mr. Speaker, and the mayors were willing to go along with this.

And now when times are better, Mr. Speaker, what does this government do? 4.9 million for all of the major cities in this province — less than what they spent on mega bingo without any plan, without ministerial approval, without cabinet approval, without any due diligence.

And, Mr. Speaker, we still do not know to this day, after six days of questioning in this legislature, the minister responsible for Liquor and Gaming has failed to answer the simple question: who gave approval for the expenditure of \$6.2 million? And we will not quit asking that question until there is an answer, Mr. Speaker, and the people of this province will not quit asking until there is an answer.

And when the members of the NDP go out to campaign in the next election and they're on the doorstep, I'm sure that many of them are going to get the question: who gave approval to the mega bingo scheme? Were you part of the scheme; did you — they'll ask the member that's on their doorstep — did you know about this scheme; were you sitting at the cabinet table when this was discussed, when the concept was discussed according

to the minister of Liquor and Gaming, the concept?

And somehow, somehow we're supposed to believe that this government was so incompetent that they gave approval for a concept without any dollars attached to it. If that is the case, Mr. Speaker, it is a very, very, very sad commentary on this government, that they would approve the concept of mega bingo without any regard for the dollars that were going to be spent on it.

If that is the case, that is even worse, I believe, in the minds of the people of this province, that they have a government that is supposed to be guarding the best interests of their tax dollars and they approve a concept, Mr. Speaker, without any regard for the amount of dollars. And I guess it begs the question: could this then come in at \$10 million? Could mega bingo have cost \$20 million?

And I guess, according to the NDP, because they approved the concept that any dollar amount was acceptable, Mr. Speaker, it is a very sad commentary about this government, that they have so little regard, Mr. Speaker, so little regard for the tax dollars of this province, that they spent \$6.2 million without even having it approved — that they just turned the decision over to someone else.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I make the point that there is not been an answer in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, about who actually gave that approval. Was it indeed the minister of Liquor and Gaming at that time who is now the Minister of CIC? Or was the responsibility delegated to someone that worked in Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming at that time, in 1998, when the final approval was given? Was \$6.2 million, the expenditure of \$6.2 million turned over to someone that worked in Liquor and Gaming? And if so, Mr. Speaker, who was that person? Was that person held responsible, Mr. Speaker, for losing \$6.2 million of taxpayers' money?

Was that person, whoever they are, held accountable? Because it is obvious, Mr. Speaker, that no minister was held accountable. No minister was held accountable for the loss of \$6.2 million. So the question that the people of this province want to know is, who was held accountable? Who was held accountable for the loss of \$6.2 million?

And, Mr. Speaker, I look at . . . This is the same government, the same NDP government that last year tried to hide 90 per cent increase to seniors in this province to try and balance their budget. Not much different than what they're doing now, this year, with CIF where they're taking \$7 million out of CIF and putting it into the General Revenue.

And, Mr. Speaker, we see the same scenario where they tried to hide 90 per cent, Mr. Speaker — 90 per cent charged to seniors. It is absolutely appalling. And then they stood behind that for day after day after day after day in this legislature and the member, the member for Regina Wascana Plain at that time, Mr. Speaker, said to the legislature and the people of this province, we put in 90 per cent because it's the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, it was not the member from Regina Wascana Plain. I have to apologize. It was . . . it is now the Minister of

Transportation, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Regina Qu'Appelle. And he stood in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, and he said, it's the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker, to charge the seniors of this province 90 per cent of their dollars in fees for nursing homes, Mr. Speaker.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we go back to the mega bingo scandal and somehow, Mr. Speaker, the NDP believe and try to tell us it somehow doesn't matter, the \$6.2 million. And I guess when you've lost \$28 million on SPUDCO, and spent 107 million on ISC, maybe \$6.2 million doesn't sound like very much. But it is a lot of money to the people of this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, just to put it into perspective, that is three times — almost three times — the amount of money that the whole Dutch Lerat, SIGA (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority) scandal was about. And that initiated an investigation, Mr. Speaker, a criminal investigation because of the loss of \$2.1 million. And now we have a loss of \$6.2 million in the same department, Mr. Speaker, and somehow it doesn't matter. The NDP thinks it's . . . think that it is inconsequential.

Mr. Speaker, it is also one-quarter of the loss that was realized in SPUDCO. And, Mr. Speaker, we know that SPUDCO is a huge, huge issue in the minds of the people across this province because \$28 million would go a long way to improving the lifestyles of many people in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is just to put it into a bit of perspective so that people in this province, and maybe the NDP, just maybe the NDP, will realize how serious it is to lose \$6.2 million.

Mr. Speaker, people across this province, and I have to say the media as well, have been very, very outraged about this whole scandal. And I'd just to read a few of the headings from the paper in the last few days, Mr. Speaker.

"Government mum on okayed bingo deal." "Mega bingo deal didn't get cabinet okay." "Osika admits to lack of business plan." "Bingo contract questioned." "We're all losers at bingo in Saskatchewan." "Opponents slam bingo boondoggle." "Bingo research was limited." "New Democrats and bingo seem to go hand in hand." "Opposition drills government over bingo software deal." "Osika won't say who gave final approval."

And the lists go on, Mr. Speaker. Those are but a few of the articles that have been in the papers. And I'm sure that the members opposite have read the articles and have heard the outrage of the people in this province, Mr. Speaker, about the failure of this government to be responsible for their hard-earned taxpayers' dollars.

And, Mr. Speaker, directly relating to gambling dollars that are generated in this province is the whole initiative about responsibility and providing services for addictions in the province. And, Mr. Speaker, there is great need for an in-patient treatment centre in Saskatchewan. And I realize that there has been one now started by the First Nations in this province. However, there is not one anywhere else in the province of Saskatchewan. And I recently spoke with an addictions counsellor who told me that it took up to five weeks. Mr. Speaker, we could have used the dollars from mega bingo to start an in-patient treatment centre in the province of

Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have talked about Alberta and how they had a plan there that was totally private driven; it would have been much less cost and it would not have been any cost to the Government of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, there are many, many ways that this money could have been used.

And, Mr. Speaker, again the whole issue around the RFP that was put out and how it was awarded still are huge questions in the minds of the members on this side of the House and certainly in the minds of the people of Saskatchewan.

And with the linked bingo RFP, the successful party also had to have a cash and paper management system. And, Mr. Speaker, this is something that Wascana Gaming was into, was part of, and there's huge questions around how this whole initiative actually ended up being awarded to Wascana Gaming because of their close ties with the NDP government and what really transpired in this whole issue.

Was the low bid actually approved, Mr. Speaker? Were the bids given to Liquor and Gaming? And who actually gave approval from Liquor and Gaming for them? Were the bids for the software and the hardware, were they separated? And how were they actually awarded?

And, Mr. Speaker, there's also a huge . . . more issues and questions around the whole issue of Wascana Gaming now receiving dollars — somewhere up to \$500,000 in the last two years — also from this government.

And, Mr. Speaker, the whole question comes back to \$6.2 million being awarded by this government and there was absolutely — apparently, from the words of the minister — no ceiling put on what could be spent in order to achieve their goals.

And, Mr. Speaker, this government continues — even today as we speak about the failed ventures of this NDP government — continue to prop up the idea that losing \$6.2 million, with no business plan, no cabinet approval, no ministerial approval, is somehow acceptable. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the NDP need to consider apologizing — firstly to the charities of this province who put their trust and their stake in this program; they need to apologize to the First Nations people of this province who rely on these dollars for their programs; and they need to apologize to the taxpayers at large in this province because they caused them to lose \$6.2 million that could have been used for many, many other reasons.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want the NDP to know, Mr. Speaker, that they are going to have to answer for who gave approval to this. The people of Saskatchewan are demanding that they be held accountable and that they have an answer.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province are almost becoming immune to the continual loss of taxpayers' dollars by this government. It's almost like oh, they lost another \$6 million. It's like old home week. It's nothing new. And it's a very, very sad commentary, Mr. Speaker, about the legacy of this government that has lost so many millions of dollars on failed ventures in this province that people aren't even really paying

attention any more because it's common day. It is scandalous to think that a government, that a government, can lose \$6.2 million; that the members of the government don't seem to be concerned; that the minister refuses to answer the questions around how it was lost.

And, Mr. Speaker, we move today that the people of this province are going to have an opportunity on election day to hold this government accountable. And they are going to have to answer to the people of Saskatchewan about how they allowed this to happen and how they allowed it to be covered up for over two years with absolutely no mention that this had ever happened until it was raised by the opposition in this province.

Today — today, Mr. Speaker — this still would not be, still would not be revealed if the opposition had not questioned this. One line, one line in the annual report, with absolutely no reference to the amount of money — no reference to the amount of money.

And, Mr. Speaker, this government will be held accountable on election day because they failed to . . . because they have turned a blind eye and they have failed the people of this province. They have covered it up time and time again. And it begs the question, Mr. Speaker — and I'm sure this is in the minds of most people in this province — what else is this government, what else is this government covering up that we have yet to find out?

(15:45)

And, Mr. Speaker, our commitment to the people of this province when we become government, which will be very soon, after the next election when we become government, Mr. Speaker, we will find out what happened. We will uncover these misspent expenditures and we will reveal to the people of the province what this NDP government was really up to.

And I . . . sadly to say, Mr. Speaker, I believe that there's going to be much more uncovered than what we know today. Sadly to say, there have been millions of dollars misspent that we know of. How many more million have been misspent as well?

Mr. Speaker, I now read in closing again our motion — that this Assembly condemns the current Premier and cabinet for a continuing practice of covering up financial losses in its numerous business ventures such as SPUDCO and mega bingo despite numerous promises in the past to be more forthright over such losses.

I second the motion.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you. I feel a bit amazed. At moments I feel I don't know what to say. The antics, the hysterics, the ranting, the extreme behaviour — I'm not sure whether I'm watching a Shakespearean comedy or tragedy.

I don't know if you remember *A Midsummer Nights Dream*. There was a character in there, Bottom, who thinks he's all things to all people. And one night he's transformed with this

ass's head and he has a bizarre dream and I'm . . . Quite an entertaining guy. But I mean the grade 8s loved him.

Or was I watching the Iraqi information officer in front of the Palestinian hotel denying the state of reality . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Got willpower and I am here.

But, Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks — and they'll be brief and to the point and I won't repeat myself — I will be moving an amendment. I will be moving an amendment and I'll explain why this amendment in a few minutes.

And it will say, that after the word, Assembly, be deleted and replaced with the following: commend the current Premier and the cabinet for the continuing practice of supporting business ventures that achieve economic diversification and community development in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is why really I am excited to move this as an amendment. When I was doing my graduate work in the University of Saskatchewan in the mid-90s and we were talking about change . . . and I'm really enthralled by this side of the House because we really are looking forward to change. And how do we make change happen in this great province? Well there was a story, and that was, what is the similarities between a jet, a jumbo jet and a supertanker? Well the key difference is this: neither one has rear-view mirrors. They have a job to do, and they're going forward to do it.

But there is an underlining technology planning, careful planning of what we have to do to get from point A to point B. We know the experience. We've learned from the experience. But we are moving forward, and that's what this is all about. We are moving forward, and we have a plan to do that. And that's what this is all about.

And I was very excited to be elected in 2001 because we are moving forward, and I saw that with our Premier, that we have a plan, and people are moving forward. And I hear what's going on today, and I think, are we stuck in the pre-1999 election mode? Have we not got past that time? We are still talking about the '90s. And you know, when you look back in a rear-view mirror, you can't just pick where you stop.

And I was interested in hearing the member speak about going back to 1905. Well there was a chunk of time in there, the 1980s. And I don't know if we're going to go into selective memory about what we want to talk about, what we don't want to talk about. We don't want to talk about the '80s, but we want to talk about the '90s. We want to quote so-and-so. We don't want to quote so-and-so.

Our plan is the future. Our plan is the future, and I'm very excited about that, and I'm happy to be here on this side of the House. And we will be on this side of the House for many years to come because people are listening to us, and we resonate with what their hopes, what their plans are for the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, before I go any further, I want to paint the landscape. What's happening in Saskatchewan today? We have our vision, but you can't really explain a vision unless you tell what is the landscape out there right now. And it is not a group of negative people. It is not a bunch of people complaining.

That's not what we hear. We hear of things happening. People are excited about the future here in Saskatchewan.

Now what happened . . . well let's take a look at the end of the year, the end of the year 2002. Well, Mr. Speaker, in fact actually, it's 11 months now. But at that time, we had seven months of consecutive, solid, job growth over last year's figures. All right? We had the highest number ever of people working November and a 5.3 per cent increase in employment. Employment was up in both agriculture and non-agricultural sectors compared to the year before. This is really good news.

In November 2002, employment gains were seen in full-time employment up by 15,000, part-time employment up by 9,200. Now this is really important. We see these trends are continuing. And we don't hear about this every day. It's like this doesn't exist. All right? We need to be talking about the positive things. This is what people are talking about. Saskatchewan has the third-lowest unemployment rate in Canada. Retail sales in Saskatchewan during September 2002 totalled over \$700 million, an increase of over 5 per cent compared to the year before. Saskatchewan department store sales were increased by 6.7 per cent to \$63 million. Mr. Speaker, in October manufacturing shipments in Saskatchewan increased by over 6 per cent. New capital investment is expected to grow by over 5 per cent this year. In October 2002 the value of residential building permits totalled \$28 million, an increase of 74 per cent compared to the year before.

Now, Mr. Speaker, just a few days ago, we had a member's statement talking about record housing permits being issued. Housing starts in Saskatchewan, urban centres, increased by 23 per cent. Saskatchewan natural gas production has increased, and so has our potash sales. Our average weekly earnings for all industries since September 2002 increased by over 1 per cent, and this is very good news. And new motor vehicle sales have increased. New business incorporations are increasing, and so is tourism.

*Partnership for Prosperity*, what's our year one progress report? Well we are on track or have met the planned 16 targets. Our Synchrotron Institute has been established. And land sales in 2002 are the highest in five years. And a greenprint for ethanol production is on track.

Now I could go through a whole list here, Mr. Speaker, but I do want to talk about what I think is the best jewel, the best thing we have going for us right now. It's our Future is Wide Open campaign. This is an extensive three-year marketing campaign that is aimed at improving Saskatchewan's image. And this is what our plan is. This is our vision. Saskatchewan is a great place to live, learn, work, and play and do business. And it's part of our provincial government's commitment to improving attitudes about our province and promoting business and investment in Saskatchewan. And it is working. This is an important campaign.

Now what are some of our visions, Mr. Speaker? Well I'll just go through some of them. They're very important, and I think they illustrate our commitment to people here in Saskatchewan and to business and to development here, community development in our province.

First, Mr. Speaker, now this may start to sound like the budget speech because in a sense that's our tool, our plan for making things happen this year. But, Mr. Speaker, our vision is a modern, competitive, economic infrastructure that supports unlimited growth and creates the opportunities of the future.

Now how are we doing this, Mr. Speaker? Well we've heard a lot of talk about CommunityNet, and that's our province's gateway to the future providing high-speed internet access to schools, libraries, health facilities, individuals, and communities across the province. Highways, we've invested almost about \$1 billion in our highways system, ensuring that transportation network is capable of supporting the movement of goods in and out of our province.

Mr. Speaker, we have taken a balanced approach, and we see the Sask Party is taking an extreme approach. They talk about extremes. And the extreme . . . and that's hard. They are hard when it comes to these issues. But we are taking a balanced approach. We are giving tax cuts that protect investments in infrastructure — a very, very common sense approach.

Mr. Speaker, we have a vision that our Crown corporations will help to build a growing economy. The Crowns are very critical to this. They do a lot of work here in the province to support the businesses here. We spent over \$1 billion for businesses in this province. Crowns buy from over 12,000 Saskatchewan suppliers of goods and services. Over 600 local dealers and brokers throughout the province partner with the Crowns to provide telecom, natural gas, and insurance services. And Crowns invest over \$400 million every year to expand and improve their service networks, creating thousands of construction jobs. This is very important.

And, Mr. Speaker, most of the half-billion-dollar annual payroll of Crown employees is spent in their communities throughout this province. This is a critical piece, Mr. Speaker, because we know, we know the Sask Party's plan — and they have said it many times over — is to attack the Crowns and prepare them for sale when the price is right. And this would be most unfortunate for the people of Saskatchewan. This extreme approach to the economy that they talk about will not go to help our province grow.

Mr. Speaker, another area that is very important are the cultural industries. We've done a lot of work here in supporting that industry because we know that is the voice of the people here in Saskatchewan.

Last year we introduced The Status of the Artist legislation which recognizes the contribution of cultural workers that they make to the enrichment of our society. The Saskatchewan film employment tax credit, since the tax credit was implemented, production volumes have reached over \$140 million in this province. And of course our sound stage here in Regina. We continue to support the Saskatchewan Arts Board with over \$3.7 million a year, and this is the oldest arms-length funding agency of its kind in North America. The Saskatchewan arts stabilization program provides large art institutions with working capital in recognition of the high level of organizational management and governance they have.

Mr. Speaker, we have the Saskatchewan Communications

Network, very important aspect. And, Mr. Speaker, as well, we support through the lottery system, Sask Culture, with over \$8 million a year in cultural funding, and the Western Development Museum of \$2.4 million.

Mr. Speaker, again our vision, our vision of the Wide Open Future campaign is a safe, modern, efficient transportation system. The plan is the largest . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I would just ask the member to try to relate his remarks more to the nature of the motion before us which deals with finances and business ventures. And so I would ask the member to confine his remarks to that aspect. There's not yet an amendment before the floor, so I would ask the member to stick to the topic.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll restate my amendment that I would be adding, and that would be, after the word, Assembly, be deleted and replaced with the following words: commend the current Premier and cabinet for a continuing practice of supporting business ventures that achieve economic diversification and community development in Saskatchewan.

And so I would think that the transportation system would relate to that in terms of economic diversification. So this will be our largest investment for transportation system. And as well again, this is a balanced approach to sustainable investment for our future economic and community development. Mr. Speaker, of course we've talked a lot about our . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. Why is the member from Estevan on her feet?

**Ms. Eagles:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave, to introduce a guest, please.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Ms. Eagles:** — First of all, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for allowing me to interrupt his speech.

And to you and through you to all members of this House, I would like to introduce a person that is no stranger to this House. He was the member for Rosetown-Elrose in 1975, and he is now my Member of Parliament for Souris-Moose Mountain, Mr. Roy Bailey. And I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming Roy.

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

(16:00)

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

##### Motion No. 2 — Government Approach to Business Ventures (continued)

**Mr. Forbes:** — Our vision on this landscape of jobs, jobs, jobs is a world-class research creating new jobs, new jobs, high-end

jobs and opportunities. This is very important as we approach our centennial.

Well there's three or four things that we're doing here. One is continuing support for Innovation Place at the University of Saskatchewan, one of the leading university-based research parks in North America, home to more than 115 companies and research organizations that employ 2,000 people, Mr. Speaker, and contribute more than \$245 million a year to the provincial economy.

Here in Regina, we continue support for the Regina Research Park at the University of Regina which is rapidly becoming one of Canada's leading research centres for the study of climate change and as it relates to the energy industry.

Mr. Speaker, and I already mentioned this as well, so I'll try not to repeat myself, but the Canadian Light Source synchrotron — very important investment here in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, as well speaking to the amendment, we have a historic expansion of mining and mineral exploration happening here in this province right now. Our vision is for thousands of new jobs and opportunities for Saskatchewan people, created through a policy of targeted, sustainable tax changes and regulation reforms. This is made possible through a 10-year royalty holiday for new precious and base metal mines, a rebate of tax on fuel used to generate power in remote locations and on fuel used for off-road mineral exploration activities, and incentives to encourage grassroots, mineral exploration by individual prospectors and exploration companies.

Mr. Speaker, this is very exciting to see the things that have happened with this. And again we've heard members' statements to this effect these past few days. Mr. Speaker. This speaks to a balanced, common-sense approach that our government is taking.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on, but I think that what I want to do is talk about our vision for fair, competitive taxes for small businesses to encourage new jobs. And we've heard about this recently in our budget — how we plan to encourage and think and listen to small businesses, the kind of things that they need. These will be targeted tax cuts that encourage investment and jobs, particularly the small business corporate tax rate, and it's being reduced in rates, and this is very, very exciting stuff.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the Sask Party and their extreme position. And yesterday I raised a point about how they look across the country and think about how do they relate to different political parties.

And today we heard them talking about the Quebec Liberals and how they would tie themselves to the Quebec Liberals. But I was a little shocked yesterday when they wouldn't tie themselves to the BC (British Columbia) Liberals. And that was a different story yesterday, but we've seen the kind of things that are happening in BC. And here they are, yes, today they were a Quebec Liberal but not a BC Liberal.

But here I just want to read this piece here. First the Saskatchewan Party latched on to the BC plan and the Saskatchewan Party leader declared in a speech to the North

Saskatoon Business Association:

One initiative that I believe holds tremendous value for Saskatchewan is a project launched by Premier Campbell called the *Core Services Review*.

He went on to say:

A Saskatchewan Party government will launch a similar Core Services Review in this province within 30 days of taking office.

And this is quite alarming because we know that that's causing a lot of problems and in fact it sounds like the United Nations body, the International Labour Organization, has condemned this core services review on a couple of occasions, particularly how they treat the public service employees and as well as how they treat women.

So I do have a lot of concerns about the extreme behaviour, the extreme rhetoric, these extreme ideas — because I don't think I would call them plans — that are coming out of the Saskatchewan Party, and we hear them daily. And I think we need to take a more reasoned, a more common sense, a more balanced approach as we approach the future.

Mr. Speaker, I see this happening on this side of the House. The government is very interested in hearing what people have to say. We will take those chances. We will support the people here in this province and we have done that and we will continue to do that.

We have built plans. We have the infrastructure. We understand what needs to be done. But what alarms me is what happens on the other side of the House with, for example, the hysterics, the ranting that went on earlier today. That really shows how one-level or shallow some of their thinking is.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would conclude by reading once again my amendment. I move:

That all words after the word "Assembly" be deleted and replaced with the following (and I quote):

commend the current Premier and cabinet for a continuing practice of supporting business ventures that achieve economic diversification and community development in Saskatchewan.

I move that, and seconded by the member from Regina Northeast. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pride to second the motion moved by my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld. And I can't help but fully support the amendment.

What this amendment does is actually point out the real thrust of the debate here this afternoon. And that thrust of the debate is about building the economy here in Saskatchewan, about building our province, about the different ideas or the different



perspectives on how that can be done.

Here in Saskatchewan we have for a number of years now proven the ability that, in order to build the province and build it successfully and build our economy, building our society, you must have a plan. A plan that clearly outlines the strengths of our province, that works with what we have and builds on those strengths, and it, I suppose, Mr. Speaker, could be best compared to building the pillars of support, the strength of our economy. And those pillars are numerous. We have individual initiative with individual investment and individual entrepreneurs working in this province and doing so very successfully.

We've also recognized, and a long time ago recognized by our forefathers and the leaders in this province, that there was a need for the public sector to play a meaningful role. And that could best be done in the service areas such as providing electricity, natural gas, telephones, and those types of services that could be best provided by the public endeavours. And thusly was created the Crown corporations to serve that need, to serve the Saskatchewan people with the abilities to have the service, to enjoy that service at a very competitive cost — competitive costs so that they could compete in the commercial marketplace, compete not only interprovincially and nationally, but compete globally.

In order to enjoy those strengths and those pillars, another significant pillar of our society and of our economy is the pillars of a workforce — the working men and women of Saskatchewan that provide the labour that creates the return of value for the investment. And it is proven over and over again it is essential that we maintain in Saskatchewan a strong, skilled, well-trained workforce.

That all fits in with the plan, Mr. Speaker, a plan that just doesn't happen — unlike the suggestions of the members opposite. The member from Swift Current today, who suggested that the way to success in our province was to have unbridled free enterprise without any plan that we would . . . that the government's responsibility would simply be to sit back and let the unbridled free enterprise take over, that they would provide the prosperity for our province.

Well, Mr. Speaker, time and history have proven in Saskatchewan, that simply doesn't work. You have to have a plan. And that's what makes me so proud of being a part of this government. We have demonstrated that plan. We have demonstrated that a plan works. We have demonstrated — unlike the opposition — a slogan doesn't work. You need a plan and that's been laid out very competently both in the Throne Speech and in our budget speech.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, that the Sask Party have had their slogan for a while, saying they have a plan . . . and they have a plan. But they have failed to release and divulge that plan to the people of Saskatchewan.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, they do have a plan. And I believe they have a reason for not divulging it to the public because they know that once Saskatchewan people take a close look at their plan, they won't like it and they'll reject it out of hand. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that that plan is not one that would fit

with the norm or with the history of Saskatchewan. I believe that plan is not a plan to build Saskatchewan, not a plan to build Saskatchewan at all like our government in the past, for nearly the last 44 years or so, has built this province.

Their plan is to tear this province down. Their plan is to tear away the very infrastructure, the very pillars that support our economy and support our province and support our citizenship within this province. They do not want to build on that; they want to tear it down.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld, for the thoughtfulness he put into his amendment because it certainly broadens the depth; it broadens and deepens the discussion and the debate to take place here today.

As I touched on earlier, Mr. Speaker, the need to maintain a solid, well-trained, skilled, well-equipped workforce to meet the needs of our investors and the needs to develop the province here in Saskatchewan . . . With that, Mr. Speaker, and to support that workforce, we need to have rules and regulations that will ensure and protect the working men and women of Saskatchewan.

There are many of those rules and regulations in place. But one that I think that all men and women in Saskatchewan really appreciate is the Workers' Compensation, the Workers' Compensation Board, that in the event of an unfortunate injury, a working person is . . . has a degree of comfort in the security of knowledge that they will not lose out on income, income that will provide them the ability to continue to keep a roof over their heads and the heads of their family, keep food on the table, and continue to support their families. They will not be left destitute. There is something out there to protect them in the event of an unfortunate industry . . . industrial accident in the workplace.

But I find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, when I was reviewing the member from Indian Head-Milestone and his comments in the Throne Speech on March 24 were, and I will quote, Mr. Speaker:

We'll also look at reviewing the mandate of . . . Workers' Compensation Board to ensure that the Workers' Compensation Board is not only serving injured workers efficiently and effectively, but also . . . fully accountable to the employer as well . . .

Well, Mr. Speaker, that immediately makes me wonder, what does the Sask Party mean by fully accountable to the employers? Does it mean that the . . . Saskatchewan will implement the Canadian Federation of Independent Business's Saskatchewan section wish list for workers' compensation? Does it mean that, Mr. Speaker?

Does it mean that the Saskatchewan Party would endorse as a part of their plan — the plan they don't want to reveal to the people of Saskatchewan — endorse the fact that they believe that injured workers should lose benefits, should have a drop from 90 per cent of net income to 75 per cent? Is that part of the Sask Party plan for injured workers? I believe it might be.

Is it also part of the Sask Party plan for injured workers and for the working men and women of Saskatchewan to let private insurance companies sell compensation coverage? Is it? Is that part of their plan?

Is it also part of the Sask Party plan to abolish the Worker's Advocate office that was set up nearly 30 years ago? It has been working very well, serving the needs of injured workers. Is that part of their plan?

Is it part of their plan to stop funding to occupational health and safety division? All workers' compensation boards across Canada do. But is it part of the Sask Party plan to limit or reduce or eliminate that funding, Mr. Speaker?

Is it part of the Sask Party's plan to end annual cost-of-living indexing to those who are receiving workers' compensation? Is that part of their plan?

But most of all, Mr. Speaker, is it a part of the Sask Party plan to introduce, if they were ever government, to introduce a three-day waiting period — a three-day waiting period— a three-day waiting period for injured workers? When somebody is injured on a job site they and their family will have to go without income for three days. Is that part of the Sask Party plan? No wages on day one. No wages on day two. No wages on day three to feed their family, to clothe their family, to house their family. That is the penalty a working person in this province would have to pay for being injured on the job. Mr. Speaker, is that the plan that they won't reveal to the people of Saskatchewan? I believe it is.

(16:15)

I believe that, Mr. Speaker, because I have studied oppositions and governments in various provinces and in the federal governments. And I have noticed that in virtually every legislature in this country, and in our national government, the opposition parties will offer constructive criticism. They will criticize. And that's the job of opposition and rightfully so. But as part of that, they will offer constructive criticism. That's true everywhere but in Saskatchewan. In Saskatchewan we do not get constructive criticism. We simply get ridicule and criticism from the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, a part of the pillars that build our economy and support our economy and support our society here in Saskatchewan — and a very important part of that — is of course our Crown corporations. And it's interesting what the Sask Party's position has been on the Crown corporations and the future of Crown corporations under their government if they were ever to become a government. And that, that position has been almost a position in quicksand because it seems to move from day to day.

It's interesting that in 1999 in their election flyer, they had a part of their flyer, a commitment to Saskatchewan people that if they were ever to become government they would use binding provincial referenda where appropriate to settle the major issues such as the sale of Crown corporations.

In the 1999 election they were saying that before they would sell a Crown corporation, they would go to the people with a

referenda. They would ask the people's permission first. Well, Mr. Speaker, interestingly enough in 2001 at their convention — and I take this particular quote right from their convention book — where it says, the headline is:

The Saskatchewan Party Crown Corporation Resolutions

**CC9701** - The Sask Party's policy of privatization is set out as follows:

1. Privatization will be considered if it is demonstrated that continued government ownership is no longer in the best interest of . . . (Saskatchewan payers);

Whoa. Two years later, they're saying now they would make that decision. They would no longer ask the Saskatchewan people what they thought about the future of Crown corporations. A Sask Party government would take that responsibility on themselves and they would make that decision without consulting Saskatchewan people.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it saddens me to think that that position moves again when, on occasions, the Sask Party members have been known to say well no, they really wouldn't, they wouldn't sell off all the Crowns; they would cherry-pick; they would sell off the unprofitable Crowns, such as the Saskatchewan Transportation Company. They are on record of saying that one of the first things they would do as a government is sell off STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company). Well the very government Crown that last year moved over 750,000 parcels across Saskatchewan.

And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I find that very strange coming from those benches and from those opposition members who represent, for the most part, the bulk of the farmers in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, I've had the experience of farming and I have a number of relatives still involved in farming, and I know that in the critical times of seeding and particularly harvest when they have a machinery breakdown and they need the parts out of Regina or Saskatoon, they phone the dealer. The dealer will put those parts on the bus and they get them in town, get them back to their farm, overnight. They do that because STC provides that service. And those same members over there, who represent those farmers who use that service on a regular basis, are suggesting that they would sell it off.

Mr. Speaker, STC transports, last year, 350,000 passengers around Saskatchewan. Many of these people, Mr. Speaker, are seniors that would have no other way to get into town and to the cities here for medical appointments than using STC. Most of those same ridership are represented by those people in the opposition benches. And they say the seniors don't need transportation; seniors can find their own way; we'll sell off STC.

Mr. Speaker, the Crown corporations are a very, very valuable tool to supporting our Saskatchewan economy, to building our Saskatchewan economy, and they're very important to providing the services that we enjoy here in Saskatchewan.

In any given year, Mr. Speaker, the Crown corporations will return to the provincial government, to the general revenue

coffers, some 150 to 200, in some years, \$250 million. That's money, Mr. Speaker, that is earned in a competitive business, that is earned and paid back to the shareholders, the people of Saskatchewan, and paid into the General Revenue Fund. That money, Mr. Speaker, is used to provide services to taxpayers of this province.

The same time, Mr. Speaker, it plays a very important part in the economies of Saskatchewan across the piece — the economies of our small towns and of course our cities. Half the jobs — half the jobs — in our Crown corporations are located in the small towns across this province. Towns like Yorkton and Kamsack and Canora and Saltcoats and Langenburg and a number of those same communities enjoy, enjoy having a Crown corporation employee in their community.

In many cases, Mr. Speaker, that same Crown corporation is the local hockey coach or the baseball coach and very much involved in the operations in the town, perhaps on town council. The very same people that those members over there represent, and they say, sell it off; eliminate those jobs.

Mr. Speaker, they are saying that the way to the future is to follow the lead of the Liberal government in BC. And the Leader of the Sask Party has been quoted as having said that one of the initiatives by the Gordon Campbell government in BC that he really thinks should be followed up on, and he would follow up on it, would be to establish a core review services committee, and it would follow the same lead and the same trends and I would imagine the same results of what has happened in BC.

Well let's look at what has happened in BC as a result of the Campbell plan so far: hospitals closed; nurses and other front-line workers laid off; schools closed; classroom sizes up and teachers laid off; and a 25 per cent cut to all public programs; 11,000 jobs lost in the public service; 23 per cent cutback to early childhood development programs; and a training wage that is \$2 under the minimum wage for the first 500 hours of work.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that an employer is simply going to hire a new person for 499 hours and then lay him off so that they can pay them \$2 less than the minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, on top of that, on top of that in BC, Gordon Campbell raised the gasoline tax by 3.5 cents a litre. Raised it by 3.5 cents a litre, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the very same things that the Sask Party says they would do, we have seen in action in British Columbia. And, Mr. Speaker, the things that have been going on in British Columbia has even drove Gordon Campbell to drinking.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to harken back for a few moments to some comments made in this House in the last session. I remember very clearly, reiterated again today, but I remember very clearly the comments made by the member from Swift Current in the last session when he stood in his place and said, for the last 60 years Saskatchewan people have had it wrong; for the last 60 years, Saskatchewan people have been all wrong.

For the most part of that 66 years — I believe about 44 of those 66 years — Saskatchewan has been governed by a CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) or an NDP government. And the member stands up and says for the last 60 years Saskatchewan people have had it wrong. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's astonishing to me that the member would stand up and say that for 60 years Saskatchewan people have had it wrong.

But what was more astonishing was the resounding support he got from all of his colleagues on that side of the House. They all supported that statement, Mr. Speaker. They all supported that statement because the Sask Party is saying it was wrong; it was wrong to develop a rural electrification program that brought electricity to every small town and farm family across Saskatchewan — they said it was wrong.

The Sask Party said it was wrong to develop a grid road system that would give every Saskatchewan person the ability to travel on an all-weather road. The Sask Party said, Mr. Speaker, it was wrong to develop a highway system that has more than twice the highway miles of Manitoba and Alberta put together.

The Sask Party says it was wrong to develop an education system where every child could receive the best of training they need to meet the challenges of the future.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party says it was wrong to develop a medicare system that gives the best in health care services to everybody in Saskatchewan; a system where a family's health does not depend on the family's wealth.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I know why the Sask Party is reluctant to release their program and their plan to the people of Saskatchewan. Because when they do, the Saskatchewan people will say that's the wrong plan, and they will say that the Sask Party is the wrong party to govern Saskatchewan and they will defeat them resoundingly at the next election.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

**Ms. Julé:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm stand to . . . pleased, rather, to stand in my place today to support the motion put forward by the member from Swift Current and seconded by the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy. Because, Mr. Speaker, this motion is exactly spelling out the truth. This motion reads:

That the Assembly condemns (and yes, it should condemn) the current Premier and cabinet for a continuing practice of covering up financial losses in its numerous business ventures such as SPUDCO and mega bingo despite numerous promises in the past to be more forthright over such losses.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you would think, Mr. Speaker, that when an ex-member of that NDP cabinet — Janice MacKinnon is who I'm referring to — most likely went to that cabinet a number of times and pleaded with them to change their practices because their practices were destroying the economy of this province, that they would have listened.

Well, Mr. Speaker, they didn't listen and Ms. MacKinnon did

the best thing, she did the right thing, and she quit that government, and she went out to work for the people of the province in a much more successful way than she could have ever done under this government.

And, Mr. Speaker, we credit her for that. We credit her for that, Mr. Speaker, because she did, as I said, the right thing. She knew what she was doing. The members that were left in that cabinet from the Romanow regime, the few of them that could have stood by her did not stand by her. They left her hanging out to dry just like they're leaving the member from Melville hanging out to dry right at this time.

Mr. Speaker, it quite amazes me that the member from Melville stands in this Assembly and he defends the mega bingo fiasco over and over again. He defends it every day that he stands in here and he's trying to answer — although he's not answering very well — to the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy on her questions.

That member from Melville, a Reform member of the federal government — well the Reform Party of Canada rather — that member stands here today defending NDP socialist policies that interfere with private business, that cover up, when in fact they're destroying private business and enterprise in this province. He stands there and he would cover up for this NDP government. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's going to be quite interesting to see what happens to that member in the next provincial election.

(16:30)

It's really hard to fathom that somebody with his philosophy, his ideas, and what he put forward prior to joining the NDP government, how in goodness' name he can stand in this Assembly today and he can stand there defending the NDP who have covered up all of these financial losses that we have heard about so many times.

The times that we've heard about these, Mr. Speaker, are mega times, too many times. Not only mega bingo, but many other, other risky ventures that this government has pumped millions and millions of taxpayers' dollars into and have lost for the people of this province. It's disgraceful, Mr. Speaker. It's disgraceful.

The people of this province need to have a government who is responsible, a government who hears them, a government who is speaking to them clearly about leaving private enterprise do business.

They're speaking to this NDP government and mark my words, Mr. Speaker, as these members touch on their constituencies, I'm sure they're hearing over and over again about the fiascos that this government has put forward, have just been engaged in, and how they have in fact wasted many of the taxpayers' dollars that are needed for things like the arts; that are needed for things like the sound stage; that are needed for things that are put forward by the Child Advocate in this, the recent report that was tabled today.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot waste millions and millions of taxpayers' dollars through these risky, foolish adventures

overseas and in Canada and expect to have money left over for the main services that the people of the province need.

We cannot expect and they should not expect to have money for things like health and education and highways. We cannot expect that the social services needed in this province, some of them which the Child Advocate is speaking of in this very report, are going . . . The money is not going to be there, Mr. Speaker, as long as they continue the practice of their government, of the NDP government of this province.

They insist and they keep insisting that they can get into business ventures when they know nothing about business. Mr. Speaker, this is truly a disgrace.

When you look at the many, many press releases that have been put out, the many articles in the paper, the many, many letters that I know have been written to that NDP government as well as to the Saskatchewan Party opposition, of people who state clearly that their businesses have basically been thwarted and very unsuccessful because of measures the NDP government has taken — things like competing, competing in private enterprise in this province. How do we expect that the economy of the province, Mr. Speaker, is going to improve? We know, everyone knows, that small business generates revenue and income. We know that wealth creation is due to small- and medium-sized businesses. We know that. And we know that's where the tax money comes in, Mr. Speaker.

We know, and it should be clear to the members opposite at this time, that there is no way in God's green earth that you can have the government thinking that they can be in business and have a successful economic climate in this province. It's just not going to happen.

What we do need, Mr. Speaker, is a Saskatchewan Party government who understands how very vitally important it is for a government to get out of the way of business, a government to stop risky ventures where they're losing all kinds of money.

We need to have a Saskatchewan Party government that appreciates and understands, Mr. Speaker, that we cannot have the services that are so direly needed by the people of this province — some of them as I mentioned that have been outlined by the Child Advocate, things like mental health services, Mr. Speaker. We have had a report, not very long ago, that denounces the mental health services that are being provided within not only our penal institutions, but mental health services for our youth in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we will not have the money for those things as long as we have an NDP government who doesn't understand that you must have private enterprise going on in order to generate those tax revenues to make sure things like that happen.

Mr. Speaker, I do commend the Child Advocate on her report. I'm not going to go into the report because I want to stay on track with the motion put forward. But I must point out, Mr. Speaker, that the Child Advocate does talk about standards of care in residential custody facilities.

And here is the concern. Residential open and closed custody facilities operated by Corrections and Public Safety are not required to comply with the basic facility standards outlined in The Residential Services Act. Services at these facilities are provided in accordance with a set of policies. However, the existing policies have not been consistently applied across the facilities.

Another mention that the Child Advocate makes, Mr. Speaker, is educational experiences of youth in custody facilities. She states here that there are concerns regarding how The Education Act is applied for youth who are attending an educational program in a secure custody facility.

Mr. Speaker, there are many problems within the system. Those problems are due to the fact that there has not been due diligence and monitoring of how the system . . . services are going at this time. We cannot and will not have improvement in those areas as long as we have a government intent on blowing our tax money outside of this province and then covering up, Mr. Speaker; having the audacity with one issue after another to cover up for what they have done.

Mr. Speaker, this government is not only financially bankrupt but they are morally bankrupt. We talk . . . Mr. Speaker, the member here just a minute ago from . . . I believe it was . . . just a minute, I want to make sure that I have the correct member — from Saskatoon Idylwyld was speaking about . . . oh, I don't know if it was Saskatoon Idylwyld. It was one of them across the way anyways, Mr. Speaker. He was talking about the Saskatchewan Party's treatment of public service employees. My, my, my.

This is really very interesting how that member could stand in this House and point across to members of the official opposition who are not in government at the time and accuse us of not treating public service employees properly. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think they'd better have a quick look in the mirror. How dare that member, how dare he stand in this legislature and talk about treatment of public service employees after the cover, the great big cover-up this NDP government has recently done regarding sexual harassment issues with public employees in Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, those public employees in Prince Albert, those women who were violated and whom this government . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Why is the member on her feet?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — Mr. Speaker, I take my word very seriously and when I say that I didn't know about a report, I certainly do not appreciate the member getting up and implying a cover-up.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Is the member up for a point of order?

**Hon. Ms. Crofford:** — It's a point of personal privilege.

**The Speaker:** — I would advise the member if she wishes to bring up a point of personal privilege, it should be done through procedures that are identified in the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly*.

**Ms. Julé:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I will go on. The point I was making was that the public service employees in Prince Albert, as well as many around this province, have come to the Saskatchewan Party oppositions many time complaining about the treatment bestowed upon them, the rude treatment bestowed upon them, as well as other citizens of Saskatchewan, by the NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, we have . . . Sometimes we tend to forget the NDP's record of multi-million dollar losses in this province. My colleagues have outlined quite clearly the \$28 million lost in the SPUDCO fiasco, the \$100 million in ISC, the 10 . . . or \$80 million in Australia, SHIN about \$80 million. And there's this public taxpayers' money going into ethanol; we're wondering about how that's going to turn out exactly. The mega bingo situation with \$6.2 million.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes we tend to forget where this all started. I recall the Channel Lake issue that we debated in this legislature somewhere around 1996. Well there too, Mr. Speaker, was between 10 and \$15 million of loss and another cover-up.

And just recently within the last day or so we've heard about \$10 million in a losing venture with Coachman Insurance, involving SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), and the minister of SGI should be somewhat concerned about that.

Mr. Speaker, we have not only bingo but we have many, many other, many other areas of concern in this province.

But, Mr. Speaker, what I want to say now is the reason that this is such a shame, all of this is such a shame is because of this amount of money being spent, being wasted, being squandered when people of this province have to listen every time that there is a budget address from this Assembly. They sit and they watch their TVs and they're waiting to hear if there is some of the hard-earned tax dollars that they have spent that the provincial government is using and should be using, I guess expeditiously and properly, to provide them with the services that they need for this province.

Mr. Speaker, that hasn't happened to the satisfaction of people of Saskatchewan because we have heard from seniors in this province the budget before this one, seniors in this province who have complained about an increase in their long-term care fees. Those members and people of Saskatchewan rightfully deserve to have services, deserve to have I guess you would say sensible fees, so that they can live in this province and get the care they need.

We also hear, Mr. Speaker, about increased utility rates for seniors on fixed income. Those seniors are very unhappy and they're even more unhappy when they hear about these fiascos going on, money-losing ventures, and cover-up on top of it.

Mr. Speaker, when I think of the money that's been squandered and spent, one of the real grievous issues as far as I'm concerned is the fact that we don't have yet in this province services provided — at least certainly not adequate services — for youth who need to have addiction services.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have had a report come down from a

committee of this legislature to deal with children involved in the sex trade and to try to provide alternatives. There were 49 recommendations that came with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and those recommendations, a couple of them have certainly been implemented, although I'm not too sure on the status, for instance, of the safe house in Regina. I'm not at all sure that there have been many other measures taken. We do have legislation that I'm very happy to see that will certainly punish and warn johns about the fact that it's a bit dangerous for them to be taking advantage and violating young people on the streets.

Those things were good; those things were a way that government acted properly. But, Mr. Speaker, we have many other issues in this province surrounding the needs of youth. We have educational issues, we have issues with needs like I mentioned of addiction centres. We have issues about safe houses being needed throughout the province. We have issues about different kinds of monies that could be spent for recreation facilities.

Mr. Speaker, we had White Spruce at Yorkton as a drug and alcohol treatment centre for youth in this province. This was no doubt a very costly venture but, Mr. Speaker, it was working. There were youth that left White Spruce, after counselling for them and their parents and their families, that went home and started a new life. Well, Mr. Speaker, under the NDP government, White Spruce was closed down.

Mr. Speaker, oftentimes when this NDP government has to answer to their budget, what they would constantly say is, well what do you expect; there's just not enough money for everything. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's priorities that count here now, and it's good management and common sense. And part of that good management and that common sense would be for the government to understand what their role is in society today. Their role is not to get into business; their role is not to take taxpayers' money and risk it all and lose it all in ventures overseas.

Mr. Speaker, the minister across the way there from Yorkton is talking, chirping away here at me. He's the minister that has been responsible just in this most recent budget for increasing crop insurance rates 52 per cent. Well just recently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have had letters, many letters from my constituents who are very, very upset about this. They talk about the waste of taxpayers' dollars, and they tell us in those letters that they are not happy and that they can hardly wait for an election. And they're wondering why that minister has no compassion for farmers. They're wondering if that minister doesn't understand the situation going on in rural Saskatchewan. And I guess they've deducted, actually many years ago, that that is not the case. They don't have any compassion. They don't have any caring or understanding for what happens.

(16:45)

The nightmarish waste, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the province of Saskatchewan, the people of this province have experienced, just goes beyond explanation. People cannot understand how the NDP does not learn, why they can't understand that this is enough. Enough is enough of that. Ms. MacKinnon understood that. Ms. MacKinnon left that crew over there, and she did the

right thing. She moved on. She definitely moved on.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I think of the kind of monies that have been squandered by this government, one can only imagine how prosperous the province could have been. How very much we could have been in this province on our way to prosperity had there been a different government in place here that did not squander, would not squander taxpayers' dollars. One cannot imagine what the losses to the people of this province have caused in anguish and misery.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have time and time and time again seen the same thing over and over. And the people of this province are sitting there, and they're saying, why is this happening? Just the other day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I went to one community in my constituency, to a town council meeting. These people are asking to be considered for some approval of their Canada-Saskatchewan infrastructure grant in order to improve their water facilities. Well, there's just not enough money. There's not enough money. Why? Because this government is not putting the kind of money into it that they've actually promised to the people of the province they're going to do.

And so one there are . . . one community after the other who have been set aside, who have been sidelined because this government chooses to spend our taxpayers' dollars overseas, wasting and losing money, and then covering it up.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many, many, many questions. There are many, many headlines, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one after the other. "Government accused of cover-up in the potato industry" "SPUDCO accused of hiding sale of GM potatoes," "Serby admits government failed to follow due diligence." We have loads of those. "SGI pumps \$9 million into Ontario insurance firm — another loss," "MacKinnon lashes out at NDP."

Over and over, many of the same sort of headlines that we have heard time after time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of these indicating that this government, this NDP government, is in big trouble. More than big trouble, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're running for the hills right now. They're continuing covering up, and we will find out most likely about more cover-ups.

We see the front benches here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we look at each one of those, many of those who most likely do know of more cover-ups. Well I'd advise them today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to do the honourable thing, to try to save their hides — at least a little — and start divulging to the public what else is out there that is going to cause them shame.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not support the amendment as put forward by the NDP, but I am proud to support the motion that has been put forward by our member from Swift Current. And I shall take my place this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and would certainly invite any of the members across if they'd like to fill up the time right now with their reply to their own amendment.

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased this afternoon to enter into this debate. And, Mr. Speaker, I

want to talk a little bit about the debate that the members opposite are having.

They talk about investment loss. And the captains of industry over there talk about how that this government is covering up losses in investments. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk about some of the investments that this government's made and the benefit to the people of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from 1992 to 2002 the Crown corporations returned to this province \$1.2 billion, Mr. Speaker — \$1.2 billion. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the course of investing in this province to build an economy, to expand the base of industry in this province, there have been some investments that haven't realized the return that we would have liked them to return.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, any corporation in North America doesn't get 100 per cent return on their investments, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They take risks you wouldn't bet. And in some you're going to make good returns, and in some you may make marginal returns, and in others you may have difficulty getting a return, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But as a whole in the investment, you want to make money across your entire investment portfolio. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has made \$1.2 billion through its Crown corporations to return to the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to talk a little bit about some of the investments they keep talking about outside Saskatchewan. If we want to just look at investment in North America or — pardon me — outside North American, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Crowns are \$100 million ahead, returned \$100 million to the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If we're looking just outside of Canada, they've returned \$84 million to this province for reinvestment in hospitals, in health care, and education, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And if we're looking outside of Saskatchewan, they've returned \$89 million to this province to reinvest in the things we need for our children.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's what this is about. It's about investing to build an economy within Saskatchewan, and it's about investing for the people of Saskatchewan to continue to build a prosperous province.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they want to talk about negativity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I want to read just an article written on February 26, 2003 about the Sask Party and how they portray things. And it says, I quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

And last week, the Saskatchewan Party's release on Spudco fell just shy of fabrication. At issue was a quote attributed to Crown Investments Corp. Minister Maynard Sonntag made June 13, 2000 during budget estimates debate. The Saskatchewan Party release quoted Sonntag as saying: "With respect to Con-Force in the construction of . . . buildings, they were jointly owned. The ownership was Con-Force 51 per cent and ourselves 49 per cent.

Here's what Sonntag actually said (Mr. Deputy Speaker) according to Hansard: "First of all, with respect to Con-Force in the construction of the buildings, they were

jointly owned but they were entirely debt-financed and SaskWater, the Spudco division of SaskWater subsequently bought Con-Force out."

It goes on to say:

Not only did the Opposition completely reconstruct Sonntag's quote, but it did so to make the point that there needed to be a special (investigation) legislative investigation of Sonntag for "lying to the Legislature."

Mr. Speaker, this reporter goes on to say:

That's not just irresponsible . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Members, there were words said that I could not make out clearly. But if the member did in his quotation or in his statement, use words that were unparliamentary, I would ask him to just simply withdraw those remarks. But I ask members to calm down so I can hear what's going on in here.

**Mr. Yates:** — This was a direct quote, and I'm sorry if anything offended the members. But, Mr. Speaker, I just want to finish off . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . a quote by Murray Mandryk in the newspaper article February 26, 2003; a direct quote, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, order. Order. We just, I think, should refrain from trying to do things indirectly and making implications. Even if they are direct quotes, it's probably not the best idea to use language that is unparliamentary even if some other people are using it in other places because the idea here is, members, that members are immune from prosecution, we in this legislature. It's supported by our concept — and very treasured concept — of freedom of speech, and we ought to not abuse those freedoms. So that is why I ask the member to withdraw that statement.

**Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the statement and apologize to the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to conclude my remarks as the hour is wrapping up with some references to the Sask Party policy manual, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm referring to the Saskatchewan Party health care resolution. In HE9705 it says:

The Saskatchewan Party will explore partnerships in the health care field with private sector providers to address the issue of waiting lists . . .

Mr. Speaker, I go on to talk about Saskatchewan Party Crown corporations resolutions. Resolution CC9701 says:

Privatization will be considered if it is demonstrated that continued government ownership is no longer in the best interest of taxpayers.

It goes on to say:

Privatization of a Crown utility will be accomplished through an initial public share offering made available first

to residents of Saskatchewan (Mr. Speaker).

Mr. Speaker, they go on to support many, many things that the people of Saskatchewan aren't aware of their positions on, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to just talk about one other thing. Mr. Speaker, the "... Saskatchewan Party government will support the subcontracting of appropriate government agency services to private sector businesses."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very important in the debates in the weeks ahead that the members opposite let the people of Saskatchewan know what they stand for prior to an election. Now, Mr. Speaker, they don't want to expose what they stand for.

But, Mr. Speaker, looking at the hour and the time of day, Mr. Speaker, I would move at this time we adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 16:58.



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