

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present petitions on behalf of people who would like to see the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open. And the prayer on this petition, Mr. Speaker, reads as such:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from the community of Semans.

I so present.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd love to read a petition today to retain the hospitals at Watrous and Lanigan, but I don't have one. So today, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to read a petition on cellular telephone coverage at Lake Alma:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to utilize the present SaskTel tower at St. Alma to include usage for cellular phones, or to construct a new cellular telephone tower at St. Alma, Saskatchewan.

People who have signed this petition are from Gladmar and Minton.

Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here today calling for a smoking ban in all public places. The petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that the Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to legislate a total ban of smoking in all public places and workplaces in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

The petitioners are all from my hometown of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan plus one from Weirdale.

I so present.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of citizens concerned about the future of their hospitals in this province. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

Signatures on this petition are all from the community of Young.

I so present.

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition that was collected on behalf of youth in Saskatchewan, and the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to legislate a total ban of smoking in all public places and workplaces in the province of Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions are collected mainly in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

And I so present.

Mr. Peters: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition in regards to the constituents concerned with health care. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed from folks from Young.

I so present.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens opposed to nursing home fee increases. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners will humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to rescind the recent large increases in nursing home fees.

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

And this is signed by folks in Creelman, Weyburn, Halbrite, and Yellow Grass.

I so present. Thank you.

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here gathered on behalf of the youth of the province. It reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to legislate a total ban of smoking in all public places and workplaces in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

And this is from residents of Prince Albert.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on behalf of citizens in southeast Saskatchewan concerned about cellular service in their area. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to utilize the present SaskTel tower at Lake Alma to include usage for cellular telephones, or to construct a new cellular telephone tower at Lake Alma, Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by the great folks of Minton, Saskatchewan.

I so present.

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition on behalf of the citizens of Saskatchewan, which reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to legislate a total ban of smoking in all public places and workplaces in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

This petition is on behalf of the youth in P.A. (Prince Albert) and Birch Hills.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of persons in Saskatchewan who are opposed to nursing home fee increases. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners will humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to rescind the recent large increases in nursing home fees.

And this is signed by citizens from Weyburn, Glenavon, and Assiniboia.

I so present.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of the young people of Saskatchewan.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the Assembly to legislate a total ban of smoking in all public places and workplaces in the province of Saskatchewan.

Signed by people from Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Meadow Lake.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got a petition today to present on behalf of residents to do with the lack of cell service. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to utilize the present SaskTel tower at Lake Alma to include usage for cellular telephones or to construct a new cellular telephone tower at Lake Alma, Saskatchewan.

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Beaubier, Lake Alma, Tribune, and Estevan.

I so present.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present today. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately take steps to begin a reconstruction of Highway 47 from the Handsworth turnoff to Junction No. 1 Highway.

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

This petition, Mr. Speaker, comes from the good people of the Corning, Glenavon, Windthorst, Stoughton, and Crane Valley areas of the province.

I so present.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present regarding highways and the poor state of our highways. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately take steps to begin reconstruction of Highway 47 from the Handsworth turnoff to Junction No. 1.

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

This petition is signed from the people in Glenavon, Saskatoon, Windthorst, and even from Taber, Alberta have trouble on our highways.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to present a petition from citizens concerned about hospital closures. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

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

Signed by the citizens from Drake, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here to reduce fuel tax by 10 cents a litre.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the federal and provincial governments to immediately reduce fuel taxes by 10 cents a litre, cost shared by both levels of government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The signatures are from Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Chamberlain, and Davidson.

I so present.

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition with citizens concerned about closure of hospitals. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners will ever pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open.

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

The petitioners are from the communities of Drake and Lockwood.

I so present.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I have a petition about citizens who are concerned and very distraught over the despicable state of our highways in Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide the necessary resources to restore the Paddockwood access road to an acceptable state.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good people from Paddockwood and Christopher Lake.

I so present.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition to present on behalf of citizens concerned about medical services in their community. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Cupar Health Centre remains open, and the physician services are retained in the community of Cupar.

Signatures to this petition come from the community of Cupar, Lestock, and Miles City, Montana.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly to bring forth a petition for improved cellular telephone coverage.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to provide reliable cellular telephone service in the districts of Prud'homme, Bruno, Vonda, and Cudworth.

And the signatures on this petition are from Prud'homme, Mr. Speaker.

I so present.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with plans to turn paved highways back to gravel.

And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to set aside any plans to revert Saskatchewan highways back to gravel, commit that the government will not download responsibility for current numbered highways on the local governments, and to consult with local residents and to co-operate in finding and implementing other alternatives.

And this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Moose Jaw and Saskatoon.

I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 12(7) they are hereby read and received.

Of citizens of the province petitioning the Assembly on the following matters:

The reconstruction of Highway 47 from Handsworth to Junction No. 1;

Setting aside plans to revert Saskatchewan highways back to gravel;

Halting plans to proceed with the amalgamation of municipalities;

Ensuring the Lanigan and Watrous hospitals remain open;

Legislating a ban of smoking in public places and workplaces;

The restoration of the Paddockwood access road; and

The rescinding of large increases in nursing home fees.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

Clerk Assistant: — Mr. Thomson, Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations, presents its first report which is hereby tabled.

Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move that:

The first report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations be now concurred in.

Seconded by the member for Regina Northeast.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce a gentleman in your gallery — a retired lieutenant colonel in the Canadian air force, currently a resident of Glentworth, Saskatchewan. A gentleman rancher I believe, Mr. Speaker. Also the director of the Moose Jaw Air Show and today he's being mobbed by well-wishers, autograph seekers, so much so that he has two rather reluctant body guards sitting up there with him.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you the new MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for Wood River by a prairie tidal wave, Mr. Yogi Huyghebaert.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's our pleasure and honour to welcome the new member from Wood River as well.

I want to also indicate that we will be moving later today a Bill that will allow for the new member to be seated, I think as early as tomorrow. And it's fair to say that we're going to give up our position and right for an immediate recount.

So welcome to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a special guest that's seated in your gallery.

Our visitor's name, Mr. Speaker, is Vicki Chittleborough. Vicki Chittleborough is a grade 11 student from Nildottie, a small community near Adelaide the capital city of South Australia.

She has come to Saskatchewan for six weeks to visit Jordan Martens. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jordan. He is going to be graduating from Balfour Collegiate this week.

Mr. Speaker, this has been an Internet friendship that has developed and Vicki is going to be staying with the host family, of course Jordan Martens and his parents, Andrew and Karen Martens.

I would ask them to stand and be recognized and welcomed by all members of the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melenchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I too would like to join with the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in welcoming Yogi Huyghebaert as the newly elected MLA for Wood River. And I'm sure that the debate in the Assembly will be heightened with his presence, and I look forward to that debate.

Please welcome Yogi. Thank you, very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're

privileged this afternoon to have in the Assembly, seated in your gallery, some guests from Bogota, Colombia. Mr. Speaker, we have with us Jorge Contreras, an exchange student, grade 12 exchange student. He's been hosted by Ruth Malo and her family in the Moosomin area, and he spent a number of months with us. And now he's been joined today by his parents, Genero and his mother Veronica and his sister Laura.

Mr. Speaker, the Contreras family own and operate dairy and beef cattle operations as well as a number of butcher shops in the country of Colombia. And I'd like the Assembly to extend a warm Saskatchewan welcome to our guests from Colombia. I'd ask them to rise and be recognized.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to have guests here in your gallery. Joining us is John Burton. John, as members will know, was a Member of Parliament from Wascana, I believe is the riding, elected in 1968, and served until 1972.

He's joined today by his grandson Paul I believe is with him. But he also has some special guests joining him from Chilliwack, British Columbia, that being his sister-in-law and her husband, Amy and John Antoshchuk. And they're also joined by Tyler Williams who is a young fellow from Vancouver who's joining them.

So if you'd join with me in welcoming them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, it seems like it never rains; it pours. I have more guests to introduce.

This time I've very pleased to introduce a couple of young ladies from my riding who are joining us here. Kaitlan Stocks is seated in the government gallery. Kaitlan was a very good supporter of mine and campaigned very hard for me, and I appreciate that. And she's joined by her friend, Nancy Beleshinski. I practised it three times, Nancy.

But I'm very pleased to have these young ladies from Campbell Collegiate here to watch our proceedings today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the House, I would like to introduce a constituent of mine, Mr. Tom Cameron from Carievale.

Tom is seated in the Speaker's gallery and was one of the driving forces behind the southeast concerned farmers last summer as we were all being flooded out. Tom and his group were good spokesmen for the farmers of the southeast area in convincing the government that we needed assistance in that area.

And I'd like everyone to welcome him here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now I'd like to introduce — he never was with the Snowbirds, but he is a frequent flyer in the legislature — in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, Paul Meid, who often takes in the proceedings. And welcome him again today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are people who do a lot of work on a daily basis to make sure that I'm organized and provide me with the support I need. And two of them are two beautiful women seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

There's Betty-Ann Donison and a young woman who's come to work during the summer months, Kim Gebhardt. And they're seated in your gallery. I'd ask all members to welcome them to proceedings today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to welcome in your gallery and have the rest of us welcome Mr. Tom Cameron, who is a tireless worker for the farmers in the southeast and who is also a guide for me as I was attempting to learn more about agriculture to be able to be an effective support for the farmers of this province.

So I'd like to welcome Tom as well and have everybody join me in that welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Wood River By-election Results

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, well, well. It's Tuesday, the day after the Wood River by-election, and it is good news for Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yogi Huyghebaert for the Saskatchewan Party won the by-election in an avalanche. The government coalition of the NDP (New Democratic Party) and Liberals, as my colleague from Kindersley predicted, received the trashing of their lives. They were beat, Mr. Speaker, like a government mule.

The numbers in the by-election, Mr. Speaker were: for Yogi and the Saskatchewan Party, 4,365; the NDP, 1,128; the Liberals, 754; and the New Green Alliance, Mr. Speaker, 429 ex-NDP votes.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals went from tied in the last election to a distant third place. The New Green Alliance almost beat them.

The people of Wood River, Mr. Speaker, judged the coalition. They judged it lacking — for inaccessible health care, impassable roads, and forced rural amalgamation, and ever-increasing taxes.

The people of Wood River spoke loudly. They wanted Yogi Huyghebaert and the Saskatchewan Party. Congratulations, Yogi.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Welcome to New MLA

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the members of the government, I want to congratulate the new member for Wood River on his by-election victory, Mr. Speaker. And for obvious reasons, Mr. Speaker, we are not going to ask for a recount.

But all joking aside, Mr. Speaker, all members I am sure look forward to having a full representation in this Assembly for all the people of Saskatchewan. It is a certainty that the people of Wood River will be relieved to have a member in this Assembly who can speak and represent them to the government, Mr. Speaker.

They have been without representation for too long. And it is worth mentioning that the speed with which this by-election was held after the resignation of the former member was made possible by the six-month legislation passed by this government and our belief in fair representation.

We know from experience what it is like not to have representation in a constituency, Mr. Speaker, and we acted to remove that as a possibility in this case. In fact, Mr. Speaker, later on today we will be introducing a Bill which will allow Mr. Huyghebaert to take his seat before this session concludes.

We look forward to his contribution in committee and in debate. And once again we congratulate him on his victory.

Congratulations, Mr. Huyghebaert. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Prince Albert Plans Performing Arts Centre

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed with great civic pride that I rise today to inform our Hon. Assembly of an event that took place on Wednesday, June 21.

Mr. Speaker, the city of Prince Albert, in collaboration with its surrounding districts, is attempting to build their very own visual and performing arts centre — a centre that will enhance all visual and performing arts for both local artists, plus provide a venue to showcase professional artists.

Mr. Speaker, on the aforementioned date, the goal of reaching the local commitment was achieved, despite vague promises from both the federal and provincial governments, to assist Prince Albert in realizing this dream. The total was only reached because Prince Albert and district believed in themselves and decided to reach their objective prior to any firm commitments from this NDP government or from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, attention needs to be brought to one contribution that is truly remarkable in today's economic reality. Rawlco

Communications, owner of the local radio station, is donating \$1 million to ensure that the local commitment was reached and in fact was even exceeded.

Mr. Speaker, because of patrons such as Rawlco and all those other committed patrons, myself included, Prince Albert and district will be a better place to live. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Statistics

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) recently released its annual graduate employment statistics report. And the statistics this year again are very, very encouraging, Mr. Speaker.

Ninety-one per cent of the respondents indicated they were employed at the time of the survey. And of those, 95 per cent are employed right here in Saskatchewan. SIAST graduates get jobs, and they get them at home in Saskatchewan.

SIAST is helping talented and skilled people, especially our young people in the province, where they can contribute to our communities and to our economy, Mr. Speaker.

The respondents, graduands of SIAST, rated the quality of the programs and services at SIAST as very high. Ninety-seven per cent of the respondents rated the overall program quality as good to excellent, Mr. Speaker. Ninety-two per cent of the graduands said that the training programs had met their expectations.

SIAST is the pre-eminent training institute in Saskatchewan when it comes to preparing young people in particular for the future.

Mr. Speaker, this government recognizes the importance of investing in people through post-secondary education. Together with SIAST we are creating a brighter future for individuals, communities, and indeed for all of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Humboldt Vintage and Antique Club Museum

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last weekend I had the distinct pleasure of attending the grand opening of the Humboldt Vintage and Antique Club Museum located five kilometres south of Humboldt on Highway No. 20.

Mr. Speaker, the club members acquired the former auction mart building three years ago. They did massive renovations and have several displays set up presently. The most recent additions are a harness and wheelwright shop, a blacksmith shop, and a farm kitchen.

Club member, Ed Brockmeyer gave a tour of the facility. And the club is now open to the public Saturdays and Sundays.

The goal of the Vintage and Antique Club, Mr. Speaker, is to

preserve the machinery and the tools of past generations so that future generations will not forget where their roots are. It is an admirable effort to preserve the history of how people worked when this province was in its infancy.

The club members are to be commended for all of the fabulous work that they have done. The building and the renovations have been made possible by the generous donations and support from the membership.

So today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the president of the Humboldt Vintage and Antique Club, Tony Stroeder, and I'd like to also congratulate all the members on a job well done in preserving Saskatchewan's history. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Increase in Stipend for Medical Students

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An active, caring, innovative government is distinguished equally by the number of small, significant actions it takes to assist people as much as it is known by the major decisions it makes.

It was an NDP government that introduced medicare and it is this government that is reviewing it with a view to making it responsive and comprehensive into the new century. That's a big decision.

And here's a small action, but a significant one, to help us along in our pursuit of the bigger challenge. Medical students at the University of Saskatchewan, between their third and fourth year, find it difficult to work in the summer in order to support their fourth year. To help alleviate this problem, in 1998 the government introduced a stipend of \$6,000 for these students.

Effective May 1 of this year, Mr. Speaker, to recognize increased student costs, this stipend is now increased to \$6,300 per student which keeps us well ahead of Alberta at \$3,420 — another tarnish on the shine that is Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, medical students, tomorrow's doctors, play an important role in the delivery of health care in Saskatchewan. I congratulate the Minister of Health, her department, and the College of Medicine for recognizing their importance in this very tangible form. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Bison Association Summer Field Days

Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The annual Saskatchewan Bison Association Summer Field Days were held in Weyburn, June 23 to 25. The bison field days attract about 300 people, including bison producers from Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba, British Columbia, and northern United States.

The field days feature a trade show and a number of specialized speakers who address various aspects of production and marketing. The event provides producers with an opportunity to access information about the latest technologies and techniques.

Mr. Speaker, the bison field days are significant in that they

bring together a larger number of bison producers than any other event during the course of the year. Mr. Speaker, there are 350 members in the Saskatchewan Bison Association and it's estimated that there are about 420 producers in the province.

Saskatchewan's bison herd is about 20,000 in number as of mid-April this year — just as calving season was about to start. Calving concludes about mid-June.

Mr. Speaker, the bison industry is helping to diversify Saskatchewan's agricultural economy. Mr. Speaker, the total on-farm investment by Saskatchewan bison producers is about 62.5 million. The average herd size 55 animals; the estimated total investment is about 700,000 a herd.

Support bison — eat a buffalo.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Wood River By-election

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's the last week of June. This is when teachers all over the province are handing out report cards. And yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the people of Wood River handed its report card to the coalition government — a big, fat F for the NDP, and a big, fat F for the Liberals.

Mr. Speaker, it is now clear that the NDP have learned nothing from last fall's election. The NDP has no plan for health care, it has no plan for highways, it has no plan for agriculture. So that's why the voters of Wood River and all over Saskatchewan are leaving the NDP and they're coming to the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, will you now admit that your government is on the wrong track, obviously.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by first of all congratulating Mr. Huyghebaert who's in the gallery — sorry I couldn't be here during the formal introductions — and the Leader of the Opposition and your party for the wonderful victory that you are enjoying, and rightly so, today, in Wood River's election yesterday.

But as one of my colleagues said to me in response to your question, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, this was a snap quiz, not the final examination that was conducted yesterday. And on a snap quiz we have many more yet to go through before the final examination.

And I would remind the Leader of the Opposition that we have many examples. I remember losing as Leader of the New Democratic Party in Wood River — it wasn't called Wood River at the time — in 1988, to the Devine administration in Assiniboia. And it looked like Premier Devine was going to come back, and was defeated in '91.

Nothing can be made of a by-election except that the interests of the folks at Wood River have to be taken into account, and

our government's going to do that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I thank the Premier for those comments. And of course these snap quizzes always tell you who's ready and who isn't ready too.

Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the government has written off entire areas of the province. The Premier and his ministers barely set foot within the boundaries of Wood River during the entire by-election.

If the NDP were so proud of their record, why weren't they out in Wood River talking to the voters? Where was the Premier? Where were his ministers, Mr. Speaker? Even on election night, the Premier doesn't have the courage to go and stand by his candidate. Not one of the NDP leadership candidates had the courage to go and stand by their candidate. So they sent the poor, old Minister of Energy and Mines way down there to the end of the road, that we wondered, what did you wrong?

Mr. Speaker, that's not my question. My question is to the Premier. How can you say you are truly listening to the people of Wood River when you don't even want to talk to them during the election campaign?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — I'm not sure what the question was but I gather it was something to the extent, why didn't anybody go out. I don't understand this question, and to be quite frank with you, he talked about none of the so-called leadership candidates of the NDP. So far as I know there are no leadership candidates in the NDP.

But what I have to ask about the Leader of the Opposition, where were your leadership candidates? How come they weren't there, at the same time?

Mr. Speaker, the jocularity that we can have respecting this by-election is good enough. But look, the government has received, I think, loudly and clearly, a very important message about the need to deal with some of the problems specifically in the Wood River area related to roads and economic uncertainty occasioned by the agricultural crisis.

We are trying very hard to balance the budget, reduce taxes, have a balanced government, and we need to do a lot more work. There's no way we can claim anything else except the need for us to turn up our sleeves, roll up our sleeves, and work harder than ever in the interests of the people of Wood River and all Saskatchewan people. That's the message.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well everyone including the Premier knows this is a wake-up call for the NDP. But it should be a breakup call for the Liberals. It's time to break up this unholy marriage, Mr. Speaker. It's not just the Saskatchewan Party that's saying that. Yesterday the voters of Wood River spoke as loudly and as clearly as they could.

The Liberals went from over 3,000 votes down to 700 votes or 800 votes. Mr. Speaker, more than three-quarters of the Liberal's own supporters abandoned them yesterday. And I believe that's because of the way they were stabbed in the back by the Leader of the Liberal Party.

To the Minister of Education: if you won't listen to us, will you at least listen to your own supporters? Will you now tear up that coalition agreement?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melnychuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly as the Premier has indicated in the answers to the previous questions, we have heard the message. This is a coalition government, a coalition government of two very proud parties who worked out to provide good government — an agreement to provide good government to the people of Saskatchewan. And we are doing that and we plan to continue doing that into the future.

We also recognize that the coalition government has been in existence for nine months, that we've recently tabled a budget and a plan for health care review, for major tax cuts beginning July 1, to a completely changed tax system beginning on January 1, 2001. These are improvements that will have a tremendous impact on the people of Saskatchewan in the very near future. And no, we will stay within the coalition government and we will work every day, every single day for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the people of Wood River have said this coalition government has been in power nine months too long. They want you to end the coalition. They want you to cancel the coalition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, they're furious with the Liberal leader for signing the agreement, and then what does the Liberal leader do? He blames all those folks out there. He says people just don't understand. He says he thinks they're not bright enough to understand the coalition agreement.

Mr. Minister, people do understand the coalition agreement. They understand it very well. They understand that it's a betrayal. They understand that it's a sellout. They understand that they've been stabbed in the back. And that's why over three-quarters of rural supporters abandoned the Liberal Party yesterday.

Mr. Minister, you're the one that doesn't get it. Will you now recognize your mistake and tear up the coalition agreement?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melnychuk: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has basically asked the same question, and I'll give him the same answer. No, we won't be tearing up the coalition agreement. And we will be working every day for the people of this province.

But when we talk about the impact of this coalition government, we're very early in our term. We haven't had an opportunity to actually see the impact on the people of Saskatchewan. And when they recognize the impact in their lives by having more money in their pockets, by having better health care, by having better education, and improvements to their highways and roads, then they will say that coalition government has been working.

And the fact of the matter is that when we talk about coalitions, I see across there, it's a coalition of sorts — a coalition of malcontents, a coalition of disconcerted people, an alliance of the unholy, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're the happiest band of malcontents I've ever . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's be serious. Is the leader, is the leader . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, is the Leader of the Liberal Party going to listen to the . . .

The Speaker: — I ask all hon. members to please come to order.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Leader of the Liberal Party going to listen to voters or is he just going to listen to the NDP?

Yesterday the people of Wood River said who they thought you should listen to. The people of Wood River said they wanted a watchdog — that's why they voted for Yogi Huyghebaert. They didn't want another lapdog like the Liberal leader.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the people of Saskatchewan have lost confidence in this government. So later today, the Saskatchewan Party will be moving a motion of non-confidence in the coalition government.

To the Minister of Education. Mr. Minister, will you listen to the message the voters sent yesterday? You have a chance now to support this non-confidence motion. Will you do that, or will you continue to prop up a failing NDP government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Melnychuk: — Mr. Speaker, the results of the Wood River by-election is a matter of record obviously. But when we talk about the issues that came forward in the Wood River by-election, they were issues about roads and highways. There was issues about health care.

And these issues are social issues that this government has made a commitment to address and to continue to address over

the future.

But when we talk about the commitment of the members opposite — when they talked about in their platform what they would do for health care, they said they would freeze spending. When they talked about their commitment to education, they said they would freeze spending on education.

So here we have a situation where, what was the message? The message from the people of Wood River were to this coalition government that they would like help, that they would like assistance. And this government will work every day to provide that assistance to those people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority Investigation

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Gaming minister. Madam Minister, my question is related to the terms of reference of the NDP's investigation into the misuse of taxpayers' money at the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority.

While the investigation will include a review and . . . or will, excuse me . . . will the investigation include a review and audit of the financial operation of all casinos operated by SIGA (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority) while Mr. Dutch Lerat served as CEO (chief executive officer)?

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned last week, the audit team has now been formulated. It works closely with the Provincial Auditor and will look into all aspects of SIGA's operations. Many of those I mentioned last week — the structures that are in place, the internal controls that are in place.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I spoke very quickly about the integrity of the casinos and the operation of the casinos. Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority has many auditing processes in place and at work on a daily basis, a weekly basis, and through the months of the year to provide that confirmation, the integrity of those operations.

One of the most apparent, of course, would be the electronic gaming machines, 95 per cent of the gaming in those casinos that are run through the Western Canada Lottery Corporation. So the answer is that has happened, that will happen, and it's an on-going process, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another question for the Gaming minister. Madam Minister, have you ever been advised of financial irregularities at any of the four SIGA run casinos prior to the June 14 letter from the Provincial Auditor? And specifically, have you ever been advised of financial irregularities at the Gold Eagle Casino in North Battleford?

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, the answer would be no. The answer also is that our Provincial Auditor in his report says:

The operation of commercial casinos in Saskatchewan is relatively new. Accordingly, the Authority faces a challenge in designing systems and practices to regulate and monitor SIGA casinos.

We've done that, we are doing that, and we will continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor also goes on to say:

We think the Authority has addressed this challenge well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question, Madam Minister, was have you ever been advised of financial irregularities at the Gold Eagle Casino? And further, has the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority ever conducted a review of the Gold Eagle Casino lease agreement between SIGA and 212317 Saskatchewan Ltd.?

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Well, Mr. Speaker, whether the member would like to admit it or not, if you look at the resolution before the Public Accounts Committee, this is certainly turning into something that they would want to see happen in advance of the audit proceedings.

They want to conduct a full investigation of their own and develop insinuation and information that is not based on auditing reports that are presented before this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, the auditing reports, before this one, came before the Assembly in the annual reporting. There were no irregularities.

Mr. Speaker, on a regular basis and throughout the year, we have many audits in place for the casinos that are operating in the province. The other thing I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, is that on an on-going basis, we continue to do spot audits of those locations.

And his answer again, Mr. Speaker, to the question about the Gold Eagle, is no.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another question for the Gaming minister. Madam Minister, has a lawyer named Rodger Linka ever prepared a report for the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority on the lease agreement between SIGA and 212317 Saskatchewan Ltd. with regard to the Gold Eagle Casino in North Battleford?

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, to detailed information like that, I do not have it before me. But I would say to the member opposite, instead of standing and providing insinuation or presenting information here, if he has that information he should step out the side of the Assembly, make the accusations so that we can look into those.

I would say to this point that has not been done anywhere but here in an oblique and accusatory fashion, Mr. Speaker, and that's not appreciated. If there's information presented to the Authority, and as is every other matter, we will act on it in all swiftness that we can provide to the Assembly the assurances

that I have in the past. We will act upon them and do it quickly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Madam Minister, these are issues for which you have accepted legislative and regulatory responsibility. Madam Minister, we have been informed the basic lease agreement for the Gold Eagle Casino in 1997-1998 was \$21.50 per square foot.

We have been further informed that Rodger Linka prepared a report for the provincial government indicating the lease amount of \$21.50 per square foot was well above market value lease rates of between \$5 and \$10 per square foot. If this is true, then 212317 Saskatchewan Ltd. was paid, overpaid, by about \$275,000 in 1997-1998 for the casino lease space.

Madam Minister, can you confirm this? Has this information ever been brought to your attention?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, I have mentioned to the member opposite, no it hasn't. I have mentioned to the member opposite, instead of trying this out on the floor of the Assembly, he has not brought this to my attention nor has anyone on his staff done so. And I can also tell the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, that the audit is underway.

And I've assured everyone the review will contain all aspects of issues identified. If this is another one that should be in that mix, we will look into that. We'll review the systems that are in place, the controls, and the actions taken by SIGA, as I mentioned earlier, including the actions by the CEO at the time, the board of directors, and key staff.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the members to let this process unfold, to provide any information that they would require us to look into further, and that will occur, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another question for the Gaming minister. Madam Minister, is the Gold Eagle Casino in North Battleford required to notify the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority of massive over expenditures on promotions? And will you confirm that the Gold Eagle Casino in North Battleford overspent its \$468,818 promotional budget by more than \$1 million in 1997-1998?

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, it's been mentioned before that we have many ways that we look at the expenditures with regard to the SIGA operations and SIGA casinos. When matters are brought to our attention, we move swiftly to act on those and we also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say, have a review underway. That I've assured the member that we'll look at all aspects of the identified issues.

If this is another issue that's been identified and brought to my attention, if it's brought to the attention of the auditors, it certainly, Mr. Speaker, it will be included in the normal audit review processes that are in place.

The external audit team that we've developed that are going in and working in co-operation with SIGA will review systems, will look at the controls and actions of the SIGA board of directors, it will look at the operations, it will look at key staffing and any other matters that are brought to their attention to look at, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the member to get his information to us quickly and we will act on it as we would any other information pertaining . . .

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another question for the Gaming minister.

We have been informed that SIGA's sponsorship budget for 1997-1998 was \$100,000. We have also been informed that SIGA does not have any specific policy with respect to the payment of sponsorships. Further, we have been informed that SIGA overspent its sponsorship budget in 1997-1998 by \$161,826.

Madam Minister, can you confirm this massive unbudgeted and unregulated expenditure?

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I think some of my members have stated in the Public Accounts Committee, a review is underway.

Mr. Speaker, to throw into the Assembly things that have not been confirmed, to throw in speculation or information that I'm not certain how he would have obtained, Mr. Speaker, I think is very unfair to this issue and borders on the cheap theatrics that are at the expense of many, many people who are employed in this industry.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member opposite to stop putting in jeopardy 1,100 jobs in this province and table the information that he's alluding to through his statements here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, we're asking these questions on behalf of individuals who are concerned about accountability.

Madam Minister, we have been informed that for the fiscal year 1997-1998 expenses for SIGA's entire operations, including the head office and all four casinos, was \$8.2 million over the approved budget. Can you confirm this, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, I've stated before, and I'll ask the member again to table all of his information. Certainly when this issue came to the forefront, when I made my statements, I've received many calls of, could you look into this, or have you heard that, Mr. Speaker. It's highly unfair to this process to begin to speculate on what is the correct information, what can be verified, and what is not verified.

Mr. Speaker, we have an audit process that's underway that will review all aspects of the issues identified. It's going to go through an auditing process that will look at the systems and the controls, the actions taken by SIGA, Mr. Speaker, including the CEO, the board of directors, the key staff — some of the issues

he's alluded to, Mr. Speaker.

And I'd urge him to please table the facts in this case so that the auditor can include that in the process underway. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another question for the Gaming minister. Madam Minister, the information we have received raises some very serious questions.

You've said that irregularities in SIGA's finances were limited to Mr. Dutch Lerat. You've said that the irregularities are limited to only the most recent fiscal year. You have said the financial irregularities are limited to SIGA's head office and not to any of the SIGA operated casinos. And you have stated that you became aware of the problems only after the Provincial Auditor brought them to your attention.

But the information we have received suggests that irregularities are not just limited to Mr. Dutch Lerat; they date back to previous years and to SIGA casino operations. And the information suggests that the provincial government was aware of these irregularities for at least the past two years.

Madam Minister, what did you know, and when did you know it?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, I did not say there was a limitation on the issues I presented to this Assembly and I presented to the people of Saskatchewan. What I said was in the letter to me dated June 14, the Provincial Auditor, in conjunction with KPMG, the official auditor of record for SIGA, had brought those two issues to my attention.

The Provincial Auditor also says he would like to take the summer months to look further at some other items he's identified of concern. Mr. Speaker, as I've said, we've got an auditing team that is willing to do that.

This is a relatively new operation in Saskatchewan. The Provincial Auditor said, accordingly we face many challenges as the Authority in designing systems and practices to regulate and monitor SIGA's operations and the casinos.

This is an ongoing process. We have been trying to work with them to develop the processes that would be in place. The auditor himself says, we think the Authority has addressed the challenge well . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the House, sitting in the west gallery, the Chair of the Legal Aid Commission in Saskatchewan, Jane Lancaster Q.C. I'd ask you all to welcome her.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Hon. members, before orders of the day, I would beg your leave to make an important statement of acknowledgement and gratitude to some special people in the Assembly here today and every day. Do I have your leave, hon. members?

Leave granted.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Recognition of the Pages

The Speaker: — I thank you so much. And at this time, hon. member, I would like to ask our pages to please, as they're called, come forward and stand in front of the dais facing the Assembly.

And I would call Rachel Birns, Charla Borowski, Carla Huber, Brooke Johnston, and Terry Rushworth.

Pages of the first session of the twenty-fourth legislature of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly, we thank you for your service to this House.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — On behalf of all hon. elected members of this Assembly, I want to recognize you and congratulate you for the work you have done for all of us. This has been a real special legislature for many of us, both personally and historically — first legislature of the millennium guaranteeing a special place in history; first legislature for a number of new members elected last fall.

Your work here has provided a unique opportunity to observe parliamentary democracy in action. Sometimes this may have been exciting and other days perhaps rather routine.

But you have observed both the passionate debate, and you have enjoyed as well the debates from day to day that have occurred on a calmer scale. Certainly many of your recent days have been long ones. Sometimes we appreciated and we thanked you. Perhaps other times, people were a little bit preoccupied or perhaps tired and did not in fact recognize your efforts.

But today we want to compliment you on your professionalism. We have sometimes ignored your presence as conversations swirled around you. But please understand the ultimate compliment that that implies — our implicit trust in your discretion and confidentiality. You are one of us.

(1430)

I know some of you may be returning to school to continue your studies this fall. Some of you are looking for employment following your time here. I hope your time here has fuelled perhaps a permanent interest in the issues and politics of this great province of ours. Perhaps one or more of you will, one time, sit in one of these desks as an elected member.

Whatever path you may wish to follow, I wish you well. Members please join me in a round of applause for our pages of the first session of the twenty-fourth legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Thank you very much. Thank you, hon. members.

MOTIONS

Special Committee on Tobacco Control

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, by leave of the Assembly, I would like to move a motion, seconded by the member from Estevan. The motion would read:

That the Special Committee on Tobacco Control be authorized during any period of adjournment of the first session of the twenty-fourth legislature to make a report on its inquiries by filing the same with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, and that the report be distributed in accordance with The Tabling of Documents Act.

I ask leave.

Leave granted.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Here's the motion, Mr. Speaker. I so move.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased on behalf of the government that's open, accountable, and responsible to supply the answer to question 202.

And, by leave of the Assembly, include questions . . . answers to 203, 204, and 205.

Leave granted.

The Speaker: — Those answers are tabled.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 11 — Non-confidence Motion

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to stand in this Assembly today to move a very, very important motion forward. It is a very unusual motion and we do not do it very lightly, Mr. Speaker. This is a motion that we present to the

Assembly not on behalf of the official opposition, Mr. Speaker, but on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

The people of Saskatchewan have watched with great interest since September 16, 1999, when a minority government was elected, Mr. Speaker. And through some backroom dealings, through some interesting deals that were struck, we now have a coalition government that has been in power for at least nine and a half months.

Mr. Speaker, last night's activities in the constituency of Wood River, I think, highlight the kinds of concerns that people have not just in the constituency of Wood River, but right across this province, Mr. Speaker. We see that the outcome of the Wood River constituency in a constituency that is . . . has been predominantly Liberal or NDP for a number of years.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Liberals received 40 per cent of the vote in 1999, and the NDP received 20 per cent of that vote. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's a combined total of 60 per cent of the votes cast supporting either the Liberals or the NDP.

Last night the people of Wood River spoke very, very clearly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They have produced the results that show that only 26 per cent of the voting population yesterday voted for the NDP and the Liberals combined — combined, Mr. Speaker. Nearly two-thirds of that vote for the NDP and the Liberals has disappeared — has disappeared since the creation of the coalition back after last September 16.

The Wood River seat is a very strong example in rural Saskatchewan of probably the largest strength that the Liberals and the NDP have, combined. These two parties have controlled that part of the province for many years with very few exceptions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of Wood River rejected this coalition last night. And the feelings that were expressed by those people in Wood River are not unique. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think those feelings are expressed everywhere in this province — from the east to the west, from the north to the south.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — You know it's very interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Many people stop me and ask me, you know, what the coalition is up to. And why in heaven's name would a political party elected on September 16, '99 with the balance of power in their hands, the most important thing that they could have done was to maintain balance of power?

And they sold it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They sold it to a deal that was struck in the dead of night to ensure that this coalition could have a majority. People are fed up with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's look at a few of the things that have transpired over the last nine months since this coalition has taken power. Let's look at taxes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In the budget of March 27, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the very first thing that occurred wasn't the tax break effective immediately.

It was an expansion of the PST (provincial sales tax). More taxes on the people of Saskatchewan.

And in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we don't see a small . . . a very small reduction until July 1 of this year. Overall for the fiscal year 2000, the people of Saskatchewan have an increase in taxes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We start to look at the fees, the premiums, all of the increases that people have been forced to pay as a result of the budget on March 27. We see utility rate increases. And you know, Mr. Speaker, the people of Wood River recognized that last night and they responded accordingly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, for days we've heard about the highways of the province of Saskatchewan. My colleagues, many of my colleagues have been out with people in the province of Saskatchewan looking at the highways.

And you know what the result is, Mr. Deputy Speaker? There wasn't a single mention in the campaign of either the NDP or the Liberals that said that they would convert miles and miles of road to gravel. Not one single mention.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know, the situations of conversion, and you know that word is not only synonymous to the health care, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's also in Highways. We hear that word conversion.

When we start to look across the province and see what's happening . . . I have in my hands, Mr. Deputy Speaker, an article from the *Norquay North Star* talking about what might happen with Highway 8. And it says . . . The heading, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is "Highway 8 north to Swan Plain to revert to gravel surface."

In this article, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a quotation from a resident that lives on that highway, and he says this:

The maintenance on the road over the past few years was inadequate and that has affected the condition of the pavement.

This is not something that has just happened because now we have larger volumes of grain moving on that highway. This is a plan that has produced a situation where the highways are crumbling.

We have reduced maintenance crews; we have reduced the number of crews that are out there. We have a situation where, yes, we recognize that the weather conditions in this province will contribute to the breakup of roads. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know very well, as do the people of Saskatchewan, that when a pothole appears and it's a very small pothole, if you don't get out there and fix it, it's going to be a large pothole very quickly. And that is what happened across this province. There is no plan by this government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's take a look at health care. In the last campaign not a single mention was made about additional health care closures. We have not heard about hospital closures;

we have not heard about health care conversions, health centre conversions. In fact we have never, never heard from either the Liberals or the NDP about long-term care facility closures.

But that is what is happening out in the province of Saskatchewan right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Boards are considering all of those things because this government does not have a plan for the people of Saskatchewan to deal with health care.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's look at municipal control and municipal government. Not a mention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the campaign literature of either of the NDP or the Liberals about amalgamation. In fact no mention of the word, forced amalgamation.

And here we sit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the last number of months debating the Garcea report, debating the Stabler report — reports that show that they would love to have forced amalgamations and do away with small municipal governments, Mr. Speaker.

People of Saskatchewan will not stand for that, Mr. Speaker, and they have lost the faith and the confidence in this government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's take a look at agriculture. And this session, Mr. Deputy Speaker, began with a debate on agriculture, a very important debate on agriculture back last December. And we heard very clearly that this government was in favour of looking at long-term assistance to farmers. And in fact in the Throne Speech it indicated that there was going to be a need to address a plan that would produce a long-term care . . . a long-term aid to farmers.

What happened? This government was proud of the fact that they cut a deal with the feds where farmers would be able to acquire \$400 million of an advance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the advance is the farmer's own money. It's a loan. And we know that all loans come due, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So farmers have been put in a predicament where they have to put their crop in, and many have taken advantage of that \$400 million advance, but it is their own money, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This isn't a plan to ensure that there is viability and stability in the agricultural sector. This is telling the farmers, well we're going to postpone that ultimate decision that you're going to have to make until next year because that's when your advance is going to come due. What a joke, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Last fall we also introduced . . . the Official Opposition introduced a motion. That motion said that we should take 300 million from the liquor and gaming fund to use it as a lever to get \$1 billion worth of additional assistance from the federal government. The response by the government coalition was this was going to break the province because 300 million out of the liquor and gaming fund was impossible — even though the very budget of that government from last year indicated that they were prepared to spend 190 million of that liquor and gaming fund.

Well you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I look at the current budget for this year and I see within the *Estimates* that the total transfer from the liquor and gaming fund to the General Revenue Fund will be \$695.4 million. A fund that was supposed to be broke. All of a sudden — \$300 million which we were asking for was an impossibility — and now in this year's budget we find that indeed that fund had \$695 million.

The plans don't fit, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have a government that doesn't know what direction it's going in. It has lost the support of the people of Saskatchewan.

Let's take a look, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at a couple of issues in education. For many years people of Saskatchewan, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, have said that the downloading to the local taxpayer has been excessive. Everyone recognizes that. I'm sure that the government members have recognized that as well and they've indicated that they need to put in place a plan that reverses the 60/40 split — 60 per cent from the local taxpayer and 40 per cent from the government.

What occurred this year? Forty-four school divisions in the province of Saskatchewan are going to receive less money — less money, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What's the options for the boards of education in those divisions? Increase property taxes — increase. That is not going to change the 60/40 split, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the correct direction.

(1445)

That's going to enhance that 60/40 and we're probably going to be looking at 62 to 38 per cent in a very short time. That's the average — that's the average across the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we know in many school divisions that that is . . . that the percentage that is paid for by the local taxpayer for education is nearing 85, 90, 95 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There is no plan. There is no plan by this government to say that over the period of time we're going to move forward. We hear from the Education minister that oh yes, oh yes, I'm aware of this, and we're going to move in the right direction. And in the meantime we see the kinds of changes that have occurred.

We don't even have a provincially negotiated contract yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we're already knowing that taxpayers have had huge increases in their taxes. This, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is not an example of a government that is leading with a plan that is producing an idea — ideas for the people of Saskatchewan that people can rally around.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, people have also expressed concerns about a number of the government's handling of many issues. We start to look at the social services issues, the policing issues. Thousands, tens of thousands of people have abandoned this coalition because they feel the coalition has abandoned them.

Or to put it in the words of a former Wood River member, the former New Democrat, the Liberal, and I don't quote him too often but I'll do that today, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He says this:

The Premier and the Liberal leader have spent all their time on creating this coalition through deals struck in the dead of night and not dealing with the issues.

That's the clear picture, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has not moved forward with the issues. And on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan I would like to move the following motion, seconded by the member from Kindersley:

That this Assembly expresses its non-confidence in the current provincial government.

I so present.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to speak briefly on this very important issue that's before the Assembly here this afternoon, in support of my colleague from Canora-Pelly.

It certainly is time for the coalition government to take stock. It's time to see how it's going so far. And I would ask the member from North Battleford to seriously think about what him and his colleague might be prepared to do here this afternoon.

The Premier last fall, you will remember, after the election, said that the government has listened; they have heard the people of this province. They have listened to the mistakes that they have made, they are going to act on them, and they're going to move forward in a positive direction.

And I would ask the people of Saskatchewan and the member from North Battleford, what was the actions that they wanted from this government? They wanted some changes in terms of health care policy. They wanted some changes in terms of highway policy. They wanted some changes in terms of agriculture and taxation policy. They wanted changes in terms of this government's direction in terms of municipal amalgamation.

And have we seen anything in terms of those in a concrete fashion? And I would argue that the people of Saskatchewan, voiced by the constituents of Wood River last night, have said overwhelmingly that no, you haven't changed direction; you haven't been prepared to listen to the people of this province. You simply have gone along and continued down the path that you did since 1991 across Saskatchewan.

At that time the Premier of Saskatchewan, in 1991, got up before the people of Saskatchewan and laid out a whole list of promises that he was going to put forward. He also didn't say a whole bunch of things about what he was going to do in a number of areas.

And you will recall this. You will recall there not being one single word of mention about anything in terms of a health care restructuring plan. Not a single word in the '91 election campaign. And then we saw 52 hospitals in this province close. And then we saw after that the Plains hospital close.

And the member will recall that, because he argued from that very seat I believe there, strenuously in opposition to that closure at the time. And his leader at that time was saying something as ridiculous as saying that he was going to chain himself to the front doors of that hospital to ensure that it wouldn't close.

As ridiculous of a statement as it was at that time, the people of Saskatchewan supported him in that view. They supported him because they knew it clearly was the right thing to do; it clearly was what the people of Saskatchewan wanted. It clearly was what they were opposed to, from a government that just simply didn't listen to the people of Saskatchewan, continues not to listen to the people of Saskatchewan. It was tired rhetoric from a government that simply has lost touch with the people of Saskatchewan. And it never is more evident than after the by-election last evening in Wood River.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Nothing has changed whatsoever in the direction of this administration, Mr. Member, and you know it. And the people in your constituency know it and now the people after last evening's by-election in Wood River, now the people of Saskatchewan clearly know it. Nothing has changed from this government.

The only thing that remains the same after the election in September of last year is your support for administration that is failing . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. Just want to remind the hon. member for Kindersley that all comments are to be directed through the Chair and I just ask that the member abide by that.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of the province of Saskatchewan realize now that — unfortunately they realize now, even after last night's by-election — that there isn't an opportunity really to make much difference. They're stuck with you. The problem is, that they are faced with, is simply a government that doesn't want to make any changes whatsoever in policy direction — none whatsoever.

But there is an opportunity to listen to the people of Saskatchewan here this afternoon. There is an opportunity that's unparalleled before the people of this province in this legislative term, this legislative session right now, right here this afternoon to make a change in direction for the people of Saskatchewan.

This is what the people of this province want. This is what they are saying to you here this afternoon. This is what the people of Wood River have said repeatedly last night after you people have received, and your coalition government have received a message that should be as loud and as clear as anything can possibly be — you were wrong.

Everybody makes mistakes. We make mistakes all the time. All of us make mistakes. I believe, I believe in your heart of hearts you know, Mr. Member, and Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that you made a mistake.

It's time to pull that mistake back. It's time to hold the government accountable. It's time to live up to the election promises that they made at that time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's time to listen to what the people were saying in the election in 1999, last fall, and the election last evening. This is the

opportunity that you may never have again for a long, long time to listen to the people of Saskatchewan. We are not going to be in this legislative session that much longer.

The people of Saskatchewan are demanding change. They are saying to this government that there needs to be a change in terms of health care policy; there needs to be a change in terms of highway policy, in agriculture policy, in taxation policies, in municipal amalgamation policies. Item after item, department after department, they have given your government a failure record — a big fat F. That's what your government has received.

The people of Saskatchewan have spoken. They have said to you, even though you have made the mistake of your life and probably your political life, now is the opportunity to correct that record. Now is the time to change your direction; now is the time for this government to change its direction. And if they are unprepared to change their direction, the people of Saskatchewan will change this government.

Unquestionably the people of this province have said time and time again that it's over, as far they are concerned, with your coalition government.

And all you have to do is look at some of the things that are going on in the Department of Highways these days or in the liquor and gaming department or SIGA — all of those kinds of things. It is just a disaster as far as the people of this province are concerned.

Right in your backyard in North Battleford, there are all kinds of problems and I predict they're going to come to light in a very, very serious way in the next few days. And I think you know that there are problems there, Mr. Minister.

Just as the Minister of Highways knows that in 19, approximately '92-93, when Bernie Wiens was talking about gravelling highways in this province, there was such an uproar that the government at least listened to the people at that time and abandoned that program; backed off because they realized that it was simply something that the people of Saskatchewan would not support.

And now we have the Minister of Highways, in his normally sneaky fashion that he administers his department, going out and gravelling highways. Not telling anybody about it until after the fact. All of those kinds of things that this province is sick and tired of.

And that's why, that's why last evening in the election you got what you deserved finally. You got what you deserved finally. The people of Saskatchewan don't agree with this administration. You didn't have a mandate to do many of the things that you are doing to the province today. And that's why, Mr. Member from North Battleford, and Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's why the people of Saskatchewan want you to correct the record. And that's the opportunity that we are giving you here this afternoon. And that's the record . . . that's the opportunity that we are going to give every single member here this afternoon, if — and it's a big if — if you allow this non-confidence vote to take place here this afternoon.

We want a standing vote in this Assembly. We want you on record of either continuing to support a failed administration, or have some courage here this afternoon and correct that record. And stand up for what you have believed in, what you said when you were on this side of the Assembly, what you said to the people of Saskatchewan in the last election campaign, and what you should have been saying to them in a by-election campaign.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the opportunity is before us. Let's see and let's challenge the people of this Assembly this afternoon here today to see whether the people of Saskatchewan and the members of this legislature have any confidence left in this administration.

I predict, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that on this side of the Assembly we are on the side of the people of Saskatchewan. We have lost confidence, the people of Saskatchewan have lost confidence — have you lost confidence?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a couple of minutes to wrap up why we have no confidence in this government. Mr. Speaker, we have no confidence in this government because this government has no confidence in the province of Saskatchewan, they have no vision for the province of Saskatchewan, and that was exemplified by the results of the Wood River by-election last night when Yogi Huyghebaert won an outstanding victory at the expense of the NDP and Liberals.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at the facts; and members opposite, I would ask them to consider with us, Mr. Speaker, the facts for the Wood River by-election victory for the Saskatchewan Party.

First of all, taxes have actually gone up in Saskatchewan. We had a government that promised they would lower taxes, but yet they raised them first thing. The first budget increase? Increase the PST. Mr. Speaker, they increased fishing licences, camping fees.

Mr. Speaker, that government, that government had the nerve — had the nerve — to raise the fees for long-term health care patients. How low can you go, Mr. Speaker. How shameful can you be to raise fees for the most vulnerable, needy people in the province of Saskatchewan. That's why we don't have confidence in this government.

Mr. Speaker, we can go on to look at the whole health care field. They said we didn't need an audit of the health care system. They said our health care system was the best in Canada, and Canada's was the best in the world. Well the other day we found out that Canada ranks number 30, and we know that Saskatchewan is at the bottom of the list in Canada. Under their watch, Mr. Speaker, health care has deteriorated

And the people of Saskatchewan are out there wondering, is our hospital going to be closed? Is our hospital going to be downgraded to a health care centre? And the Minister of Health doesn't have the nerve and doesn't have the courage to tell the people of Saskatchewan what her plan is for health care in this province. That's why we don't have confidence in this government.

Mr. Speaker, education — this government for years has underfunded education. And under the new Minister of Education we have labour problems, we have the teachers prepared to go on strike, we have not resolved the funding problems, we have not resolved the high burden of education borne by property taxpayers. Mr. Speaker, the Liberals promised to fix that. They've been no influence in this coalition government. That's why we don't have confidence in this government.

Mr. Speaker, we drive on the highways in this province. Mr. Speaker, we see every day when we drive down secondary highways, even primary highways in Saskatchewan, why we don't have confidence in this government. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan don't have confidence in a government that says, go out and fix your own highways. How despicable. How shameful. That's why we don't have confidence in this government.

Mr. Speaker, farmers and people in agriculture don't have confidence in this government. We see this government propose an AIDA (Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance) package and then we hear the other day that you might not get the money — might not be there. Hurry up and get your applications in early, the Minister of Finance says, or you might not get any money from AIDA. That's why we don't have confidence in this government.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at small business and labour. We hear small business talking about leaving the province of Saskatchewan because of unfair labour legislation, because of a terrible labour climate. I get letters in my office from workers saying, don't force me to join a union. Stop this government from their uncaring ways. Mr. Speaker, that's why we don't have confidence in this government.

Mr. Speaker, this coalition has been an absolute disaster. Mr. Speaker, there was some very prophetic words spoken by the former leader of the Liberal Party after the current Liberal leader agreed to form a coalition. She said, the former Liberal leader, this is out of *The Leader-Post*, Friday, October 1:

(And) Former Liberal leader Lynda Haverstock warned Melenchuk not to get too big for his . . . (new baseball pants).

She said:

Understand, they're going to be way out of their league around that cabinet table because they have no experience. If they're attempting to paint the picture that this is a great opportunity for tremendous influence around the cabinet table, then they must think we're all fools.

She scoffed at Melenchuk's comment about lighting a candle.

Lighting a candle is doing more than serving yourself.

Mr. Speaker, that's why we don't have confidence in this government. The coalition was a grab at opportunism; it was not done in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan.

(1500)

Mr. Speaker, we don't have confidence in this government because they don't even have confidence in themselves. Ned Shillington, former front-bencher for the NDP, left the province and went to Calgary. He didn't have confidence in this government; why should we have confidence in the NDP government?

Doug Anguish left even before that. He lost confidence in this government years ago.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that the Premier is frantically trying to find a way to get out of the province himself. I think he's looking for a way out right now.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier said he's doing some soul searching. He said today, after the results of the by-election, doing some soul searching. Well the last time he did the soul searching, Mr. Speaker, he found three souls. They were for sale and he bought them and that's why we have a government today that we don't have confidence in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, that's why I ask the members to reconsider their support of the government — particularly the Liberal members — to reconsider their support of this government. And I ask them to support this motion of non-confidence. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kasperski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as government caucus Chair it's my pleasure to rise in the Assembly this afternoon and speak briefly to some of the issues raised by the members of the opposition in their motion.

Mr. Speaker, a non-confidence motion such as theirs suggests that a government has been not listening to the people. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the facts are right to the contrary in the history of the government . . . of this particular government since 1991.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, since 1991 this government, and what particularly now since the last election, this coalition government, has listened to the people of Saskatchewan and to the advice of people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, do we have more to do? Yes, we do. Mr. Speaker, have we made some mistakes? We have.

But we have listened to people. We listened to people, Mr. Speaker, in 1991 when they wanted fiscal responsibility and integrity restored to this province. We did that. Mr. Speaker, we listened to the people again in 1995 when they asked us — now that the fiscal responsibility was restored — to look at spending increased funds in health, education, highways, and other areas. Mr. Speaker, we increased spendings in all those areas during the second terms of our office.

Mr. Speaker, in 1999 we also listened to the people of Saskatchewan after the election. The new coalition government

in response to the farm income crisis and the rural economy directed increased funding from our province, and also in conjunction with the federal government, to farmers, to rural Saskatchewan, and to agriculture in a number of areas, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kasperski: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also since the election listened to the people when they said to us we would like a tax cut. Mr. Speaker, we responded in this past budget with the largest ever income tax cut in the history of this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kasperski: — Over the next two years our taxpayers in this province go from being the second highest to I think fourth . . . or fourth I think in the province. Mr. Speaker, it is a great, great step for taxpaying citizens of our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to take just a couple of minutes to talk . . . the opposition has been focusing on the by-election last night, and, as my colleagues did before, I add my congratulations to Mr. Huyghebaert on his win last night. But I'd like to take a couple of minutes and talk about by-elections over the last 20 years in this province and what they have meant.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, by-elections are a snapshot in a particular part of the province and of activities going on at a particular point in time. They do not necessarily represent a trend. I would point out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in 1980 Grant Devine lost a very safe Tory seat in Estevan in a by-election. We all know what happened in 1982 — two years later — quite a different result.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1984 the NDP took a by-election in Regina Northeast with a resounding majority which brought back Ed Tchorzewski into this legislature. His margin of victory I think was in the order of 77 per cent of the vote — yet the NDP did not win the next provincial election just a year later.

An Hon. Member: — What per cent?

Mr. Kasperski: — Seventy-six. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1988 the Tories won a decisive by-election in Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, the same general area as Wood River, and very much a part of what the Wood River seat was. Did this mean they would win the next general election? Mr. Deputy Speaker, it certainly did not, when the NDP government came to power with a resounding majority government in 1991.

Even in more recent history, Mr. Deputy Speaker — in 1994 a year before the second majority government of this current term, the Liberals won a by-election in Regina Northwest with quite a substantial majority. Much of this constituency is in the area that I represented and was first elected to in 1995.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the result from this area in 1995 was very much different from what it was in 1994.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, if we might talk about even more recent

history, there have been six by-elections in the province of Saskatchewan since the creation of the Saskatchewan Party. And, Mr. Speaker, how many have they won? They have won two.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, moving on to another topic on this, concerning this motion, we must take a look at who is moving the motion of non-confidence. Mr. Speaker, motions of non-confidence are moved usually by opposition parties with a plan, with a vision, with a clear idea of what they would do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what have we seen from this opposition? What have we heard from this opposition? Mr. Deputy Speaker, this opposition continuously criticizes the people and institutions of this province. They have Alberta envy.

Mr. Speaker, this opposition has spent 2 billion more in this session alone in promises than we have in all our entire budget in resources and income. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the highest in the history of this province. They've spent 2 billion more.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kasperski: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's easy to govern when you're in opposition. Opposition is the easiest thing in the world. Governments, on the other hand, and we on this side of the House have had to make and take important, substantive decisions. It is not an easy time to do under the pressures we have to maintain a balanced budget and also the expectations of our population for more money in health, more money in education, more money in highways, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, less taxes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think this coalition government in the light of this expectation of our public, has done a very good job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kasperski: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have to also take a look at where the motion is coming from, the opposition party. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in recent press articles, in recent publications by the financial industry, I haven't seen any evidence of non-confidence in this coalition government.

In the financial service sector, I seem to recall that a month or so ago the credit rating of this province was increased. Just as early as last week the Royal Bank of Canada is predicting that coming up . . . which was a bad year in our economy in 1999-2000 — that we're coming into a year where we are expected to grow in excess of 2 per cent and in the year after, upwards of 3.5 per cent. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is from the Royal Bank of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kasperski: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, also in recent reports from *Sask Trends Monitor* and other institutions, we are having one of our . . . we have the least unemployment we have had in the history of our province. There are more jobs available even for our young people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are not the signs of an economy or

population out there that is expressing non-confidence in this government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in summary I'd just like to summarize a little bit of what I said. First of all on behalf of all of us, I again want to express our congratulations to the new member from Wood River constituency. I also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, want to send our congratulations to all the candidates who ran. Robert Anderson for our party, Jerry Ruehs for the Liberals, and Peter Borch for the New Green Alliance.

I also want to point out what's pointed out by our colleagues a little bit earlier. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will be introducing a Bill in the legislature later this afternoon, that will short-circuit some of the normal conditions and will allow us to seat the new member of Wood River constituency as early as tomorrow, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to conclude, the election results are not about this coalition government. The results are about issues that have been of particular concern to constituents in Wood River constituency, issues like highways and the rural economy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we heard the message. This coalition government has been responsive and will be responsive. We will do our utmost to work in the interests not only of the constituents of Wood River, but all the people in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has a history of 10 years of a balanced approach to government, and I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it will serve us well in the years ahead. My colleagues and I will not be supporting the motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As a member of this coalition government, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to be able to stand here today and let this province know just a few of the things that this New Democratic government has accomplished over its last two terms, and what this coalition government has begun to accomplish in these last nine short months.

The New Democrats have done a great deal of good work for the people of Saskatchewan. From our beginnings in 1944, the list of positive accomplishments is considerable. From medicare to the child action plan, from public insurance to public accountability, the list of New Democratic accomplishments over the last half of this century has been truly remarkable.

Mr. Speaker, when the New Democrats came to power in 1991 this province was in shambles. People had left our province in droves during the 1980s. We had acquired a huge debt and bankruptcy threatened our province. During the early- to mid-1990s, Saskatchewan had some very stressful times. Drastic budgets, yes, Mr. Speaker, and some tax increases were made to help revive our province and bring us back from the brink of bankruptcy. The people of Saskatchewan realized that drastic measures were needed to combat a desperate situation.

Mr. Speaker, in the true Saskatchewan spirit — through hard work, making some tough financial decisions, and by making sacrifices and sticking together in our resolve to make

Saskatchewan a better place to live — we have come through the worst of it. Balanced budgets and fiscal responsibility marked our first two terms of government. Mr. Speaker, that's a testament to the conviction and dedication of our Premier and the government caucus during those tough times.

Mr. Speaker, during our first two terms of government, and although our financial situation was far from the best, this government began to ease the tax burden on Saskatchewan people. As early as 1992, this New Democratic government began a balanced and sustainable series of tax reductions. A balance that encouraged growth in many sectors throughout the province in a sustainable way. Tax reductions within our means that would not cause reductions in other areas.

(1515)

Corporate income tax, E&H (education and health) tax on manufacturing, royalty structures were improved for the oil and gas industry, aviation fuel tax was reduced — these are but a few during this time, Mr. Speaker. And they may not seem huge reductions, but it was done with a balanced approach to stimulate our economy and begin our climb to a better tomorrow.

Before the provincial election last September, one of the major concerns that was heard on doorsteps was a concern over our taxes in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this government heard those concerns and responded in our budget with a package that gives Saskatchewan residents the largest personal income tax cuts in the history of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Higgins: — Lower tax rates, Mr. Speaker, significantly higher personal tax credits, the elimination of the flat tax, the debt reduction surtax, high-income tax surtax, Saskatchewan sales tax credits for low-income family and seniors, 55,000 low-income earners will no longer be on our provincial tax roles — Mr. Speaker, this tax reduction package begins July 1. It means fairness for families and competitiveness with neighbouring provinces, Mr. Speaker; \$260 million in overall income tax reductions done in a fair, balanced, and sustainable way.

Mr. Speaker, this past fall the full effect of world commodity prices and distorted trade subsidies hit home to all of us in this province. Our farm families and rural citizens have been forced into a new way of doing business in an industry geared not to local, provincial, or even Canadian markets, but geared and dictated to by world demands.

Their traditional lifestyle is now changing, and changing, Mr. Speaker, at lightning speed. Mr. Speaker, when many people think of family farms, we think of our grandparents, aunts, and uncles, mixed farms — geese, chicken, pigs, cattle, grain. Those days are gone, Mr. Speaker. That traditional lifestyle has been forced to change.

Mr. Speaker, this traditional lifestyle has been pushed from all sides. Changes to traditional crops grown, transportation upheavals, input costs, machinery costs — Mr. Speaker, it's a never-ending list.

This government heard those concerns and acted on them. In a special sitting of this Legislative Assembly last December, we heard reports and presentations from producers and agricultural representatives from across this province. This special session resulted in eventual added dollars from the federal government and from this coalition provincial government to help our rural citizens adjust to market and transportation changes, and to ease what has become an immense burden and stresser on many farm families.

More issues were addressed in our last provincial budget, Mr. Speaker. The removal of the fuel tax rebate cap and property tax rebates will be given to rural residents who need much needed relief.

Mr. Speaker, this government . . . (inaudible) . . . and acted upon concerns of this province. Is this a case of solved, over and done with? Definitely not. Agriculture is a never-ending, never . . . ever changing — sorry, Mr. Speaker. Agriculture is an ever-changing industry. Talking to producers, researchers and development, diversification, and value added are all commitments of this government in this term of office and into our next, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, huge challenges still face our province — transportation issues, municipal concerns, health care, and education. This government is committed to listening to the people of Saskatchewan and acting on their concerns.

The round-table discussions currently being held with the municipalities is a very good example of public and stakeholder input into our direction and our policy. Also the Fyke commission that was recently announced by our Premier will do a full-scale review into our health system. We are listening to the people of Saskatchewan and we will act on their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, when I first heard this motion I couldn't believe it. A motion of non-confidence from an opposition that has demanded extra financial expenditures from this government in the last three months totalling well over \$1.4 billion.

Mr. Speaker, spend, spend, spend and while you're at it, cut the taxes. And in your spare time, privatize and sell off everything that the people in Saskatchewan have worked for 90 years to build. That is all we've heard.

Mr. Speaker, non-confidence suggests a government that hears nothing and does nothing. This government listens and acts on citizens' concerns. And, Mr. Speaker, we have much more to do in the next three years.

Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the opposition member's motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. First of all, I wish to join with, I'm sure, all of my colleagues in extending my congratulations to Yogi Huyghebaert on his magnificent win yesterday and say that I am sure that he, like all members and like myself, entered public life in the hope that he would be able to make a contribution to the building of his community and his province. That is why we all go into public

life, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And whether the tack we take, whether the stance we take, whether the work we do in fact aids in the growth and development of this province and of its people is something that we must leave to history. But I wish to say that I am confident that what this coalition is doing is working for the benefit of the people in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — We know there are serious challenges, Mr. Speaker. First of all we have the challenge of maintaining a decent level of quality public services in roads, in education, in health care. We know that we have a serious challenge in maintaining a competitive tax rate, particularly in view of our position in Canada being next door to the lowest tax jurisdiction in Canada.

We know that we cannot afford to have a tax rate seriously out of whack with that of our neighbours. We know that we need opportunities for our young people to end the migration of our young people seeking opportunities elsewhere. And we know we need to end the marginalization of our Aboriginal people, which has been a blight on this province from its earliest days.

How you accomplish all of those goals at the same time is frankly not easy, whether one comes from a right or left perspective. How one maintains a good level of public services and a competitive tax rate is frankly not easy to see at first blush.

But I would encourage hon. members opposite not to turn this into a shallow and simplistic debate in which they promise that they can solve all the problems in highways and health care while dropping the province's tax level to nothing. We know that does not make sense.

We need to rejuvenate this province. We need to practise the politics of inclusion, the politics which brings us together as a province and as a people — rural and urban, north and south, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

Well we had a by-election last night. And may I say, I think we had an excellent Liberal candidate, and the results are such as to cause some serious soul-searching in our party.

We need to reconnect with rural Saskatchewan. Rural Saskatchewan has to know that this party and this government is committed to rural Saskatchewan and its future and to the maintenance of good public services for our rural areas. Yes, there is a message in the results last night, and I must say for myself and my party and this government, we are committed to reconnecting with rural Saskatchewan.

But may I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one by-election is not the whole story. Hon. members may recall that I myself was elected in a by-election. And I remember particularly the hon. member from Kindersley working in that by-election.

Now in that by-election the hon. member for Kindersley led his party — the Conservative Party at that time; that was the label it went under at that time — and I must say they ran a wonderful

campaign. They spent I think twice the amount of money I spent, they worked very hard, and they got 400 votes — and they got 400 votes. So they spent a lot of money, they worked hard, they got 400 votes.

And I must say on the night of that by-election, if anyone had predicted that a rejuvenated and reconstituted Conservative Party would come close to winning the province in three years time, I'm sure they would have been told they were crazy. In point of fact that's what happened.

I give that example to the hon. member for Kindersley to point out that one disappointing by-election result is not the whole ball game — if it was, he wouldn't be here.

But Churchill's famous observation of a day being a lifetime in politics was certainly born out by the by-election which elected me and the by-election which indicated that the Conservative Party — no matter how much money they spent — could go nowhere.

And I have to . . . I say this not to be critical. I say it, I say it as a matter of humility that, as I say, anyone looking at the North Battleford by-election results would have said it was over. And yet in a few months later the Conservative Party managed to reinvent itself and is now . . . that has led to the magnificent result that they achieved last night. And I congratulate them on that.

Well what is the purpose of the coalition government? I say we know, we know we have some serious challenges in this province. We know the maintaining of the province's highways, our education system, our health system — this is a challenge. We know and we have moved to bring down our income tax level to one competitive with the province of Alberta.

These are not easy things to do, but this government is committed to the task and is working hard on it. And that is why I say this province needs stability. Election after election after election, throwing governments out — is this the way that we can address the serious problems of our province?

Now the hon. member for Canora-Pelly said that, oh this coalition was a dead-of-night agreement. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we have to look at the history. The hon. member for Canora-Pelly ran for election as a Liberal. He then, shortly after his election, participated in dumping its leader. He then ran to replace her and be the leader. And then when he was defeated as leader, he ran off . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order. Now the hon. member for North Battleford has the floor in this debate. I ask all hon. members to allow the hon. member to make his presentation.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — So then he joined the Tories. Now he says that he's worried, he's worried that I betrayed the Liberal Party.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I look across the way, I have to say I'm getting pretty tired of being lectured about political loyalty by a bunch of people who have no more sense of political loyalty and no more respect for political loyalty than

an alley cat has for marriage.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — I realize I have . . . I realize that there are some new developments.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. The hon. member from North Battleford . . . Order. The hon. member for Indian Head-Milestone will please come to order. Order!

(1530)

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — I realize, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that those of us who maintain party labels that have a long and historic tradition maybe don't understand some of the current trends in our politics when we have people who take the attitude that whether they are called PC (Progressive Conservative) or Tory or Reform or Alliance or Saskatchewan Party, really doesn't matter; it's kind of all the same thing and probably another name tomorrow. And maybe that's for the best.

They tell me that the realignment of our national politics will benefit this country. That may be the case, Mr. Speaker. But I . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, I mean this is really quite amazing. I see before me catcalls from people who dumped their Liberal leader, dumped their party, wanted to run for the Liberal leadership, and when they couldn't, they left the party. And now they're worried about my loyalty to the Liberal Party. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just don't understand it.

But I want to say, I'm committed to the same things I was in the by-election. I'm committed to North Battleford. I am committed to the improvement of our highway system. I am committed to the building of our community. I am committed to a competitive tax rate that will not drive our young people west.

I'm committed to bringing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together in this society. I am committed . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Clearly there is a great many members who wish to get into this debate. I just wish to remind you that all hon. members have an opportunity, but for the moment the hon. member for North Battleford has the floor, and I ask that members respect his right to make a speech.

Hon. Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I want you to know that I understand that if you throw a stone in the dark and a coyote yowls, you've probably hit the coyote.

Now I want to say that I'm still committed to the principles that led me into public life — the building of my community and the building of this province. And I believe that the stability offered by the coalition government is still the best way to proceed.

As we look at our health care system, the first serious look at our health care system since it was founded now nearly 40 years ago, how do we modernize our health care and make it sustainable and viable into the 21st century?

How do we rebuild a highway system, which frankly, was built decades ago using a system, the TMS (thin membrane surface) system, that was not regulation in other provinces and is simply

not able to cope with the heavy grain traffic of the new grain handling system.

This is a challenge. It's a serious challenge. And frankly, the results of last night shows that we haven't done a good enough job connecting with the people of rural Saskatchewan and telling them that this government cares about them and their future and is committed to the maintaining of high quality services for them. We have to do that.

If I thought that defeating this government and throwing out the government, having an election and possibly, as my friends across the way would hope, electing a government which is narrow and mean-spirited, if I thought that could benefit the province, I would do it. But I do not believe that that is the way to build this province.

I know that the challenges before us are difficult, and I also know that it would be much easier to be in opposition now, because when one is in opposition it's quite simple to double spend and halve taxes and then the math still comes out. That's possible in opposition. Unfortunately in government it's far more difficult to square that circle.

But I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm committed to that job. And I'm committed to the principles which initially brought me to the Liberal Party and which initially brought me to public life. And that is why I'll be voting against this motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 3:36 p.m. until 3:49 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 24

Hermanson	Elhard	Heppner
Julé	Krawetz	Draude
Boyd	Gantefoer	Toth
Eagles	Wall	Bakken
Bjornerud	D'Autremont	McMorris
Weekes	Brkich	Harpauer
Wakefield	Wiberg	Hart
Allchurch	Stewart	Kwiatkowski

Nays — 30

Romanow	Hagel	Van Mulligen
MacKinnon	Lingenfelter	Melenchuk
Cline	Atkinson	Goulet
Lautermilch	Thomson	Lorje
Serby	Belanger	Nilson
Crofford	Hillson	Kowalsky
Sonntag	Hamilton	Prebble
Jones	Higgins	Yates
Harper	Axworthy	Junor
Kasperski	Wartman	Addley

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Deputy Speaker . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order, order. Members, please come to order. Order, order.

MOTIONS

Tabling of Information regarding Gold Eagle Casino

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. With leave to move a motion related to the tabling of documents for information regarding the Gold Eagle Casino and the motion would read:

That this Assembly direct the member of the Legislative Assembly from Carrot River Valley to officially table the information regarding the Gold Eagle Casino referred to in question period of June 27, 2000.

I ask leave, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Leave not granted.

Move to Government Business

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, by leave to move to government business.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order, members on both sides of the House will come to order. Order. Order. Order.

Leave granted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 59

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Crofford that **Bill No. 59 — The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2000** be now read a second time.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Bill 59, The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2000 represents anything that is wrong with this coalition government.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to stand in this House today and continue to speak out against this Bill, as many of my colleagues in the Saskatchewan Party have done for a number of weeks — not only to speak out against Bill 59, but continue to inform the public of the two consequences of the Bill and correct the many misrepresentations and false statements made by the Minister of Labour and outline the real reasons the NDP is so desperate to pass Bill 59.

The news release on March 14 announcing the amendments to The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act, 1992, tries to highlight conditions in the construction industry that does not

really exist. The news release reads:

The amendments will bring stability for the construction industry, reducing the tensions within the industry.

The construction industry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has enjoyed labour peace for over 18 years. Instability and tension in the construction industry is something contrived by the NDP spin doctors to justify these amendments.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some of these misstatements the minister has made or government documents that suggest the wages in the industry are in decline — not accurate. The . . . (inaudible) . . . wage survey and the federal wage represents . . . schedule represents an average of wages paid across the industry. Wages being paid are fair and competitive.

The NDP government leaves the impression that wages need to be addressed in order to attract new people to the industry. The government also feels that a stronger union sector will ensure that wages are addressed in a way that will attract new people to the industry. Nothing is further from the truth, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Comparisons between union and open shop entry level wages rates indicates that union wages for level entry positions are at least \$2 an hour lower than the open shop rates before union dues are deducted — \$2 an hour lower.

Young people struggling with starting in a trade are up against substantial joining fees and union fees as much as 12 to \$1,800 a year, will actively consider their options in the open shop sector. This clearly contradicts the notion that unions offer a better way for young people to enter the trades, and demonstrates a very real road block faced by the trade unions. Government intervention to attempt to address the unions' problems in this area will be a disaster.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government leaves the impression that safety is addressed by . . . through a union-only site. Well the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association has trained over 12,000 people in the years '94 to '99. It is clear that safety is a priority in the workplace for open shop sectors as well as union sites.

The government would also like us to think that so-called double breasted companies are in conflict of interest position if they are allowed to be involved in collective bargaining. The Queen's Bench decision and the subsequent Court of Appeal ruling clearly indicates that this argument has no merit. The proposed amendments are seen as means of circumventing the judge's decision and rewriting that to fit the argument.

Another misconception, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that union pensions are best for workers. Comparisons of costs for open shop and union plans again clearly show the fallacy in this statement.

Open shop workers enjoy the participation of the employers and the self-directed RRSPs (Registered Retirement Savings Plan), with the employer matching contributions up to 3 per cent of a worker's gross pay. Union plans are not worker-directed and carry huge administrative costs that adversely affect the final

benefit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the intent of the amendments is to promote building trade unions, experience has proved that this will not occur. The CCTA (Crown Construction Tendering Agreement) was a failure, and efforts by other NDP governments in Ontario and British Columbia were also unsuccessful.

Forcing all contractors to abide by union agreement will only push up the cost of construction in Saskatchewan. And with Saskatchewan's current economy and the global competitiveness, the contemplated amendments will further damage Saskatchewan's fragile economy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, many projects are not proceeding because the return on investment is not great enough for investors. By further increasing costs there is a chance that even projects currently being contemplated will not proceed.

The major long-term contracts who have significantly contributed to the development of Saskatchewan's economy will be forced to pull out of the province if they cannot compete and their places will not be taken by union contractors, but by open-shop contractors who will move in from other provinces free of any union obligations.

The current coalition government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would be wise to remember the damage caused by restrictive legislation introduced by the NDP government in Ontario. Several corporate offices relocated out of the province, and many contractors pulled out of the province. There were no gains made by the building and trades in Ontario during the tenure of the Rae government.

When the PCs came back into power the restrictive legislation was revoked, the economy of the province started to blossom again, and many of the corporate offices and contracts have returned.

(1600)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in British Columbia the unionized marketplace has dwindled to an all-time low. And because of the NDP's anti-business policy, investor business confidence in the province has significantly diminished. As a result, the majority of the major unionized general contractors have been forced out of their province and open-shop contractors have taken their place.

Also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, several First Nation companies which have established joint ventures and alliances with major contractors, will be put at a very great disadvantage if this legislation is invoked.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the passing of this Bill the coalition will clearly have a new partner and a whole new focus. The partner will be the trade unions, and the focus will be the agenda of the trade unions to increase their presence in Saskatchewan regardless of the wishes of the workers in the sector.

Workers' rights . . . workers' Charter rights to freedom of

choice and freedom of association will be violated with the imposition of collective agreements on workers, while denying them the right to vote on the matter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is nothing but forced unionization. The minister tries to hide behind a statement that the companies are unionized, not the workers. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the workers, even though they're not unionized, will have union dues deducted from their cheques, and worse yet, they will not even be able to participate in union business because they aren't an official member.

And of course in the construction industry it's seasonal . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — With leave, to introduce a guest.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, a friend and a constituent — Phyllis Mews from the constituency of Elphinstone who is a regular visitor here to the Assembly. And I would like all members to join with me in welcoming Phyllis here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 59 — The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2000 (continued)

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I was saying, this Bill is nothing but forced unionization. Again the minister tries to hide behind the statement that the company is unionized, not the worker. But unfortunately the employer will have to deduct union dues from that worker, and the worker will not be able to participate in union business even though they're paying the dues.

And of course in the construction industry it's very reasonable — seasonal work. And when they are laid off and rehired in the springtime, and when there's new work, they will be forced to join a union. And again forced unionization comes to the front.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, while the government will argue that this legislation will only affect those companies currently with spinoffs, it will actually go much deeper than that. The way several of the province-wide collective bargaining agreements are written, subcontractors are required to operate under union rules and pay union benefits. One of the province-wide contractors even requires subcontractors to purchase supplies from union only shops, severely limiting the competitiveness.

In other words, the changes made in this Bill will affect many, many smaller construction companies throughout the province

who do construction work for the larger companies that the government says it has targeted. In reality, the effects of this will be far more wide reaching. In other words, the so-called mom-and-pop operations will be affected by this forced unionization as well.

Another aspect of this Bill is the Labour Relations Board will need a second Vice-Chair. Well we ask why? Well it's only . . . the Chair will only be there to force unionization down workers' throats.

Another part of this Bill is, not only the workers don't have a secret ballot when it comes time to join a union, but they're not even going to be allowed under the present conditions of signing a certification card. They will be forced to join a union without a vote, without any consideration to their concerns — let alone freedom of speech. There's no opportunity for the employer to discuss this with the workers. The workers don't even have an opportunity to discuss this with the union. They will be forced to be unionized.

The question has to be asked, why in the last 20 years has the spin-off companies not been unionized? Even with all the advantages that the union has, they have been unable to certify these companies. Why? Because the workers choose not to belong to a union.

The construction companies of Saskatchewan are productive builders in this province, job creators, taxpayers, employers. This NDP-Liberal coalition view this valuable sector with distrust and contempt. And big brother, the NDP, feel they must watch over the shoulder of these construction companies.

I'd like to quote from a letter sent to the Premier from the Saskatchewan Alliance for Economic Growth. The letter reads in part:

This letter is written on behalf of the recently formed Saskatchewan Alliance for Economic Growth, which represents the majority of businesses from across the province. Our main focus (Mr. Deputy Speaker) is the development of labour policies that will help foster, rather than hinder . . . growth.

And I'd like to read for the record the members of the Saskatchewan Alliance for Economic Growth. The members include: the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, North Saskatoon Business Association, Prairie Implement Manufacturers Association, Regina Chamber of Commerce, Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, Saskatchewan Construction Association, Saskatoon and District Chamber of Commerce, Lloydminster Chamber of Commerce, Estevan Chamber of Commerce, Moose Jaw Construction Association, Prince Albert Construction Association, Regina Construction Association, Saskatoon Construction Association.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it also includes: Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association, Lloydminster Construction Association, Electrical Contractors Association, General Contractors Association, Mechanical Contractors Association, Merit Contractors Association, Saskatchewan Masonry Institute, Saskatchewan Drywall Association, Saskatchewan Steel Fabricators and Erectors Association, Saskatchewan

Construction Labour Relations Council, Saskatchewan Professional Painting Contractors, Meadow Lake Tribal Council, and last but not least, the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association.

But no, the government will not listen to these people. It goes on to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

This Act sends a very negative message to the business community in and outside Saskatchewan, and suggests the Coalition government does not understand the impact of overzealous labour legislation on the economy, nor that they are prepared to listen to the concerns of the business community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it goes on to say:

The Minister of Labour has stated that the Act does not require all construction companies to become unionized nor does it require contractors to hire unionized sub-contractors. (It says) we would suggest that your government revisit both of these points.

While there are no provisions in the proposed legislation that forces anyone to join a union, the impact of this legislation on employees of companies caught in the legislation will essentially force them to pay union dues and ultimately once laid off will force (them) into a union.

Forced unionization, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Further, essentially every collective agreement in the province has subcontracting conditions, which make it illegal for (a) unionized (company) to hire non-unionized sub-contractors. Contractors caught by the new legislation will be forced to abide by the terms of these agreements. (This) provisions will ensure the proposed legislation will far transcend the "big" construction companies and impact the mom and pop businesses operating all over Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker. The letter goes on, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

The Alliance is also concerned that this Act will impact the employment of Aboriginal people in this province. There is nothing in the legislation that speaks to the First Nations joint ventures, which will be dramatically affected if one of the partners in the joint venture is forced into unionization. There is absolutely no evidence to support your government's assurances that the unions have agreements in place with the First Nations.

Despite (Mr. Speaker, the letter goes on to say) the Minister of Labour's assurances, we do not believe this Act will bring Saskatchewan into line with all other provinces. We have asked the Minister of Labour to direct her staff to review the legislation in Ontario, New Brunswick, and Alberta, and the construction agreement in Manitoba, where they will find completely different provisions. For instance, in Alberta, section 45 (3) of the Labour Relations Code prohibits a spin off application being filed against an employer engaged in the construction industry. Also in Alberta, the power of the Labour Relations Board are

limited in section 190 (3) and prevents the Board from declaring the common employer in the construction industry if the company does not employ employees that perform work of the kind performed by the applicant trade union.

I'd also like to point out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, other areas where Saskatchewan law differs from many other provinces. In Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the employer must prove that it's innocent in Saskatchewan concerns with labour problems. In British Columbia there's no reverse onus clause, in Alberta, no reverse onus clause, and also Alberta allows for a secret ballot if workers want to join a union.

Manitoba, no reverse onus clause and allowed to vote for certification. Ontario, Mr. Deputy Speaker, no reverse onus clause and also allowed to vote for certification. New Brunswick, no reverse onus clause. Also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Nova Scotia, no reverse onus clause and allowed to vote for certification. Prince Edward Island, no reverse onus clause. Newfoundland, no reverse onus clause and allowed to vote for certification.

The letter goes on, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

The fact is this legislation is not good for the business community. The provisions of the Act which repeal the section entitled "Rights of (the) Unionized Employer" essentially strips unionized employers of their democratic right to choose their own bargaining representative. Instead, CLR has been forced upon employers. This association is union-dominated and has been found by the courts to have violated the Canadian Charter of Rights, the Non Profit Corporation Act, the Construction Industry Industrial Relations Act, in addition to denial of natural justice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the North Saskatoon Business Association has invited the Labour minister to debate with the Saskatchewan Party this Bill and she has refused. The Saskatchewan Alliance for Economic Growth has asked the Premier to sit down and discuss the Bill's implications in this province. Again, he has refused.

My colleague from Swift Current had brought forward a motion to hoist this Bill for six months, delay the Bill for six months while the people of Saskatchewan and the people involved in the construction industry has a chance to bring forward their concerns to this government, and again the government has said no, they will not. The Premier said there isn't enough time in order to discuss this situation. Isn't that a shame. He doesn't have time to discuss this Bill before it's passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the union movement in Saskatchewan has had a long and important history. The Saskatchewan Party believes in the rights of workers in this province to join a union and believes union will continue to play an important part in our society.

The question today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the behaviour of the coalition government and its reason for introducing this forced unionization Bill.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if it might have something to do with this — the fundraising schemes of the NDP. This is quite an incestuous little relationship the NDP has going with the unions. The NDP need more money from the unions; the unions need more money from the workers.

So the NDP gives money to a union organizer to recommend forcing more workers into the union, so the unions can extract more money from the workers and the NDP can extract more money from the unions. What a cozy little arrangement. Except it completely ignores the wishes of 80 per cent of the construction workers who don't belong to a union and don't want to belong to a union.

Mr. Speaker, this new legislation will force thousands of workers to join a union against their will. This Bill is unfair and undemocratic, Mr. Speaker.

(1615)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, is there instability and tension in the construction . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. If I were to name all of the members that were speaking, I'm afraid we would completely lose quorum. So I ask all hon. members to simply allow the member for Redberry Lake to continue with his speech. Order, order, order!

Mr. Weekes: — I nearly forgot to point out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the results of the fundraising scheme — \$300,000 from the unions to the NDP Party; over \$30,000 from construction unions to the NDP Party; and even \$6,500 to the Minister of Labour's own campaign fund. Thank you for allowing me to remember that small point.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the question is, is there instability and tension in the construction industry? No. The only instability and tension that exists in this province is around the coalition government cabinet meetings and the NDP caucus meetings and the potential NDP leadership candidates' teams waiting for their old and tired leader to step down. And the Liberals, considering their dismal performance after yesterday's by-election, I think instability and tension will be the theme of your next convention.

This coalition government is responsible for failing health care, deteriorating highways and roads, forced amalgamation, and now with Bill 59 — forced unionization.

I ask this coalition government to put Saskatchewan and the people ahead of its own narrow interest and the Liberal cabinet minister's support of the NDP to keep their cabinet positions and salaries, as well as the NDP Party's fundraising schemes.

Do the right thing. Withdraw Bill 59. Stop this forced unionization. Get back to basic democratic rights to construction workers. Allow them the right to make an informal decision through . . . an informed decision through a secret ballot — whether to be unionized or not. Withdraw this forced unionization Bill now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill No. 63 — The Legal Aid Amendment Act, 2000

The Chair: — Before I call clause 1, I'll invite the Hon. Minister of Justice to introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I'd like to introduce to the Assembly, to my right, Susan Amrud, who's director of legislative services branch in the Department of Justice; to my left, Tom Irvine, in the constitutional law branch; and behind me, Jane Lancaster, Q.C., the Chair of the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister.

Clause 1

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman, committees, and minister, welcome to your officials.

With respect to Bill 63, we do have a number of questions that we would like to ask this afternoon. And in the course of consulting with different parties on this particular Bill, some have had fewer concerns than others. And some have characterized it as a major disappointment. Some, right in the legal community, have characterized this as a major disappointment.

They question whether some of the major problems that exist with Legal Aid in our province and with the commission have indeed been addressed by the Bill. And so I do have a few questions, Minister. And I guess the first one would be more of a general question on behalf of those who have some concerns. And I think their concern can best be characterized by referring to those who fall somewhere in between but probably at the lower end of those who can easily afford their own counsel, and then still others who simply can't.

I think one individual characterized it as people who would be the working poor or perhaps those who are just outside or just fail to qualify for legal aid. Those restrictions haven't . . . or those limits haven't been changed at all. And I wonder if you can answer why that is. Because I know you would have had some significant input from people who made that request to the department.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Chair, in response to the member's question. The member's right that the focus of legal aid is on those who have least resources and therefore least ability to hire lawyers of their own. He's also right that as with so many programs designed to assist the most disadvantaged in our society, those who are above the most disadvantaged and not wealthy have sometimes quite a burden to . . . in order to provide for the services they need.

In fact it's the case that those who work but don't have enormous resources are assisted by the Legal Aid program. And as an example . . . for example a single mother with two children who makes \$1,200 a year would be assisted for

example by the program. And indeed if she, just as an example, she earned more money than that in a month, she would still be assisted but would be expected to make some contribution to the Legal Aid fund as a result of receiving that legal assistance.

So there is the availability for those who are, as the member described, working to receive assistance from the Legal Aid program.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Minister. Nothing also in this Bill addressed the tariff, the Legal Aid tariff in the province of Saskatchewan and that of course is also a concern to some and I guess that would be my next question. Why did the department in drafting the Bill decide not to change the tariff for Legal Aid? And what in the Bill — I guess I'll just ask two questions here, Minister, if I can — what in the Bill addresses the concern of people who see judges changing the . . . basically changing the tariff arbitrarily in certain cases?

So those would be the two questions: one, why didn't the Bill contemplate the tariff and a potential change; and two, what in the Bill would guard against people who aren't elected, people who do not have the authority to expend taxpayers' money, doing so from the bench?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. The member asked two questions — one dealing with the tariff for private lawyers doing Legal Aid work. And this is of interest in some smaller centres where it makes more sense to have private lawyers doing that work rather than have a full-time Legal Aid lawyer in that community. And also where other eventualities, such as a particular skill or the workload of those in Legal Aid make . . . ensure that it makes sense to hire outside lawyers.

And he wondered why there was nothing in the Bill regarding changing the tariff. I should say that the Legal Aid Commission has been discussing this matter with lawyers, and I'm pleased to let the member know that as of October 1 this year that fee will increase to \$60 an hour. And that the . . . that's actually, in terms of rates across the country, I think a satisfactory rate. The range is from \$51 an hour to \$63 an hour in various provinces. So that will go to \$60 an hour on October 1, 2000.

(1630)

In terms of, I think, the member's other question regarding lawyers who are appointed, who are not Legal Aid lawyers but are appointed to provide legal services to clients and are originally appointed at the tariff rate, and the member asks why . . . what have we done here to ensure that judges who aren't elected don't make decisions about how much a lawyer should receive.

And in fact, invariably — and I think the response to the member's written question would indicate this some time ago — invariably the decision about how much that lawyer should be paid is made by court services in the Department of Justice in conjunction with the lawyer themselves. So not in fact made by a judge, but made by an official of the Department of Justice working in consultation with the lawyer who will take the case on.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Minister, and I guess I'll just . . . two

questions. The first one's fairly quick. The \$60 an hour rate that will be effective October 1 — is that for both research time and case work? That is — I can see an official nodding. Because now of course there's a split; \$45 I think is research and \$55 court time. So it'll be \$60 for both of those things? Okay, thank you.

With respect to the latter question of the non-Legal Aid lawyers who are getting paid at a higher rate, at the higher hourly rate — I guess the fact that it's going to be increasing to \$60 October 1, perhaps it's going to mitigate that. It's probably going to cut that down in terms of that being as frequent an occurrence as it has been.

But I guess I'd just like to pursue that a little bit. And it may not be related directly to the Bill, but the arrangements that's made with the court services in the Department of Justice, how does that process work? Who is applying for the increased rate, and under whose authority, and under what legislative authority then does court services have to arbitrarily increase that rate?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Chair, in response to the member's question there, there are a number of ways in which this situation might arise, but likely the most common is where an accused feels in order to be properly represented, he or she needs a lawyer who's not a Legal Aid lawyer and makes that claim.

If the discussions between court services and the Department of Justice and that lawyer are not resolved — in other words they don't come to some decision as to how much the lawyer should be paid, and generally the court services attempts to keep the private tariff, the fee for the non legal aid lawyer within the tariffed amount — but if that's not possible, then a judge would look at both the complexity of the issue and indeed the financial implications.

And while a judge would not normally dictate how much a lawyer should be paid, it would be possible for a judge to essentially stay the proceedings and with the view that the court services and the lawyer would discuss this matter again and hopefully come to a more satisfactory conclusion.

So it's a process of negotiation which the judge can assist in from time to time, but generally these matters are resolved effectively by the executive director of court services and the lawyer involved.

Mr. Wall: — Well thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Chairman of Committees, and members, I'll move on but I would like to say this. That I think . . . and you've outlined quite clearly that it can happen. It can happen and it does happen that an elected individual then can effectively spend the money of the province of Saskatchewan without legislative authority to do that.

And I think that should be a great concern. If it happened only once and amounted to only hundreds of dollars, and I know that's not the case, but if that was the case that is not acceptable, I do not believe. Because we are all sent here by our constituents for that expressed duty, among others, but that prime among them I would say.

And I think it's absolutely unacceptable that at any time, any

time in the province of Saskatchewan, someone who is unelected can effectively spend taxpayers' dollars without the legislative authority to do so. They are not answering to the Legislative Assembly. They don't answer to Public Accounts. They frankly don't answer to the Department of Justice, obviously for very good reasons. And that would be a concern, a great concern, that we on this side of the House would have.

Could you just very briefly explain, Minister, the removal of section 29(1) — the decision with respect to removing the choice of counsel for murder and high treason. The rationale quickly for the removal of section 29(1), please.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Let me deal with the member's last question first, then I'll return to his comment because I think it deserves to be clarified a little.

The original arrangement with the federal government over legal aid ended in 1996 with a new agreement which took away the federal government's requirement that Legal Aid plans provide a counsel of choice for offences punishable by life in prison — basically murder and high treason.

So originally that requirement was there because the federal government required it. Once the federal government took that requirement away, it was possible for the Legal Aid Commission and the Department of Justice to reconsider that issue.

It is now the case that those offences are dealt with in the same way as any other offence for the purposes of providing legal aid. In other words, an appropriate lawyer will be sought within the Legal Aid Commission to defend the person in question. And of course that happens on a regular basis even for these more serious offences.

So faced with the situation of sometimes very high legal bills as a result of a whole string of events for those kinds of penalties, and because we're no longer required to provide the choice of counsel, the decision was made to treat every offence in the same way.

I'd say with regards to the member's first point that, in fact, judge's do not set Legal Aid tariffs. They, under no circumstances, would do that. What they will do is assess whether or not the accused's Charter right to a fair trial can be . . . or in order to ensure that that right to a fair trial is available to the accused, they will assess whether or not a higher tariff than that agreed to by court services, or discussed by court services and the lawyer in question, needs to be . . . whether the fee needs to be higher than that.

If it does, in the court's mind in order for the Charter right to a fair trial requires more intensive legal work at a higher rate, then they will order a stay of the proceedings so that the lawyer and court services can discuss the matter further. If there is no possibility . . . If an agreement is not reached, the proceedings will remain stayed and as a result that charge will not be pursued. So the judge does not specify how much a lawyer should be paid.

And I would just say one other point here. I mean, judicial independence is an important price we pay to live in the kind of

society in which we live. Only in totalitarian states does anybody ever think it's appropriate to interfere with judicial independence. And we surely do not want to move in that direction. It is awkward sometimes when judges make decisions which we don't like.

And we might, for example, easily agree that the Supreme Court of Canada in dealing with the Bill C-68, a reference, the firearms reference, was not acting in a way that we would have hoped. We plainly are disappointed by that decision.

But there are other decisions which courts make which we fully agree with. There will be some that you agree with that I don't agree with and vice versa. So I think it's critically important that we regard judicial independence as a cornerstone of our democratic society, that we don't try to tell judges what to do, and particularly that we don't try to tell them what to do if we are not totally familiar with the case in question.

And we will never be as familiar as the case in question as they will be, and neither will we hear the . . . in particular trial levels will we hear the evidence from both sides and be able to be in a position of interpreting what the appropriate decision is in that case.

We can more easily at higher court levels — Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada, for example, or the federal Court of Appeal — read and hear the judgments . . . the arguments presented by lawyers in those cases, and we can assess perhaps whether or not we agree with the court. But I think it's critically important that we maintain vigilance over judicial independence, even when judges are deciding things in a way in which we do not agree.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and Mr. Minister. I don't think you're going to have an argument on this side of the House from your last point. I don't think you're going to have an argument about the absolute, the absolute requirement that the judicial branch of our government have that independence.

But where I think you will find some disagreement then, from what I'm hearing, is — and depending how you want to characterize it here — what you've outlined as the process by which the tariff can be exceeded is still, in my books — and I guess we all have the right to be wrong — but I believe that what you've outlined is the delegation of the expenditure of tax dollars to the bench, to unelected people — be they from court services or the judge.

And I think we ought to take the opportunity to take . . . to make . . . When we're making legislative changes like we're talking about here today, I think we ought to take the opportunity to address that because there is a great demarcation between the independence of the judicial branch of our government and the need for the sole authority to levy and expend tax dollars to be with those who are elected — that's what this place is all about in my view. And in my view, I think what you've described is still the delegation of that authority to . . . (inaudible) . . . people.

So you might want to comment on that again, and I'll invite you to do that. But I'll also ask another question so we can continue to make some progress.

The other concern that I have, Minister, and that the members behind the bar would share as well, is that the change in the definition of solicitor in this Act seeming to lift the current restrictions on them being Saskatchewan residents.

And I wonder, Minister, if you could explain that a little bit? There's a great deal of concern out there. There's a particular lawyer that some Saskatchewan lawyers refer to who has billed almost 10 per cent of the entire Legal Aid budget in a very celebrated case. And I think there is . . . or at least that's the cost of that particular case, and I'm sure his bill is somewhere approximating that. And he's clearly not from here. And I think there is great unease within the legal community that this Bill seems to further loosen the definition of solicitors under the particular Act to include people from Saskatchewan.

And when they raise that concern, they point to other attendant issues — not the least of which is the request on behalf of lawyers to incorporate. And of course they've made that request for different reasons; one of them is financial reasons, some of them are bottom-line reasons.

But they make a good case about the number of Saskatchewan lawyers who are leaving or planning to leave Saskatchewan, setting up shop in Alberta, with the full intent of continuing to practice here in the province of Saskatchewan. But they're doing that for various tax reasons, and it's part of their argument when they make a request to be incorporated as professionals.

And so when you combine that fact with the provision in this Bill that changes the definition of solicitor to those so they don't have to be ordinary residents of the province of Saskatchewan, they have some valid concerns, and I'd like, Minister, if you could address those please.

(1645)

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'll start by the first point the member was concerned about with regards to unelected officials setting Legal Aid tariffs for the private bar.

The court services is a department within the Department of Justice, and therefore for the purposes of this discussion is essentially the Minister of Justice. And therefore the work done by court services in assessing and coming to agreement . . . assessing acceptable fee levels and coming to agreement on fee level is essentially then done by an elected official, because it's done under the authority of the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well no, it's done under the authority of the Minister of Justice and so therefore, I think, doesn't meet your concern.

With regards to removing ordinary residents in Saskatchewan as a requirement for using a solicitor for legal aid purposes, there are a number of points here. We have, as the member rightly pointed out, removed the choice of counsel so the issue of Fisher case, for example, will no longer arise.

And there are issues — they're two issues really; I suppose there are maybe three — one where to rise over in a situation, geographic situation like Lloydminster, for example, where it might very well be it wise . . . or it may just happen that a lawyer who lives in Alberta is chosen to represent an accused

here in Saskatchewan obviously would have to be a member of the Saskatchewan bar or be admitted for the purposes of that trial.

There may be, in some instances, conflicts which require a lawyer from outside of the province. And lastly, the agreement on internal trade requires us to be much more flexible with regards to professionals from other provinces operating here in the province. And I know the member will be supportive of freer trade within the provinces.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chair, Mr. Minister. We have no more questions on this Bill other than to restate the concerns that we've suggested already and to thank your officials for their attendance here today.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 31 inclusive agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Chairman, let me thank the officials for their assistance here today, and of course throughout the year, and move that we report the Bill without amendment.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**Bill No. 50 — The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2000/
Loi de 2000 modifiant la Loi d'interprétation de 1995**

Clause 1

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman of Committees. To the minister, could you with respect to Bill 50, I guess the question that I'd start with is: could you provide an example of the . . . could you provide a concrete example of the problems that this . . . that you hope to address through this legislation?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Let me thank the member for the question because I presume it wouldn't make very much sense to propose legislation if there wasn't a problem to be addressed. But he might argue that we've done that before and we might do it again.

But the problem arises here because of conflicting interpretations of the deputy ministers' and other officials' powers. And so there are conflicting court . . . judicial interpretations of when the powers of the minister can be administered, carried out by someone else.

So the purpose behind the Bill is to clarify that and ensure that the ministers' responsibilities can effectively be carried out by members of the department and particularly by the deputy minister.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Minister. That will be it for questioning on that. And I can point out to the committee members that since 51 is a consequential amendment Act, when we get to that point, there'll be no further questions on that Bill.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 5 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**Bill No. 51 — The Interpretation Act
Consequential Amendment Act**

Clauses 1 to 46 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

**Bill No. 80 — The Court of Appeal Act, 2000/
Loi de 2000 sur la Cour d'appel**

The Chair: — Minister, same officials or do you have new officials coming in?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Chair, we will be joined by Andrea Seale who will sit on my right, from the Department of Justice.

The Chair: — Thank you, Minister.

Clause 1

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman of Committees and Mr. Minister. With respect to Bill 80, could you explain the rationale for changing the ability of the cabinet basically, the Lieutenant Governor in Council, to decrease the size of the court so that it will now be done by the Legislative Assembly?

I don't think individually or we as a caucus have any problem with that, but I'd be interested in the rationale for coming to that decision.

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Well in response to the member's question, I can say that only Alberta and Ontario allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council to increase the size of the court and no other province allows the Lieutenant Governor in Council to decrease the size of the court in any province.

And the Chief Justice raised a legitimate concern about judicial independence, of which we just discussed, and the appearance really that this provision would interfere with judicial independence, and so consequently that provision was eliminated. It's probably been in place from the beginning of the Act, which would be about 85 years.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, maybe you could also outline why we would want to reserve for cabinet the power to increase the number of judges from the current nine. What circumstance would you see where nine wouldn't be enough?

Hon. Mr. Axworthy: — Mr. Chair, in response to that question, the department was attempting to respond to the concerns of the Chief Justice in regards to these provisions, and the Chief Justice did not raise an issue of concern about increasing the size of the court. The member probably knows that the court at the present time has a vacancy and it is not likely that that vacancy will be filled in the near future because the work of the court doesn't seem to require it and certainly the Chief Justice does not ask for it.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and Mr. Chairman. On this particular Bill that would conclude the questions that I

have, and once again I thank the minister for the answers and thank the officials for their resource as well.

The Chair: — I thank the member for Swift Current.

Committee members, this Bill is in English and in French, is 28 clauses and 19 pages long.

I'm going to simply remind members when we're voting in English we're also passing the French version. And after . . . I'll do the first page and the last page by clause and the rest, can I do by page? That's agreed.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 28 inclusive agreed to.

The committee agreed to report the Bill.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 63 — The Legal Aid Amendment Act, 2000

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move the Bill now be read the third time and passed under its title.

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

Bill No. 50 — The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2000/ Loi de 2000 modifiant la Loi d'interprétation de 1995

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 50 be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

Bill No. 51 — The Interpretation Act Consequential Amendment Act, 2000

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move the Bill now be read a third time and passed under its title.

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

Bill No. 80 — The Court of Appeal Act, 2000/ Loi de 2000 sur la Cour d'appel

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, with leave, I would like to move a motion concerning the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This afternoon, I regretted that we were supposed to move an additional motion coming out of our report to the Assembly. The motion moved by myself, seconded by the member from Indian Head-Milestone, is:

That the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations have the authority to travel and hold meetings away from the seat of government in order that the fullest representations may be received without unduly inconveniencing those desiring to be heard.

And I would so move, seconded by the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.

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