



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

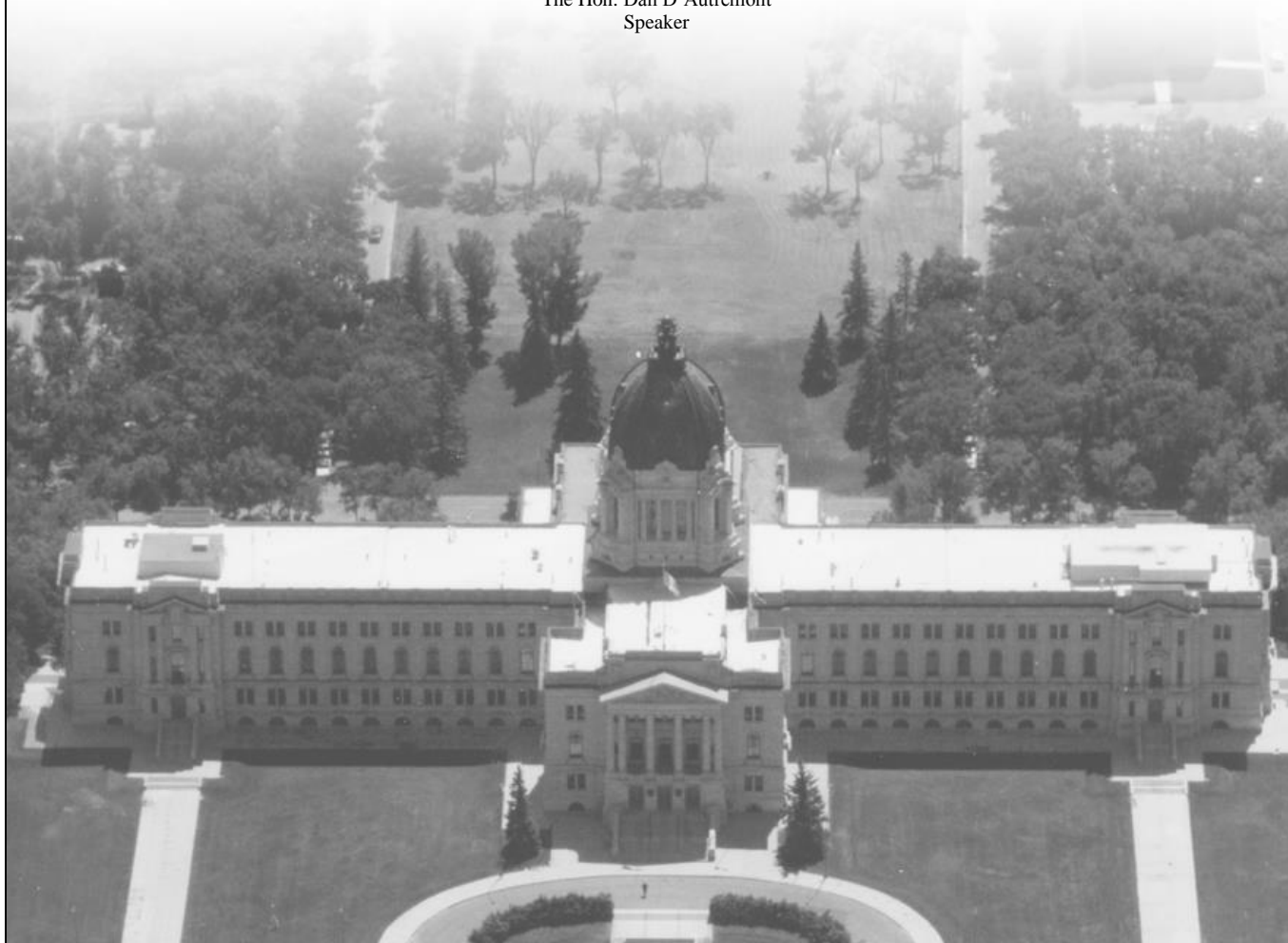
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Cam Broten

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Hon. Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D’Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Hon. Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Hon. Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Hon. Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu’Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Hon. Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Young, Colleen	SP	Lloydminster
Vacant		Prince Albert Carlton

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask for leave of this House to make a statement of a personal nature.

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Rosemont has asked for leave to make a statement. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Withdrawal of Statement and Apology

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to both sides of the House for granting leave.

Mr. Speaker, a statement that I made yesterday when sharing a concern raised by a Saskatchewan citizen was called into question, and the Premier has clarified that it was not accurate. So I wish to withdraw and apologize.

The Speaker: — Thank you. Introduction of guests.

Oh sorry. Just wait. Before you get to that point, I have something I want to say here as well.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Question of Privilege

The Speaker: — Under the provisions of rule 12(1) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, I received notice of a question of privilege this morning, Tuesday, April 14th, 2015 at 11:25 a.m. Upon receipt of the notice, in accordance with rule 12(3) I immediately informed both House leaders of the details of the case and the proposed question of privilege.

At page 267 of Maingot's *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, 2nd Edition, in the section "Where a Member is the subject of a question of privilege," it is stated, "An apology by the offending Member will invariably close the matter without the necessity of putting the motion to a vote."

In each of the cases cited, an apology ended the matter. This has also been the custom of this and other Assemblies as outlined by the precedents cited. In consequence of the apology of the member, it is my decision that this case need not go further.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to introduce and welcome a group of very special guests today, citizens who embody the spirit of selfless service to their province. And I am speaking of course of our most recent eight recipients of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. Launched in 1995, the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal gives Saskatchewan people a formal way of recognizing the contributions of our province's wonderful volunteers.

This morning at Government House during National Volunteer Week, which runs this year from April 12th to April 18th, I had the privilege of witnessing our Lieutenant Governor present this provincial honour to these newest and most deserving recipients who work tirelessly and give so much of themselves to their communities. Shortly each of these recipients will be recognized by members representing these individuals' towns and cities so that their names are read into the official record of their Assembly.

On behalf of the Premier and the Government of Saskatchewan, I would like to congratulate and thank them for making our province a better place. I would ask that all members of this Assembly join with me in welcoming these very special volunteers from across our great province to their legislature.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to join with the Deputy Premier in welcoming these distinguished and fine guests to the Assembly today.

Mr. Speaker, we know we live in a very diverse province. We come from different corners, different backgrounds, different interests, and different beliefs. We have our differences, but we have a lot that brings us together, and that's the love that we have for our province and a willingness to help out our neighbours to make our communities as strong and as great as we want them to be and as we believe that they can be.

I think that's shared by all residents in the province, but today in the Assembly the eight recipients that we have with us are perhaps some of the finest examples that we have in Saskatchewan of that true Saskatchewan spirit of contributing, of sacrifice, and of really thinking about others ahead of themselves.

So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I want to extend my deep gratitude to the recipients for all that they have accomplished in their volunteer careers and also look forward to their many accomplishments in the years ahead. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it

is my privilege to introduce Mr. John Barton from the constituency of Saskatoon Southeast who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Ms. Tina Bird from the constituency of Estevan who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina South.

Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Mrs. Marnie Eistetter from the constituency of Regina South who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Cox: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Senator Ray Fox from the constituency of The Battlefords who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Chief Warrant Officer (retired) Don McDonald from the constituency of Saskatoon Centre who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Crown Investments.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce Lieutenant (retired) Harold Ross from the constituency of Indian Head-Milestone who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Cox: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Ms. Edith Slatnik from the constituency of Rosetown-Elrose who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Mr. Darren Whitehead from the constituency of Prince Albert Carlton who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce two people who are up in your gallery, Mr. Speaker: Dave Trann, the mayor of Nipawin; and Chris Hudyma who is the economic development officer for Nipawin. And they are here on business today, Mr. Speaker, and wanted to come down and watch the proceedings. So I'd like all members to please welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for greater support for better schools here in Saskatchewan. We know that far too many of our classrooms are overcrowded and under resourced and that the Sask Party government has eliminated hundreds of educational assistant positions. And we know that students often don't get the one-on-one attention they need and that the condition of many of our schools are rundown, unsafe, or uninspected, and that this government refuses to release information on the \$1.5 billion of known repairs that are needed in our schools, and that this government's plan to rent schools from private corporations is expensive and reckless. Now none of this is acceptable, given the record revenues this government has had over the last eight years.

I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on this government to immediately stop ignoring schools and start prioritizing students by capping classroom sizes, increasing supports for students, and developing a transparent plan to build and repair our schools.

Mr. Speaker, I do so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to call on this government to act to address the unsafe conditions they've created on Dewdney Avenue. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the provincial government to immediately take action as it relates to the unacceptable danger, disturbance, and infrastructure damage caused by the heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue west of the city centre, to ensure the safety and well-being of communities, families, residents, and users; and that those actions and plans should include rerouting the heavy-haul truck traffic, receive provincial funding, and be developed through consultation with the city of Regina, communities, and residents.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of Regina. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. Homelessness is a major problem in La Ronge and other parts of the North, and it's getting worse. Shelter is a basic need for everyone, but under this government it's getting harder and harder for people to find adequate housing, especially families, seniors, women, and children who face

abusive situations. The problem is getting worse because of the rising level of poverty, skyrocketing home ownership costs. And the prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Saskatchewan government to build a homeless shelter in the Lac la Ronge area to meet the needs of addressing homelessness in the Lac la Ronge area.

It is signed by many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present a petition again today in support of safe staffing levels in long-term care. The petitioners point out that many aspects of long-term care are deteriorating under this government. The petitioners talk about that the Government of Saskatchewan need to recognize the need for safe staffing levels to provide hands-on care to residents. They point out that the government has removed the regulations requiring a minimum standard of care for seniors, which has resulted in neglect; and that chronic understaffing in long-term care facilities results in unacceptable conditions, including unanswered calls for help, infrequent bathing, and a rise in physical violence amongst residents. The prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the government to commit to the creation of safe staffing levels for all valued members of the health care team and to reintroduce actual numbers of staff to match the level of care needs and the number of residents under their care in long-term care facilities.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of retaining Yarrow Youth Farm. This government has closed Yarrow Youth Farm and they have moved all of these open-custody youth to Kilburn Hall, which is a secure custody unit, to accommodate the residents of Yarrow. The provincial Advocate for Children and Youth has declared he can't endorse such a rationalization, as low-risk teens could be influenced and pressured by close proximity to high-risk youth who may be involved in serious crimes or gangs, and that Kilburn Hall has a more institutional environment that could intimidate and alienate teens that have committed minor offences.

The prayer reads as follows:

They respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the government to keep Yarrow Youth Farm open to ensure a caring home environment for youth who have committed minor offences, and provide support to help these young people redirect their lives by setting more positive goals.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by individuals from Ile a la Crosse, Saskatoon, Regina, Dalmeny, and Saskatoon. I so present. Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

College of Arts and Science Alumni of Influence

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, March 13th, I had the pleasure to attend the sixth annual University of Saskatchewan College of Arts and Science Alumni of Influence Dean's Gala and Award Ceremony at TCU Place. As always, it's a wonderful event and it's important to see Saskatchewan people recognized for their contributions across our province, our country, and around the world.

This year's recipients come from all walks of life — from academia, the arts, business, and the community activists. The diversity and breadth of their accomplishments speak to the quality and disciplinary excellence that we have in our programming and instruction at the University of Saskatchewan.

This year's recipients included Federated Co-op CEO [chief executive officer], Scott Banda; former Saskatoon police officer, Keith Briant; CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] radio personalities, Piya Chattopadhyay and Robert Enright; renowned scientist and business leader, Heather Koshinsky; visual artist, Zachari Logan; Idle No More founder, Sheelah McLean; Chinese businessman, Bob Xiaoping Xu; and well-known Saskatoon-based poet, playwright, and author, Donald Kerr.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating this year's award recipients and also join with me in recognizing important contributions that the University of Saskatchewan makes to our province's cultural, intellectual, and community well-being. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

Be Kind to Lawyers Day

Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this Assembly we often have the opportunity to give statements to recognize Saskatchewan people who have made real differences in their communities. Today I rise to recognize a day overlooked by nearly all Canadians, Be Kind to Lawyers Day, and two gentlemen . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Seriously, Mr. Speaker, and two gentlemen from Saskatchewan who personified good practice. They are truly making a difference in

the global campaign for democracy.

Mr. Alan McIntyre, Q.C. [Queen's Counsel], a partner at McKercher in Regina, and Justice Ted Zarzeczny of the Court of Queen's Bench were part of a Canadian delegation of legal experts assisting Ukraine in improving its justice system. The Judicial Education for Economic Growth project worked to increase core efficiency and fairness, especially for commercial disputes. This enables a stronger economic environment for Ukrainians. Their efforts will help the Ukraine in meeting standards set by the European Union for a strong and independent judiciary. This could pave the way for the country to achieve membership status.

The pair's primary focus was on ways to help parties settle legal matters without resorting to a full-blown trial. In Saskatchewan, the vast majority of civil cases are resolved before trial. In the Ukraine, Alan reported that the settlement rate is about 1 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, their contributions to the international community not only speak to the generosity of Saskatchewan people but also the quality of our justice system. I would ask all my colleagues in this House to join me in applauding the work of Mr. McIntyre and Justice Ted Zarzeczny. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Video Released by Saskatoon Firm

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today to recognize a group of Saskatoon entrepreneurs who have really got Saskatchewan talking with their latest project. Huw Evans and his sons Douglas and Dylan started Eyecatcher Video three years ago and produced advertisements, music videos, and short films. Huw has worked for more than 30 years as a graphic designer and cartoonist in Saskatoon, and one of his recent video productions has people all across our province taking a look.

Evans says his forte would be his ideas: "a little edgier, a little weirder, a little cheesier, a little more retro."

Eyecatcher's ad for Saskatoon-based market research firm Insigthrix is entitled "SaskatcheWHAT?!" and it has gone viral. More than 285,000 people from all over the world have watched it on YouTube. I'm sure many members here in the Assembly have seen the video I'm talking about, which is full of subtitled Saskatchewanisms like "The grid on that back 40 is brutal"; "I almost hit the rhubarb"; "I bust open a 2-4 of Pil that I had just got at the LB."

I'm sure all members here have received a puzzled look from someone who isn't from Saskatchewan when talking about a bunny hug or a matrimonial cake, but I'm glad that Huw and his team put this video together to share some of the things that make our province unique and different. And this was Eyecatcher's first commercial. I understand that they're now planning the next made-in-Sask instalment, which I'm looking forward to.

I ask all members to join me in recognizing Huw and all of the people at Eyecatcher and Insigthrix whose hard work and dedication have captured a lighthearted but important part of our province's cultural and linguistic heritage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Sutherland Curling Club Exemplifies Community

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Saturday I had the great opportunity to bring greetings at the Sutherland Curling Club's annual wind-up banquet. This year's banquet was also the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the curling club in its current location and over 100 years in operation. The slogan of the Sutherland's Curling Club is 50 Years in Place Planted in 100 Years of Tradition.

Curling is our province's official sport and one of Saskatchewan's greatest traditions. This tradition remains strong, with Saskatchewan curlers achieving great success in competitions and communities around the province regularly hosting major national and international curling events.

Mr. Speaker, the Sutherland Curling Club exemplifies one of the great things about our province — community. Curling clubs like Sutherland bring our communities together for bonspiels, curling leagues, volunteer opportunities, and socializing. Thanks to the local curling rinks, people of all ages and abilities can be part of a team and engage in physical activity and healthy living. The Sutherland is one of 637 ice surfaces to have received the community rink affordability grant this year. In recognition of the importance of our rinks in our province, our government offers this grant to help ensure that the curling clubs and hockey rinks remain in the proper part of the community to enjoy for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in congratulating the Sutherland Curling Club on their 50 years of tradition and their windup this last Saturday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Recipients of Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal Recognized

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, this morning in a ceremony at Government House, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor presented the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal to eight deserving recipients. This honour is a way to express to volunteers the gratitude of their community and to present role models for the people of our province.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the provincial honour which was first established in 1995. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the highest level of volunteerism in Canada. Following today's ceremony, 174 people have now received this honour over the past 20 years.

This year's recipients are John Barton of Saskatoon, Tina Bird of Estevan, Marnie Eistetter of Regina, Ray Fox of North

Battleford, Don McDonald of Saskatoon, Harold Ross of Fort Qu'Appelle, Edith Slatnik of Outlook, and Darren Whitehead, a constituent from Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Darren Whitehead for his 30 outstanding years of volunteer commitment to Special Olympics in Saskatchewan. Darren has served as role model, leader, mentor, board member, program volunteer, referee, and coach to athletes with an intellectual disability during his many years volunteering with the Special Olympics.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating all eight of this year's recipients of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal and in recognizing their exceptional community involvement and outstanding commitment as volunteers.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Remembering Elmer Lach

Mr. Brkich: — The town of Nokomis in my constituency has always been a hotbed for great hockey players. This has included Jordan Henry who recently won a Stanley Cup with the Chicago Blackhawks.

Yet Nokomis is most famously known as the home of Elmer Lach. Mr. Speaker, on April 4th the great Elmer Lach passed away in Montreal at the age of 97. Elmer was born in Nokomis, Saskatchewan, considered to be one of the best NHL [National Hockey League] players of his era.

This small-town Saskatchewan boy really did stay true to his roots. Lach twice led the NHL in scoring and was named as the league's most valuable player. At one point he was the NHL's all-time leading scorer and had his name engraved three times on the Stanley Cup. Being a well-rounded player, Lach was a smooth skater and tough in the corners, making him a valuable member for the Canadiens. When Lach's teammate Rocket Richard famously scored 50 goals in 50 games, Lach assisted on most of them, including the 50th.

Although Elmer has not lived in Saskatchewan for a number of years, there is no doubt the time spent learning the game on his parents' frozen slough growing up made him one of the greats. In fact one of the first persons to notice Lach's talent was a town doctor.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members in joining me in recognizing one of the great hockey players to come out of Saskatchewan. Elmer Lach will be greatly missed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Dewdney.

Saskatchewan Woman Honoured for Heroism

Mr. Makowsky: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to inform the House of the lifetime achievements of Margaret Brooke and her recent exciting announcement. Mrs. Brooke was born in Ardash, a village 70 kilometres southwest of Saskatoon. Margaret turned 100 years old on Saturday, and she is being honoured once again for her heroic actions while on board the SS [steamship] *Caribou* on October 13th in 1942.

The SS *Caribou* was torpedoed and sank off the coast of Newfoundland. Submerged in the icy waters off the coast of Newfoundland, Mrs. Brooke clung to a capsized lifeboat for over two hours. In that time she also spotted her friend and fellow nurse, Sub-Lieutenant Agnes Wilkie. Margaret held on to her friend to keep her from drowning, unfortunately not enough to prevent her death from the cold waters.

Margaret's heroic actions earned her the Order of the British Empire. Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Brooke is the only Canadian nurse to receive such an honour during the Second World War. Yet in addition to this, the Canadian government has announced a Canadian Arctic patrol ship will bear her name, the HMCS [Her Majesty's Canadian Ship] *Margaret Brooke*.

Margaret is truly a Canadian hero and lived her life to the fullest since then, including earning a doctorate from the University of Saskatchewan. I'd ask all members to join me in congratulating Mrs. Margaret Brooke in yet another accomplishment, as well as wish her a very happy belated birthday.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Provision of Seniors' Care

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, Mike Seon is here today because he's very concerned about the quality of seniors' care in our province. For the last few years his mother has lived in Pioneer Village here in Regina. Members will recall that this is the same facility that served bologna to the residents on Christmas Day. Mike visits his mom almost every single day, and he says this: "This is a very scary place that needs to be investigated."

My question to the Premier: will he listen to Mike and look into these concerns or will the government once again try to minimize this?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Premier, I'll take the question on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I've had an opportunity to tour this particular facility. I will perhaps put on the record that there was a full turkey meal that was served for Christmas, with cold cuts that were served as a lighter meal, Mr. Speaker, which happens not just in long-term care facilities but I think in homes all across Saskatchewan on Christmas Day.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to this facility, this is one that we know that Regina Qu'Appelle is actively looking at in terms of their replacement strategy for long-term care in this region, in the city, in the capital city as well as in the rural areas. Mr. Speaker, we've provided dollars for the planning for the replacement of long-term care facilities, Mr. Speaker, in the city of Regina. That work does continue.

Mr. Speaker, we're always looking for ways to make improvement in seniors' care, whether that be on replacing existing facilities, whether that be on adding dollars for equipment, maintenance, Mr. Speaker, as well as for front-line

staff. That's the case not just in the city of Regina but all across the province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, unfortunately when families have come to the legislature and shared their stories, this government hasn't listened. This government hasn't recognized their concerns, and instead they trumpet, Mr. Speaker, and try to minimize the concerns brought forward.

Mike's mom, Bernal, moved into Pioneer Village in 2011. She went from walking, alert, and healthy to malnourished and in a wheelchair in just three weeks. She was placed on anti-psychotic medication despite not having psychosis. This made her zone out, have less of an appetite, and have swallowing problems. Mike's mom went from 105 pounds to just 83 pounds, losing 20 per cent of her body weight because she could not eat properly and because the front-line workers did not have the time to feed her. It's no wonder, Mr. Speaker, that Mike says that this is a very scary place and that it needs to be investigated.

My question to the Premier: does it not alarm the Premier to hear care facilities described as scary places?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly I would be very happy to meet with Mike after question period to hear first-hand of his concerns of his mother's care, Mr. Speaker. I know that Pioneer Village under this government has seen . . . not just in terms of some capital replacement dollars for the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region. That was in last year's budget, Mr. Speaker. And they continue forward with looking at the replacement of long-term capital within the city as well as in the rural areas.

But, Mr. Speaker, I know that that facility itself has had an over 50 per cent increase in their budget over the last seven years, Mr. Speaker. We've seen a significant increase in some of their positions, particularly on the LPN [licensed practical nurse] side, Mr. Speaker, that is despite the fact that the number of beds, the number of residents in that facility have not changed.

We also have added some other supports, Mr. Speaker, within the system — not just long-term care, but the system at large, Mr. Speaker. For example, registered dietitians working within the health care system are up 40 per cent over the last seven years. We know that Regina Qu'Appelle for instance is doing some good work when it comes to dietary needs for their residents, Mr. Speaker. They have some dollars through the Urgent Issues Action Fund, but we're always looking for more ways to make improvements in long-term care.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, I guess this doesn't alarm him because we hear the exact same dismissive tone coming from this government. Mike was absolutely horrified by what he saw happening to his mom so he started bringing meals in for her every day, which takes about 45 to 90 minutes per meal to be feeding her. And he spends a lot of time at the Pioneer facility

to make sure that his mom's basic needs are being met.

Now Bernal is very fortunate to have her son around, but not every senior in care has that. There are many seniors, Mr. Speaker, that are drugged up unnecessarily, not getting fed properly, and no one is there to advocate for them. Mike says this: "The care at Pioneer Village is far from acceptable, but I think the problem goes right up to the ministry." And Mike wonders what it will take for this government to finally get serious about fixing seniors' care. What is the Premier's response to that?

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Again, and again, Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Premier, I'll take that question on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, certainly we are monitoring, as a Ministry of Health working with our regional health authorities and our facilities, on a number of key indicators when it comes to the quality of the care of seniors. That would include using medication without a diagnosis, Mr. Speaker. That would include using restraints, falls that take place, Mr. Speaker.

And we've some good work that has been done in long-term care. Not to say that the number is zero today, Mr. Speaker, but we have seen some progress and I'd like to note that progress. I think people working in the system, trying to make these improvements, need to be recognized for their work.

The number of falls in long-term care is down from 13.95 per cent, down to under 10 per cent, Mr. Speaker. But there is more work to be done. The use of daily restraints in long-term care is down from nearly 16 per cent, down to 12.7 per cent last year, Mr. Speaker. Obviously we need to keep working and getting that lower.

Mr. Speaker, this government has always said that there is more work to be done in long-term care, Mr. Speaker. But from where we've come from, Mr. Speaker, the same number of residents in care in the last seven years, over nearly 800 full-time equivalents in care aids, in LPNs, in RNs [registered nurses] and other support staffs working in the long-term care system, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I think that that demonstrates that this government wants to make improvements when it comes to the long-term care and the seniors' system for those seniors living in care. But as well, Mr. Speaker, for those seniors that aren't in long-term care, may never be in long-term care, we need to also keep them in mind.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, it was this government that removed the minimum regulated care standards that were in place, Mr. Speaker. If this government was taking seniors' care in the right direction, we would not be having family after family coming forward sharing their heartbreaking stories.

Mike is here today, Mr. Speaker, because he wants this government to get serious about fixing seniors' care here in the

province. He wants regulated minimum care standards. He wants accountability for when those standards are not met, and he wants a seniors' advocate to help seniors and to help families investigate problems when they are identified. My question to the Premier: why is he so stubborn on this?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again in the absence of the Premier, I'll take that question on behalf of Government of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, again as I've said in the past, over the last seven years and including in this year, Mr. Speaker, we are making improvements and enhancements in long-term care, on front-line staff, Mr. Speaker, nearly 800 full-time equivalents.

From when the members opposite were the government of the day, Mr. Speaker, to today, there are more front-line staff working in long-term care, Mr. Speaker. There's more investments being made in equipment, in the basic equipment that we need in long-term care — mattresses, slings, tubs, etc., Mr. Speaker. The Urgent Issues Action Fund identified \$10 million, Mr. Speaker. Most of those dollars have gone out to the health regions for equipment that they never had in the past, Mr. Speaker. They have now.

Mr. Speaker, as well, we are in the midst of significant capital replacement: 13 long-term care facilities, a \$250 million investment in this province — largely in rural Saskatchewan, but not entirely in rural Saskatchewan — as well as the changes, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon with an additional number of beds in Saskatoon and Swift Current long-term care facility. This demonstrates our commitment to seniors in this province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, we know the one-time payment that this government brought forward, Mr. Speaker, was simply a drop in the bucket when we look at the needs that are actually there and what health regions themselves are identifying.

Mr. Speaker, if you speak with front-line providers, if you speak with families, they also say you need to look at the actual number of people on shifts when we talk about the hands-on, front-line care provided. We've had care aids come to this Assembly and talk about the incredible ratios that they are working under, Mr. Speaker.

We've had family after family come to the legislature and share their concerns about the quality of seniors' care in this province. At last count, the Ombudsman reports that her office has received 79 formal complaints about the quality of care in this province — not going in the right direction, Mr. Speaker, as the minister wants to suggest — 79 formal complaints. That means since her last update at the end of January, she's received an additional 44 complaints. The Ombudsman said these complaints come from all over the province.

Here's what is said: "... poor quality of care, low staff-to-resident ratios, a poor organizational culture within facilities, lack of communications with families and residents, and a long-term care system lacking in accountability." Mr. Speaker, that doesn't sound like a seniors' care system that is

meeting the needs of Saskatchewan's seniors in this province.

My question to the Premier: how could he possibly keep pretending that there is not a crisis in seniors' care here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can indicate to the House and to the member, member opposite, members of this House, that in terms of the staff ratio that we have working in long-term care — this is for sure, Mr. Speaker — it is better, much better, than it was when the members opposite left government in 2007.

A 13 per cent increase in staff, front-line staff in long-term care, Mr. Speaker, when the number of residents haven't changed. And in fact, the numbers that we have in terms of the average case mix index, Mr. Speaker — and CIHI [Canadian Institute of Health Information] verified this number and I was able to share this in estimates a week and a half ago, Mr. Speaker — has remained relatively level in the last seven years. And we know that acuity for certain residents is higher, Mr. Speaker, but the overall case mix index hasn't changed. In fact it's a little bit lower today than it was in 2007.

Mr. Speaker, we have more staff working in long-term care. Mr. Speaker, we welcome the Ombudsman's work. There are nearly 8,000 residents in our care, in long-term care. We need to be working each and every day to provide care that is in a compassionate way, Mr. Speaker, and that's the commitment of this government.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Costs Associated With Smart Meter Program

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government released the SaskPower annual report today. It shows the highest debt ratio in more than 20 years, and it shows an extremely low return on investment, down 6 per cent from last year. Meanwhile, this government is literally giving away millions upon millions of dollars to the failed American manufacturer of the smart meters. How can the SaskPower minister keep justifying this massive gift of public money to this failed American manufacturer?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, when it became apparent that there were problems with the smart meters here in Saskatchewan, our government ordered their removal and we ordered a number of things that would be done with respect to it, including the independent review of the entire program. It looked into three areas. PricewaterhouseCoopers was responsible for assessing the due diligence, the procurement, and contract management practices of SaskPower. Robertson Stromberg reviewed the contracts between SaskPower and various vendors, and Ritenburg & Associates was selected to provide an independent assessment of the causes of the fires.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, our government negotiated through SaskPower with Sensus, the manufacturer. They

received \$24 million cash refund, \$18 million of credit for future purchases if they are not able to come up with a meter that meets the standards here in Saskatchewan, and \$5 million for research to provide a meter that could stand the various rigorous climatic conditions that we experience here in Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I noticed the minister conveniently left out that he ignored the direct warnings that came his way a full two years before he pushed forward with this dangerous, costly program.

In fact it's astonishing that this government's approach is to, with the SaskPower smart meters, continue to put the bottom line of this failed manufacturer ahead of Saskatchewan taxpayers. In addition to the massive total cost of this government's smart meter mess, which continues to be hidden by government, nothing in its annual report shows any action to recover the 20-some-million dollars of ratepayers' money that's currently in Sensus's bank account. Why should Saskatchewan families have to pay for this Sask Party government's fire-prone smart meter debacle?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, the information that the member opposite presents is just simply not true. Indeed what happened was, is there was a \$24 million cash settlement. There's \$18 million of future credit if Sensus is able to come up . . . If they're not able to come up with a meter that meets Saskatchewan's standards, we would receive those \$18 million back. And there's \$5 million more with respect to a research program to make sure that that happens.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that the SaskPower officials took full responsibility of it. The Government of Saskatchewan apologized to the people of Saskatchewan and took full responsibility of it as well, which is in sharp contrast to anything that the members opposite ever did when they were in government, Mr. Speaker. When you look down the list of failures that that NDP [New Democratic Party] administration had, time after time after time they never once gave any kind of an indication to the people of Saskatchewan that they were sorry for their actions.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Pretty rich, Mr. Speaker, coming from a minister who ignored a direct warning, put people's lives at risk, Mr. Speaker, put property at risk and wasted millions upon millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan families have repeatedly seen their power bills go up and go up and go up under this Sask Party government. So when we see the SaskPower annual report that shows the highest debt ratio in more than 20 years and an extremely low rate on investment, and when we see the Sask Party government giving over \$20 million to this failed American smart meter manufacturer, Saskatchewan ratepayers and taxpayers are rightfully concerned about this government's failed approach and what it will mean for their power bills. To this minister:

how much more will Saskatchewan families have to pay for power because of this government's failed approach?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, the rates for SaskPower are a matter of public record here in Saskatchewan. They are debated in this legislature. They are put through the rate review panel. Everybody in Saskatchewan knows what those rates are. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, they also know about the history of the NDP when it comes to dividends with respect to SaskPower. They stripped every dividend they ever could from SaskPower, Mr. Speaker — 114 per cent in 1998 they stripped from them; 97 per cent of their earnings in '99; and in 2001, the largest figure in the history of the province, they stripped 181 per cent of the dividends from the people of Saskatchewan.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, when you look down the long list of failures that the NDP had here in Saskatchewan, it totals somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$303 million, time after time after time here in Saskatchewan, failure after failure after failure. That's the record of the NDP.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Condition of Highways

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Highways 220 and 322 are total disasters, Mr. Speaker. Those roads are really, really bad. Marina Ahrendt says, "I pretty much have to drive in the ditch. I have to go completely around the broken pavement." Reeve Gary Gilbert says, "I would call Highway 220 horrible. I would call it non-driveable." Ashlie Peakman says, "Every year roads get worse. How bad do they have to be before they are fixed?"

Mr. Speaker, to the Highways minister: what's her answer to Ashlie's question?

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that there are roads across this province that are facing some issues when it comes to pavement breaking. 322 and 220 are no different. I was on those roads last week. Mr. Speaker, we have crews out seven days a week making sure that those roads are levelled off so that they are as driveable as possible until the roadbed dries out so that we can do some more permanent repairs — as opposed to what the member from Rosemont said, that a wet roadbed is no reason not to fix a road. Well, Mr. Speaker, he's not an engineer and neither am I, but I know that you can't make a permanent repair on a soaking wet roadbed. So as soon as those conditions are in place, we will be making permanent repairs, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, despite the government having eight long years of record windfall revenues, we keep hearing about highways getting worse all throughout the province because this government wastes too much money too often. Under the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, the Highways minister has

increased spending — not on roads, but on consultants — by 404 per cent since 2009. And highway contractors have said, highway contractors have said this government's reliance on private consultants have at least doubled the cost and led to lower quality work. That's what the highways contractors have said, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister: how could she possibly justify a 400 per cent increase on consultants when highways like Highways 220 and 322 are literally falling apart?

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite references record revenues that the province of Saskatchewan has seen and, Mr. Speaker, we have coupled that with record investment in our infrastructure in this province. Mr. Speaker, in our last eight budgets we have spent \$1 billion more on highway infrastructure than the NDP did in their 16 years in government, Mr. Speaker — half the time, \$1 billion more.

We are investing in our highways, Mr. Speaker, and the member opposite asks about consultants. We are doing more than this province has ever seen when it comes to infrastructure, and every one of those projects requires help on the consulting side, Mr. Speaker. We are undertaking projects that the NDP never dreamed of doing — interchanges, twinning, passing lanes, the Regina bypass, working on the Saskatoon perimeter highway, Mr. Speaker — record investment in the highway system in the province of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, in the Ministry of Highways alone, this government is spending over 400 per cent more on consultants. Internal government documents show that this government is spending way more money because it had outsourced so much of the work. For outsourced surveyors, this government is spending 227 per cent more on outsourced surveyors. This is just wasteful spending under the Sask Party's watch, and so much neglect is the net result on highways like 220 and 322.

To the minister: why is the Sask Party willing to pay way more and get way less through wasteful outsourcing and more cash cow consultant contracts? Why, Mr. Speaker?

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, we are spending more because we are doing more. From 2008 to 2014, the number of culvert projects in the province has increased by 2,100 per cent, Mr. Speaker — 2,100 per cent. The number of TMS [thin membrane surface] upgrades between 2008 and 2014 has increased by 27 per cent, Mr. Speaker. We have increased budgets year over year, record investments, Mr. Speaker. Things are costing more because we are doing more.

And, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the member opposite is finally on his feet. I think it's the second time in the last year, so good for him for getting up. Because, Mr. Speaker, it's quite

evident that highways is not a priority for the NDP, Mr. Speaker. Their press release before this last year's budget, no mention of highways. Their press release before the Throne Speech last fall with their must-haves, no mention of highways. Their press release before the budget last year with their must-haves, no mention of highways, Mr. Speaker. As I've said before, not a priority when they were in government, not a priority when they are in opposition.

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

Farm Land Ownership

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the government has finally announced that it will freeze future farm land purchases by pension plans and institutional investors. Surely the Assiniboia land deal with Canada Pension Plan should also finally be considered inappropriate by the minister. This special Assiniboia land deal delivered huge benefits to two Sask Party insiders, and a former manager of the Farm Land Security Board says that special deal was bizarre.

To the minister: why did this government approve this bizarre deal and why should Sask Party insiders get special treatment?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for that question. There's certainly no insider deal and there's certainly no special treatment. That deal was allowed to happen because the Ministry of Justice provided a legal opinion that it was a proper deal and that it probably could not be stopped.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why the Sask Party government can't admit that it was wrong to let that massive special land deal go ahead — a \$128 million deal for Saskatchewan farm land which delivered huge benefits to the Premier's former senior advisor and the Sask Party's former executive directors. No other deals like that will be allowed. So it's not surprising that more and more Saskatchewan people are starting to question: why is it that this government seems more interested in looking out for its friends than standing up for Saskatchewan people?

To the minister: will this government require CPP [Canada Pension Plan] to divest itself of Saskatchewan farm land holdings?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have recently announced, as recently as yesterday, that there will be a conversation with the people of Saskatchewan over the course of this summer about farm land ownership in the province, including mainly the two main issues of foreign ownership and as well institutional owners, ownership by institutional investors. Mr. Speaker, the details of that consultation will be announced this spring and the consultation will carry on

throughout much of the summer, giving everyone in the province who is interested an opportunity to respond and provide the government with their views on farm land ownership.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what more we could do. We're going to listen to the people of Saskatchewan and we're going to act accordingly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Private Bills Committee.

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Mr. Steinley: — I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Private Bills to report private Bill No. 904, *The Mohyla Institute (1958) Amendment Act, 2014* without amendment, and to present its sixth report. I move:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Private Bills be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Private Bills be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the member for Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Makowsky: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 904, *The Mohyla Institute (1958) Amendment Act, 2014*, and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bill 904, *The Mohyla Institute (1958) Amendment Act, 2014*, and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 904 — *The Mohyla Institute (1958) Amendment Act, 2014*

Mr. Makowsky: — I move that this bill now be read the third

time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member that Bill 904, *The Mohyla Institute (1958) Amendment Act, 2014* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To facilitate the work of committees, both this afternoon and this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — This House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:23.]

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