



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

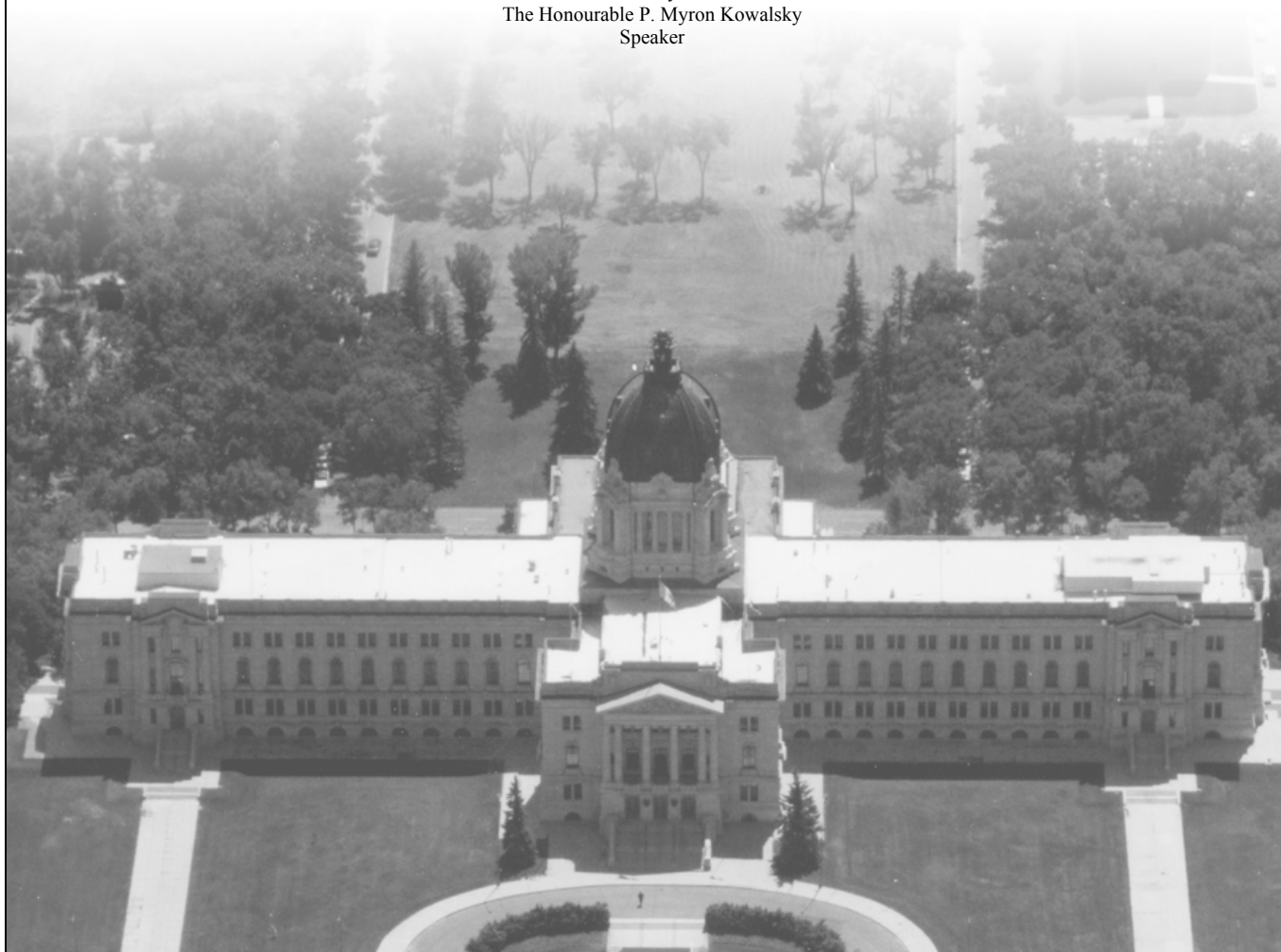
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky
Premier — Hon. Lorne Calvert
Leader of the Opposition — Brad Wall

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Addley, Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Bakken, Brenda	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Borgerson, Lon	NDP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Calvert, Hon. Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Cline, Hon. Eric	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Crofford, Hon. Joanne	NDP	Regina Rosemont
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Dearborn, Jason	SP	Kindersley
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Gantefoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, Glenn	NDP	Moose Jaw North
Hamilton, Doreen	NDP	Regina Wascana Plains
Harpauer, Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Ben	SP	Martensville
Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Higgins, Hon. Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kerpan, Allan	SP	Carrot River Valley
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Kowalsky, Hon. P. Myron	NDP	Prince Albert Carlton
Krawetz, Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lautermilch, Eldon	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Ted	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Morgan, Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, Hon. John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Prebble, Hon. Peter	NDP	Saskatoon Greystone
Quennell, Hon. Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Serby, Hon. Clay	NDP	Yorkton
Sonntag, Hon. Maynard	NDP	Meadow Lake
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Hon. Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Thomson, Hon. Andrew	NDP	Regina South
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wakefield, Milton	SP	Lloydminster
Wall, Brad	SP	Swift Current
Wartman, Hon. Mark	NDP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

The Assembly met at 10:00.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the prospect of losing some hours of emergency service at the Border Health Centre in Climax remains a concern. And I have a petition to present on behalf of constituents from the community of Climax and Frontier, as well as communities in the Wood River constituency. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to ensure that the Border Health Centre in Climax remains a 24-hour facility.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise on behalf of people from my constituency who are concerned about the right to communicate to appropriate officials when they believe the safety or well-being of a Saskatchewan citizen may be jeopardized.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to introduce and support whistle-blower legislation.

The people who have signed this petition are from Wadena, Elfros, Foam Lake, Fosston, and Lintlaw.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the possible downsizing or closure of the Craik Health Centre. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the Craik Health Centre is not closed or further downsized.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Craik and Penzance.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present regarding the future of the Claybank Brick Plant. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reconsider its decision to reduce funding to the Claybank Brick Plant.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from Avonlea, Rouleau, Spring Valley, Regina.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition from constituents that are concerned about the possible reductions of health care services in Biggar. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Biggar hospital, long-term care home, and ambulance services maintain at the very least their current level of services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Perdue, Kinley, Saskatoon, Sonningdale and Biggar and district, I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise in the Assembly on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan to read a petition concerned with the loss of ambulance service. And the prayer is as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the Dodsland and Luseland ambulance services are not discontinued.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed entirely by citizens of the town of Luseland, Saskatchewan.

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 closures, conversions of health facilities, sessional paper 193;

And addendums to previously tabled petitions, being sessional paper no. 63, 107, 166, 167, 170, 180, and 182.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day 50 ask the government the following question:

To the minister of SGI: in 2003 how many vehicle damage claims to SGI were denied because the claimants were found to be residents of Alberta?

And, Mr. Speaker, I also ask the same question for the year 2002. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to all colleagues in the Assembly 12 grade 7 students that are sitting in the west gallery.

Mr. Speaker, I've always been warmly welcomed by Wilfred Hunt School, and I hope today I'll be able to return some of that hospitality. The students are accompanied this morning by their teacher, Dave Gawley. And I think back to a time where there was a wonderful celebration at Wilfred Hunt School. These are very environmentally friendly, green students. Their school had been part of the earth school program and achieved a very high level in that program, and we had a wonderful celebration day, out in the warm summer sunshine. So I would ask all members to welcome these wonderful students.

I see their clipboards, Mr. Speaker, so I know that they're wanting to learn as much as they can today, and I'll be meeting with them to answer their questions later on this morning. I ask all of my colleagues to give the students from Wilfred Hunt School a very warm welcome this morning.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce 12 students from grade 7, 8, and 9 in your gallery. They're from Riverdale School from Kenville, Manitoba. Their teacher is Mr. Barry Hrappestad, I believe is the proper pronunciation. I could be corrected on that.

But I hope they enjoy their trip to Saskatchewan here and their visit to the Legislative Buildings. I've had the opportunity of visiting the Manitoba Legislative Buildings, and it's a beautiful

building. I may be a little bit biased; I like ours just a little bit more. So I hope they enjoy their trip here, and I'd ask all members to welcome them here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to welcome the 11 grade 7, 8, and 9 students from Riverdale School in Kenville, Manitoba. I can't see them from here, but I had a peek at them from down the floor. I'd like to welcome them here along with, as the hon. member indicated, their teacher, Darcy Wohlgemuth, and their parents — Barry Hrappestad, Rick Penner, Andy Miller, parent chaperons.

So we'd like to welcome them to this province, to this city, and to this Assembly. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Swift Current.

Swift Current Guitarist Performs in Moscow

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the Assembly today and recognize a constituent who has returned home after becoming the first guitarist in the world to be invited to perform at the Alternativa Festival at the Cultural Centre Dom in Moscow, Russia.

Saskatchewan-born guitarist, Gerry Dumalski and a friend, Mr. Speaker, travelled with Arizona-based pianist and physicist Harry Lyden to Russia from May 13 to May 22. Dumalski and Lyden are recognized as the leading authorities in the world, Mr. Speaker, on the Schillinger System of Musical Composition, an approach to music composition based on mathematical theories.

Dumalski also conducted four lectures, Mr. Speaker, at the Moscow State Conservatory and the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He's a professional guitarist, is Mr. Dumalski, of 30 years. He's written several pieces of music based on the Schillinger system including an original composition entitled "Rhapsody of Light" which he performed together with other worldwide performers at the Moscow Conservatory when he was there. His lectures at the conservatories on the "Electrification of Music" focused on graphic and numerical parameters to music composition, Mr. Speaker. What an amazing achievement for a resident of our province and a resident of the community of Pennant.

I've had the chance to visit at length with Gerry. We have become friends. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I still only know the three chords that I knew before I met Gerry. But I'd ask all members to join with me in acknowledging his amazing achievement in international music and his recent trip to Russia.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

Distinguished Community Service Awards

Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, every year the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan honours individuals with the Distinguished Community Service Awards. These awards recognize CAs (chartered accountant) and FCAs (Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants) who have provided either extensive one-time or long-term service and leadership in areas such as career, community, business, not-for-profit, and professional organizations.

Mr. Speaker, this year eight chartered accountants were honoured at the institute's annual general meeting and conference on May 26. This year's recipients of the Distinguished Community Service Awards are: J. Charles Baldock, Lyle Bolen, Elaine Bourassa, Les Cannam, Blair Davidson, Ron Hicks, Ray Kolla, and Bruce Willis.

Mr. Speaker, the George Baxter Achievement Award was also presented at this ceremony. This award is given to young chartered accountants who have demonstrated excellence, innovation, or remarkable achievements in their community, profession, or to the field of accounting within the province of Saskatchewan. This year's recipients are Orlo Drewitz and Greg Keller.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in recognizing all of the recipients for their contribution and commitment to their community and their profession, and in congratulating them on their achievements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

University of Saskatchewan Spring Convocation

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The University of Saskatchewan spring convocation was held over the last two days. The member from Rosetown-Elrose and I had the honour of participating in the ceremonies which saw some 2,910 degrees awarded.

Saskatoon-born astronaut, Dave Williams, delivered the convocation address at the first ceremony. He spoke about when he was a child watching rocket launches on television. His own dreams of space flight seemed impossible. But having spent 16 days aboard space shuttle Columbia in April 1998, Williams assured the University of Saskatchewan graduates that passion and persistence can make the wildest dreams come true.

Williams is one of four people chosen by the Canadian Space Agency from among 5,300 applicants to join its astronaut training program. Quite a feat. He delighted in telling the audience that 600 of those 5,300 applicants were children 10 years old and younger. Williams received an honorary degree of letters.

Dr. Marc Baltzan, a renowned pioneer in the field of dialysis

and renal transplants, received an honorary doctor of science degree. The Master Teacher Award went to Professor John Thompson from the department of Sociology at St. Thomas More College. The Governor General's Gold Medal for graduate with the highest academic standing was presented to Angela Baerwald of Elrose.

And, Mr. Speaker, there was one very special graduate to me. My mother received her second degree. The University of Saskatchewan worldwide alumni is now 114,000 strong.

Congratulations to the University of Saskatchewan and all graduates.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Yorkton.

Yorkton Short Film & Video Festival

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's time again that where filmmakers from across the country enter their new and innovative productions into the prestigious Yorkton Short Film & Video Festival.

Mr. Speaker, the Yorkton Short Film & Video Festival is the longest-running event of its kind in Canada. The Yorkton Film Council was established in 1947, and the first festival was held in 1950. Over the years it has garnered its esteemed reputation as one of the country's top film and video festivals.

Mr. Speaker, this year's festival kicked off yesterday. It runs until Sunday, May 30. A variety of workshops will be held throughout the weekend as well as the screenings and numerous films. And the prized Golden Sheaf Awards banquet and ceremony will be held on Saturday evening.

Mr. Speaker, this year there are more than 100 nominees competing in 31 different categories ranging from the mechanics of filmmaking, to the best script, the best documentary, to the best animation, and much, much more. Delegates participating in this event have travelled from across the nation to take part in this world-class festival.

Mr. Speaker, it is . . . I'm sure that my colleagues will join me in congratulating the board and the directors of the Yorkton Short Film & Video Festival and their staff. And I invite, and encourage anyone from the Assembly to make their way to Yorkton and enjoy the festival over the weekend. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

(10:15)

Senior Bowl Football Game

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too want to rise today on this member statement and talk about accomplishments of people from Saskatchewan — in this case

young people from Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Last Monday I attended the 20th annual Ed Henick senior bowl football game that was held in Saskatoon at Griffith Stadium. Mr. Speaker, this game is a game that features graduating high school football players from right across Saskatchewan, and it is named after Mr. Ed Henick who was a big supporter and a big part of amateur football in Saskatchewan. Football Saskatchewan does sponsor the game, and it gives the opportunity for young people, young players from both rural and urban Saskatchewan the opportunity to showcase their talents and to perhaps be scouted by post-secondary schools.

Mr. Speaker, this year the North won the football game in the dying seconds of the game — and a very exciting football game. The two MVPs (most valuable player) for the football teams, from the South was Teale Orban from Regina, and the North MVP was Andrew Busby from Delisle, Saskatchewan, who plays nine-man football. Mr. Speaker, Andrew Busby tied a record for the most receptions in the senior bowl game and has a very, very bright future ahead of him.

Mr. Speaker, my point here is that I think rather than talking about football or sports, I wanted to make my point being that we need to support the accomplishments of young people right across this province — whether that be in athletics, academics, or the arts and culture. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Eastview.

Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association Awards

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association recently recognized 10 individuals with the 2004 Millennium Awards. These awards recognize nurses or members of the public who have made an outstanding contribution to the nursing practice and/or health environment.

Mr. Speaker, this year's recipients are: Penny Schafer for the Granger Campbell Award for clinical excellence; Sarah Gill for the Ruth Hicks Award for student leadership. The Effie Feeny Award for nursing research went to Dr. Donna Rennie and Dr. Norma Stewart. Diana Davidson Dick was the recipient of the Elizabeth Van Valkenburg Award for leadership in nursing education. Anne Unsworth took home the Helen Walker Award for innovation in nursing. And the Jean Wilson Award for employer of the year went to Darlene Onslow.

Mr. Speaker, the SRNA (Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association) also recognized two nurses for their lifetime of contributions to individuals, families, and communities in Saskatchewan. Betty Hailstone and Joanne Felstrom were both recipients of the SRNA lifetime membership. And former Saskatchewan premier, Roy Romanow, was awarded an honorary membership.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure my colleagues will join me in congratulating the recipients of the life membership and the 2004 Millennium Awards, and in recognizing their commitment

to health care in Saskatchewan. I thank them for making a difference in the lives of people across the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Wrestling Gold Medal Winner

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I too rise today to recognize excellence in our youth and feel it's most appropriate when the legislature also recognizes achievements in athletic and academic endeavours.

One of my constituents, Pam Ewanishin, a grade 11 student at Walter Murray, has three times become the gold medal winner in . . . Canadian wrestling champion in the 46-kilo weight group. She is currently a member of the Canadian National Cadet Wrestling Team and is now in Germany — will be there from May 24 until May 31. And she is competing in the Hans Von Zons International Wrestling Tournament. And I would like to ask members to wish Pam well in that.

I would also like to congratulate her on her gold medal that she has already won, and want to wish her good luck in Germany and as well at the Canada Cup competition which will be held this summer in Guelph, Ontario in July.

And would ask all members to join me in congratulating Pam and wishing her well in the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Funding for Repairs to Diefenbaker Bridge

Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, some weeks ago we asked some questions about the government's commitment that they should have and do have to the maintenance of the Diefenbaker bridge in P.A. (Prince Albert). The government, the NDP (New Democratic Party) government, is refusing to pay for its share of that maintenance.

The city has an agreement with the province dating back to the '50s to cost share any repairs to the bridge. But like many other promises, the NDP is refusing to keep this commitment.

The minister says, Mr. Speaker, believe it or not, that the deck of the bridge that is being repaired isn't actually part of the bridge as far as the government is concerned. Well that's pretty twisted logic even by NDP standards, Mr. Speaker.

The costs of the NDP share to fix the bridge — \$636,000. It's less than they spent on an imaginary ethanol plant. It's 2 per cent of what they blew on SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company).

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier, will the minister keep their commitment to the taxpayers of P.A. on the Diefenbaker

bridge?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister responsible for Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well the members ask us whether we will keep our commitment and they want me to say yes. And the answer is, of course, yes.

Mr. Speaker, the commitment and the agreement that was signed, the commitment and the agreement that was signed in the '50s, Mr. Speaker, said that the department would look after 50 per cent, Mr. Speaker, of the structure of the bridge in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker. The surface of the bridge, much like the surface of the road when it needs repairs, Mr. Speaker, wouldn't be considered to be part of the structure.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is an agreement that exists with the city of Prince Albert that I have to say is an exception. This does not exist with many other cities in the province. But having made that commitment, Mr. Speaker, and having signed that agreement we will honour our commitment. And the answer again is yes, we will honour our commitment, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers of P.A., the council of Prince Albert, and engineers kind of disagree with the minister. They think the part that the cars drive on is part of the structure of the bridge, Mr. Speaker. In fact, Prince Albert City Council has issued an interesting invitation to the Minister of Highways. They're inviting him to come to Prince Albert once the deck is off on certain parts of the bridge and here's the good part, and I quote:

Then we will take him (the minister) across the bridge where the deck has been taken off and let him determine whether or not the deck is actually a part of the structure (Mr. Speaker).

Well that seems pretty fair to us, Mr. Speaker. If the minister can cross the bridge, especially over the parts where there is no decking, I think we'll all accept that the deck is not part of the bridge.

Will the minister accept the invitation from the city council in Prince Albert?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well look, the important point and the point that I made last time this series of questions was asked, Mr. Speaker, is that we will continue to work with the city as we have done through the history of this province, worked with the city of Prince Albert, which is a very progressive city and which we see as a link into the North, and certainly is key in economic development in our province, Mr.

Speaker. We'll continue to work with them.

Mr. Speaker, there is also, I need to . . . And we've made this point with the city but maybe the opposition is unaware of this. There is some suggestion — although we can't be categorical about this, but it has happened in the past — when the funding that the province puts in for something like this through the Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program, when the province puts in money, the federal government could easily simply withdraw. So the city may not be any better off if the province were to add additional funds, Mr. Speaker. That's been one of the discussions we've been having with the city and that's an important consideration that needs to be given in this discussion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be in Prince Albert on the June 9; we're accepting an invitation to meet with some groups and speak there. And I'd like to challenge the minister to a debate, Mr. Speaker. Since we think we agree with the engineers in Prince Albert and city council that the deck, the top of the bridge is part of the bridge, I'll stand on the road next to the bridge or the parts of the bridge where there is still decking, and the minister, for his part of the debate, he could stand on the part of the bridge where there is no decking, and we'll even bring a personal flotation device so the minister can actually participate in the debate.

Mr. Speaker, Prince Albert City Council does admit, Prince Albert City Council admits that their invitation is tongue-in-cheek.

But the matter is serious. The Tommy Douglas government made an agreement to help repair . . . to share the costs of repairing this bridge in the '50s. Mr. Speaker, will this Premier, will this government agree to keep its share, to pay for its share of maintenance of the Diefenbaker bridge?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the member could just clarify for me again exactly where he'd be standing on what date and time, I'd be interested in knowing that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to say again, though, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with the city as we have done in the past. There is no point in the province putting in funding if it's simply going to be a withdrawal of funds by the federal government and the city not being any further ahead.

The agreement, Mr. Speaker, as I have explained a number of times, is for the province to maintain and support 50 per cent of the structural repairs. Mr. Speaker, it has been my understanding, it has been the department's position — and there has been additional funding through the Canada-Saskatchewan infrastructure I say as an aside anyway — but it has been the department's position that the repairs to the surface of the bridge are not considered to be structural

repairs. But we'll keep talking with the city of Prince Albert.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

SaskTel Net Income in 2004

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister Responsible for SaskTel. In 2003 SaskTel recorded net income of \$85 million and paid a dividend to the province of seventy-six and a half million dollars. Now this morning the NDP released SaskTel's first quarter report. Mr. Speaker, how much does SaskTel now project it will make in net income in 2004, and what does the NDP government project SaskTel will pay in dividends in 2004?

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister responsible for the Crown Management Board.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, in a speech delivered by the Premier of Saskatchewan last fall, the Premier outlined a number of commitments that we would make as a government as we went forward when it came to our Crown corporations.

We indicated at the time, that when we tabled our annual reports that they would be staggered in order to allow the opposition and the media and the public to have proper scrutiny. We also indicated that we would send a statement to all of our citizens in the province of Saskatchewan outlining a summary annual report which talks about the revenues and expenditures of our Crowns. And we also said, Mr. Speaker, that we would publish quarterly reports so that the public would understand how well our Crowns are doing.

What I'm pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, is that consolidated revenue and earnings are higher after this quarter. Revenues are up 60 million and earnings are up 27 million, and that's very good news for our Crown corporations . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, SaskTel's 2003 annual report estimates that the company will profit in 2004, net income at between 40 million and \$85 million, and it also estimates a dividend to the government of between 36 and \$77 million. SaskTel's 2004 first-quarter report indicates similar projections for both net income and dividend payments. But, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has acquired confidential SaskTel documents distributed by SaskTel's senior vice-president, Diana Milenkovic, to company managers last month. Those documents project SaskTel's 2004 net income at just \$4.8 million.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP government claiming in public that SaskTel will make a profit up to 17 times larger than SaskTel's senior vice-president is projecting in private meetings with SaskTel company managers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister responsible for Crown Management Board.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, what we would like the opposition to understand is that this is the first-quarter report. We still have three more quarters to go, Mr. Speaker. We still have three more quarters to go.

Mr. Speaker, these are projections. Obviously . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please, members. We ought to be able to hear the entire response. I recognize the minister responsible for the Crown Management Board.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, this is the first-quarter report. We have three quarters to go, and obviously we expect that the Crown sector will be able to provide earnings to CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) of \$250 million as budgeted in the Finance minister's budget delivered about a month ago, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Well, Mr. Speaker, given the information contained on the confidential documents that we received, now we understand why the government can't afford to fix the bridge in Prince Albert. Given these figures, they won't have enough money to do anything.

Mr. Speaker, according to internal SaskTel documents acquired by the Saskatchewan Party, SaskTel expects to spend about \$20 million this year on corporate restructuring and \$30 million in extra payments to employee pensions. As a result, SaskTel's internal estimate is that net income for the company will fall to just \$4.8 million in 2004. And yet both SaskTel's 2003 annual report and its first-quarter report for 2004 continue to project profits as much as 17 times higher than the internal company estimates.

Will the minister explain to the House today why SaskTel's internal net income estimates are significantly lower than the NDP's public statements?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister responsible for Crown Management Board.

(10:30)

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — What I find so interesting about the member's question in the House this morning is that these members continue to try and throw cold water on our Crowns at every opportunity, Mr. Speaker. We listened very carefully to what the opposition had to say about SaskTel and our Crowns during the four years prior to the last provincial election.

We have the member from Rosetown chirping from his seat. Well we know what he had to say about SaskTel in the last provincial election where it might be for sale, Mr. Speaker.

SaskTel is a company that's highly supported by the citizens of this province. It's a company that we have a great deal of faith in, Mr. Speaker. It delivers huge cellphone coverage in this province and Internet coverage to our citizens. And, Mr. Speaker, we continue to believe that SaskTel will report its earnings for the year that are appropriate, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, will the minister simply explain the difference between the SaskTel internal documents and the ones released for public exposure?

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister responsible.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, this is a group of men and women that believed in the last provincial election that they were going to win the election, Mr. Speaker, based upon their internal polling. Well that's what they projected, Mr. Speaker. So we don't really pay much attention to what the members of the opposition have to project when it comes to our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company Litigation

Mr. Elhard: — Well, Mr. Speaker, apparently we're not going to get an answer there, so we'll try another minister in another issue.

Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday Justice Ball threw out most of the NDP's counterclaims in the SPUDCO case saying that they were essentially a taxpayer-funded stalling tactic. Yesterday in the House the minister denied that the NDP is stalling the SPUDCO case and said he looks forward to the trial going forward in October.

But just a few minutes later, outside the House in the rotunda, the minister changed his tune and said the government may yet appeal Wednesday's ruling, which could possibly delay the trial past the established October trial date. Mr. Speaker, isn't this just another taxpayer-funded stalling tactic? Will the NDP accept Justice Ball's ruling and let the trial proceed in October?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister responsible for Sask Water.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that the final decision about whether or not an appeal will be launched will be taken by the deputy minister to the Premier. In other words, we're going to try to keep this decision about appeal as depoliticized as is possible, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make that clear. But at this point no decision's been made to appeal, but there will be consultation with legal counsel before a final decision is made.

But I want to raise a larger question, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite don't seem to be able to accept the fact that we acknowledge that some mistakes were made with respect to SPUDCO.

But you know what, Mr. Speaker, I want them to acknowledge that there have also been benefits from the investment, and they won't acknowledge that, Mr. Speaker. And the benefits have translated into a potato industry in the Lake Diefenbaker area with a gross value of \$35 million.

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the response from the minister begs the question, who is really making these decisions?

Yesterday the minister said the decisions were being made by the deputy minister to the Premier. But the minister also admitted in this House that political oversight was being provided by the Deputy Premier. So, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the final decision on whether to proceed with the appeal will be made by someone at the cabinet level.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP has stalled long enough on this file. My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier drop the appeal and allow the SPUDCO trial to finally go ahead this October?

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister for Sask Water.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many times I have to explain to the member of the opposition that we genuinely mean it when we say that the final decision about whether or not this appeal will be launched will be made by the deputy minister to the Premier and not by a member of cabinet and not by cabinet. And I want to assure the member that that will be the case, Mr. Speaker, and I don't know how much clearer I can be.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization Program

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Yesterday Statistics Canada confirmed the nightmare every farm family in Saskatchewan has been living through. Last year was the worst financial year on the farm since the Great Depression.

Ironically it was also the day the NDP confirmed Saskatchewan farm families will not receive all of the provincial government money they qualify for under the Canadian Agriculture Income Stabilization program.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP government refusing to fully fund the provincial share of the 2003 CAIS (Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization) program when 2003 was the most devastating year on the farm in Saskatchewan since the Great Depression?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question, and I appreciate as well that the member asking it and his family are directly affected by these issues. I think they affect all of this province. And when we look at the kind of loss of income that there is, we know that it has a huge impact.

Mr. Speaker, we have been very, very diligent in trying to work with the federal government to help them understand the terrible effect that this has on the economy of Saskatchewan. And in terms of our payments to CAIS, we have recognized that we have a capacity within this province which amounts to about \$100 million roughly. And when we looked at these numbers we recognized that the estimates that the federal government are giving us are substantially higher. And so we are compelled, Mr. Speaker, recognizing this tax base, to pro-rate, and we have advised the producers in this province of that fact.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Certainly, Mr. Speaker, support for agriculture is onerous for this province in bad years, but agriculture contributes greatly to the economy of Saskatchewan — not only in good years but also in bad years. That is because agriculture is more important to our economy than it is to the economy of any other province.

The NDP has \$28 million to blow on a rotten potato deal. There's 26 million to blow on a dot-com in Atlanta, Georgia. But when it comes to supporting farm families in the worst year since the Great Depression, the NDP slams the door shut.

Mr. Speaker, other provinces are honouring their commitments to farm families. Why is the NDP abandoning farm families in Saskatchewan in the middle of this crisis?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, there is obviously a great confusion on the other side, when the minister just obviously was answering around SPUDCO and pointing out that that potato industry has grown substantially because of the investment that was made in the potato industry. Mr. Speaker, people that recognize that growth, recognize that this government is concerned and investing in agriculture.

This province is investing inordinately in agriculture compared to other provinces, Mr. Speaker. We are putting into the agriculture sector more than \$500 per man, woman, and child in this province. Far more than any other province is putting into the sector.

Mr. Speaker, recognizing that, we are pressing the federal government for fairness in the programs that will make sure that our producers get the kind of support that they need. That is what we're working on; that's what we're pressing for, Mr.

Speaker, for our producers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Recruitment of Urologists in Regina Qu'Appelle Regional Health Authority

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of this session the Saskatchewan Party has raised the cases of a number of men who have waited too long for either diagnostic tests or treatment for prostate cancer. We now know that men wait significantly longer in Regina for treatment for this cancer in comparison with Saskatoon, and that part of the problem is that Regina has only two urologists while Saskatoon has eight.

Mr. Speaker, for three months now we've been bringing forward cases as evidence that there is a problem. What is being done specifically to recruit more urologists in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as the member knows and as many people in the province know, recruiting of new people to work in our system as well as retaining the ones that are there are major priorities of the government.

In Regina they have been working at recruiting through the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority with a special person hired to do this job. And I think many people will remember the ads in the newspaper last year where they lined up a lot of the people that they had recruited to come to the province.

There are from time to time shortages in specific areas, and in the urologist area there are some challenges that they are attempting to address right now. I know that they're working on this because we've identified it, the public's identified it, and it's something they're working on.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, patients in Saskatchewan are supposed to have equal access to health services. It is incumbent on the Department of Health to ensure that adequate specialists are in place to deal with the volume of cases in the system. People like Stan Szostak should not be waiting three to four months for prostate cancer treatment.

A recent CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) television story reported that some men wait a year and a half for this treatment. This is clearly not acceptable, Mr. Speaker. The minister himself has stated that the target for cancer treatment is to have 95 per cent of the cases treated within three weeks.

Why has the Department of Health allowed the number of urologists in Regina to drop to such a crisis proportion when this issue has not happened overnight. It's the responsibility of the minister to take action in a concrete way.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan decided last fall that our government was the one that was going to proceed and deal with health issues and many other issues in this province because we set forward a plan in December, 2001 about how we were going to provide health care for people in Saskatchewan. And as we work forward we have to do a number of different things to deal with the supply of physicians and all of the other valuable health professionals.

We have to provide training for them; we have to provide the proper compensation for them. We have to work together with all of the regional health authorities in the province to provide the appropriate work spaces.

We've been doing those things and there are many people who are working now in our system. But from time to time we do have shortages in particular areas of the province and for particular physicians.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, it's clear the surgery wait for prostate cancer is much shorter in Saskatoon than in Regina. Only 5 per cent of the people receive timely treatment in Regina; 95 per cent do not. If the goal is three weeks for treatment then we should be doing whatever we can to achieve that goal even if it means sending patients from Regina to Saskatoon, or sending them out-of-province if timely treatment is not available in Saskatchewan. These people should not be allowed to wait in fear of their future health concerns in this province.

Mr. Speaker, why aren't the quality care coordinators directing clients who complain about waiting times to seek treatment in Saskatoon instead of telling people like Stan Szostak that they are lucky because others are waiting six months or longer. This is simply not acceptable, Mr. Speaker.

What measures is the Department of Health taking to ensure that patients are informed about treatment alternatives in other locations in and out of this province if they can't be dealt with in a timely fashion in Regina?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Traditionally in our system here in Saskatchewan and in Canada the family practitioners have been the main advocates for patients, and they do that kind of work. One of the things that's happened though with the proliferation of information across the system is that people take much more interest and care in working with their own health problems.

We're trying to do that in Saskatchewan by providing information to the physicians, providing information to the patients about how the system works and we think that's an important way to tackle this problem.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister says that the system relies on family resources and family physicians in order to make this system work. Mr. Speaker, outgoing Saskatchewan Medical Association president, Dr. Joel Yelland, says that this government needs to have a proper plan in place to address the issue of the shortage of doctors. He says that it's time that Saskatchewan had a physician resource plan in place.

Mr. Speaker, the minister relies on all these bureaucratic announcements that he makes. And at the same time that all these announcements are being made people like Stan Szostak are waiting in fear of the future of their health conditions because they're exceeding the targets that are set by the medical system and even this very government.

Mr. Speaker, when will this minister take responsibility for the people of Saskatchewan to have timely health care received, especially in oncology issues of cancer in this province, and if you can't have it happen in Regina to see to it that there's coordination between Regina and Saskatoon and out-of-province referrals?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(10:45)

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, we have more doctors this last year than we did the previous year or the year before that. Each year, we've been increasing the number of physicians in our province. We are doing that in a very careful way. We've been working with the SMA (Saskatchewan Medical Association). We've been working with the College of Physicians and Surgeons. We've been working with our medical school and that is part of our plan.

But one of the things that we have to do is make sure that we have the proper resources to do this across the whole system. And we are also working on that particular issue and that's why we brought forward the budget we did this year for \$173 million.

Mr. Speaker, one of the major problems in this province is how the members opposite seem to want to go at cross purposes of what the people of this province want to do. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that we need those people to work together with us as we move forward to build a health system which will provide good care for all Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 65 — The Agri-Food Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 65, The Agri-Food Act, 2004 be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture and Food that Bill No. 65, The Agri-Food Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

**Bill No. 66 — The Cattle Marketing Deductions
Amendment Act, 2004**

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 66, The Cattle Marketing Deductions Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture and Food that Bill No. 66, The Cattle Marketing Deductions Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm

extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions no. 441 through 451 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 441 to 451 inclusive have been submitted.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Government House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to move the work of the policy committees along, I would move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Government House Leader that this House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:48.

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