

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

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

The Speaker: — I hereby inform the Assembly that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Jack Hillson, Esquire, as member for the constituency of North Battleford.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to you, Mr. Jack Hillson, member for the constituency of North Battleford. He has taken the oath, signed the roll and now claims the right to take his seat.

The Speaker: — Mr. Hillson, I want to say welcome to the Legislative Assembly and I hope that your time here will be one that serves to be a record of honour to yourself and your constituents. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Let the hon. member for North Battleford take his seat.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PROROGATION

At 10:05 a.m. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber and took his seat upon the Throne.

His Honour was then pleased to deliver the following speech:

Mr. Speaker,

Members of the Legislature:

It is my duty to release you from further attendance at the first session of the Twenty-Third Legislature. In thus relieving you, I would like to thank you for the work you have done.

This Session's work is a cornerstone in building a future of prosperity and security. You have successfully introduced legislation that supports Saskatchewan's growing, diversifying economy and meets people's expectations of strong social programmes and good government. Saskatchewan can look forward to the 21st century with a sense of confidence and security.

You recognized the social and economic importance of the land to the people of Saskatchewan by passing amendments to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*. This action added 3,600 acres of crown land to the province's designated wildlife areas, protecting rare and endangered species. In consultation with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, 21,500 acres were made available to satisfy specific band land entitlements. And now offenders who have disturbed protected wildlife habitat lands must restore and rehabilitate these lands.

You have demonstrated a commitment to sustainable growth in

our resource industries by passing *The Forest Resources Management Act*. The legislation provides a strong framework to ensure healthy economic growth is balanced with a healthy forest. It ensures public involvement in all levels of forest management planning, and supports the continued development of co-management and partnership initiatives.

You responded to the recommendations of government, business and consumer groups by passing *The Consumer Protection Act* and *The Direct Sellers Amendment Act, 1996*. These acts offer additional consumer protection for vulnerable groups in society, such as the elderly and recent immigrants; encode quick and effective enforcement mechanisms to deal with businesses that intentionally victimize consumers; and provide new remedies that allow consumers and businesses to resolve their own disputes without going to court.

In keeping with your commitment to high quality education, you improved rules governing the teaching profession by passing amendments to *The Education Act*. These provisions create clear and workable rules to ensure consistent and acceptable hiring practices across the province.

You recognized the vital role that libraries play in education and information by creating a multitype library system that provides seamless service to Saskatchewan people. *The Libraries Co-operation Act* and *The Public Libraries Act* establish a network of university, school, public and special libraries to share service and resources.

Across Saskatchewan there is a deeply held belief that access to health services must be based on need, not the ability to pay. You demonstrated your unwavering endorsement of this principle by passing *The Health Facilities Licensing Act* that prevents the development of a two-tier health system in the province. The government now has the authority to ensure that any future private facility coming to Saskatchewan cannot charge patients for a service that is covered by Saskatchewan Medicare.

You ensured that donors and health districts would receive the maximum benefits from charitable donations by passing *The Crown Foundation for District Health Boards Act*. This action allows people who donate more than 20 per cent of their net income toward a district health board or affiliate in a given year will receive a tax credit on the entire donation.

You provided new tools to assist parents and children to obtain the support to which they are entitled by passing *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 1996*. This legislation strengthens the ability of the Maintenance Enforcement Office to ensure that people who have been ordered by the court to pay child maintenance comply with that order, and includes last resort measures of licence suspensions and utilization of deferred pension funds.

You chose to implement *The Highway and Vehicle Statutes Amendment Act* which is one of the toughest and most comprehensive measures in Canada dealing with drinking and driving. Harsher penalties for impaired drivers and closer

monitoring of new drivers will help to reduce traffic accidents, injuries and debts. As well they will help reduce the associated insurance and health care costs.

You reflected your commitment to guarantee that all residents of Saskatchewan will have common access to emergency and protective services by passing *The 911 Emergency Services Act*. This legislation provides an opportunity for municipalities and emergency service providers to work together in the delivery of the service.

You enacted *The Public Disclosure Act* which establishes a workable, effective process to allow for public notification about dangerous offenders in situations where it is necessary. Saskatchewan is the first jurisdiction in Canada to introduce legislation to respond to police requests for help in dealing with the difficult issue of releasing information in these cases. The Act strikes a needed balance by providing for an encouraging full consideration of the concerns of the community as well as the rights of the offender in making a recommendation regarding notification.

You have demonstrated your commitment to good government at all levels by passing a new *Election Act*. The updated and modernized Act extends the right to vote by providing a mechanism for absentee voting and provision of mobile poles; improves access to voters by extending the hours of advance poles; provides for the establishment of a provincial tax credit system for political donations; and establishes a procedure for improving the accuracy of voters' lists and reducing enumeration costs.

You enacted *The Local Government Election Amendment Act* that expands political rights at the local level and enables municipalities and school divisions to use computerized voting and vote counting.

You chose to implement *The Service Districts Act* which provides a new framework for intermunicipal co-operation in the delivery of local services. It gives municipalities the ability to form a service district to achieve efficiencies without restricting or reducing the autonomy or powers of individual municipalities.

You responded to the request from aboriginal groups that this government honour their constitutional rights by passing *The Interpretation Amendment Act*. This act now contains a clause that clarifies that provincial legislation does not abrogate or derogate treaty rights in any way.

Finally, in taking leave of you, I wish to thank you for the diligent manner in which you have devoted your energies to the activities of the session and wish you the full blessing of Providence.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly, it is the will and pleasure of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor that this Legislative Assembly be prorogued until later today, the 6th day of March, 1997, at 2:30 p.m., and this Legislative Assembly is accordingly prorogued.

His Honour then retired from the Chamber at 10:15 a.m.

Error Made in Prorogation Speech

On March 10, 1997, in a statement to the Assembly, the Speaker acknowledged that the prorogation speech which ended the first session of the twenty-third legislature contained an error. The speech stated that Bill No. 33, The Service Districts Act, had been implemented. In fact, the said Bill did not pass and was left standing on the order paper.