

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan concerned about the government's transfer of the surplus of the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund to the General Revenue Fund. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to refund the \$1.6 million intended for the Saskatchewan Fish and Wildlife Development Fund and discontinue its present policy of using this money for other government purpose.

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

And this petition is signed by approximately 50 citizens of Regina, Mr. Speaker.

I so present.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise this afternoon on behalf of citizens concerned about the shortcomings of the tobacco legislation. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately amend tobacco legislation that would make it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to be in possession of any tobacco product; and furthermore, anyone found guilty of such an offence would be subject to a fine of not more than \$100.

Signatures on this petition this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Tisdale, Star City, and Rose Valley, and I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to work with the federal government, First Nations representatives, and with other provincial governments to bring about a resolution in the Lake of the Prairies situation and to ensure that our natural resources as a whole are used in a responsible manner by all people in the future.

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, are all from the community of Langenburg.

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition by citizens concerned with the condition of Highway No. 58. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action to make necessary repairs to Highway 58 in order to avoid serious injury and property damage.

The signatures on this petition are from the communities of Shamrock, Chaplin, and Saskatoon.

I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the deplorable and dangerous condition of Highway 58. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and make necessary repairs to Highway 58 in order to avoid serious injury and property damage.

And this petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by individuals from the communities of Chaplin, Central Butte, and Moose Jaw.

I so present.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens opposed to possible reductions of services to Davidson and Craik health centres. The prayer goes as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Davidson and Craik health centres be maintained at its current level of service at a minimum, with 24-hour acute care, emergency, and doctorial services available as well as lab services, public health, home care, long-term care services available to the users from the Craik and Davidson area and beyond.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Kenaston and Bladworth.

I so present.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from constituents that are concerned about the changes to the crop insurance program. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to halt its plans to take money out of the crop insurance program and hike farmers' crop insurance premium rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the community of Wynyard.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by young farmers in my constituency that are concerned about the crop insurance program.

And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to halt its plan to take money out of the crop insurance program and hike farmers' crop insurance premium rates while reducing coverage in order to pay off the provincial government's debt to the federal government.

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

And the signatures on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are all young farmers from my town of Spiritwood.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 7, 11, 18, 132, 157, 165, and 169.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 77 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: how much was paid out by the Government of Saskatchewan for AIDA/CFIP in the year 2000-2001; how much was paid out in Saskatchewan by the federal government for AIDA/CFIP in 2000-2001?

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I should also give notice that I shall on day no. 77 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: how much was paid out by the Government of Saskatchewan for AIDA/CFIP in 2001-2002; how much was paid out in Saskatchewan by the federal government for AIDA/CFIP in 2001-2002?

And I shall ask on day no. 77, the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: what was the total paid out by the Government of Saskatchewan under C-SAP I; what was the total paid out by the federal government in Saskatchewan under C-SAP I?

And one additional question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: how much did the provincial government pay out through C-SAP II; and how much did the federal government pay out in Saskatchewan under C-SAP II?

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Firefighting Efforts Contain Crutwell Fire Near Prince Albert

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, those of us who live in the Prince Albert area had the opportunity to witness nature at its very worst during a close encounter we hope never to experience again. Although nature did show us its ugly side, Mr. Speaker, we also had as a community at large the opportunity to witness how a community can rise together to protect their own.

Mr. Speaker, of course I am speaking of the devastation wreaked upon the Nisbet Forest by the Crutwell fire. Mr. Speaker, during the mid-morning of Friday, June 28 a dry thunderstorm rolled through the Prince Albert region. This storm ignited two fires — one north and one south of the Highway 3 and 55 corridor west of Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, this huge fire in central Saskatchewan quickly threatened to destroy scores of homes close to and inside the city of Prince Albert.

Now we get to the good part, Mr. Speaker. Led by the quick response of SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management), three volunteer fire co-ops joined in with SERM professional forest firefighters to inhibit the progress of the Crutwell fires into the housing areas abutting the Nisbet Forest.

Mr. Speaker, today we need to remind ourselves of the professionalism of SERM's forest firefighters and also those three volunteer firefighters near Prince Albert who gave up a July 1 long weekend to assist SERM.

These three volunteer co-ops are the Buckland and District Fire Co-op, the Lakeland and District Fire Co-op, and the West Central Fire Co-op.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in thanking all four firefighting groups for their quick action in bringing under control the Crutwell fire.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the member from Saskatchewan Rivers in commending the people who worked over the long weekend on the Crutwell fire. The volunteer fire departments have been mentioned. The 250 SERM employees have been mentioned by the member. But I want to as well speak to the Wahpeton Dakota First Nation who were engaged in the struggle to fight this fire.

Mr. Speaker, this fire has covered something in the neighbourhood of 9,000 hectares of forest west of Prince Albert and had moved within 11 kilometres of the city. Certainly we were all concerned. Several villages had to be evacuated. And I want to today commend the people who operated the 6 helicopters, the 4 air tankers, the 22 water trucks, the 18 caterpillars, and who manned the 500 fire hoses.

What I think is important, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank someone upstairs who allowed a little rain to happen in our area, which allowed the fire to be now 85 per cent contained.

I want to, in closing, Mr. Speaker, commend Mayor Cody and his staff — tremendous co-operation was between SERM and the city. And I want to commend as well two individuals from SERM — Murdoch Carriere and Curtis Lee who organized and coordinated the firefighting efforts. It's because of them that we have safe communities and that there wasn't a lot of personal property loss. The forest can be replaced and will be replaced by mother nature.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Grand Opening of New Canora Credit Union Building

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, June 26, the minister for CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) and I had the pleasure to be on hand for the grand opening of the new Canora Credit Union building in Canora. This is a new facility that will allow the Canora Credit Union to better serve its members for years to come.

According to general manager, Dave Masters, the \$2.5 million building will not only allow them to continue the delivery of traditional services like lending and deposit services but will allow them to expand upon emerging services like financial planning, estate and trust services, and brokerage services.

Mr. Speaker, the Canora Credit Union began in 1959 with an initial deposit of nearly \$11,000 from 161 investors. Since then it has expanded with branches in Wadena, Kuroki, Preeceville, and Sturgis. Today Canora Credit Union Limited boasts assets of more than \$130 million.

Special recognition should be given to architect, Heney Klypak of Saskatoon, and general contractor, Logan Stevens of Yorkton, and all of the subcontractors who participated in constructing such a beautiful facility.

I'd like to ask all members to join me in congratulating the board, general manager, staff, and membership of the Canora Credit Union on the grand opening of their new building.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

New Water System for Martensville

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, it was my great pleasure on Friday last to join the people of Martensville on the very happy occasion of the sod-turning for their new water reservoir, pumping station, and pipeline.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report that the province is joining in partnership with the town of Martensville and the federal government through the Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program to develop this new water system. This is one of many projects under the infrastructure program, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that Martensville has seen amazing growth and progress since its incorporation as a village in 1966. In just over 30 years its population now nears the level required for city status. That's amazing progress for Martensville, Mr.

Speaker.

This investment of \$800,000 by provincial and federal governments over the next two years will help to provide the infrastructure necessary to attract new industry, new families, and new business investments in one of Saskatchewan's fastest growing communities.

Mr. Speaker, the infrastructure program stresses improvements to water and waste water systems, solid waste management, recycling, and energy efficient projects. It's a good example of partnership between the province, the federal government, and municipalities like Martensville; and I know all members will want to join me in congratulating Mayor Jim Stone, the council, and the people of Martensville on the progress being made in that community.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

Drought Disaster Areas in Northwest Saskatchewan

Mr. Wakefield: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to again bring attention to the legislature of a continuing disastrous situation in the northwest Saskatchewan due to the extreme drought, now both in the livestock sector — including grazing, feeding, and water supply — as well as the current crop conditions. Crop deterioration has complicated an extremely uneven germination and many grain producers are now trying to come to grips with a complete crop failure. Expenses to date will be just written off.

Heartland Livestock Services in Lloydminster has indicated that four to six times the usual number of cattle are now on offer as producers and ranchers are trying to deal with a complete lack of feed and grazing capacity. Watering the remaining livestock has become a huge problem. About a dozen rural municipalities in the Northwest have officially declared themselves drought disaster areas and are looking for any advice or guidance or any assistance that can be directed their way.

Now is the time for this government to offer any assistance that it can to these farmers and ranchers as they face the worst drought and crop failure conditions in living memory. The problems and consequences cannot be ignored any longer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Partnership Between Thom Collegiate and SaskEnergy

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to draw the attention of the Assembly to a six-year partnership that's just a remarkable partnership between the students and teachers at Thom Collegiate and the employees and staff at SaskEnergy.

Mr. Speaker, SaskEnergy and Thom have entered into a business education partnership in 1984. It was to facilitate the education of students in technology, in business, in the arts and humanities, in environmental studies, in environmental studies, and . . . Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the agreement was to facilitate the education of students in technology and business, in the arts and humanities, in environmental studies, and in

sciences. In turn, students would participate in certain SaskEnergy community programs and, on occasion, provide facilities for some events.

Mr. Speaker, what has happened is the students and the staff at SaskEnergy have been building off of each other's energy and making Thom, and making SaskEnergy, making Regina, and making our province a better place to live.

Mr. Speaker, it's a great co-operative program in education and in community spirit. And I want to conclude by congratulating Thom, SaskEnergy, and everyone involved in this great six-year partnership.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Drought Assistance for Agriculture

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. As we heard earlier from the member from Lloydminster, the severe drought continues to affect many areas in northern Saskatchewan. Conditions are bone dry, particularly around Lloydminster, Prince Albert, and Melfort.

The crops are burning; the pastures never even turned green this spring. The little feed that was available is almost entirely gone. Mr. Speaker, what specific measures is the government taking to assist the farmers and cattle producers in drought-stricken areas of this province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the member's question, because it's one that is most serious in the northwest side of the province. And I say to the member opposite that there are a number of things that we implemented this year to try and deal with the drought that we anticipated might occur in Saskatchewan.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, we implemented the new forage crop insurance program, which we have today, Mr. Speaker, better than 3 million acres that are insured in Saskatchewan.

This year, Mr. Speaker, we also have the water sources development fund that we expanded in this province, put additional money in last year for this year. And I now have the federal government matching that up by an additional \$1.1 million.

We got a further extension, Mr. Speaker, on the tax deferral program to allow for the drought-induced sale of breeding stock to be administered for an additional two more years, Mr. Speaker. So that if producers find themselves in a situation where they need to sell some of their livestock off, the deferral program will work, Mr. Speaker.

So those are some of the things that we've done through the course of this year. I have a longer list, Mr. Speaker, and I'll go on in time . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the minister, I know, is well aware that these programs are not addressing the need. They are terribly inadequate. And about a month ago, the Saskatchewan Party called on the province to commit \$10 million to well drilling, to dugout digging, and to the purchase of pumping equipment.

The NDP (New Democratic Party) rejected the idea. In fact the minister said that helping the cattle producers of this province was a dumb idea.

And then he sort of had a change of heart and he said that he would speak to the federal government about a water program for cattle producers, but we haven't heard a thing since. Mr. Speaker, the drought is still very severe in some areas of this province and the NDP is still doing nothing.

What is the government going to do to deal with the severe drought in many areas? Will they support the Saskatchewan Party's proposal which will address the need right now?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — I should say to the member opposite that this government has, over the last year and a half, Mr. Speaker, has done a tremendous amount for agriculture in this province and have built on the work of agriculture strategy for this province, Mr. Speaker.

And I say to the member opposite that just recently in my conversations with the Minister of Agriculture federally, there is a commitment by the federal government to put some additional dollars in for water of which, Mr. Speaker, we will announce in the next day or two a strategy in terms of enhancing the water supply in this province, Mr. Speaker. And the minister of Sask Water will be announcing that.

But I want to say to the member opposite, it wasn't this member on this side of the House that said that we shouldn't be supporting cattle producers and supporting agriculture, Mr. Speaker. And it was not this member of the House who said that it was a dumb, dumb idea.

It was, Mr. Speaker, the media who had in fact had read the quote from the member from Watrous and they said that it was that member, Mr. Speaker — it was a dumb, dumb idea, not on this side of the House but on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP likes to talk about helping the farmers in the province. But their record is a disaster. They know that in just this year alone they cut the budget by \$50 million, they cut the crop insurance coverage, they jacked up the premiums. They cancelled the property tax rebate and they refuse to help the cattle producers who are short of both feed and water.

Mr. Speaker, this spring many cattle producers, particularly in the Northwest, need to haul cattle and water but they couldn't

because many highways have road bans in place and the government refused to issue special permits.

For instance, Highway 4 from Rosthern to Meadow Lake, one of the driest areas of the province, had a road ban until June 30. And we heard from producers who were fined for hauling cattle on that road.

Mr. Speaker, if the NDP really does care about the cattle producers, if they really do want to see that industry grow in the province, why won't they at least issue special permits for the cattle hauling?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — In this province, Mr. Speaker, I meet with the farm producers and the farm organizations about every five or six weeks, Mr. Speaker. I meet with them and we have a conversation. In fact I just met with them before I went to Halifax on the recent rounds of discussions on agriculture. I'll be meeting with them again in the next 10 days or so.

And livestock producers said to us unequivocally, Mr. Speaker, we should not be providing financial assistance for the hauling of livestock or the hauling of feed. That's the position, Mr. Speaker, today. That's the position, Mr. Speaker.

And I hear the members opposite chirping, Mr. Speaker. I hear the members opposite chirping, Mr. Speaker, about road bans in Saskatchewan. And the members over there should know that road bans are determined, Mr. Speaker, by the municipalities. They're not determined by the provincial government.

The decision about road closures, road bans, road weights, Mr. Speaker, are determined by municipalities, Mr. Speaker, and the member opposite should know that, you would think.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Provincial Disaster Assistance Program

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, two years ago tomorrow, the community of Vanguard and surrounding area was hit by a devastating storm that dropped 375 millimetres of rain. The area suffered extreme flooding which damaged roads, buildings, crops, and fields. The downpour also left the community with contaminated drinking water, and an incredible amount of work to repair the damage.

Damage estimates have now reached over \$5 million yet unbelievably there are still people in the area who have not been paid for their claims from the provincial disaster assistance program.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier explain why some people in Vanguard have had to wait over two years to be paid by the PDAP (provincial disaster assistance program)?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There are really a number of issues here that affect the ability to pay out individual claims. I want to assure the House though,

that we have had a person working full-time on this since the flood, and indeed we added another person in September.

There are a number of different issues. I can advise the House very quickly that some of this involves the ability of getting a . . . the availability of getting contractors. Some of it's had to do with needing to wait to evaluate structural damage of basement walls. For particular reasons around the erosions and dike claims, there have been some issues with getting a large contractor.

There's a relatively small number of claims, Mr. Speaker, that are still waiting to be paid out but this program is moving forward.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, on Saturday evening a severe wind and hail storm cut a devastating path across southwestern Saskatchewan. Crops were completely destroyed by the wind and hail. In RM (rural municipality) No. 75, for example, one farmer lost every building and tree on his property except his house.

Extensive property damage occurred almost everywhere the storm was felt and affected many RMs. Some people have insurance that will cover the damages to property, and crop insurance will take care of some crop damage. But the NDP's cut of spot loss hail coverage will negatively affect many farmers.

Mr. Speaker, initial damage reports from this storm are just coming in. If RMs affected by this storm request help from the provincial disaster assistance program, will the Premier assure them that help will be there now, not two years from now?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have certainly advised the House in the past that insurable items, insurable properties are not covered under PDAP. They are to be covered under the insurance programs. It's up to the people who own the property to take out the appropriate insurance.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Assistance to Municipalities for Firefighting

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the Premier accompanied me to Nipawin following the devastating fire that destroyed an industry in the community and threatened lives and property throughout the entire community and surrounding RMs, the Premier indicated that the situation would definitely qualify for provincial assistance to cover the damage. The town itself has already spent over \$50,000 for external costs. And they're tabulating apparently their own costs at this point.

They still haven't got the bill from SERM for the water bombers, but they do expect the total costs of fighting the blaze will top \$100,000.

Mr. Speaker, what is happening with the Premier's commitment

to help Nipawin with disaster assistance? How much money can the community expect to receive and when can they expect to hear from the province on their assistance package?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to be joined by the member when I toured the situation of the fire in Nipawin, and meeting with the mayor and council members and community leaders. I indicated, I indicated to them, Mr. Speaker, that we would work with them in terms of the cost of bringing in the provincial forest fighting resources to bear on that fire. We've established a committee; we're working with the community of Nipawin.

I think the member will understand that our people in the fighting of forest fires these days have been . . . had a full load on their plates, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to, however, Mr. Speaker, on this point, remind the member opposite and remind the party opposite what they were saying in this House about a year ago, about a year ago. They were talking about the budget at that time. They said at that time that this budget is, quote:

. . . a slap in the face to Saskatchewan people.

That's what they said. And quote, incredibly they said:

. . . the NDP has added 550 new government employees.

Mr. Speaker, in that 550 were 88 people dedicated to the fighting of forest fires in our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — What do they say today? What do they say in the House today? Did they get up and complain today? No, Mr. Speaker. And what do they say to the people of Prince Albert about their comments a year ago?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Mr. Speaker, the issue here is that these communities are now themselves facing huge bills for firefighting. The town of Nipawin is not the only community. The RMs of Mervin and Loon Lake are each facing bills of almost \$3 million each for fighting the blaze in the Turtle Lake area.

In late May, before the Turtle Lake fire began, SARM, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, was already requesting that the provincial government waive any charges to RMs for the use of water bombers, helicopters, and firefighting crews. So far all they've heard is that the province has set up a committee, another committee to try and find out how the cost should be handled.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier explain who is on this committee, when the committee is expected to reach a decision, and what process will it use to arrive at that decision; and when municipalities in Saskatchewan can expect an answer from the NDP on whether or not they will receive assistance?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — I'm confident the New Democratic Party would have something to say if the member wants to check the party headquarters downtown. I'll tell him what the Government of Saskatchewan is doing. I'll tell him what the Government of Saskatchewan is doing.

Mr. Speaker, we are working with communities. Surely to goodness the member recognizes that our fire management team has something on their plate . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, we have committed to work with communities. We've established the process to do so. I think even members opposite in the most partisanship would understand that this agency of government has a full load on its plate these days.

Now I want that leader or that member to stand up today and declare their policy on the hiring of public servants to fight forest fires. Let the member from Rosthern stand up — the member from Rosthern has a great deal to say from his seat — let the member of Rosthern stand up and criticize today the hiring that we did last year of those involved in fighting forest fires in our province, Mr. Speaker.

I'll tell you, you'll hear nothing about it from them, Mr. Speaker. You'll hear nothing about it from them. You'll hear nothing about it from them in regards to the highways of the province. Not a question, Mr. Speaker, in this entire session to the Minister of Highways. Not a question this year, Mr. Speaker, about the hiring of forest fighting personnel in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's absolutely unbelievable to think that because the Premier is suggesting his entire . . .

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

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's unbelievable to think that because the Premier is suggesting his entire government is in a state of terminal inertia that that's an excuse to be able to allow municipalities to be crushed under the cost of firefighting.

Mr. Speaker, one RM indicates that if they themselves have to assume responsibility for all of the firefighting costs, they might as well lock the doors and hand over the keys.

Mr. Speaker, why did the Premier promise disaster assistance for Nipawin if he wasn't prepared to offer it on the spot for other municipalities facing the devastation of fire and the enormous costs?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, there's one party in this House that wishes they were involved with inertia — it's the

Saskatchewan Party — as opposed to going straight downhill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I will say again that we are working with communities. We are working with RMs in this extremely important . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Members on both sides of the House.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, we are involved in some very, very difficult days as we deal with the fires that are threatening communities, have been threatening communities, and likely will threaten communities and property and lives across the province. I want to, as Premier of the province, join my colleague from Prince Albert in congratulating all of those men and women who today are in the field working, some of them with the provincial government, some of them with RMs, doing exceptional, exceptional work in very difficult circumstances.

And as I indicated in the member's presence where he congratulated me for doing so, as I indicated to the people of Nipawin, I indicate to the people of communities across Saskatchewan: we will work with those communities, we will find solutions, and together we will take on the fires that are threatening our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier's announcement in Nipawin was described as follows in *The Nipawin Journal* on June 13, and I quote:

The hesitation in Calvert's voice was obvious the day he made the announcement in Nipawin.

And I quote further:

But with several other Saskatchewan communities dealing with the fall out from fires, Calvert may have to be prepared to help them out as well.

Mr. Speaker, with the total number of fires up 209 from last year, there can be no more hesitation from this Premier. People need to know what they can expect — what they can expect in terms of assistance from this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — What a transformation, Mr. Speaker. A year ago, that member, his leader, the Finance critic, complained on a daily basis that we were adding new resources to the fighting of forest fires in this province. On a daily basis. Now we're not hearing that this . . . this afternoon.

I look forward to the comments that I'm sure the Leader of the Opposition will make later this afternoon. Will he be criticizing this government as he did a year ago for adding new resources to the fighting of forest fires in the province?

Mr. Speaker, let there be no hesitation about this. We will work

with the communities of Saskatchewan, as I indicated in Nipawin, as we have indicated through the minister. We will work together to deal with the fires as they present today and the cost as they will present tomorrow.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Performance of New Democratic Party Government

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since the Premier seems to be so confident, perhaps he should then visit the Lieutenant Governor and call the election.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — He seems to be a little reluctant to do that, though. Perhaps he has seen the latest polling.

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you. I gather he hasn't shared the polling with the rest of caucus.

Mr. Speaker, last Thursday we witnessed another characteristic display from the former Environment minister. The former minister refuses to take responsibility for her own problems. Instead she blames the media; she blames the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, let's review the facts. The media didn't get the minister kicked out of cabinet. The opposition didn't get the minister kicked out of cabinet. The minister got kicked out of cabinet because she wouldn't keep her mouth shut.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier agree with his NDP member blaming the media? Does he support that member's threat to sue the media?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, while the member opposite concerns himself with events of Friday past, I want to remind him of another event of Friday past. That's when hundreds of people gathered here in the Regina Centre of the Arts to celebrate, to celebrate those who have made their home in this city, those who have returned to this city, those who are making their home in this province, those who have returned to this province.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, what goes on here, what goes on here. They'll use absolutely anything to divert attention in this province from the good news that's happening all across this province. That's what they'll do. They'll try to do anything in this context, in this House in question period to divert from the accomplishments of this session of the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, he wants to talk about the press. Well, I took a look at some press on the weekend. Here's a little headline from the Saskatoon *StarPhoenix*: "Job opportunities abound" in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's what's going on in the province. I wish the opposition would get off the doom and gloom and get on with the good news.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. He wants to review the session. He's fired a minister. They've had numerous investigations into the incompetence of their ministers that should have been fired, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let's just remember that this whole . . . where this whole problem started in the first place. The former minister couldn't take responsibility even to mail her own brother's birthday cards. They didn't get mailed so she blamed someone else for it.

Mr. Speaker, this is typical of this NDP government. They take no responsibility for their actions. They blame the media. They blame the opposition. They blame all of their problems on everyone else.

Mr. Speaker, the scandal surrounding the former minister is just one symptom of the lack and weak leadership and the lack of talent on the NDP benches, Mr. Speaker.

Does the Premier think it's right that his member blame the media and threaten to sue the media for her own mistakes?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, the member from Cannington wants to review the session. Well here we go. In this session, a greenprint for ethanol production in Saskatchewan in place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — In this session, Saskatchewan's first commercial wind power in place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — In this session, a 25-year gaming agreement with the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — In this session, May unemployment up — 11,000 new jobs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Expansion of high-speed Internet next year and this to 256 communities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — \$1.2 billion for education — record number, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — 5.8 per cent increase in the Department of Health in this budget.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, 10th balanced budget, in this session.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, in this session credit rating upgrade from Moody's of New York.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, in this session a whole government reorganization — fewer departments, more efficiencies.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Ten million dollar increase to municipalities, a new Cities Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — The largest number ever of police officers in Saskatchewan. A coordinated strategy, a coordinated strategy to take on the sexual exploitation of children that are on our street.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well the Premier continues to perpetrate the fantasy that the budget was balanced, Mr. Speaker. But even using the minister of . . .

The Speaker: — Members will come to order.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Even if you use the Minister of Finance's numbers, the \$45,000 surplus, the Premier spent it investigating his own ministers, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, this is just another example of the bungling leadership and lack of judgment that we see every day from this Premier. The other day the Premier was asked, if he had to do it over again would he put that member back in cabinet, and he said yes.

The Speaker: — Order please, members. Order.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Talk about not learning from your mistakes . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

(14:15)

Mr. D'Autremont: — The Premier isn't learning from his mistakes, Mr. Speaker. According to one recent media report, NDP caucus workers were constantly complaining to their union about the member from Saskatoon Southeast before she was even in cabinet. In fact, he had more complaints about her than any other MLA combined and still the Premier put her into cabinet. It makes you wonder just how bad the rest of the NDP backbenchers really are.

Mr. Premier, why does the Premier continue to exercise such bad judgment? Why has he not learned from his mistakes?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — . . . going to continue to do, to do the kind of work that we've been doing in this session.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now let's just, let's just take a little further look at this session. These question period answers are too short. Let's take a little further look at this session. In this session we've received the ACRE (Action Committee on the Rural Economy) committee report . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — . . . one of the most fundamental reports in the future of rural Saskatchewan. During this session we listened to the people of Saskatchewan. We did not close rural hospitals.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — In this session we listened to the people of Saskatchewan. We reversed field on a long-term care increase.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, we in the course of this session have offered support to the Farm Rail Car Coalition in this session.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — We've taken national leadership on the fight for a trade injury payment out of Ottawa.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, in this session, in this session alone, we've authorized the funds for the Minister of Highways to complete paving and reconstruction of another 700 kilometres of roadway in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — But just take a look at the human agenda in this session, Mr. Speaker. Look at the human agenda in this speaker. Look at the decline in the level of social services caseloads. Look at the new funding for education capital. Look at the leadership in health care, Mr. Speaker.

That's the kind of stuff we're about, Mr. Speaker, not the doom and gloom and the diversionary tactics of the Saskatchewan . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll convert for debates returnable.

The Speaker: — 411 converted to motions for debate returnable.

Order, please. Order. Order.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 17 — Performance of Government

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure after the long Canada Day holiday weekend to come back to the legislature to try to do some business on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this session thus far has been a terrible disappointment to the people of Saskatchewan as they look at the record of the government. They look at the failures of this government. They look at this government that is focused on internal problems and internal matters and seem to be totally oblivious of the problems facing our province and the direction that our province is heading.

You know, Mr. Speaker, over the course of Saskatchewan's history, and we're approaching being 100 years old, and we've had our ups and down, Mr. Speaker. The province started off on a strong note back in 1905 with a lot of immigration into the province, a fast growing population. We saw much of the southern third to two-thirds of the province settled. Communities were rising up all over the province. There was schools being built, there were churches being built, Mr. Speaker, and the people that were predicting Saskatchewan's future predicted that our province would attain a population of well over 1 million people very quickly.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, when this Legislative Assembly was built back shortly after this province was established, the people of this province expected our population to reach about 4 or 5 million people, a bustling province, one of the largest in Canada. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatoon expected that by the year 1940 their population would reach the . . . 400,000 people.

But, Mr. Speaker, there have been some barriers in the way of growth in this province. And we all recognize that there have been two world wars, there was the crash of '29 and the dirty thirties, Mr. Speaker, when not only Saskatchewan but most of Canada experienced some real difficulties and they experienced a stalemate or a pause in the growth pattern.

But, Mr. Speaker, at other times when Canada has grown immensely and when this province . . . when the nation as a whole has gone forward, there have been times, primarily under NDP governments, when this province has been stagnant or actually slipped backwards.

We think of the 1970s, when this province should have been growing much more quickly under the Blakeney government,

Mr. Speaker, we did not do the economic things that were necessary for the province to grow.

And, Mr. Speaker, more recently, through the '90s, a time of unprecedented national growth, Mr. Speaker, our province has sputtered, stopped growing, and in fact right now our province is sliding backwards.

Mr. Speaker, under the Romanow government the slide was beginning, but it was slight. But, Mr. Speaker, under the current NDP government, that slide has accelerated. And, Mr. Speaker, it is causing alarm all over the province.

Mr. Speaker, what is particularly disconcerting, and we saw it again in question period today, is the fact that the government seems to be oblivious — the NDP government, I should say — is oblivious to the fact that the province is not making progress. The province is not meeting its potential.

Mr. Speaker, they chime and they chirp and they chorus over accomplishments that are rather pathetic, Mr. Speaker. Accomplishments that are often figments of their own imagination.

Mr. Speaker, at the current time under this NDP government, we have returned to deficits by the Finance minister's own admission. We have a deficit, Mr. Speaker. We have a cash deficit. And, yes, the former Finance minister, Janice MacKinnon, also admits, Mr. Speaker, that this province is back into deficits after a long . . . a lot of effort on her part to prevent that from happening.

Mr. Speaker, not only are there been deficits, but, Mr. Speaker, now we are plagued with scandals and all kinds of problems internally with the New Democratic Party.

And, Mr. Speaker, I guess the problems reached their apex last week when the best thing the NDP could do in this House and the best use they could make at the time of the legislature was to somehow fabricate some kind of a motion that would indicate that the Saskatchewan Party was the same as the Liberal Party under Mr. Campbell in British Columbia.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you're in trouble, like the NDP are in trouble, when you're failing and when failure after failure mounts up, Mr. Speaker, what the NDP try to do is deflect attention away from themselves.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure why in that motion they didn't address their concerns to the member from North Battleford. After all, he is supposed to be the Liberal member of this Assembly, perhaps the only living one left in this House, Mr. Speaker. You know, we're not here to either sing the praises or to criticize the Campbell government but what we do know about that government is that they faced a mess left behind by the NDP, just like this current NDP government is leaving a mess that the Saskatchewan Party will have to clean up.

Mr. Speaker, in British Columbia under NDP governments — Harcourt, Clark, and Dosanjh, Mr. Speaker, there were huge deficits, there were scandals from bingogate to the Premier's deck, Premier Clark's deck being built in lieu of a gaming licence being given to a friend. Mr. Speaker, there was the

whole ferries fiasco where they built these hugely expensive ferries that didn't go as fast as they were supposed to. They were over budget and they underperformed.

And, Mr. Speaker, what the NDP did in British Columbia is move that province from one of the wealthiest, most progressive provinces into a have-not province, if you can believe that, Mr. Speaker — the same as the NDP has done in Saskatchewan. We're still a have-not province under the NDP.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the NDP in British Columbia ripped up contracts. They had a contract with Carrier Lumber that they ripped up. They also have fabricated the truth, Mr. Speaker, just like the NDP in Saskatchewan ripped up written contracts and showed no regard for the letter of the law whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, in British Columbia the NDP fired people just because they were related to people that were not perceived to be NDP supporters. That's the status that occurred or that's the . . . those are the events that occurred in British Columbia, and that is why that government was replaced.

Mr. Speaker, another . . . a minister, Mr. Moe Sihota, in British Columbia enrolled his kids in a private school while he was touting the public school sector, Mr. Speaker. That caused a scandal. And then Mr. Moe Sihota went on to build a new house with non-union labour, and that caused a kerfuffle in the NDP. Mr. Speaker, it was just from one disaster to the other.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we used to always laugh at British Columbia, and say, well the NDP out there are probably amongst the most incompetent in the country. Those poor folks in British Columbia are getting what they voted for — it will never, ever be that bad in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, nobody thought the NDP in Saskatchewan would drop to the level of the NDP out in British Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, what else did the NDP do out in British Columbia? They increased taxes, they expanded the PST (provincial sales tax). Does that sound familiar — exactly the same thing that the NDP Finance minister in Saskatchewan did. He must have been reading notes from his colleagues in British Columbia, because he expanded the PST. While he was claiming to lower taxes with one hand, he was taking more tax revenue with the other through the expanded PST.

Mr. Speaker, the justification for increasing taxes was because of an adviser named Mr. Ron Hickie, a former advisor to Allan Blakeney. Mr. Speaker, there are connections between the NDP in British Columbia and the NDP in Saskatchewan. And in fact, one of the most shocking things that I read just the other day was a statement by an NDP member on the other side here in Saskatchewan, in Crown Corporations Committee. It was the MLA for Saskatoon Idylwyld and he said:

Well, I'm just alarmed by the word taxpayer because I think all citizens have an opinion on how these Crown corporations are run . . . not just a small segment.

Mr. Speaker, now I know that the member is a new member and I know that the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld probably has much to learn. But you would think one of the first pieces of homework that a new member would do would be to recognize

how many taxpayers there are in Saskatchewan. If you just look at the number of tax returns, taxable returns filed in Saskatchewan is 481,000, the non-taxable returns are 224,000. So the total tax returns filed in Saskatchewan, 705,000 out of a population of under 1 million people.

And the member from Saskatoon Idylwyld says that he's alarmed by the use of the word taxpayers because he thinks that the general citizenship is more important; that taxpayers are just a small segment of our population. Mr. Speaker, that shows how misguided our New Democratic government is here in this province. Mr. Speaker, total disregard for the taxpayers.

Now as I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, the NDP are employing a strategy of deflection to cover up their own incompetence and their failures. And let's just look at a few of the failures we've seen over the past few years. Mr. Speaker, when I first became involved in provincial politics, we saw the nurses legislated back from a strike with a contract legislated as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that if there is a disruption in health care services, that government sometimes have to act. We recognize that. And we recognize that many governments of many stripes have legislated health care workers and other essential workers back into the workplace if contract negotiations have failed.

(14:30)

But, Mr. Speaker, only under the NDP in Saskatchewan would they also legislate the contract, Mr. Speaker, and totally stomp all over the principle of collective bargaining — and that by an NDP government no less, and led, no less, by the former, by the former president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses who is the NDP MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for Saskatoon Eastview. And she was justifying this, Mr. Speaker. It tells you how quickly NDP members can flip-flop and how little their principles mean to them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is the same NDP government that has been closing hospitals over the years, starting with 52 hospitals back in the early '90s, closing the Plains hospital, and generally shutting down health care in the province of Saskatchewan.

This is the same government that I mentioned that cancelled the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) contracts when they were already in force, Mr. Speaker. What should have been an illegal action, made legal by changing the law so that breaking the law suddenly became legal. Mr. Speaker, it's hard to understand but the NDP somehow or another did it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is the NDP government that has most recently cut funding for agriculture, cut it by \$50 million and then has the nerve to go down to Ottawa and ask them to increase their spending for agriculture. Yes that spending increase is required but the Minister of Agriculture takes a very weak position to the bargaining table when he himself is slashing his own Agriculture budget and demanding that the federal government increase theirs.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that stood up in this House . . . the Minister of Environment stood up in this House and said we are not the least bit vulnerable to a Walkerton-style water

quality scandal in the province of Saskatchewan, knowing full well, Mr. Speaker, that he had read a cabinet document that said we were very vulnerable to a water quality scandal of the same type and style as the Walkerton issue was.

Mr. Speaker, this is an NDP government that in the last election their very top election platform promise was to create 30,000 new jobs. Mr. Speaker, well that's a laudable number. It certainly isn't as high a job creation number as we're seeing in the other Prairie provinces — Manitoba and Alberta have certainly been outstripping that number.

But you've got to start somewhere and so the NDP picked 30,000 jobs as the number that they would try to create. Well, Mr. Speaker, what happened, the member from Melfort-Tisdale asks? Well I'll tell you what happened. We went, from the number of jobs in 1999, we've gone down, Mr. Speaker.

We were almost 500,000 jobs back when the election was called in 1999 and we've dropped down as much as 30, 35,000 jobs below that level, Mr. Speaker. And we are still far below the number of jobs that existed in this province back in 1999. And that's what I mean, Mr. Speaker, when I say that the province is declining, it's going in the wrong direction. And that is under the watch of an NDP government.

They promised 30,000 jobs. By their own admission they're not going to make it. Mr. Speaker, it looks like we will have fewer jobs when the next election is called than we had back in 1999.

Mr. Speaker, wherever I go — and I've been all through Saskatchewan on a regular basis — the people of this province tell me they're losing confidence in the NDP. They say this government has lost its way. They say this government has weak leadership. They tell me that they think the Premier of the province is weak. They feel that the Premier has a weak cabinet. They're not sure who is doing what over there, and quite frankly, we're not sure who's in charge over there either.

Mr. Speaker, many times it seems to us that Frank Hart is more the premier of the province than is the current Premier. It seems like nothing gets done unless Mr. Hart gives his permission, Mr. Speaker. Unless CIC plays a role in any major economic initiative or action, it doesn't happen. And that is an indictment and that is a sign, Mr. Speaker, of an extremely weak government.

But let's look at the crop of MLAs over on the other side and see why the people of Saskatchewan are losing confidence in their NDP government here in the province of Saskatchewan.

They see the MLA for Regina Coronation Park. They saw him fired. Mr. Speaker, they saw the MLA for Regina South and he was demoted. And then they look over at the MLA for Regina Wascana Plains and they see that she's been fired from cabinet. Mr. Speaker, they look at the MLA for Regina Sherwood and he's been excommunicated.

Mr. Speaker, they look at the MLA for Saskatoon Southeast, and we talked about her in question period today. She was hired and then she fired. And then she was hired and then she was fired.

It's no wonder, Mr. Speaker, that the people of the province are losing confidence in the NDP government in this province.

We look at the MLA for North Battleford, Mr. Speaker — the only Liberal that we have left in the House — and he was over on the other side, Mr. Speaker. And he deserted the coalition government and he joined the Karwacki party.

Then we look at the MLA for Saskatoon Idylwyld. I mentioned him just a little bit earlier on, Mr. Speaker. But we think about the member that he replaced. She left in disgust because she knew that it was actually Frank Hart who was the premier of Saskatchewan, not the newly elected Premier who's only been in office for a short time.

Mr. Speaker, then we look at the MLA for Saskatoon Fairview and we understand he can't wait to get out of cabinet — probably can't wait to get out of caucus, Mr. Speaker. He's had enough of that outfit.

An Hon. Member: — Do you blame him?

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker . . . No, I don't blame him. I think a lot of people are wondering about their future over on the other side. Anybody that's thinking on the other side, Mr. Speaker, beginning to look at their options.

Mr. Speaker, we look at the MLA for Saskatoon Fairview that can't wait to get out. And then we look at the MLA for Saskatoon Eastview and we understand that she's looking for a better job if it comes along.

Mr. Speaker, we look at the MLA for Cumberland and he wants to go back to school. He's trying to find a way to get out of the NDP government as well. We look at the MLA for Saskatoon Nutana and she says she may retire, this may be her last session, Mr. Speaker. The MLA for Regina Victoria is in the same position. He may retire. He's been removed from cabinet.

The MLA for Saskatoon Mount Royal, the Finance minister, may retire. We understand that the MLA for Regina Northeast might retire. He's never made it into cabinet. And finally, Mr. Speaker, we even understand that the MLA for Prince Albert Northcote may be calling this his very last session.

Obviously if all of these MLAs are thinking about packing it in or, Mr. Speaker, if they've been fired, dumped from cabinet, Mr. Speaker, obviously the message that's being sent to everyone in this province is that this NDP government is floundering. In fact it's beyond floundering, Mr. Speaker, it is sinking.

We have seen ministerial incompetence on the other side. Mr. Speaker, it is a . . . from an opposition perspective we should be overjoyed but it is a pathetic sight when we saw the Minister of CIC — every question that he's asked, he cannot give an answer. I don't think he's given one straight answer in the House this entire session. He's at arm's length, he's at arm's length on every issue. His officials give him wrong information. He has to hire PricewaterhouseCoopers, Mr. Speaker, to try to get him out of trouble.

Mr. Speaker, he has wrong information about SGI

(Saskatchewan Government Insurance); he has wrong information about SaskTel. He's the minister in charge of a Crown corporation that's playing the stock market in Australia and he doesn't seem to mind that whatsoever even though he's lost so much money. I understand the shares are worth about 17 cents on the Australian stock market. That's Saskatchewan money, Mr. Speaker, that's going down the tube on the Australian stock market.

And then we look at the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege, as Leader of the Opposition, to sit in on some of the discussions with the premiers and other opposition agriculture . . . other opposition leaders in the Prairie provinces to discuss the trade injury compensation that we were asking from the federal government because of the US (United States) farm Bill.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I heard our Minister of Agriculture talking about being part of this new agriculture partnership agreement, this new framework agreement that was being put in place. And he was discussing with his colleagues, the other Agriculture ministers, about what a wonderful deal this was going to be.

So, Mr. Speaker, we begin to ask the Agriculture minister questions about this new agreement in the House, and he doesn't know the first thing about it. He doesn't even know what's going to happen to existing safety nets like NISA (Net Income Stabilization Account) and like crop insurance, Mr. Speaker, let alone any new details of the framework agreement that might impact what we had hoped would be trade injury compensation.

Mr. Speaker, the MLA who serves as the Agriculture minister is totally out of his league. He's not in the game, Mr. Speaker, and agriculture producers across Saskatchewan have suffered as a result.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we look at the record of the Minister of Highways. Mr. Speaker, he thought that he was doing pretty good. He got his budget up from about \$250 million up to I think it was close to \$300 million and he started to feel his wild oats a bit, Mr. Speaker. And he started to think well, I think we've got to have this money so we're going to just . . . we're just going to increase the long-term care fees for senior citizens.

And he got so riled up about that, Mr. Speaker, that he just about blew the walls out of this Assembly when he said that's the right thing to do.

And then, Mr. Speaker, he so impressed his leader, the Premier of Saskatchewan, that the following day that the House sat, Mr. Speaker, the Premier said he reversed his position, and he was going to cover the shortfall by taking away gravel money from the Highway minister.

Mr. Speaker, the Highway minister just lost \$7 million to pay for long-term care fee stability. Obviously we believe that the fee . . . care hikes were excessive and wrong and we were very pleased to see the Premier recant on that. But it seemed rather amusing and odd that the Highway minister, who was so much in favour of that move, would pay the price by losing the money from his budget.

Mr. Speaker, we look at the Minister of Education, one of the transplanted Liberals who has thrown his Liberal membership in the garbage and now, Mr. Speaker, is sitting shoulder to shoulder with the New Democrats on the other side of the House. This Minister of Agriculture doesn't even blink, doesn't even bat an eye, when his officials tell him to expect a decrease in enrolment of 35,000 students by the end of the decade.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education should be alarmed. The Minister of Education should be worried about the loss of students in this province. And the Minister of Education should be worried about then the subsequent loss of teachers from our province. And then the closure of schools, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — But what does this Minister of Education do? This Minister of Education just pretends that nothing is wrong. He's going to increase property taxes for every property taxpayer in Saskatchewan to keep the facade going that everything is all right in education even though . . . because under the NDP the population is dropping. We're going to see fewer and fewer and fewer of our young people educated in our province.

Mr. Speaker, this cabinet and these cabinet ministers are a shame to the province of Saskatchewan.

I think I've touched well over half of the members on the other side in talking about their incompetence and the problems they are having, but we haven't talked yet about the Premier. But I was incensed and very disappointed in the Premier when he said that he was from a wee province. He said he was a wee Premier from a wee province, Mr. Speaker.

Well I'm proud of Saskatchewan and I don't think it's a wee province. I'm not about to put my province down. I'm proud of Saskatchewan, even if the Premier of Saskatchewan calls it a wee province. He may be a wee Premier, he may be a wee Premier, but he is not the Premier of a wee province.

We have one of the greatest provinces in Canada. A province that someday will move forward. A province that under a real government will see growth and will not be the laughingstock of the rest of the country like it is under the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, we see a Premier that's out of control. He's lost control of his cabinet. We saw that with the minister of Environment. Mr. Speaker, we made the national news, not because of something good but because the Premier couldn't even handle his own cabinet minister, Mr. Speaker, couldn't release the report — still in trouble.

We may now have litigation as a result, Mr. Speaker, of our Premier's incompetence. He can't manage his cabinet, Mr. Speaker. He can't get along with his Minister of Justice. He can't manage his spending. He can't keep his Finance minister in check, Mr. Speaker.

The result of course is that the NDP support is dwindling. Mr. Speaker, it's like there's a vacuum on the other side. There's just nothing over there any more, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and the people of Saskatchewan realize that.

The people of Saskatchewan have lost confidence in the NDP. And so they're looking at what the alternatives might be. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, we are so excited about talking about our plan to grow the province of Saskatchewan. That's why we're so excited about the fact that Saskatchewan can grow by 100,000 people over the next 10 years if we remove this NDP government.

That's why we're so excited about putting a social partnership together in Saskatchewan where business and labour and government and First Nations and municipalities come together in one . . . with one mind and that is a mind to grow the province of Saskatchewan, where they will all contribute to the growth.

And, Mr. Speaker, we believe that that's going to happen prior to the province of Saskatchewan reaching its 100th birthday. There will be something to celebrate in the year 2005, Mr. Speaker. It's going to be a celebration of the end of NDP government in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, the begin of growth and prosperity and vision being accomplished in our province.

(14:45)

Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan is not a wee province. The province of Saskatchewan, land-wise, is one of the larger geographic areas in the world, Mr. Speaker. Larger than many, many countries — in fact larger than most European countries. Mr. Speaker, the problem is we only have 1 million . . . actually now we've slipped below 1 million people. Mr. Speaker, we do not have the people power that we need to develop this province. We do not have the tax base that we need to develop this province.

We have a government that thinks if we're going to establish any industry like ethanol, that the Crown Investments Corporation needs to be a partner in the equity position in those ventures or they will . . . they will not succeed.

Mr. Speaker, that NDP attitude has not only created a lack of confidence from Saskatchewan people in our province but it also has created a lack of confidence among the investment community who bypass this province and look for other provinces to put their dollars into where governments recognize the importance of the private sector, where they recognize that the private sector must be regulated but not be subject to competition from the government itself.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a government that's lost its way, a government that's far more worried about internal matters. In fact I even hear that some New Democrats in Saskatchewan are plotting how they might replace the current Premier. They're already trying to look at whether they should resign and come back or whether they should stay and, after the Premier's defeated in the next election, how they might best position themselves to replace him. That kind of internal navel-gazing, Mr. Speaker, is not good for the province of Saskatchewan because there's too much work that needs to be done.

If we're going to restore confidence of the people in our province, we need a government with strong leadership. Mr. Speaker, we need a government that knows the issues that are

important to people. We need a government that can come to grips with the agricultural issues facing Saskatchewan. We need a government that actually knows how economic development happens — not just talks about it, Mr. Speaker, and not tries to buy it with taxpayers' dollars but actually knows how to create a climate where economic development happens.

We need a government that can come to grips with the health care issue in this province. Just the other day I talked to a gentleman here in Regina who had to take his son to emergency because he wasn't feeling very well. This just happened a few days ago.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the son . . . his son was complaining of an upset stomach and so he went to emergency — it was after doctors' hours — and they checked him over and they said, if he gets worse, bring him back to emergency. And so the father and son went home.

And the son was getting worse, so they took him back to emergency, to the hospital. And, Mr. Speaker, the father recognized that maybe there are others that are more critically ill than his son, even though his son was bent over in pain. And, Mr. Speaker, his son was throwing up. He waited and he watched. He paced. He consoled his son, Mr. Speaker. He talked to staff and, Mr. Speaker, nothing happened and nothing happened. His son was getting worse.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, an exasperated father — five hours in emergency — went to the head reception and said I've got to take my son to another hospital. If you can't look after him, I've got to find some place that will. And finally, Mr. Speaker, some people got excited and they did some checking.

And with all the money we invest in health care — your 40 cents in every tax dollar going into health care — somehow in this system the doctor forgot to see the patient. I don't know how it happened, Mr. Speaker. Nobody caught it. With all the bookkeeping and all the staff and all the support, you think they would have fixed it, Mr. Speaker. The doctor came five hours later and apologized, checked the young man over, realized he was having appendicitis attack. Mr. Speaker, thankfully that young man received attention before his appendicitis broke.

And when we talk about the importance of our health care system, this is not a laughing matter. This is a serious and, for many people, a life and death matter. And this is . . . and the fact that our health care system is failing in Saskatchewan is another reason why the people of this province are losing confidence in the NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, I've spoken about the concern over education. I've spoken on the expense of investigations and the reports that have been made necessary because of ministerial incompetence and the poor behaviour on the part of the NDP government. There are more things that I could have talked about, but I want to make way and let my colleague from Saskatchewan Rivers speak.

But I would close by saying Saskatchewan is too great a province to not have confidence in it, Mr. Speaker. Clean water, the clean air, the people with vision and determination and ambition, Mr. Speaker, our communities that have thrived in the

past and want to move forward again are too great and too valuable to let slip away. We need a government in this province that can come to grips with the challenges that we face. A government that believes in this province, a government that will instill confidence in the people.

We no longer need an NDP government that has shaken the confidence of Saskatchewan people. That is why, Mr. Speaker, that I would move, seconded by the hon. member for Saskatchewan Rivers:

That this Assembly express its non-confidence in the Premier and cabinet, due to the NDP's ongoing weak leadership and lack of direction in dealing with issues of importance to the people of Saskatchewan such as agriculture, economic development, health care, and education, and; that this Assembly further expresses its non-confidence in the current government due to the various expensive investigations and reports made necessary because of ministerial incompetence and behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to move this motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon and especially a pleasure from . . . being from central Saskatchewan, to be able to second the motion, Mr. Speaker, by the member from Rosetown-Biggar.

A motion that clearly indicates, on this side of the House, the things that we've been hearing in Saskatchewan — be it urban or rural or northern, Mr. Speaker — that the people of Saskatchewan are tired of this government, that this government is tired. It has become extremely weak and ineffective and it completely lacks vision — completely lacks vision, Mr. Speaker, on the direction that is needed for Saskatchewan to grow and to grow by 100,000 people over the next 10 years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if we take a look at this motion, I think there's something we need to quickly remember here; that even though the people of Saskatchewan are frustrated with the lack of direction of this government, they're frustrated by its ineptitude, they're frustrated, they're frustrated, Mr. Speaker, by its inability to even be able to deal with the most . . . the minute of calamities that seem to befall it, is that the people of Saskatchewan realize very distinctly, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Rosetown-Biggar — who will lead the Saskatchewan Party into the next general election in this province and will be the next Premier of this province — the people of Saskatchewan are looking forward to that day when the member from Rosetown-Biggar will be the Premier of this province, can lead us out of the doldrums that we are now in.

Mr. Speaker, this all encompassing motion which speaks to economic development, it speaks to the lack of initiatives by this government surrounding agriculture, it speaks about a government that, that it seems to have . . . be dragging its feet surrounding the issues of health care and certainly they are, they're very . . . it strikes me, Mr. Speaker, that forth wise is that this is a government that is completely uncommitted — uncommitted, Mr. Speaker — to the needs and the demands of

education for the 21st century.

Now of course we've seen this government . . . And of course I was in a position in the early 1990s, Mr. Speaker, being with the Prince Albert rural school division — a school division that now doesn't exist because of an amalgamation in the Prince Albert region — is that we had the misfortune of participating in massive cuts to education by this provincial government in the early 1990s.

They seemed for some reason or other they wanted to use the backs of local taxpayers and the educational issue to help balance their budget. They were still freewheel spending in the open market, Mr. Speaker, creating more Crown corporations. That's where that money was going. They told the people of Saskatchewan the money was going to balance the budget. In the long term it turned out that what they were doing, Mr. Speaker, was creating more Crown corporations.

That seems to have been the priority of this government for the last 11 years, Mr. Speaker. A government that is taking taxpayers' dollars out of education, out of the care of people in this province, out of . . . raising long-term care fees so that they can use those dollars, use those dollars, Mr. Speaker, to create more government industry in this province — a complete notion that has gone flying in the face, Mr. Speaker, of the rest of the world and how governments need to operate, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't matter where you go.

Let's take a look at a few of these things that the member from Rosetown-Biggar, Mr. Speaker, has brought up in his motion so that we can get a clear understanding in this House of how someone like the Leader of the Opposition has a clear direction, a clear direction, Mr. Speaker, of how this province needs to move in order to better itself, and a direction that is clearly understood and is clearly accepted by the people of Saskatchewan. And we certainly know that with the latest round of polling that's been done, Mr. Speaker, is that what we know is the people of Saskatchewan are ready for the member from Rosetown-Biggar to be the next premier of this province and we are certainly looking forward to that day. But the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Rosetown-Biggar, Mr. Speaker, has set a clear plan in place.

And let's take a look at that. Let's start with agriculture. Now let's take a, you know, a short moment to take a look at the dismal record of this government in the past several months.

We know that, as mentioned already by the member from Rosetown-Biggar, Mr. Speaker, that in this spring's budget in order to come up with this so-called budget, this fallacy of a budget that the member . . . Finance minister, the member from Saskatoon Mount Royal brought forward in March, Mr. Speaker, was that although he called it a balanced budget, certainly we found huge loopholes in his argument.

But one of the areas that he attacked extremely was the farming community of Saskatchewan, our own agricultural community, one of the four backbones, one of the four backbones that drives the economy in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Fifty million dollars, as mentioned by the member from Rosetown-Biggar, Mr. Speaker, was taken out of the

Agriculture budget in order to help the Minister of Finance prepare what he still claims is a balanced budget — \$50 million, Mr. Speaker. That certainly could be used to a large degree throughout much of Saskatchewan.

Today we heard from the member from Lloydminster the concerns that he has in the Northwest around agriculture in that area of the world, Mr. Speaker. We're looking at crops in that area of the world that, although they . . . poorly germinated, they're barely out of the ground on top of that. Pasture land is actually deteriorating. It's the first part of July, they still should be growing lush but because of the complete lack of moisture, Mr. Speaker, in that area of the world, in Saskatchewan's northwest, pastures are deteriorating. The cattle have grazed it down almost to the ground.

So what are the options that could be looked at around agriculture? Well it's been suggested that maybe we could turn some of those cattle out into the cropland. And, Mr. Speaker, the drought is so devastating in that area of the world that we actually cannot turn the cows out into the cropland because there's simply not enough there to actually feed the cows.

And so then, Mr. Speaker, how did this government try to help? Well they take \$50 million out of agriculture. That was certainly no help.

The farmers of that area needed to move their cattle into more lush areas of the province, but unfortunately in the spring of Saskatchewan there's often road bans on. In fact . . . in fact, Mr. Speaker, some of the road bans are so restrictive . . . and I know that from my own constituency where we actually have provincial roads where the road ban is down to 8,000 kilometres . . . 8,000 kilograms, Mr. Speaker. And so, Mr. Speaker, you can't haul very much when you're only allowed to haul 8,000 kilograms.

In fact what that only allows, Mr. Speaker, is a small farm truck pulling a trailer empty. That's all that's going to allow. So you can't even get cattle on the trailer.

So many of the farmers in northwest Saskatchewan went to the government to see if they could get overweight permits so that they could move their cattle from such a devastated drought area into the more lush areas of the province, Mr. Speaker, to see if, you know, couldn't help their cattle out a little bit.

(15:00)

Well what did the province do? Well first they said no. So then the farmers, being the wily businessmen that they are, Mr. Speaker, actually tried to move their cattle anyway. They had to get their cattle to where the feed is. And of course the feed is still growing. It hasn't been put up for winter purposes, and so where it's lush and green, they tried to move their cattle there. Well what happened, Mr. Speaker?

This government, in their wisdom, in their support of agriculture in this province, actually fined the farmers for moving their cattle to pasture. Now is this the kind of government that we can expect to help rural Saskatchewan? Well we see over and over and over again, Mr. Speaker, this is not the type of government that supports rural Saskatchewan.

What we see here is a government that is in such disarray that they don't even understand the issue in rural Saskatchewan.

And so there's another issue that arose this spring, Mr. Speaker. Of course the United States of America has initiated a program to support their farmers because of the trade injury that is being . . . devastating across the rest of the world because of governments in Europe, Mr. Speaker. And the Government of the United States of America retaliated to protect their farmers.

And so then it was appropriate, governments such as Saskatchewan and Alberta and Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, they went to Ottawa and said, this is a devastating international trade policy that . . . it needs to be addressed by the federal government. So while the other four governments, the other four governments, Mr. Speaker, were actually trying to negotiate with the federal government in Ottawa, what was this provincial government doing?

Well today the Agriculture minister announced that he actually meets with agricultural producers about every six weeks. Well in this six weeks period of time, Mr. Speaker, farming can change quite dramatically in Saskatchewan. So meeting with farm groups in Saskatchewan every six weeks, you know, is akin to saying that well, I'm starting to plan my Christmas present buying spree, Mr. Speaker. This is a government that's completely lacking in any type of vision for agriculture in this province.

In fact this government was so . . . is so tied up in itself that when the Minister of Agriculture and the Premier should have been working on behalf of rural Saskatchewan and the people that are associated with the agricultural industry in this province, Mr. Speaker, what were they doing?

Well they were tied up here in Regina. They happened to have a couple of cabinet ministers who couldn't seem to keep their feet out of their mouth. And so what they were doing is hiring people to do studies and they were having meetings and they were talking about things and at the end of the day what did we find out? Well it cost us \$75,000 to find out that we have a couple of incompetent cabinet ministers, which the members on the opposition side of the House already, had already pointed out to the government, Mr. Speaker.

And in . . . during that period of time, during that period of time, Mr. Speaker, an opportunity was lost in being able to negotiate and to be able to put forward the arguments in Ottawa on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan — the necessity for trade injury payments for Saskatchewan's agricultural industry. And that . . . and that opportunity was lost, Mr. Speaker. The opposition party knew it was lost, the people of Saskatchewan knew that opportunity was lost, but unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the government of the day, this NDP government, still doesn't understand what's gone wrong.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, this is just a couple of examples of a single incident; how a government who is so inept, inert, as was brought forward today, because of the chaos that is wreaking through their cabinet and the caucus, that what's happening is that the people of Saskatchewan are now being forgotten, Mr. Speaker, because of what's happening with this NDP government and their lack of initiative in promoting this great

province of ours.

Now let me just talk about Saskatchewan here as . . . before I continue on with some of these other items that I wish to speak about, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan, as we all agree in this House, is one of the best provinces, one of the best places to live in the world. But what did we hear again in June, Mr. Speaker? That people are continue to leave this province in droves. The population is down again.

The government keeps talking that, well, job numbers are up. Well we need this government to show us, Mr. Speaker, where the job numbers are up. Because I know that in my area of the world, Mr. Speaker, is that we're anticipating some pretty large layoffs this summer — layoffs that can be attributed to the softwood tariffs in the United States — but nevertheless, we're going to have large layoffs.

So how can a government say that there's been a massive increase in job numbers? We ask them to show us where those job numbers are, because we're certainly not finding it in the forest industry, we're not finding it in agriculture. Maybe there's a little bit in tourism, although certainly we've heard of some stories lately, Mr. Speaker, that in the tourism industry they're even having trouble finding people because, Mr. Speaker, people continue to leave this province in droves. And so how does that continue to help the economy of Saskatchewan when we have fewer people today than we did six months ago?

But you know, you know, Mr. Speaker, it's still a great place to live. But on this side of the House — on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker — we want to make Saskatchewan a great place to work. Because that's one of the things you never hear from that NDP government — that Saskatchewan is a great place to work. They always talk about it being a great place to live, but those of us on this side of the House have yet to hear, have yet to hear one member on the government side of the House say that this is a great place to work, that Saskatchewan is a great province to work in.

Well I'll tell you what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, after the next provincial election, I can assure you when the member from Rosetown-Biggan becomes the premier that this will not only be a great place to live but that Saskatchewan will be a great place to work.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wiberg: — You know something, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is in the area that we've been talking generally around, we talked about agriculture of Saskatchewan being a great place to work in the future after the next provincial election.

It is economic development in this province that is going to be the engine that drives the future of this province. Because certainly we know on this side of the House all the opportunities that are available because we hear about them every day from the captains of industry, that there is a lot of opportunity in Saskatchewan.

In fact, we can take a look at the oil fields, we can take a look at the gas fields, the opportunities that could exist there. We know,

certainly when it comes to the area of gas, that our neighbour to the south is suffering an energy shortage. They've been quite pleased to be able to tap into this huge resource that we have.

And there are members on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, that know clearly that there are large untapped reserves in this province. It certainly, the NDP government is not comfortable with the people of Saskatchewan knowing about. They seem to want to trickle out on a very long-term basis a little bit amounts of new reserves that are being found rather than attacking this massive market that is available to us.

Because we know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, certainly in the area of natural gas, that this is one of the clean burning fossil fuels that we have, Mr. Speaker. That this is a fuel that does not contribute hardly at all to the greenhouse effect. And we should be tapping into that huge market. There's a huge market, huge opportunity here.

But rather, this NDP government in its inertia, in its inability to make decisions, keeps trotting out an old line to the people of Saskatchewan that we've heard many, many times, that they want to save Saskatchewan's resources for a rainy day.

Well maybe in Lloydminster and Prince Albert it's not raining that much, but I'll tell you what, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We certainly have some problems up there and there are people leaving those areas of the world in multitudes. And it's sectors such as the natural gas industry that could provide jobs in Saskatchewan that would keep the young people of Saskatchewan here. And that's only one small area, one small area, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that would be of a major benefit to the people of Saskatchewan.

Because not only, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would it keep the young people here so that they could have the opportunities, the professional opportunities, that would arise from the development of this kind of energy, but you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The contributions that they would make to our Saskatchewan society, both financially through their taxes, but not only because of the goods and services that they're going to need to purchase, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would be a great benefit to communities throughout Saskatchewan.

And it is those kinds of lost opportunities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that are a great deal of concern to us on this side of the House. Now we certainly know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those kind of opportunities don't seem to be of very much concern on the government side of the House. And the people of Saskatchewan know that and understand that very clearly.

And so that's why on this side of the House we're certainly looking forward to the next provincial election, because we know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that people of Saskatchewan are demanding a general election. They're demanding it sooner than later because they want this government replaced with a government that is actually going to do something, that is going to allow economic development to happen in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it is through, it is through those kind of initiatives that Saskatchewan is going to be able to grow and grow by 100,000 people in the next 10 years.

Now certainly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can hear the member

from Mount Royal talking about the fact that we're going to have economic development in Saskatchewan. And he calls economic development a dream. Economic development is not a dream, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Economic development anywhere in the world is a reality.

In fact there are very, very few jurisdictions in the world that have the restrictions on economic development such as we have in Saskatchewan. And it's because of those restrictions that economic development is not taking place. And I've already mentioned the gas fields that could be developing and opening up in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But we also know that Saskatchewan is blessed with some of the largest heavy oil fields in the world — heavy oil fields that are basically sitting there waiting for, again, a rainy day as the NDP have termed it. They're going to save it for future generations.

Well, Mr. Speaker, since the late 1940s we've been saving our resources for future generations. How far into the future do we start saving our resources? Do we save it for another century or two centuries? Well, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan need to start taking advantage of our resources now because as we certainly know that there are other alternatives that are being looked at for the future and we're going to lose this opportunity if we don't develop it now, Mr. Speaker.

Maybe we're only going to get a few score years of opportunity to be able to reap the benefits of helping Saskatchewan grow and develop and become wealthy and become a have province, Mr. Speaker. Now wouldn't that be something if Saskatchewan became a have province?

We may not have a lot of time to do that and if we lose that opportunity we may never get it again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Those are just two small areas in economic development that I've started out with. And we certainly look around the rest of the province at many other opportunities.

Certainly in my area of the world, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can talk about forestry. Now certainly in Saskatchewan, people in Saskatchewan say, well you know we have smaller trees and there's . . . a little harder to access so it can't be much of an opportunity.

But you know who's saying that? You know who's saying that, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The NDP government. The NDP government again are putting restrictions in place to hold back forestry in this province. Certainly we've heard of lots of opportunity, and I know that this government has been trotting out a plan for an OSB (oriented strand board) plant in Meadow Lake. But you know what? They couldn't seem to keep their fingers out of the pie. In fact what they did, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that they're forcing on this company taxpayers' money — taxpayers' money, Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$50 million they're forcing upon them.

So let's take a quick look at that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This government is saying that we need to invest, as the province of Saskatchewan, \$50 million in an OSB plant in Meadow Lake, forcing \$50 million on a company that did not ask for it; that did not say to this government, if we don't get \$50 million

we're not coming here. Instead they cut \$50 million out of agriculture to give to a company to build a plant, who doesn't want the money.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it sure leads us to wonder on this side of the House the priorities of this NDP government. For some reason or other they seem to want to get involved in private industry, but they don't want to be able to provide the necessary, at-the-ground resources that people are demanding for the running of the province of Saskatchewan. And it is this kind of meddling that is holding Saskatchewan back.

Because one of the things the people . . . the members on this side of the House on the opposition side, certainly realize, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the benefits that are going to be accrued in Meadow Lake, and certainly for a large surrounding area around Meadow Lake by the building of that OSB plant — an OSB plant, I must remind you again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that could have built 100 per cent with private monies.

The benefits that are going to accrue from that are very, very large. Because certainly we know that there's an opportunity in the future for . . . when the softwood lumber prices turn around, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that there should be some profits accrue from this. There'll be corporate income tax to be collected. All of Saskatchewan's going to benefit from that.

Certainly the multitude of employees that are going to be needed at the mill, the multitude of employees, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that are going to need to work in our northern forest and our central forest to be able to provide the necessary raw product to the OSB plant, Mr. Deputy Speaker — those workers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are going to be able to have the opportunity for good paying jobs, and be able to contribute to Saskatchewan's coffers by the paying of income tax.

(15:15)

So we didn't need to, as a province, become an investor in this. It would . . . It could have happened anyway, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We could have saved that \$50 million, left it in agriculture so that agriculture could get through these tough times. But no, the government saw a need that they need to become an investor, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this industry.

And so it leads us to worry and we're certainly very concerned on this side of the House, in the opposition side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that kind of involvement from this NDP government, where they feel that they must become a player in the investment game, is actually driving investment out of this province.

And certainly we've heard, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there actually was problems surrounding financing of that project. And so then there didn't seem to be a problem surrounding it before this NDP government became involved in it. The problems of financing seemed to arise after the NDP government became involved in it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So it begs the obvious question: if financing wasn't a problem prior to the announcement of this OSB plant, why did the problems arise afterwards, and why was it necessary for this NDP government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to become involved in

the OSB plant in Meadow Lake?

Again, we want to take a look in the . . . continue in the forest industry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the opportunities that could abound there. We certainly heard this past winter, this winter of 2002, where there is a company in Alberta, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is looking to expand in the making of newsprint.

Now certainly we know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the amount of newspapers that those of us in the House peruse in keeping up with the daily news and what's going on in Saskatchewan and certainly we know that there are literally tens and hundreds of thousands of people in Saskatchewan who do so just as eagerly and willingly as we do, and we take a look across Western Canada and in Eastern Canada, we know that you can multiply that many, many times, Mr. Speaker, because certainly Saskatchewan is only one-thirtieth the population of Canada. And so you multiply the necessity for newsprint in Saskatchewan across Canada, that there's probably a huge opportunity here for newsprint in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So this NDP government, in their wisdom, trotted out the idea that we could have a newsprint plant in Saskatchewan. Again, it's going to require literally scores upon scores of people to work at the plant, wherever it may be built, whether it's in the Prince Albert vicinity or Meadow Lake or Nipawin. It's got to have a large source of water.

But what this government did is actually jump the gun on the issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They announced a newsprint plant for Saskatchewan when the reality of it was that this company only wanted to study the optics of whether it would even be feasible to build a plant in Saskatchewan.

And what have we heard since, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well we haven't heard one word since as to whether this plant is going to be viable, or whether they're still interested in coming to Saskatchewan, or whether the corporate income tax structure . . . or whether the corporate capital tax structure is going to be of such a detriment that they may not want to come here. But we haven't heard one word from this government in regards to that.

So the people of Saskatchewan, who were very eager for this type of plant to come to Saskatchewan after the first initial announcement — imagine their dismay, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when they found out that it was merely a study. The NDP, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was going to have a meeting and they're going to talk about it and we'll see how things go and then we'll discuss it some more and we'll talk about stuff, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This seems to be the way the . . . this NDP government approaches issues, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They want to have a meeting. They want to study it. And then we'll review the study. And then we'll pass it on to a review committee to study the study. And then we'll have a meeting.

And as we know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and certainly there's been other reports that have been brought to this legislature, is all they do is gather dust. They end up here in the Legislative Library sitting on the shelf, filling up space that could be more

appropriately taken up with things that are actually happening rather than studies of things that may happen or could have happened. And it reminds me of that short little saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker — should've, would've, could've. And that seems to be the attitude of this NDP government. They could have been doing things and they should have been doing things, but reality was, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they wouldn't actually do anything.

It takes me back as we talk about forestry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, an opportunity that was lost in the early 1970s that . . . It actually could have been resurrected by this government because they certainly talk about northern opportunities, wanting to have economic development in northern Saskatchewan. They talk about how good they have been for northern Saskatchewan.

One of the ideas that was bandied about many years ago was the viability of a pulp mill at Beauval, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Beauval in northern Saskatchewan. Beauval is in the constituency of Athabasca, represented by the member of . . . the Minister of Environment and Resource Management who is also the Minister of Northern Affairs. And you'd think with that kind of a portfolio that somewhere on the radar screen issues like this should be coming up.

Well the people of Beauval certainly remembered that they had an opportunity for a pulp mill. They also certainly remember that it was an NDP government that took it away from them. And so lo and behold, much to their dismay, they lost that opportunity but they haven't forgotten about it.

And they're still waiting for the day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where there's going to be a government who has the vision, who has the goal that northern Saskatchewan can become a great part of this province and can lead the way in economic expansion for this province. But again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to remind you that they know very clearly in northern Saskatchewan that'll only happen when the member from Rosetown-Biggar becomes the premier after the next general election.

And so then there was that lost opportunity by an NDP government who thought they knew what was best for the people, rather than the people knowing what was best for them.

But you know, there are other opportunities that this NDP government has lost and continues to lose. We know that through the mid-1990s in Saskatchewan there was a few areas of the province that had large, devastating forest fires. One of the initiatives by forest companies . . . forestry companies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was the opportunity to harvest the salvaged timber in there, in those areas, Mr. Deputy Speaker. These companies could go in there, quickly log an area, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and what would happen is they'd take out the salvageable timber, the marketable timber, in a very quick order because they have a very short time frame to operate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because after a fire there's a lot of regeneration that's going on. And so there's a very short time frame — maybe about three years at most — and there are salvage companies out there that would be quite willing to do that.

So a pilot project was actually started, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the mid- to late-1990s. And it worked very, very well. In fact, in fact what we understand on this side of the House, from information that we've been able to glean, is that the cost of fighting those forest fires in . . . may in all likelihood, Mr. Speaker, have been recouped, have been recouped through the sale of that timber and the provincial sales tax that was applied to those sales. So the government, through the simple salvage of timber that is lost in a forest fire, can recoup the entire cost of fighting those fires.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's take a look then at that pilot project and how it's turned out in the last few years. Well we know that companies have come to Saskatchewan because they thought there was an opportunity here. There was actually two of the pretty good-sized companies that set up shop here in Saskatchewan — one of them in Meadow Lake, one of them much closer to La Ronge. And then they were going to operate on salvaged timber, set up saw mills to operate on salvaged timber, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so that this timber could be . . . get some value back out of it rather than lost to time immemorial.

So unfortunately, the project turned out great. Unfortunately, I say, because those of us on this side of the House understood the benefits from it. But those members on the government side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP, never did get a grasp of the economy of this project; that you could actually salvage timber, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that wealth could be created, that jobs could be created, that taxes would be paid, PST could be collected. The PST alone, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would almost pay for the cost of fighting the fires.

But an opportunity again is lost, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because this NDP government does not have the vision to understand that if you go in there and salvage that timber for lumber purposes, that there is a great economic benefit for Saskatchewan.

In fact, they seem to be . . . get caught up in much wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth of what they should do next. And in the meantime, the wood has aged, is starting to fall down, there's too much new growth coming in it now, there would be too much damage to those forests with the larger regrowth that's in there now. And a huge opportunity is being lost.

And unfortunately through all this process, through all this process, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of those larger sawmills actually went out of business. They are sitting in Meadow Lake doing absolutely nothing, rusting, lost a significant amount of employment inside the town of Meadow Lake. And I'd sure like to have the member from Meadow Lake explain to this House how the loss of that business has contributed to the benefit of Meadow Lake.

Because I would, I would dare say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, explain to him that the people of Meadow Lake are outraged and highly disappointed that their own member was not able to stand up for them in this House and in their caucus, and most importantly of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the cabinet, and explain to his own colleagues the importance of having that salvaged timber recouped for the benefit of the province. And certainly, most importantly or just as importantly for the benefit of his own constituency.

And that is a great deal of concern to all of us in this province. Because certainly on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we understand the importance of projects such as that even though the member from Meadow Lake may not as . . . understand them as clearly as we do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we continue looking at the area of forestry and the opportunities that are being lost, we certainly know on this side of the House, there was a very large fire and of course it was mentioned a couple of times today, close to the city of Prince Albert — a very old-growth forest east of the city of Prince Albert. There's another forest there, old-growth forest, Fort à la Corne Forest, that over the last few years has suffered a few fires and that. There was opportunities there, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in order to address — to address the issue of salvage in that forest.

And there's going to be the issue of salvage in the Nisbet Forest after this large fire that consumed about 88 square kilometres, which is a pretty good-sized chunk of forest in southern Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What kind of initiatives that are going to take place by this NDP government to be able to salvage some of that timber?

We heard also today mention by the member from Carrot River Valley some of the costs that can arise from fires. And certainly the one at Nipawin accrued a six-figure bill to it in all likelihood, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But let's take a look at the size of fire that was in the Nisbet Forest — a much larger fire, a much longer period of time to bring it to its knees, and so then the costs to that fire are going to be significantly higher.

One of the ways this government could have recouped those losses . . . recouped that loss — because certainly we saw in their budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there was a massive cut to the Forest Firefighting Contingency Fund — and one of the ways they could recoup those monies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is by harvesting that salvaged timber.

So let's hope in the next few days because we haven't got a lot of time to wait on this, that this government will take the initiative to start those kind of salvage operations as soon as possible. Because as soon as that fire is out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the forest operators of Saskatchewan, the smaller forest operators of Saskatchewan, could be in there salvaging that timber and bringing some wealth into the Prince Albert region — bringing more wealth into the Prince Albert region, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And let's hope that inertia and the wringing of hands is not going to prevent this government from making the appropriate kind of decisions that are necessary, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

(15:30)

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's going to continue throughout much of Saskatchewan this year. There has been a lot of forest fires, and certainly the member from Carrot River Valley has mentioned that forest fires at this point in time are up about 270 fires over last year and that's a significant amount. There's a great deal of opportunity that could be gained here. I'm sure — I'm sure this government is going to be hearing in very short order from some entrepreneur in the Turnor Lake region of Saskatchewan, an area north of Buffalo Narrows, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, where someone there might come up with an idea for salvage also.

And we hope, on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Minister for Environment and Resource Management will listen very closely to those ideas. Because he should be able to give the okay that it's okay to . . . in northern Saskatchewan, to create wealth, to create jobs, and to put people to work in good paying jobs because that's certainly something we know on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that opportunities in Saskatchewan's woodlands can bring a great deal of wealth to Saskatchewan. Certainly, significantly more than they're doing right now.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I spoke about a couple of opportunities for salvage in Saskatchewan's forests after a devastating fire has gone through it. But there are other opportunities that this government . . . has been brought to them. Certainly, it's public knowledge that they've had ideas proposed to them about further development of forest opportunities.

There's been talk in Prince Albert, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of a finger joint plant. Now a finger joint plant, Mr. Deputy Speaker, takes small pieces of salvage lumber and moulds them together and it glues them together to make a straight piece of wood that can be used for a multitude of purposes.

But you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Again, the lack of initiative, the fear of this NDP government to allow someone to have a creative project that'll bring wealth to a region just seems to seize their hearts with fear. And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've lost a couple of opportunities. Well we haven't lost them yet because certainly we know that after the next general election, when the member from Rosetown-Biggan becomes the Premier, that those opportunities are going to abound.

But you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? That type of project, the one I was just speaking about, a finger joint project, will actually . . . is actually tariff exempt. It's not subject to the softwood lumber tariff that the United States government is imposing upon lumber producers in our province, because it's considered a finished product. It's a value-added product. It's worth a few more dollars. It's going to be tax exempt.

And so then why aren't we doing those kind of projects in this province? Instead, we see an NDP government again meddling in the private sector with much wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth, afraid to allow projects such as that to go ahead.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that brings a great deal of concern to us on this side of the House. But more importantly, more importantly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a great deal of concern to the people of central and northern Saskatchewan that those type of projects aren't in place now because they know very well that, over the past few years, there's been a great deal of wealth that's been lost in this province, a great deal of wealth that, through corporate income tax and personal income tax could've contributed to the health and well-being of Saskatchewan's General Revenue Fund.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are other areas of economic

development that need to be talked about also this afternoon, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the areas that's of a great deal of concern and we see has a great deal of opportunity, an opportunity in Saskatchewan that is actually like no other — there is actually no other in the world, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and that's the tourism opportunities in Saskatchewan.

Now certainly members on this side of the House have had the opportunity to travel in northern Saskatchewan extensively, to understand the hopes and dreams of northern Saskatchewan. And the people of northern Saskatchewan are saying that we have not even begin to scratch the surface of tourism opportunities in northern Saskatchewan.

In fact, on this side of the House we've actually had written questions to the government to try to help us understand the amount of leased land they have in northern Saskatchewan and north of the northern administrative boundary. How much land is actually leased out for . . . you know so we could get a grasp on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the kind of economic opportunities that are actually going on in Saskatchewan.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we found out that the percentage of land that's actually being used for economic development in northern Saskatchewan is so minute that it doesn't even register on the Richter scale, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It gets below the . . . somewhere down .01 per cent is actually the amount of land in northern Saskatchewan that is being used for economic development.

But we know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are huge opportunities in northern Saskatchewan and more specifically in tourism. The people of northern Saskatchewan have been saying to this government — they've actually made proposals to this government — why can't we have more opportunities for tourism in this province?

Oh well, this government of course in their . . . because they've got much fear in their heart about what might go wrong, is that they aren't able to see what might go right for tourism in northern Saskatchewan.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of northern Saskatchewan have some great ideas for tourism opportunities in northern Saskatchewan. They have opportunities that will bring Europeans into this province, that will bring Asians into this province, that will bring people from the southern part of North America into this province — people that will come here and enjoy the great beauty, the great opportunities that we have in northern Saskatchewan. But this government because of their fear and . . . basically their fear they might lose control of something is delaying and staying those opportunities.

What needs to happen here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is we need a government in place that has the confidence to let these people move ahead with the enthusiasm that they're bringing to economic development in this province. Those entrepreneurs in northern Saskatchewan who have the will and have the initiative to bring tourism to a level in this province, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, where we can actually see Saskatchewan, and northern Saskatchewan more specifically, grow and prosper under a Saskatchewan Party government. And certainly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on this side of the House we can hardly wait for that day.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, here again we have a government that the people of Saskatchewan have lost confidence in, which is why the member from Rosetown-Biggan has most specifically brought this motion today. Because after a four-day weekend we certainly know on this side of the House, and I suspect on the government side of the House too, is that the people of Saskatchewan have completely lost confidence in this government.

They're asking when's the next general election. They're not saying anything about oh, the government could have done a better job with agriculture. Well maybe the government could have done a better job with the member from Saskatoon Southeast. Maybe the government could have done a better job . . . They're just saying when's the next election. They want to know when the next election is, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And so that's why we get motions such as this, brought forward by the member from Rosetown-Biggan, because he knows, as well as I know, as well as the rest of the members on this side of the House and all — and all — the people of Saskatchewan are wondering when's the next general election so we can throw out this inept NDP government and get moving on with our lives in Saskatchewan. That's what the people of Saskatchewan are calling for.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've talked about three areas of economic development now that are extremely important to the people of Saskatchewan, but I want to talk about one more area yet in economic development before we move on to health and education. Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the great opportunities and one of the great lucks — and it's just luck but we just don't seem to understand when things are going well for us — is that Saskatchewan has been blessed with some of the most necessary and needed mineral resources in all the world.

We know that in northern Saskatchewan we have some of the largest deposits of uranium anywhere in the world, we have some of the highest concentrates of uranium anywhere in the world, and that the world is clamouring for this cheap and safe energy output. So what's this NDP government doing about it? Well again as I mentioned earlier, after much wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth, they're not doing much of anything.

In fact what the NDP government has bragged about is that — and to some degree, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this NDP government has made a move that is of some benefit to the people of northern Saskatchewan, is that they put in northern hiring practices to ensure that the people of northern Saskatchewan actually can benefit from some of these jobs surrounding the nuclear industry.

But what this NDP government failed to do, even though the world was demanding it, even though the rest of the world is demanding it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this NDP government failed to put in the policies that were necessary to expand that nuclear industry so that not only the people of northern Saskatchewan

could benefit . . . or few people from northern Saskatchewan could benefit from it. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to take a look at this industry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see if we could expand it to the point where even more people from northern Saskatchewan can benefit from it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And even the tradespeople and the skilled people in southern Saskatchewan could benefit from the expansion of that industry, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Because we know very well that when we have higher oil prices in Saskatchewan, when we get into Europe and Asia, those prices get even higher. And those people are demanding cheap, safe nuclear energy and the people of Saskatchewan can deliver that. And why is this NDP government sitting on their hands waffling on an idea that is a great resource to this province and is a great resource to the people of this world? That's one area we can look at.

One of the unfortunates that the automobile industry in the United States, and certainly all of North America, have to put up with is that in their new . . . in new technology now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the computerization that takes place in today's automobiles is that there are very specific rare earth elements that are being used nowadays.

Well there are actually a couple of the areas, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that are very prolific, very prolific with these rare earth elements, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One of them is China. Well as we know on this side of the House, a rather unstable government there, a rather unstable source, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that is of a great deal of concern to the automobile manufacturers in North America.

But there is another source, there is another source, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that could be of a great benefit to the automobile industry in North America. In fact it probably could be of a benefit to the automobile industry not only in North America but in Europe also, and maybe even Asia, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And that place is right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There are areas surrounding what we call in northern Saskatchewan, affectionately, as the Athabasca Basin where there's large areas of rare earth elements that could be developed.

But you know what again, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Because of the ineptitude and the inertia of this NDP government, mining companies around the world are waiting to see when this Saskatchewan Party government is going to take power, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so that they can start to move in that direction of harvesting those rare earth elements so that . . .

And you know what's going to happen again, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It's going to create more wealth. It's going to create more wealth in Saskatchewan — high-paying jobs, people that are going to pay income tax, corporations that are going to pay corporate income tax. And that's going to create a better situation for all of Saskatchewan. So that will be one more element, one more element, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where we can start to help Saskatchewan from being a have-not province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to start being a have province. Because certainly it's of a great deal of concern to us; it's a great deal of concern to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker,

that Saskatchewan is a have-not province with all the resources that we have and we're still a have-not province and yet the NDP government can't seem to understand that.

Now over in my neck of the woods again we have a great opportunity, and in fact just right in my constituency. Of course the government has mentioned on many occasions that this opportunity exists about 60 kilometres east of Prince Albert. Well of course the Minister of Industry and Resources lives in Prince Albert so that's where he's . . . that's the description he's going to use. I like to use the description that this opportunity is right in the middle of my constituency.

And the member from Melfort-Tisdale likes to point out that the opportunity actually exists about 60 kilometres north of the city of Melfort. But the opportunity exists. It doesn't matter if it's east of Prince Albert or north of Melfort or smack dab in the middle of the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers and that opportunity is diamonds, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We have diamonds in Saskatchewan and we have lots of diamonds in Saskatchewan. When members on this side of the House have gone out to the diamond fields to see how things are progressing out there, what do we find? We find an enthusiasm to come to Saskatchewan to create wealth in Saskatchewan, to provide hundreds upon hundreds upon hundreds of jobs for the people of Saskatchewan for many generations to come, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's what we find out there.

So why isn't this happening, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Why isn't this government making a major announcement that there's an opportunity here exists and they want to see this development go ahead? We haven't heard anything, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This government has been absolutely silent on this issue. What they're saying is nothing. Why aren't they saying something? It's time to step to the plate and say why is this project not going ahead? That's the billion-dollar investment that it's going to take to create a diamond industry in this province. Where is it and why aren't we hearing anything more about it?

(15:45)

Now on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're going to tell you very clearly that when we become government we're going to find out how long it's going to take before that diamond mine's going to be in operation. We're going to know that on this side of the house. We're not going to be sitting here in Regina wringing our hands, gnashing our teeth, wondering which cabinet minister is going to stick their foot in their mouth next. We don't have to worry about that on this side of the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wiberg: — Because what's going to happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that we're going to be out there making sure that that . . . those economic opportunities are being coming to Saskatchewan and are going to stay here for decades to come after that. That's what's going to happen when this . . . people on this side of the House become government after the next general election, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just . . . it was just some comments I wanted to make about economic development, and certainly I've had the opportunity to say a few words about agriculture. But I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's absolutely crucial we just say a few words about a couple of other things that the member from Rosetown-Biggar mentioned in his motion, this motion of non-confidence.

And the next one, the third one . . . item on the list, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is health. Now health care in this province is starting to become a great deal of concern and has been a concern . . . although it has been a concern it's become a great deal of concern now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the people of Saskatchewan.

I take a look around at my friends and neighbours who have been trying to access the health care system, are getting caught up in the bureaucracy of the health care system. And I must, I must state that very, very distinctively, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is the bureaucracy of the health care system that members on this side of the House and the people of Saskatchewan are concerned about.

They are certainly not . . . they're not concerned about the quality of health care professionals in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Because we know on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the people of Saskatchewan know very clearly that we have some of the best health care professionals in the world. We're doing everything we can to try to keep them here.

We're trying to encourage them to stay here, that things will get better after the next general election in Saskatchewan. They're hoping, they're hoping, Mr. Deputy Speaker — those professionals — that there will be a change in government. They're crossing their fingers, they're crossing their toes that the next general election will be sooner rather than later so that we can move on with quality health care in this province.

Now it was mentioned earlier when, if we talked about studies, how this government has a tendency to do a study and then they review it and then they'll hold a meeting, and then they'll discuss things, talk about stuff, and then they'll review that, and then, and then they'll put a . . . have a report on the study and then they file it. It's collecting dust.

We have a report that was done by one of their own supporters who . . . what he believed was a clear vision of what should be done with health care. On this side of the House we didn't agree with it all. There was some areas we agreed with. But what happened to that report? Well the government tinkered with it a little bit, looked at it, studied it, reviewed it, put it on a shelf somewhere, and then reduced the amount of health districts and said, this is our great plan — we'll have fewer health districts.

Well on this side of the House we asked them, well, how does that bring more nurses into the system, how does that keep doctors in Saskatchewan? What does that do for the backup services in all the hospitals in Saskatchewan — those health care professionals that are so crucial to providing quality health care for the people of Saskatchewan?

Well the government was absolutely appalled that we'd even

ask that question. After all, we must have been sucking lemons that day, that we had the tart taste in our mouth. Who are we to be talking about health care in Saskatchewan? They're the fathers of medicare in this province. Well they may be the fathers, but they're quickly becoming the grandfathers of medicare. It is because of their own ineptitude, their own inertia, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we are ending up with one of the worst health care systems anywhere because of this NDP government.

There was actually very little they have to do to it. The member from Melfort-Tisdale has put together a quality health care plan for the people of Saskatchewan, endorsed by the people of Saskatchewan, a great deal of help from the people of Saskatchewan to construct the plan, specifically health care professionals — whether it's in the nursing sector, whether it's in the more technical sector, whether it's in the . . . doctors participated in that — and came up with a very good plan. It's even on our Web site, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so that the people of Saskatchewan can have a look at what health care could be like in the province of Saskatchewan.

And the NDP government's response to that was to get rid of health districts. They say that if we had fewer health districts and more people managing out of the city in the government, more government people, more bureaucracy in the Department of Health, that health care will be better. If we take money from health care and put it into health management, we'll be better off.

Well people on this side of the House know better than that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The people in opposition know very clearly that putting more money into management is not going to fix health care. It's putting it into front-line services. The people of Saskatchewan know that we need to redirect the money that's already in place. We need to redirect the money that's already in place, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and put it into front-line services for the people of Saskatchewan.

And one of the things the people on this side of the House — and we certainly made that promise in 1999 — is that health care costs need to keep up to the cost of inflation. But what has the NDP government done?

Well they were going to do all sorts of good things. They were going to have a meeting and we'll study it. Well they did hold the study and then put it on the shelf. They decided to talk about stuff and ending up doing absolutely . . . virtually nothing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we've ended up with a system that continues to deteriorate — longer and longer waiting lists for surgeries, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and a loss of health care professionals that is arguably one of the highest in the Western world.

So we asked the government: well what are you going to do about this? Well they're going to have a meeting and we'll discuss it and we'll do stuff. In fact, when we questioned the Minister of Health on this several occasions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is this government going to do to fix health care in this province? Well we're going to have a meeting.

We don't need to have meetings. The reports have been done. There's actually another report being done even as we speak

now, the Romanow Commission. All the information is out there on how to make publicly funded health care better. But this NDP government in their complete lack of initiative, in their inertia to make a decision, in their ineptitude led by the wee Premier from our wee province — which all of us on this side of the House take offence to, that we're a wee province — that the wee Premier of this province is so afraid to make a decision that health care continues to deteriorate in this province.

What we need is a plan. We need a plan to keep health care professionals in this province. That's why the member from Rosetown-Biggan has brought this motion of non-confidence, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the people of Saskatchewan have no confidence that this government can keep or attract new health care professionals to Saskatchewan.

Not only do we need to keep the people that are here, we need to keep the ones that are going to be graduating in the very near future, whether it's in the College of Nursing, College of Medicine, and certainly through the SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology) courses, technical courses that are being offered in Saskatchewan. We need to keep those people here, but not only the people that are in place.

But you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? What we're finding is that health care professionals are leaving and retiring faster than we can graduate them. And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is absolutely crucial that we start to keep these people here that are already here, keep the people here that are going to graduate, but we need to attract new people to Saskatchewan just to protect the system that we already have in place now.

But we need the initiative, we need the initiative such as the initiative that's going to be shown by the member from Rosetown-Biggan when he becomes the Premier, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We need that kind of initiative that people are going to feel comfortable with staying in Saskatchewan, that going to have . . . He'll have the initiative, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to attract new people to Saskatchewan because they know that not only will Saskatchewan be a great place to live, it will be a great place to work, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we certainly don't see that from that NDP government, Mr. Deputy Speaker — that Saskatchewan is a great place to work.

It needs to be a great place to work because that's how we're going to be able to protect health care and the needs of Saskatchewan people not only in this decade but the decades to follow, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I mentioned earlier when I first started, I talked about education a little bit, the cuts that this government has made to education in the early 1990s with their lack of initiative to even be able to keep up with the cost of inflation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because certainly the cost of operating school divisions in this province has risen to a large degree.

A lot of it, a lot of it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of this NDP government, because of that lack of initiative to appropriately fund education, that we now have an attack on the property tax base that is virtually unheard of in the rest of the world, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Let's just take a quick look, take a quick look around us. In the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the property tax base picks up approximately 60 per cent of the funding of K to 12 education in this province — 60 per cent.

So how does that compare to our next door neighbours? Well lets, let's move east to begin with, to the province of Manitoba. How much of the property tax base there goes towards publicly funded education in the K to 12 system? Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll tell you. It's 35 per cent. Only 35 per cent of the property tax base . . . of the funding of education comes from the property tax base in Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker, only 35 per cent — 60 per cent in Saskatchewan, but only 35 per cent in Manitoba.

Well let's make it even worse, and it can . . . it does get worse, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Let's go west. Let's go west to that great downloading province of Alberta who continues to download on its taxpayers. How much of the provincial K to 12 education system is funded by the property tax base there, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's only 26 per cent. Only 26 per cent of public education in Alberta is picked up by the property tax base — 26 per cent in Alberta, 35 per cent in Manitoba, 60 per cent in Saskatchewan.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . and it wasn't, it wasn't that long ago, it was only a short time ago when I was on the school board, the Prince Albert rural school division, where it was almost . . . it was just over 40 per cent. Just over 40 per cent of the property tax base paid for the provincial funding of K to 12 education. So that's a huge shift. That is a huge shift.

And I can remember when, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the member from Canora-Pelly was the president of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association is that the school trustees at that time enacted a program, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to have this government move towards a 60 per cent funding of education, K to 12 education in this province. A move towards 60 per cent. In fact we had a slogan; we called it 60/40, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I was a school trustee.

And by golly, we almost became a prophet. We became a prophet in reverse, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We didn't move from 60/40 . . . to 60/40 funding. It moved to 40/60 funding, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's the NDP's commitment to education in this province.

And here we have a government that verbally espouses the need for publicly funded education, but unfortunately that's all we've ever got from them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to be able to talk the talk. What we need, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a government with the confidence to move forward, the confidence that education is an extremely high priority type of necessity for a new Saskatchewan, the type of Saskatchewan that is going to grow by 100,000 people in 10 years.

And it's that kind of confidence that we have on this side of the House, that education is important, that it needs more funding from the provincial coffers, rather than, rather than, Mr. Deputy Speaker, taking money out of the General Revenue Fund, money that is put there by the taxpayers of Saskatchewan for health, for education, for social services, for infrastructure, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And instead, what does this government use those monies for, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well we got \$20 million in Atlanta, Georgia. We have \$80 million in Australia. How does this help education and health care? Sixty-five million dollars in land titles to create a system that we already had. It doesn't work. Sixty million dollars from the General Revenue Fund in cable TV by SaskTel, to invest in a system they don't even know if it's going to work. But it's taxpayers' dollars, it's not their money, it's not private investors' money, it's taxpayers' dollars.

And it is this kind of inept attitude, Mr. Deputy Speaker, towards the taxpayers of Saskatchewan that is of most concern not only to us on this side of the House but to the people of Saskatchewan. The people of Saskatchewan are tired of this NDP government's ineptitude and attitude that it doesn't matter because the taxpayers' dollars of Saskatchewan belong to the NDP government. And we say after the next general election that's going to change.

(16:00)

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we said, made a few reports . . . or made a few comments about a few issues out there and so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we need to take a look at just one more area, just one more area, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is absolutely crucial, absolutely crucial, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to how we can grow Saskatchewan by 100,000 people in 10 years. And that's that we need a government, we need a government — and we will have a government, Mr. Deputy Speaker — led by the member from Rosetown-Biggar, who's going . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wiberg: — . . . who's going to invest in infrastructure for this province, who is going to invest in infrastructure for this province to grow Saskatchewan? That's what we need in this province. And after the next general election, that's what's going to happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know, after the next general election there's going to be a lot of members missing on that side of the House. In fact it . . . appropriately pointed out earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the member from Rosetown-Biggar. He named off a few members over there who are already starting to bail out. I remember those years in the late 1980s, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where the rats were leaving a sinking ship and we're seeing the same scenario in today's era now too in this NDP government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And so I remember earlier today in question period the Premier spoke that, by golly, the Department of Highways is going to fix and build up to 700 kilometres, 700 kilometres of road in this province this year, Mr. Deputy Speaker — 700 kilometres. Well now that seems like a, seems like a pretty good number for the NDP but of course they're . . . being the small thinkers that they are, and of course we're a lot bigger thinkers on this side of the House.

Let's put that in perspective. Let's put that in perspective, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If we look after 700 kilometres of road in this province of just provincial highways in this province in a year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to understand how many years it's going to take to do the rest of them, how many years it's going to take, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to fix all the highways in this province. It's going to take 37 years — 37 years, Mr.

Deputy Speaker — to fix all the highways in this province.

Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the time we start today fixing the roads that they're fixing now, and by the time we get to the end of the process, in 37 years the first road will have been deteriorated so badly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it'll be undriveable — much like the one that I have to use to drive to my farm, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is a principal . . . a main highway, a provincial highway in this province.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is this kind of lack of initiative that this government sees that they need to invest dollars throughout the world rather than in Saskatchewan. It is this kind of ineptitude that has led the member from Rosetown-Biggar to bring this motion that the people of Saskatchewan have no confidence, no confidence, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this government. And that's why, as the representative from Saskatchewan Rivers, I'm extremely proud today to second this motion.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm extremely pleased this afternoon to stand and enter into this debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've heard the members opposite talk this afternoon about their confidence in this government. Well at the conclusion of my remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll be moving an amendment to the original motion.

But before I get to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to spend just a few minutes talking about the official opposition and their position on issues throughout the province, that affect the people of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We hear the members opposite day after day promise the citizens of this province every single thing that they ask for. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they promise everything to everybody without any concern about an ability to deliver it. They don't talk about the financial consequences to the province. They don't talk about having to make choices because of course in opposition they don't have to make choices, Mr. Deputy Speaker; they can promise all things to all people. And they can promise to be all things to all people whenever they want and wherever they want. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they do just that.

But I have to, I have to remind the members opposite and the people of Saskatchewan that we had a government like that in the 1980s, a government led by premier Grant Devine. A government, a Conservative or a Tory government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that promised all things to all people. They promised that they'd deliver more than the people of Saskatchewan could afford.

And what was the end result, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They went into debt. They went \$15 billion in debt, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And out of that, Mr. Speaker, what was the legacy of that government? We are paying today close to \$700 million in interest on that debt. The actions of the government of the 1980s, the Tory government of the 1980s is handicapping the children of today. They're preventing us from implementing programs; they're stopping us from spending the money that's

earned each fiscal year in this province because we are paying \$700 million to the debt, interest on that debt.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it doesn't matter that the members opposite went and had their official name changed to the Saskatchewan Party. The people of this province understand a Tory is a Tory is a Tory.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when they hear, when they hear the members opposite spouting the exact same philosophical position that was spouted in the 1980s, that put this province more than \$15 billion in debt, are they going to fall for it, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I think not. The people of this province are far, far too intelligent to do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we don't need another government in the future like we had in the 1980s. And it doesn't matter if they changed their name. There is no doubt the Saskatchewan Party is no different than the Tory government of the 1980s, with the promises, the philosophical position, and what they do to this province.

Now, it's the same old people. There are members there who sat and worked in the offices of cabinet ministers in the 1980s, Conservative cabinet ministers. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do not need a repeat of the 1980s.

So for those reasons, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will move an amendment, seconded by the member from Regina Victoria, and I will amend the motion by removing all the words after Assembly and replace with the following:

Express its continued confidence in the Premier, the cabinet, and the Government of Saskatchewan for their wise and prudent and careful leadership.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is a very good amendment because it talks about the actions of this government and its leadership. And its leadership's very, very prudent, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This government has made advances in the economy over the last decade. It's made advances in education where we have now the largest education budget in history. It's made advances in health care. We spend more than 40 cents of every dollar in this province on health care, Mr. Speaker. We have made advances in agriculture. We have helped through biodiversity to continue to make improvements in the agricultural sector in the province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is good news in this province. We've had members opposite talk about the doom and the gloom in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But the reality is, there is great news in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We have seen growth, we have seen growth in this province. We have seen years of improvement. I want to refer to a minute . . . for a minute, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . or Mr. Speaker, pardon me, to an article called "The Saskatchewan Advantage". Now lo and behold, Mr. Speaker, this article appeared in an Edmonton paper and it talks about the advantages of Saskatchewan.

It talks about child poverty. And it talks about:

Twelve years ago, the House of Commons passed a resolution to do its best to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. This is a particularly important goal for society. Children live in poverty through no fault of their own. Yet poor children are severely disadvantaged in the opportunities they have and in their ability to create bright futures for themselves.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk about the . . . this article and the one province in this country that has done a significant amount to deal with child poverty.

A report released earlier this month (and I'm quoting again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from the article) by the Canadian Council in Social Development found that Saskatchewan has done a much better job than either Alberta or Ontario in reducing child poverty, especially among single-parent families. Between 1993 and 1998, Saskatchewan cut the incidence of poverty among single-parent families from 51 to 20 per cent.

A drop of 31 per cent. It goes on to say, Mr. Speaker, that:

It accomplished this not by increasing welfare rates — rates for a single parent with one child were actually cut by almost 10 per cent — but by a myriad of other programs such as child-care subsidies, a prescription drug plan and provincial income supplement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker:

In 1998-99, Saskatchewan spent \$37 million on child benefit programs compared with \$6 million in Alberta, a province with a population three times as large.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . or Mr. Speaker, this is only one example of how Saskatchewan through its innovation and willingness to work with the people has been able to create solutions that benefit the people of this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Conservative Alberta, the richest per capita province in this country spent \$6 million on child welfare last year. And Saskatchewan, a province that has far fewer resources, spent \$37 million. It's about priorities.

And the members opposite don't understand about priorities because they want to promise all things to all people. But on this side of the House, we understand priorities and we will put children, we will put children first, Mr. Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . or, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk to you about the commitments that this government has made in a number of initiatives over the last several years, Mr. Speaker. I want to talk about one of the items that the members opposite like to talk about on a regular basis. I want to talk about taxes, something that the members opposite claim to have all the knowledge of in the world, Mr. Speaker. And they have the only plan that would ever work.

But I want to talk about tax cuts in this province. Since 1993, provincial income taxes, sales taxes, and fuel taxes paid by the average Saskatchewan family have been reduced by 24 per cent. We de-harmonized the sales tax and have reduced sales and

personal income taxes in every budget since we've balanced the budget.

We eliminated the flat tax. We eliminated debt reduction surtax. We eliminated the high income surtax, Mr. Speaker. We lowered provincial sales tax by 33 per cent and provided a sales tax credit to assist lower income families and people. We lowered the corporate capital tax rate for small businesses by 40 per cent since 1991. And since 1991, we introduced dozens — dozens — of targeted tax and royalty incentives to help business.

I'm going to mention some of the key areas that we in fact hit upon with tax reductions: manufacturing and processing, enhanced oil recovery, potash and base mineral development, aviation, film and video, livestock and horticultural facilities, and research and development.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that is committed to building an economy but doing it in a sustainable way that allows us still to meet our goals of dealing with those very important priorities of child poverty. It's not about cutting taxes in an unsustainable way that means you have to take from other priority programs, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . or, Mr. Speaker, we have worked very hard to do that in an environment of balanced budgets. This year, Mr. Speaker, once again, a balanced budget in very trying and difficult times. But the members opposite keep talking about the economy isn't working, we can't balance the budget. They talk doom and gloom all the time.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk . . . I'd like to talk about what the Provincial Auditor says and this was on CBC *Morning Edition*, February 21, and this is a quote from Provincial Auditor Fred Wendel on the Saskatchewan economy. Mr. Wendel said . . . the question asked by Sheila Coles was:

What kind of shape do you see us being in in a few years down the road?

Provincial Auditor said:

Well one of the things we have to put out each year is a report called *Understanding the Finances of the Government*. It tracks the government's financial position and brings in economic indicators and shows the government's net debt, which is the accumulated deficit compared to its gross domestic product which is like your family income. We compare that and we track that with the government's financial condition which has been improving considerably over the last many years.

And when we compare ourselves interprovincially, we stack up about third place in Canada, Mr. Speaker — third place in Canada. So we are one of the provinces better able to withstand a downturn in our economy now in comparison to most other provinces.

So if we did end up . . . if we do have a deficit, we have a deficit. But we are in a much better position to deal with it than we were just a few years ago because our economy has grown so much and the government has reduced its accumulated

deficit over the past few years.

(16:15)

And, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor is an independent, an independent officer of the legislature that speaks on behalf . . . or is a watchdog on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan to ensure the government conforms to its own rules. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what does the Provincial Auditor say? He says we are in a very good position to withstand a downturn in the economy.

I want to talk a little bit about the initiatives that we have had in our budget, okay. But before I get to that, I want to talk for just one second about the fact that this year again, in what can be described as a very tough economic time in the province of Saskatchewan where there is some uncertainty because of the struggles in the agricultural community, but even in these very, very tough times, this government received a credit rating again this year, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We received that credit rating because the financial institutions in this country and those rating agencies that rate governments were very, very pleased with the government . . . the job being done by the Finance minister of Saskatchewan, Eric Cline, and the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order. I would remind the member that he's to refer to all members by their title or by their constituency and never by their direct name or, for all that matters, any other name.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I apologize for using the Finance minister's name.

But again, the Finance minister has done a terrific job on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan and has again, once again received an upgrading in our rating, Mr. Speaker.

Now the economy of Saskatchewan is continuing to grow. It's had challenges because of a downturn in the agriculture economy, but it's continuing to grow. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan have confidence in the province of Saskatchewan. They have confidence in this government, they have confidence in its people, and they have confidence in themselves.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am . . . or Mr. Speaker, I'm extremely pleased to move an amendment for the motion:

By removing all of the words after "Assembly" and replacing it with the following:

express its continued confidence in the Premier, the cabinet, and the Government of Saskatchewan for their wise, prudent, and careful leadership.

Seconded by the member from Regina Victoria.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to participate in this debate. This matter of confidence

or lack of confidence in the government is not something that should be taken lightly. I last recall there being debates about real confidence in a government more than 10 years ago, in the final years of the Devine government in Saskatchewan when there were very real concerns about the economy in Saskatchewan, when the economy was faltering, when Saskatoon, as an example, was considered to be a town that had gone bust; that in Regina, both realtors and union members were on the same picket lines to decry some of the initiatives of the then Devine government; that fiscally, as a result, in part, of the mismanagement of the economy but generally the mismanagement of the government, the government continued to wrack up record, record deficits year after year to push our debt to the highest level in all of Canada.

This was a time that population figures . . . we weren't losing 5,000 people a year net, we were losing 25, 30,000 people a year net, Mr. Speaker. Those were the days that we did see large shifts in the requirements for education funding to come from school boards as opposed to coming from government, although government did seem to have all kinds of money to wrack up record deficits. That was a time that the government decided to cut back on highways spending, although they did seem to have all kinds of money for other kinds of initiatives, as evidenced by their large deficit, Mr. Speaker.

Yet none of the members who had spoken in this House at that point evinced any lack of confidence in the Devine administration at that time. And some of those members, Mr. Speaker, were either members of the Devine administration, or like the member for Souris-Cannington, ran on the PC ticket in the election. And they didn't run because they lacked confidence in the Devine administration and those horrible, horrible, horrible statistics that were so evidenced of a great malaise and just a horrible government in the history of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, that didn't prevent them from supporting that administration at this point . . . at that time.

To now talk about a lack of confidence, Mr. Speaker, given the fact that our economy is on the rebound that we will see population figures also increase as a result of that, that we are beginning to turn around the question of property tax load for those who are paying for education taxes, that we are beginning to see a turnaround in our highways, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't suggest to me any lack of confidence, Mr. Speaker.

It does suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the standards of what is expected from a government have been elevated, and elevated greatly, during the course of these last 10 years, Mr. Speaker. And that's to the credit of this New Democratic Party government administration, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are making considerable progress, as the people of Saskatchewan know. This is not cause for a lack of confidence; this is cause to encourage government to keep on with the excellent program that it has. And in order to do that, Mr. Speaker, I would certainly encourage people to attend to the business of the government.

And having said that, Mr. Speaker, and to allow for that, I move that we now adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to go to government business.

Leave granted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 32

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 32 — The Land Surveys Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's certainly . . . I look forward to entering debate on this particular Bill, an amendment to The Land Surveys Act, 2000.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill deals with amendments that are required to help move the old system of land titles registry into this new LAND (Land Titles Automated Network Development) system, or the automated registry system, the . . . quite often . . . that is being managed and operated by the Information Services Corporation, Mr. Speaker.

We certainly know of all the problems that have arisen out of this move to automate land titles registry and the transfer of land titles and so on.

I thought perhaps I might just take a brief moment, Mr. Speaker, to briefly review our system of land survey and how it has served the property owners of this province for many, many years back when our great province of Saskatchewan was first set up as a province.

And then of course it was realized that we need to divide up the province into parcels that are manageable for the on wave of immigrants and settlers that were moving to our province to take up the farming and residences within our villages and towns as they were developing along the rail lines and so on.

And the system was designed that seemed to work very well. In rural Saskatchewan, it is a system of townships and ranges with meridians, starting with the first meridian and moving on to the second and third and so on. And that system seemed to work very well for many, many years and it was fairly straightforward.

A title for a parcel of land or a lot, it was a piece of paper. It had the owner, the names of the owner or owners on the land. It also described the land of course or the property, whether that be a quarter of land or a lot in a town or a city or village. And it was simple. It was very convenient to transfer these titles, very low cost. And as I said, it worked very well for many years.

Then for . . . but as time progressed and other jurisdictions, and I suppose there was a need to update and modernize this

system, this government decided that they are going to build a new system, something that other areas, other jurisdictions don't have as far as this particular system.

Now that was one of their choices. They could have chosen to look at some neighbouring provinces, seen . . . have a look and see what they have done and brought that system into Saskatchewan. But this government chose to reinvent the wheel. And it's been wrought with numerous problems, Mr. Speaker. I know my office has, in the last six months or more, has received numerous complaints and concerns about this system. Complaints dealing with long delay and now more complaints about the excessive costs of doing simple things.

And I might just explain, Mr. Speaker, that I'll outline a very simple example. Two owners . . . two people have joint ownership of a piece of property. In this case, the example I'm thinking of, I believe there's mineral rights attached to the land. Under the old . . . and the object . . . or the purpose of making changes to the title is that one of the owners has bought the other owner's interests and now becomes the sole owner of that property.

Under the old system, this was a fairly simple transaction, fairly inexpensive, really didn't take a lot of time to accomplish it.

Now under the new system it's . . . seems that with the automation, it's complicated the system. It's added more work for all parties involved with the transfer of the title and certainly as more time and more people involved with the handling a title transfer translates into more money. And certainly the people that are either selling or buying — or perhaps both, depending on how they agree to share the costs — will incur considerably more costs, Mr. Speaker, to transfer title.

So I think there needs to be a lot of work done in that particular system, Mr. Speaker, and the Bill that deals with the amendments, we . . . there are a number of questions that we do have, Mr. Speaker, but those concerns that we have certainly can be dealt with in Committee of the Whole, Mr. Speaker.

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

Bill No. 33

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 33 — The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill No. 33, Land Titles Amendment Act — again, as with Bill 32, it again deals with amendments to the land survey and land titles Acts that will allow and perhaps expediate and fix some of the problems that are being experienced with the current automated land titles registry system that has been put in place, Mr. Speaker.

As I had indicated in my remarks with regards to Bill 32, there certainly is more . . . there are quite a number of problems and additional costs. And, Mr. Speaker, I have an example here as I indicated earlier as far as costs and I . . . perhaps I'd like to for the . . . put some of these comparisons on the record.

(16:30)

Looking at the two schedules of fees for the old system, the old land titles registry system and the new automated system, there is quite a significant difference in costs as I'd indicated earlier, and I would like to give some examples.

Under a basic search of a title, Mr. Speaker — in other words an individual wants to look at the title of a property to see if there is perhaps a . . . who the owner is, if there is some encumbrances on the title and so on — a simple search under the old system would cost an individual \$2. Under the new system that fee goes up to \$6. For the register of transfer of a title, a title that is clear and free, unencumbered, and is merely being transferred from one individual to another, under the old system that was \$64. Under the new system, it's \$160 — so some pretty significant increase there, Mr. Speaker.

To obtain a copy of a title, a printed copy, under the old system it was \$6 and under the new system it's \$12. So just those few procedures which are normally involved in transferring title of a piece of property from one owner to another, we have a difference in cost under the old system of \$72 and under the current system — this new and automated and supposedly faster system, Mr. Speaker — of \$178, for an increase of \$106. And this is a cost that has to be borne by the purchaser or perhaps if the purchaser and the vendor agree to split costs, the two parties will bear the cost.

But that's only a part of the additional costs that are associated with transfer of title, Mr. Speaker. I have talked to a number of people in the real estate industry and to lawyers and other agents who have dealt with transfer of title of property for many, many years, and what they are telling me is that under the new system there is a lot more information is required. It's detailed information. I believe it's three pages of information with a number of boxes that have to be filled out exactly and those sorts of things. And they are telling me that the time needed to be spent to prepare a package of information to transfer a title under this new system, their staff has to put in at least 30 or 40 per cent more time.

And you know the old saying, Mr. Speaker, that time is money and of course, certainly that additional cost isn't being absorbed by the person doing the transfer. It's passed on to the people who have initiated the action and most often the purchaser of the property.

Now one of the features that was supposed to make this system so great and more . . . facilitate the transfer of title more expediently and so on was that it should happen in a very short period of time. Same day service ultimately was the goal. Well, Mr. Speaker, I talked to a lawyer's office, last Thursday I believe it was, and they were telling me that no information could be received by ISC (Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan) or be . . . or that their offices could get information from the land titles registry office. And that . . . And you know what the reason was, Mr. Speaker? The reason was that the fax machines were down.

We've got an \$80 million system that's supposed to be on-line, same day, instantaneous land titles transfer, and we haven't been there yet. I don't know why it's . . . Do we need another

20 or \$30 million to fix this boondoggle that we have here, Mr. Speaker? It seems like. I would hope not. But it . . . for a system that costs 60 or 1 million and projected to cost \$80 million, business couldn't be done because the fax machines were down, Mr. Speaker. Well this is . . . this is certainly not acceptable, Mr. Speaker.

Now another attribute or sales points of this whole system as touted by this government is that they were going to be, once they got this system working — and that'll be, I . . . I would, would suggest quite some long time; in fact, it may never work quite as it was supposed to, and flawless — is that they were going to be able to sell this system to other jurisdictions. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would doubt very much that they'll ever sell this automated land titles transfer system, Mr. Speaker.

In order to sell a system, first of all it has to work. And this system certainly doesn't work as I've indicated. It's costly. It's taking far too long to have a title transferred. As a matter of fact, I was told today that the delay in Saskatoon is anywhere from 7 to 11 days. That doesn't sound like same day service to me. And if you're going . . . so you know, as I said, if you're going to sell a system, first of all, you'd . . . it has to work. Well this system isn't working.

Secondly, in order to sell a system, you have to offer a complete support system to ensure that the people using your system have, when they encounter some technical problems, they have somewhere to call back to and get the help that they're needed. So from talking to users of the system, that support system certainly isn't in place.

And thirdly, you've got to offer a guarantee. And you have to because there's liability involved with transferring title. If it's not done correctly, there can be some huge liabilities. And is this something that this government wants to undertake and to accept liability? I would think not, Mr. Speaker.

So I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps cows would fly before they ever . . . this NDP government ever sells one of these systems to another jurisdiction.

And as I indicated, there are a number of questions that we do have but I think, Mr. Speaker, that those questions can be addressed in Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 48

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Osika that **Bill No. 48 — The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill No. 48, the changes to the alcohol and gaming regulations.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very lengthy Bill. We see some 36 changes as I went through the Bill and marked them off. So there are huge changes being put forth for the alcohol and

gaming regulation Bill.

And, Mr. Speaker, I guess what's most alarming about this Bill is the number of issues that are now going to be decided through regulation as opposed to before the legislature. And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen this become common throughout . . . theme throughout this Legislative Assembly sitting where many of the important decisions are now being removed from the legislature and are being decided in regulation, which is out of the view of the public and out of the view of the legislators.

And we've seen this especially in Bill No. 61 to do with regional health authorities where many of the decisions are made by regulation. And people in Saskatchewan should be very concerned about that because then they lose the ability to have their member enter into debate and to debate it in the legislature.

And, Mr. Speaker, with regard to this Bill, we have now three pages that are under regulation that previous to now were in legislation, and they have been removed from the floor of this legislature and I find that very alarming.

One in particular that has been put into regulation is the whole issue around acceptance of gifts which, as you know, was a topic of great debate in the legislature last year where the minister accepted gifts, and others in Liquor and Gaming accepted gifts from liquor companies and so on. And there was a whole review around that.

Now instead of it be . . . coming before the legislature to be debated and to be talked about, these issues will be dealt with in regulation, and I find that very alarming that that is the move that this government has taken is to remove those issues from the floor. And I do not believe that it was what Justice Wakeling had in mind when he brought down his ruling that it should now be taken out of the purview of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, there are many other areas of this Bill that we have some concern about, and certainly we're concerned about section 133 which is what I just referred to where the . . . it is completely repealed and put all into regulation.

Another section, Mr. Speaker, section 46 . . . and 45.1 which expands people and groups who are eligible to now receive permits in order to sell liquor and to hold events, and some of those changes now are that individuals and corporate applicants can receive permits. And it's unclear what implications this is going to have to those people that presently are able to receive permits. And so there's a . . . there is some concern around this.

And if you refer to page 9 of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, if you'll just allow me, it gives the new categories, and I'd just like to read that into the record:

Adding new categories of eligible entities for commercial liquor permits. The amendments add new categories of entities that are eligible for commercial liquor permits including partnership of persons, co-operatives, non-profit corporations, regional park authorities, crown corporations, and credit unions.

This expansion of eligibility will not result in an increased number of persons seeking liquor permits because current ineligible entities restructure to conform with existing legislative criteria.

And this is from the explanatory notes, Mr. Speaker. I guess there is some concern about this expansion, and how it's going to impact on those that today are eligible to receive permits.

And another part of this, Mr. Speaker, which I find a little strange is that they talk about that it might . . . you must focus on good character is a requirement in order to receive a permit. And, Mr. Speaker, I guess that is a judgment call and anyone can receive a permit and not act in good faith. Their previous character should not probably enter into this discussion because it certainly is a call by the person that is giving the permit.

And, Mr. Speaker, if we go on further and talk along that same theme, under the horse racing part of the Act, section 10(1), they again talk about good character when they're applying for a licence. And again this is certainly a judgment call and is open to interpretation.

And, Mr. Speaker, I guess in light of the fact of all the concerns that the horse racing industry has with SLGA (Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority) I find it quite ironic that in the Bill put forth by this government that they are talking about a good character requirement and using it as an argument and a prerequisite for obtaining a licence.

Mr. Speaker, I've had occasion to speak with many people in the horse racing industry and they certainly do have concerns with how their industry has been destroyed in this province. And it's been destroyed because of an NDP government that did not see the value of a horse racing industry in our province.

We've lost breeders, we've lost riders, trainers, the track personnel, those that supplied feed and equipment, and all the spinoff benefits from a horse racing industry. And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen the loss of some 50 horse racing families that have left our province and gone elsewhere, many of them to the province of Alberta where they are appreciated and the industry is thriving. And we've certainly lost a heritage industry in our province.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's not because the people that are in the horse racing industry do not have the will to grow this industry here but they have been met with roadblocks at every turn by this government, who has in their wisdom decided that bureaucrats and those that have never been involved in the industry somehow know better how to run the horse racing industry than those people that have grown up in the industry and have made it their lifelong passion.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that this government would see a way to turning this around and changing, and certainly when the Saskatchewan Party becomes government we will be willing to work with those in the horse racing industry to try and regain this industry for our province. We see where the government is putting in some \$1.6 million into paying for purses and so on, yet we have very few horses that are actually racing, very few people that are involved.

But we're still expending a huge amount of dollars and yet most of the money that is generated is generated through simulcast and teletheatre. And the only reason that there's any entertainment of live racing in this province at all is because it is a prerequisite, you must have live racing in order to have simulcast and teletheatre.

(16:45)

So I think that this whole area needs to be very seriously looked at, and certainly the Bill only talks about good character being a prerequisite and very little else to address the concerns of the horse industry in Saskatchewan. And so I find it very faulty in that regard.

And so, Mr. Speaker, this Bill has been debated in the legislature previous to today. We will have many questions in the Committee of the Whole, and I would now like to move Bill 48 to Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

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

Bill No. 61

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 61 — The Regional Health Services Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter the second reading debate on Bill 61 this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, this is certainly one of the most important pieces of legislation that has been brought forward this session because, of course, it affects health care delivery in the province of Saskatchewan, and therefore it affects the health of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 61 comes in the wake of the government's Action Plan for Health Care which was formally announced, introduced, in the province of Saskatchewan in December of last year. And now the Bill has been presented to the Assembly, a Bill that is very, very sweeping in scope; a Bill that replaces several other important pieces of health care legislation in the province; and a Bill that will reorganize the health governance system in the province of Saskatchewan.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I think you'd forgive the members of the opposition, I think you'd forgive the people of the province for being very, very wary of Bill No. 61. They would be wary, Mr. Speaker, because it represents another phase of NDP reform of our health care, the first phase occurring in 1993 — in the early 1990s — in 1993 when the government's wellness model was heralded by the NDP as their reform of our health care system.

And what happened as a result of those reforms, Mr. Speaker, is now a matter of the public record — the closure of more than 50 hospitals in the province of Saskatchewan, including the Plains Health Centre here in Regina happened in the wake of that reform.

The waiting list crisis we've seen in this province has happened

in the wake of that first reform. The chronic shortage of front-line staff has happened in the wake of the NDP's first reform of the health care system in 1993.

And all of the problems, the significant concerns of Saskatchewan people with regard to health care have happened in the wake of this NDP government's reform of our health care system that occurred in 1993. So the government embarked on a consultation process, on a third party review and they presented to the people the Action Plan for Health Care, and now as a large piece of that plan, Bill No. 61, The Regional Health Services Act.

Mr. Speaker, this particular Bill is very important not only of course across the province but it's very important in southwest Saskatchewan and has been watched very, very carefully in southwest Saskatchewan by all of the residents there — prime among them, Mr. Speaker, those residents who can remember the formation of health care region no. 1. The very, very cradle of medicare in Canada happened in my hometown, Mr. Speaker, in Swift Current in that very, very early health district, that health care region.

And so the people of southwest Saskatchewan and of Swift Current were very interested when they were hearing initially about the Fyke report and they noted with some concern that in his initial configuration of a potential map of regions much similar to what we're dealing with today, Swift Current was to be collocated with Moose Jaw.

Two large centres were to be collocated together and that caused a great deal of concern on the part of myself as the MLA but most importantly on the part of the people of Swift Current, on the part of those involved in health care delivery knowing that competition for scarce health care resources and facilities would be made that much more difficult by the fact if we were to be collocated with Moose Jaw.

And so the city council and the health district and others in the community made a case, a strong case that when the final maps were drawn that Swift Current would indeed not be collocated with Moose Jaw but rather that we would be the centre of our own region.

And while that much has happened in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, while that much has been proposed at least by the government, what is unclear is whether or not this government's latest attempt to reform the health care system will bear any better fruit than its first attempt in 1993.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is still recovering from the NDP health reform of the early 1990s. And it has been a long and painful recovery of waiting lists and health care worker shortages and facility closures.

And the government now has introduced Bill No. 61 and asked people to trust it, that this is the right thing for health care in the province. And it should pardon those people in the province who just aren't quite ready to do that in light of the recent history.

And I would just want to make these few observations about the Bill, both as a member for the legislature and an MLA in the

entire province of Saskatchewan but more specifically as the MLA for Swift Current.

We have a health care problem in Swift Current, Mr. Speaker. It isn't just about the facility, but that's a big, big part of it. Those who are pushing for a new facility in the community of Swift Current — in the last session I introduced 6,000 petitioners into this Assembly who called on the government to build a new facility — those people understand that it's not just about a new hospital.

That the new hospital is just part of a plan to attract the kind of health care professionals we need to have the kind of modern facility we need to offer regional health care services to the region, to all of southwest Saskatchewan. But they do understand it's important to have a modern facility.

We don't have that today in the city of Swift Current. We have a facility that was built in the late 1940s. Its last capital improvement came when I was in grade 6 in 1971. And since that date there's no substantive capital improvement to that facility, Mr. Speaker. And the deleterious state of the hospital speaks to the fact that it has been neglected, especially in these last 10 years, by the Government of Saskatchewan, by the NDP.

The facility, as it exists now, is literally falling apart. I hear from health care workers who work there, fairly consistently, very, very concerned about the state of the Swift Current hospital.

And I have tried to give voice to those concerns in this Legislative Assembly and elsewhere, and will continue to do so and will use my remarks on Bill 61 to do that again. Because I don't think we can say too often or too loudly that Swift Current needs a new facility; that we deserve and need a regional hospital to serve the region.

This district does set out Swift Current as the hub of the region in the southwest. It draws it, it draws it that way on the map. But what the map doesn't say, Mr. Speaker, is whether or not Swift Current has the kind of facility that we need to be able deliver, to deliver a regional health service centre for all of southwest Saskatchewan. Because as it stands right now, there's a great concern in my hometown and across the southwest that the facility in Swift Current currently will not be able to do that.

And that is why others that have spoken before me on this Bill have raised serious concerns about this government's track record in health care and this latest, very top-down approach they've taken with Bill 61. And that's what it is. It's a very top-down approach that wrestles yet more control and influence away from local people over their health care system and places it with Saskatchewan Health and the Health minister. And I think there are . . . the other speakers that have gone before me have raised those very, very serious concerns.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, that the critic, the member for Melfort-Tisdale, and others want to speak very clearly to those concerns and ask questions that underscore those and other concerns in Committee of the Whole. And so with those very brief remarks, Mr. Speaker, the opposition is prepared to see this Bill move to Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 62

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 62 — The Health Statutes Consequential Amendments Act, 2002/Loi de 2002 apportant des modifications corrélatives à certaines lois sur la santé** be now read a second time.

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's very tempting to use this opportunity to again speak about the need for a hospital in Swift Current. But I think we've covered the bases here in reference to Bill 61 and, in light of the fact that this particular Act is involving some consequential amendments arising from the one we just discussed previously, we'll also be moving that to Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 54

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Osika that **Bill No. 54 — The Urban Municipality Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to have the opportunity today to talk about The Urban Municipality Amendment Act. I think many people in the province are glad to see the parts of this Bill that are here. But the same comment, Mr. Speaker, came out of many, many of these people that come down to funding from municipalities and especially in this case our cities, towns, and villages out there who ... they're having to deal with water, sewer problems, infrastructure of one kind or another, Mr. Speaker, and the buck always seems to stop with the local municipality out there.

This Bill covers a wide variety of things, Mr. Speaker, from property assessment to dangerous animals. But most of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, seems to be what the communities out there are quite satisfied with — in fact, in many cases, are looking for. So we will have some questions, Mr. Speaker, but we'll deal with those in Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 55

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Osika that **Bill No. 55 — The Rural Municipality Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The same, Mr. Speaker, as the previous Bill. I think the main concern to municipalities and the rural municipalities is also funding. In fact right now in parts of the province that are still in the drought situation and are hurting very badly, I think right now

funding is even more crucial than it has been in the past. And I think by the end of this year, Mr. Speaker, we're going to see more arrears than we've ever seen before out in rural Saskatchewan.

The Bill itself, Mr. Speaker, covers again a great deal of ... a great area of points that actually municipalities out there were looking for and I think are quite satisfied with. So once again, Mr. Speaker, we will be asking questions on this Bill when we get into committee but ... and I think have our questions answered at that point. So we would let this move on to committee.

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

Bill No. 56

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Osika that **Bill No. 56 — The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's been a pleasure this afternoon to rise and say a few words concerning the people of northern Saskatchewan and their hopes and aspirations.

Mr. Speaker, it's certainly an interesting Bill we have here — Bill No. 56, The Northern Municipalities Amendment Act. Mr. Speaker, what we've seen in this Bill ... and sure we have some concerns. We certainly have a lot of concerns around funding, again for municipalities.

And of course that's one of the things that's been promoted on this side of the House is that infrastructure is crucial for the people of Saskatchewan, and certainly the provincial government has a role in that. And the lack of initiative by this government in this area certainly is going to provide us with some opportunity when we get into Committee of the Whole, Mr. Speaker, to be able to talk to the minister about that.

We do see some things in this Bill, such as the expansion of leadership opportunities for northern municipalities, Mr. Speaker. And certainly something that the people of Saskatchewan have been able to finally get through to this government. So it's appropriate that the people of Saskatchewan have the opportunity to be able to show that they do have the ability to provide leadership in their communities.

Certainly there are aspects of this Bill which speak about how to deal with the more mundane aspects of operating municipalities and how to help municipalities be able to become more in tune with what's necessary in their communities, and they put the bylaws in place rather than have these aspects of municipal government looked after by Big Brother.

And so we will have some questions about this Bill for the Minister of Government Relations, Mr. Speaker, and so then it'd be more appropriate to deal with this in Committee of the Whole.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to a

Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

Bill No. 69

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Thomson that **Bill No. 69 — The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Mr. Heppner: — Thank you. This is an interesting piece of legislation, not so much in what it does but in how it ended up being Bill No. 69 and where it came from. Because, as we are quite well aware, Mr. Speaker, that this originally, early on in this session was Bill No. 29. And we kind of wonder, how come did it go from 29 to 69? Is it more or less important? Is it bigger or smaller?

And I think it has a lot to do with question period, Mr. Speaker. We know in question period we've been asking all kinds of questions and the answer that's been somewhat prevalent in the last week or two. We get an address for the NDP headquarters and there's some discussion as to what it really is. They have some address that I don't think anyone's been at. We always say at 666 chaos drive. I think this one relates to that chaos drive very well because how in the world could you have a Bill and get it all ready and present it as Bill No. 29 and then go back . . . and this by the way, Mr. Speaker, as you're aware of, relates to The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Act is what it's called. That's what it was called back in Bill No. 29.

However when they did that one they got it all wrong and then they did go back to The Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Act or individuals and they told them this is not at all a good piece of legislation; you have it all wrong. This by the way, Mr. Speaker, would be a good time, if we had the time, and I'm not going to take it, to debate the merits of having a fall session because it would have given the opportunity for the government to go ahead and put this legislation on the table, would have given them from a fall session to some time in the spring to get it right.

As it is, as I said earlier on, they came up with Bill No. 29. The government hadn't done its due diligence and it was all messed up. So they came back with Bill No. 69. Now it's interesting. When they come back with Bill No. 69, the same group that had the concerns about it the first time, the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians, said that this is still all wrong. So twice in a row in one spring the NDP can get the same Bill all messed up. And I think that's where the address that I mentioned earlier on — chaos drive — comes to bear and is very aptly put to this particular NDP government.

So here we go again. We had the one Bill; it was wrong. We have another Bill; it was wrong again. And yet, Mr. Speaker, we need to carry this one on as quickly as possible so what we will need to do with this one, Mr. Speaker, is move it into the Committee of the Whole and deal with it there. And possibly at that point the NDP government would listen to some reasoning, listen to what the technologists and technicians have to say, and maybe when we tamper with the second Bill the second time around, hopefully the government will be able to get it right.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we take Bill No. 69 and move it into the Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 68

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Belanger that **Bill No. 68 — The Saskatchewan Water Corporation Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Water Corporation Act as proposed by the NDP causes some great concerns with individuals in this province who have made a livelihood or developed businesses around providing consulting services to municipalities and to people concerned about the quality of drinking water in this province.

There are some of those individuals and some of those businesses that have indicated to us that by Sask Water now becoming for all intents and purposes a consulting firm that will compete directly with these private sector businesses, that it's going to be very difficult for them to survive.

This is just one of the issues, Mr. Speaker, that we want to pursue, and we will be prepared to pursue that in Committee of the Whole. Thank you.

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

Bill No. 67

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Lorje that **Bill No. 67 — The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act** be now read a second time.

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

Bill No. 71

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Lorje that **Bill No. 71 — The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Environmental Management and Protection Act is an Act that comes about directly as a result of the North Battleford water crisis and some of the issues that were identified in Justice Laing's report. Now I understand that in this Act there are some regulatory changes that were recommended by Justice Laing, but there are also a number of other changes that could very, very severely impact the way that municipalities do their job around the provision of safe drinking water to their communities.

Some of the reporting provisions have caused some concerns and some questions within municipal government, and those we

would like to pursue further in Committee of the Whole, Mr. Speaker.

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

Bill No. 65

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Lorjé that **Bill No. 65 — The Forest Resources Management Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand and be able to speak to the Bill No. 65, the forest . . . forest amendment Act.

And I'd just like to say that this Act here, I believe, has a lot to do with the regulations and administration of the Dutch elm disease which is so prevalent in the province of Saskatchewan.

As you know, in cities like Regina and Saskatoon and many other parts of the province, Dutch elm disease is thriving and there is a lot of concern with people in the province regarding this disease.

This Bill allows the department to assume administration of the Dutch elm disease program by moving the authority of applicable regulations from The Pest Control Act to The Forest Resources Management Act.

The other amendments in this legislation will authorize the department to set province-wide standards to govern planning and operational activities of all forest companies. Up until now, Mr. Speaker, such authority was separated . . . was separately spelled out in each licence granted. This new Act that's proposed under Bill 65 will also provide more authority to penalize those in violation of the Act by broadening the scope of activities that can be penalized.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've had a few people write in regards to this Bill and they have some concerns with it. And some of the concerns that I want to point out are the fact that . . . the concerns that the practice surrounding the imposing of administration penalties is that the administer delegates its authority to the local Saskatchewan Environment office, who are also charged on a day-to-day basis with directory . . . directing forestry activity in their area.

And also another concern, Mr. Speaker, to this Act is where local forestry officials determine that a licence has committed an offence, they will investigate the allegation, accept submissions from the licence, and will therefore either accept the submissions by . . . or levy a penalty in accordance with the regulations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the reason that the members, regarding the . . . this forestry Act, have these concerns is they feel that the government has taken authority away from the smaller organizations and given it to the minister itself.

There is no appeal for this progress . . . from this process, other than the way the justice review which essentially only deals

with questions of law as: did the minister have the jurisdiction to impose a penalty?

At the local level, personality issues arise and when local officials is both involved in the day-to-day management of the issues with industry, and is also the sole person to decide whether an offence has taken place.

The proposed amendment also provides that a licence may be held responsible for . . . licensee may be held responsible for the actions of his contractors or employees even when they act according to the instructions within their authority.

Essentially the government is saying, trust us; we will not abuse our authority. And that's typical of our present NDP government: trust us. There are others who . . . whoever will also say that while this appeal has rarely occurred, the right to an appeal to . . . in a court, is the best safeguard that none will be required.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's some other questions that myself and some of the other members have in regards to this Bill, but I think we can move it on to COW (Committee of the Whole) and we will present our questions at that time. Thank you.

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

Bill No. 75

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Osika that **Bill No. 75 — The Cities Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Bill has been awaited very patiently and very eagerly by the cities of the province of Saskatchewan. They've put many, many hours of work into this Bill to remove red tape, to clarify a certain way that things are legislated.

And, Mr. Speaker, we will have many questions on this Bill, but find no problem with it to this point whatsoever, so we'll get our questions answered in committee.

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

Bill No. 76

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Osika that **Bill No. 76 — The Cities Consequential Amendment Act, 2002/Loi de 2002 apportant des modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Cities Act** be now read a second time.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Bill, I believe, was made necessary by the bringing forward of The Cities Act and again, once again, we will be able to get our questions answered in Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 77

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Osika that **Bill No. 77 — The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2002 (No. 2)/Loi de 2002 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard** be now read a second time.

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill No. 77. And, Mr. Speaker, we've already debated this Bill and it ties in with Bill No. 48, and so, Mr. Speaker, I move that we move this Bill to Committee of the Whole.

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

Bill No. 79

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Axworthy that **Bill No. 79 — The Saskatchewan Farm Security Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think this Bill is very, very important to the well-being and the future of this province. We had an Agriculture Committee that worked on this for possibly a month. We heard presentations from people all over this province and we realize I think, as every member in here does, that there was a mixed reaction of those for and those against this Farm Land Security Act being opened up.

But I do think, Mr. Speaker, that this is a very positive step — might even liked to have seen it gone somewhat further than the Bill itself states. But I think it's a step in the right direction and I think it's what the province needs for a prosperous future when we come to the agriculture problem we have in this province. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure there'll be questions brought forward about what is in the Bill, what is not in the Bill that was suggested by the committee, and we will answer those questions in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my reservations on some of the provisions of Bill No. 79, An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act.

Our farm land is second only to our people as our greatest Saskatchewan asset. We are blessed with more than 40 per cent of Canada's farm land. While our grain and oilseed farmers have faced two difficult decades, I believe that in the long term there will be no more valued asset, in a world of food shortages, than good quality farm land.

Our ability to build our own future in this province depends in part on our ability to control our land resource. With Bill 79, Mr. Speaker, we give up some of that control. Bill No. 79, the proposed law before us, makes fundamental changes to the rules governing who can own Saskatchewan farm land. It makes it possible for a broad range of Canadian corporations, syndicates, joint venture companies, and partnerships, to own an unlimited amount of Saskatchewan farm land with no

provisions for the Farm Land Security Board to make a determination of whether these purchases are in the public interest.

I do not believe this to be a wise path of action. Instead I believe, Mr. Speaker, we should be setting down well-defined, transparent criteria in legislation which the Farm Land Security Board would then use to assess each application to own Saskatchewan farm land that is made by a Canadian corporation or other Canadian owned entity.

In effect the board would serve as our screening mechanism. It would approve applications to purchase farm land that are in the public interest by virtue of the fact that they better our community, create local employment, improve our provincial economy, and are truly environmentally sustainable.

Canadian corporate land purchases that do not meet these four criteria should, in my personal view, be rejected by the Farm Land Security Board. However under the legislation now before the Assembly, they will no longer be reviewed and assessed by the board.

Therefore there will no longer be any screening mechanism for purchase of Saskatchewan farm land by Canadian corporations that are not traded on the stock exchange. Mr. Speaker, I worry that this new legislation will be exceedingly difficult for the Farm Land Security Board to enforce. The existing board has a very limited budget and a very small staff. For example, how will the board actually determine where applicants reside? How will we know when purchasing entities are entirely Canadian owned?

Since applications will no longer be needed from other Canadian citizens, just how will the board know when the purchaser of land is a Canadian citizen versus a situation where a Canadian citizen living in another country is quietly acting on behalf of foreign residents who want to control farm land in Saskatchewan? How will we uncover situations where the real purchasing corporation is actually hidden behind another Canadian controlled company, in other words a corporation behind a corporation with complex layers of directors and shareholders?

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the potential for abuse is real. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan will have a very difficult time enforcing this legislation and will find it difficult to monitor future land transfers. Mr. Speaker, let me say a word about why I do not believe, why I do believe we should not open Saskatchewan farm land up to ownership by Canadian corporation entities in the way the Bill proposes.

First I worry about absentee land ownership in our communities. Non-resident corporate ownership will often mean the owner isn't living in the local community where the farm is located and may not be contributing anything to the community. Second I worry about long-term vertical integration in which privately held Canadian corporations buy up large tracts of Saskatchewan farm land. Mr. Speaker, these are two of my concerns.

The third of my concerns, Mr. Speaker, is with respect to land speculation. This I think is not a concern in the current context

of low commodity prices in the agricultural area. But, Mr. Speaker, in the event that commodity prices for agriculture products improve, this is a concern. And one only has to look south to states like Montana to see that the concern about privately owned corporations, non-agriculture corporations buying up large blocks of land for speculative purposes is indeed a worry.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make reference to one other concern before I take my seat. And this is actually my greatest concern about the Bill. And it relates, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that I believe this Bill runs the risk of opening the door to foreign individual ownership and foreign corporate ownership by way of a challenge under the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Let me clarify that the Bill now before the Assembly does not permit any extension of current foreign ownership limits. The rules for non-Canadian owners remain at 10 acres for both individuals and non-Canadian entities, a policy I am very pleased is being maintained. The risk is, however, that an American individual or corporation will launch a challenge arguing that our legislation is discriminatory to Americans under the provisions of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). Such a challenge is particularly likely to come from American corporations.

One of the basic principles of NAFTA is that American companies are to be treated like Canadian companies when it comes to rights of investment. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I worry that rights this legislature extends to the Canadian corporate entities that are not publicly traded will in turn have to be extended to American corporate entities that are not publicly traded.

The result of a successful challenge by US or Mexican corporations to the NAFTA review panel could therefore open up our proposed legislation to ownership of Saskatchewan farm land by American and Mexican corporations as well as Canadian corporations. Should this happen, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people could lose control of their farm economy in a very significant way over a 25- to 50-year period.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to express my reservations on this Bill, and I thank my colleagues on the government side for the opportunity to do that. And so those are my concerns, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to speak to Bill 79, The Farm Land Security Act.

As you may know, Mr. Speaker, I was on the Ag Committee, the Agriculture Standing Committee, concerning this Bill. And we sat for many days — mornings and evenings — listening to representation from citizens from all over Saskatchewan. And it became very evident that there was a very . . . the people that made presentations were very divided on how they felt about The Farm Land Security Act and what to do, what changes to be made, if any.

We had a number of people that came forward and felt a real fear about opening up the process. And that fear, I must say we all feel. We all took that into consideration. But I believe, I

believe many of the concerns are . . . concerning opening up the Act are not well-founded.

I believe at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, that times have changed. There may very well have been a case to keep these restrictions in place back in the '60s and '70s. The world has changed considerably since then and now we see Saskatchewan is in a position of needing huge sums of money to revitalize the economy, revitalize rural Saskatchewan, create more jobs. And as the ACRE report said, that we're looking at needing a \$20 billion investment . . . a \$60 billion investment over the next 20 years.

And I think that the case has to be made that allowing non-residents to purchase Saskatchewan farm land is not the panacea that's going to solve the whole problem. It's one piece in the puzzle. It may be even one small piece in the puzzle concerning encouraging investment in the province.

And we listened to people with their fears and their concerns. And we also listened to a number of people that represented individuals or groups that said that we must move on to encourage investment to get Saskatchewan going. We need to open it up to non-resident ownership of farm land in this province. And again there, those people really felt the need for that change. They felt that the change had to be made for the future of the province in a positive way.

And so at the end of the day the committee had to sit down and take all those divergent views into account and come up with recommendations. And I believe the Bill that we're discussing today is a step in the right direction. I believe that opening it up to Canadians, whether they live in Saskatchewan or not, to owning and operating farm land is an important step. It's a necessary step.

Also opening it up to Canadian farming corporations that are 100 per cent Canadian owned is another step in the right direction. I have some doubts about why it wasn't opened up to other Canadian corporations, whether they are being traded on the stock exchange or not. If they're Canadian companies with 51 per cent of the shares held by Canadians I don't see the reason why we couldn't go that step.

The other aspect of the farm security of course is the potential of opening up to foreign ownership. This Bill does not address that. That's something that I believe needs to be looked at. I understand the concerns around to opening up to non-Canadians. I share those views as well. But I also recognize the very importance of attracting investment in this province.

And when we discuss this issue with the people that made representation to the committee, and among the committee members, I think it was unanimous that we felt that there was a huge perception problem concerning the farm land security Act — that right now the farm security board was allowing I believe up to 90 per cent of all applications to be granted. So if all those applications are being exempt from the Act, what was the big deal about changing the Act?

And I think it came down to, again, the perception that Saskatchewan is closed to outside investment. That's the message that people are getting from outside Saskatchewan,

outside of Canada — that Saskatchewan does not welcome outside investment in agriculture. And we've heard a number of cases where people have applied to the board and have been granted exemptions, and then other people have applied and it seemed on the face of it, exactly the same circumstances and they were denied an exemption. So that created . . . creates a huge problem about perceptions.

And as well as people from other province just hearing that there is this Act in place that we're debating, and there's the board in place, many people said, well I'm not interested in going, jumping through the hoops and the regulations and conditions that Saskatchewan has put in place. If they don't want my investment I'll go elsewhere.

And they do go elsewhere. They'll go to Manitoba. They will go to Alberta to invest in farm land and build their feed lots and their intensive livestock operations or buy grain operations and run successful businesses.

So that's the other thing that we had to wrestle with, was the perception that people and businesses outside of Saskatchewan had.

There are a number of other areas that we talked about, was the concern about the . . . basically the foreign investment — I guess technically they're Canadian investors — but Ducks Unlimited have had on the purchase of farm land in this province. Once Ducks Unlimited has purchased land, it's out of farming for perpetuity, and that was a big concern to many, many people in the provinces. Many different groups made presentations concerning the actions of Ducks Unlimited.

So that's something that I think the government needs to address. They did not address that in the Act. I understand the board . . . well the board did tell us that they put a moratorium on any more Ducks Unlimited purchases, but with this Act the government does not give direction to the board concerning purchases by Ducks Unlimited.

So there's a number of areas around there that need to be dealt with, and have not been dealt with with this Bill. But fundamentally we believe that this is a step in the right direction, that we need to go further, but the government has decided not to go further at this point.

So I would like as a member of the committee . . . It was a great opportunity to sit on the committee, to deal with the issues. And I would like to say again, step in the right direction. We need to go further, but not just in land, farm land security Act, but regulation and rules and conditions, and perception of rigid rules and conditions in this province, that other people in provinces and companies have of Saskatchewan.

So we need to start moving on that whole area of rules and red tape. And so, Mr. Speaker, I would support this Bill as far as it goes. And we would like to let this go on to Committee of the Whole and ask more questions there.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just also like to add my comments as the Vice-Chair of the committee and again say that it's very emotional — the hearings that we held, it's a very emotional issue.

We heard arguments on both sides of the issue. We found, or I found, that individuals that made presentations, if you did a quick tally, it was weighed more heavily on the side of not wanting to see changes; whereas organizations, the tally was weighed more heavily on the side of wanting to see changes made to The Farm Land Security Act.

The basic clear message though for those who spoke on it was that the original intent of the Act basically had not been met. It was the understanding the intent of the Act was to keep the family farm relatively small, to make land affordable and available for young farmers to start. And in fact, it hasn't done either of those things.

Statistically Saskatchewan farms are larger than those of our two neighbouring provinces of Alberta and Manitoba. And the Saskatchewan farmer, the average age of the Saskatchewan farmer is as old and a little bit older than our neighbouring provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba . . . or sorry, Alberta and Manitoba.

So if the Act, in fact, isn't accomplishing what the goal was, what it was put in place for, then the question is why do we need to keep the Act in place and is it in fact being a deterrent? And there are some indications that perhaps it is.

We heard from a number of different groups and individuals who said that it was a deterrent to investment coming to our province, and that is a very, very serious issue. So we need to consider that and that's what, what I felt was extremely important to look at. And there was comments that Alberta and Manitoba have managed to attract investment dollars to intensive livestock industries — for example, Alberta with the cattle, Manitoba with the hogs — and perhaps this Farm Land Security Act was one of the factors that investors looked at and decided to invest elsewhere.

So there was that factor. The other thing that was said by one particular presenter, which I thought was a good point, if it is indeed good public policy to depress the land prices through The Farm Land Security Act, then it should perhaps be financed by the government rather than financed by the farmers who wish to retire. Because they hardly can afford to be the ones that have to carry the purse on this type of public policy.

So there was a lot of discussion amongst the committee members. There's a lot of fears of change. There is fear that . . . of corporations buying large tracts of land. There's a fear of vacant land owners. And we have to look at our neighbouring province of Manitoba which made its change, not all that long ago, and those fears were never realized. They haven't found that they have more vacant land owners than they have previously or that corporations have . . . are buying large tracts of land.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to add that I will be supporting this Bill. And the one thing in particular that I wish I would have seen in the Bill, and I'm hoping that the government will keep this in consideration, there are a number of concerns about Ducks Unlimited which is now the largest foreign land owner in our province and there are concerns about that corporation buying large tracts of land. They admit themselves that they're buying it with US dollars.

They're taking the land out of production. They want conservation easements which will take it out of production for perpetuity, and I believe that is a concern. And right now, presently, the Farm Land Security Board has a moratorium on the Ducks Unlimited purchasing any more land. And I would advise the government to look into this issue quite thoroughly and take heed to address the concerns there.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to stand in the House today to participate in this particular debate this afternoon.

Much of what my colleagues have said, I would be remiss if I didn't emphasize again some of the points that they have highlighted. I don't want to go on at length, Mr. Speaker, because so much of the material that they covered simply was adequate to address the concerns of the official opposition as it relates to this particular Bill. But there are a few points that do bear repetition.

Mr. Speaker, as one of the members of the official opposition who served on the Standing Committee on Agriculture which dealt with this particular issue of foreign ownership of Saskatchewan farm land, I was privy to the expressions of concern and interest by various groups. Some took a very negative view of the consequences of opening up Saskatchewan farm ownership to people who weren't resident in this province. Others looked at it from a much more positive light and reflected on the possibilities that any changes in ownership laws might send a message of importance to people who were looking at Saskatchewan as a place where investment was welcome.

Mr. Speaker, I want to focus my comments, I think, in a fairly narrow area, and that has to do particularly with the fears of people as they relate to the changing ownership rules for Saskatchewan farm land. If fear of change is the only reason we are not prepared to proceed with this kind of legislation, then we are indeed a province that will not be well served.

Mr. Speaker, the fear is that if we change the ownership rules, we are going to see a flood of foreign investment here, a takeover of our land by people who don't reside here. And the assumption, frankly, Mr. Speaker, is incorrect. I think it's ill-founded, and I think it's fear based on very poor practical reasoning.

Mr. Speaker, farm land might be owned by anybody, but it's not a commodity that can be picked up and moved. You can't take a quarter section of land and relocate it elsewhere. It's not like losing a national treasure that is portable. Farm land is stationary.

And in the case of farm land that might be owned by somebody outside of this province, it's not as though that land will not be used for productive purposes. That land will in fact of necessity be put to practical use and productive purposes because the individual who expends money to buy that land is going to want a return on investment. So, Mr. Speaker, we are going to see investment in Saskatchewan farm land by people from outside of this province for a good purpose, a purpose that will be of ultimate benefit to the province of Saskatchewan.

If anybody took the time to listen to the recommendations of the ACRE report and give those recommendations serious consideration, the one thing that was stressed repeatedly was the amount of money necessary, the amount of investment money needed in this province to make rural Saskatchewan blossom.

Mr. Speaker, the sad reality is that there isn't enough money in this province alone to accomplish the purposes that need to be accomplished in rural Saskatchewan if we are to, not prosper but just stabilize the rural economy.

(17:45)

So, Mr. Speaker, this particular piece of legislation, in my view, is sound, but it is only a tentative first step needed to be undertaken in order to achieve the investment opportunities that Saskatchewan wants to realize.

And I think that having taken this initial step, we have sent a message not just to Saskatchewan residents who have moved to other provinces, not just to other Canadians who would consider investing here, but it is a signal, a positive signal, to investors of substantial importance around the world, that Saskatchewan has investment opportunities here and that we might eventually welcome their money in our province.

Mr. Speaker, in 1974 when this legislation was brought in, there was a fear that Saskatchewan farm land ownership would be overtaken by Europeans, by Americans. There was a concern that Saskatchewan born and raised young farmers wouldn't be able to take up farming and to have enough land to make their enterprises a success.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is, the fact is that after 31 or 32 years of existence, that particular piece of legislation has not accomplished its intended purpose. It hasn't allowed for more young farmers to get started. It hasn't allowed for them to prosper. In fact, it's probably done the exact opposite of what was intended.

We need to base our consideration of this particular piece of legislation on the facts. And the facts are, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan is in need of change and investment and opportunities for young farmers. And much of that will be achieved by investment in this province by sources or from sources from outside of the province.

I'm glad that this particular piece of legislation opens up ownership to Canadian citizens and residents. I'm glad that it opens up ownership to Canadian citizens living outside the country. I'm glad that it opens up ownership to farm based and family owned private corporations.

Mr. Speaker, those are all important changes. They aren't enough to accomplish what we ultimately could accomplish, but they are important changes that will be to the benefit of this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, as a member of the official opposition Standing Committee on Agriculture, while I'm disappointed that the legislation brought in by the government does not go as far as the committee recommended, I'm prepared to support the

legislation as introduced by the government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Bill No. 57

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Sonntag that **Bill No. 57 — The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We see here this afternoon again Bill No. 57, The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, the so-called replacement for our present no-fault system. It's only somewhat of a replacement, Mr. Speaker, it's kind of a half measures type of movement by this government. They still can't seem to be able to let go, Mr. Speaker, of the no-fault system.

And so knowing that no-fault is not working anywhere else in the world, the complaints that have come to this government and certainly many times to the opposition, Mr. Speaker, in regards to no-fault, we see this government trying to make this half-hearted attempt to make some minor changes to this Act.

There is one clause in here which we were interested in as opposition. Something that we've certainly promoted to a large degree is that there needs to be a measure, Mr. Speaker, of recognition for those people who are safe drivers on Saskatchewan highways. And conversely, Mr. Speaker, we need a process in place to increase the penalties for those people who are a danger to safe drivers on Saskatchewan highways.

And now after many years of prompting by the opposition, and we see now that the government is taking our advice, and they're introducing a program, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to reward those people on their . . . when they renew their car insurance for a reduction of up to 7 per cent. You can gain safety points up to 7 per cent.

I know on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, I've . . . talking to many of my colleagues and virtually all of us are going to be able to participate in this program, and we certainly want to thank SGI for finally taking this initiative that we promoted quite widely.

Nowhere do we see a program such as that we've had in the past, Mr. Speaker, where people who are safe drivers, who are very conscious on today's highways, are penalized for being conscientious drivers.

And so then finally Saskatchewan is taking that big step into the 20th century and so we want to recognize — and certainly from this side of the House, Mr. Speaker — that we are moving into the 20th century. We're only 100 years behind everyone else now and so then we need to recognize that the members on this side of the House, after many years of pushing the government for this recognition, it is now taking place.

Because what has been happened in the past, Mr. Speaker, is

that those conscientious drivers on the highways, on our Saskatchewan highways, were paying a price for those who are less conscientious. And that's unfortunate because what it meant then, Mr. Speaker, is that if you just wanted to, you know, basically turn your vehicle into a weapon is that there was no significant penalty for that, and that's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker. So this new safe driver program is certainly going to provide a lot of initiative to Saskatchewan drivers to be more conscientious on Saskatchewan highways.

But the big part of this Bill, the big part of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, has to do with the adding a tort system to no-fault insurance. Now this is . . . it seems like it's going to be a bit convoluted. We're very concerned about adding tort to no-fault. How is this going to work, Mr. Speaker?

And let's just use an example, Mr. Speaker. Say there's two friends that are looking at the system and of course they're going to have a hard time looking at it now because the government has provided virtually no information on how a tort/no-fault system is going to work. So say into July now they're going to be able to make a decision on how this is going to work and one of them chooses no-fault but the other one chooses tort.

And the two friends go up to one of their cabins, and one of them might have a cabin up at a resort, and in the manoeuvring of vehicles inside of a small lane one of them bumps into the other. This is where we're going to start running into some problems. This is where as opposition we see some problems with this Bill.

What happens in that case scenario? One of the drivers is operating under the old no-fault system, which they're going to be allowed to do, and the other one is operating under the tort system, which he is also allowed to do. So does that mean then that if you're under the tort system and it was your buddy that backed into your car by accident, that you're going to be able to sue him even though he's under no-fault? Is that going to be possible? Or because one person is under no-fault, does that mean that if you elected the tort system, does that mean then, Mr. Speaker, that he's exempt? That the gentlemen who's under no-fault then is exempt from being sued by someone who's under the tort system?

So technically what could happen here, Mr. Speaker, is that only . . . if half the people of Saskatchewan choose the tort system, you're only going to be able to be allowed to use it in all likelihood . . . This is what we're very concerned about, Mr. Speaker, is that only if two people who are under the tort system are involved in an accident, is the tort system going to be allowed to work.

And so then that virtually eliminates . . . you could eliminate virtually, Mr. Speaker, 75 per cent of the accidents from falling under the tort system.

And this certainly . . . And we've heard, Mr. Speaker, from legal minds in Saskatchewan, and certainly from those people who are involved in the insurance industry, that this could become a very convoluted type of process where you have two systems operating under one umbrella.

And so then because, because the government was unable to make a decision . . . and we spoke about that many times today and certainly the member from Rosetown-Biggar spoke about it quite illustriously, Mr. Speaker, about a government unable to make up its mind. As we see again in this Bill, Bill No. 57, a government completely unable to make up its mind of what it wants to do.

They're getting attacked from all sides because of no-fault system that was put in place quite a few years now in the early '90s by this government; certainly a system that was highly applauded by the automobile makers in Detroit, because we certainly heard a loud cheer rise up at that point because suddenly they're not, not to blame for any of the problems that they might have accruing in their vehicles that could cause harm to someone.

But, Mr. Speaker, the NDP government just couldn't get their head around that no-fault is not working. A change is needed to be made. So they go to this half and half system that is going to be so complex, is going to cause a great deal of difficulties so that we feel, Mr. Speaker, we're just not getting enough information.

And so then because so much more needs to be learned about what's going to go on in this system, because the government has not been completely forthcoming in dealing with the professional associations out there of how this new Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act is going to affect the citizens of Saskatchewan, it's important that we have these kind of debates, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's important that the people of Saskatchewan through their MLAs get the opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to voice their concerns, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about how this . . . how this Act may or may not affect them.

And certainly, when you go into basically a two-tier system, and certainly we see two-tier rising up from this NDP government on many occasions, when you go into this type of two-tier automobile accident insurance system it's the people of Saskatchewan are going to be very confused about how this is going to affect them. Should we take tort? Should we stay with no-fault? These are the kind of questions that need to be answered before — before — it becomes time to renew your insurance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not afterwards.

And it is because of this lack of forthrightness that the people of Saskatchewan are highly concerned, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And so then because the Saskatchewan Party is working very hard with the professionals of Saskatchewan in regards to these changes to no-fault insurance that we would like to continue to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 70

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Higgins that **Bill No. 70 — The Labour Standards Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been looking

forward to speaking to the Bill 70. This is a Bill that the government has been hinting at bringing in for quite some time. There is quite a history to this whole debate.

The first sign that the government was going to introduce the hog industry into labour standards was back in the NDP leadership race where the present Premier promised that he would bring this in if elected to be leader of the NDP Party. And then later on we hear that the Minister of Labour announces at the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour that they will be introducing this Bill into the legislature in the upcoming spring sitting that we are now in.

And it's an odd way of introducing a Bill. It's an odd way of advertising and speaking to the stakeholders about a situation, a Bill, a piece of legislation that affects a fundamental industry in our province.

One has to look at why the government has introduced this Bill and the repercussions surrounding the introduction of this Bill. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it raises a number of questions, and some of the questions are . . . is why they are picking on just the pork industry and at this time leaving the rest of agriculture outside labour standards. And that's a question that the hog industry has asked the Saskatchewan Party, the official opposition, why they would be doing this. And again it goes back to a political decision made by the Premier and the Minister of Labour, not based on any need or necessity or fact, but based on a political decision to bring this legislation in.

But we have heard that the . . . in correspondence from the minister to the pork industry that they will deal with the pork industry now and then discuss labour standards in the rest of agriculture later. Well that is not a . . . that is very disturbing to hear that type of response from the Minister of Labour. That means the government is considering at some date to introduce labour standards to all of agriculture and, as we know, that agriculture has been exempt from labour standards. And there is very good reasons why agriculture's been exempt from labour standards and it is also the same reason why the pork industry should continue to remain exempt from labour standards.

And the main reason is that in agriculture you're dealing with animals. You're dealing with seasons. You're dealing with weather-related concerns, cycles, and agriculture doesn't fit into a nine-to-five job. It is . . . the work needs to be done when it is ready to be done. You care for animals when the animals need to be cared for. You can't just go home at 5 o'clock and leave certain jobs concerning feed and health concerns left to another day, because there could be catastrophic consequences to those decisions.

And the pork industry is very concerned that . . . well not only their industry but all of agriculture, and the ripple effect it may have on the other parts of agriculture.

The Labour minister did not consult properly with Sask Pork and the pork industry. At the end of the day, when pressed, the minister says, well we've been talking about it; it's been in the newspaper quite a few times. That's consultation. Well unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not consultation and the government really dropped the ball concerning this whole issue.

We are asked why would the government bring in this legislation. I would just like to point out some areas of the labour standards and compare that to what the pork industry, for the most part, is doing now concerning labour standards on the operations.

Take, for example, a comparison of annual vacations. Labour standards — three weeks after one year of holiday; four weeks holiday after 10 years. For the most part, the industry gives three weeks after one year; four weeks after five; five weeks after 15 years; six weeks after 25 years, so above labour standards.

Public holidays: labour standards — nine days per year, and a person . . . and in the industry they also give nine days per year.

When you talk about minimum wage, minimum wage in this province has just been revised. It is now 6.30, I believe, an hour. The starting wage in the pork industry, for the most part, is \$8 an hour, well above minimum wage.

Personal days, sick leave: none required under labour standards. The industry gives three days per year. Dental and disability insurance: none required by labour standards, but the industry provides a cost share with the employees. Worker's compensation: required under labour standards but not required under the pork industry. Dependant life insurance: none required. The company pays the dependant life insurance. Health benefit plan: none required under labour standards and the company is paying for a health benefit plan.

And it goes on and on, Mr. Speaker. So again one wonders why there was such a rush to bring the pork industry under labour standards when the industry already is meeting labour standards or is well above labour standards in many areas.

The other indicator that government or politicians have is concerns brought to their constituency offices about problems in the province. Well again, have there been any concerns concerning not having the hog workers under labour standards? Well for the most part, none or very few. This has not been an issue. On the east side of the province where the bulk of the hog industry is, there's been very few if none, no complaints brought to the MLAs in that area. The hog workers of this province are quite happy the way the industry was being run, how they've been treated. But again the government felt for political reasons that they had to bring in labour standards into being this session.

Mr. Speaker, we have to look again, as I spoke in The Farm Security Act, about perception in this province. And perception is such a critical item when we as a province need to attract investment. We need to send out the right signals to investors outside of Saskatchewan, outside of Canada, that we are welcome to investment. And again bringing the hog industry under the labour standards sends out the wrong signals, the wrong perception, to potential investors and either chases away existing businesses from the province or stops potential investors from coming into the province.

Mr. Speaker, the other item is . . . It's such an obvious point, is that Manitoba — which has a well established hog industry — has not brought in labour standards to their workers. Alberta,

again, which has a well-established hog industry, has not brought labour standards into its province. So one wonders why Saskatchewan — who has a fledgling hog industry, we have a growing industry and we want to grow the industry — why we would start putting up regulation and red tape onto a growing industry with such a huge potential in this province.

And again, the only answer is for political expediency. The Premier promised it, so that's what's going to happen. It's not based on any economic indicators or problems in the workforce or problems at the workplace. It's just for political reasons and that's an unfortunate way to run a province and to run a government when we are so . . . in such desperate need for investment capital to be brought into this province and to grow this province and create more jobs and to develop this province to the potential that we could have, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just, for the record, want to say that we will be opposing this Bill for all the reasons I outlined. It's an unnecessary Bill. There's no need for it other than for the political decision that was made by the Premier and the promise that he made to organized labour to bring in labour standards into the pork industry without any need or reason.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to move to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 72

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Higgins that **Bill No. 72 — The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2002** be now read a second time.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to make a few comments about this workers' compensation Bill. On the surface, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it looks like an unofficial little Bill. Really, a lot of the remarks in the Bill and a lot of the regulations are something that seem like they aren't going to be disruptive to anyone.

But the Workers' Compensation Board itself is something that is a concern to many people, both employees and employers. And it's a big concern to MLAs because I'm sure that most of us get a lot of our calls to our office regarding this office.

Fiscal accountability is one of the issues that has come to the forefront about Workers' Compensation. It's something that the people of the province know that in the last year there was actually a \$68 million mistake in this Workers' Compensation Board, something that the actuary adjustment for the year 2001 showed that the estimates of future costs of claims received in that year was going to amount to \$69 million.

That's a huge amount of money. It raises a red flag to many of the people in the province, both employee and employer, when we're talking about the concern that we have about this department. It's actually a 48 per cent increase in Workers' Compensation administration costs over the past six years.

Now many of us in business know that workers' compensation is something that we have to do; it's a protection for our

employees. But none of us in business have known that we've allowed a 48 per cent increase over the past number of years. So it's something that it's a big concern and something that we want to look at.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a really delicate balance that government must achieve in making policy that's going to be good for both employees and employers in the province, something that we know is going to be making a difference to people when they're deciding if they're going to start a business in this province.

We all recognize the importance of having safeguards for our employees, but at the same time it has to be a situation that works for everyone. We know that this Bill is going to make changes to a number of issues. And we don't have any dispute over the fact that things like burial costs have increased. We know that the amendment is going to allow changes to take place from 5,000 to \$10,000 to pay for burials.

We're not disputing the fact that the last increase in wage cap was in 1985. The increase in the wage cap is now from \$48,000 gross to 51,900 and that's something that is good.

We realize that the amounts awarded for permanent functional impairment are completely out of whack with other provinces. And it's important that we balance the needs in our province to other provinces because people have the opportunity to go right across this province, right across the country, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to starting businesses in Canada. And we have to make our environment attractive to everyone, so again, for both employees and employers.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are concerned about the way Workers' Compensation Board is working within the administration part of it itself. We also know that there is a two-year waiting list at the Worker's Advocate before they can even appeal a person's claim. It's something that's a concern for the employees of this province.

And we are wanting to know if this Bill is actually going to make Workers' Compensation more transparent. Are people going to feel like they have an opportunity to question what's happening in the board and with a . . . both from the employer and employee perspective.

Mr. Speaker, there's many issues that we want to talk about with this Bill. We haven't had the opportunity to discuss the impact with people across this province, so at this time we'd like to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Chair, I ask leave of the House to move to motions for returns (debatable) and at the same time I would ask leave of the House for the Opposition House Leader to be able to stand motions in the name of members of the opposition who may not be here.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave on two accounts. First of all is leave granted to move to motions for returns (debatable)?

Leave granted.

The Speaker: — And secondly is leave granted for the House Leader of the opposition to stand the motions which other people might not be here for . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Opposition and his caucus. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

(18:15)

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Debatable)

Return No. 51

Mr. Hillson: — Yes, I move no. 18, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for North Battleford that the order for the Assembly return do issue for return no. 51. Is the Assembly ready for the question? Let me go back one step.

Mr. Hillson: — Mr. Speaker, the seconder is the hon. member for Canora-Pelly.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 63

Ms. Draude: — I move an order of the Assembly to do return 63, seconded by the member from Melfort-Tisdale:

To the Minister of Learning: the name of each published department policy, report, study, review, or consultant's report undertaken by this department or its predecessors, the Department of Education and the Department of Post-Secondary Education in the year 2001-2002 and the cost of conducting each of these to the government.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 64

Ms. Draude: — To move order of the Assembly for return 64, seconded by the member from Melfort-Tisdale:

To the Minister of Learning: The name of each published departmental policy report, study, review or consultant's report undertaken by this department or its predecessor the Department of Education and the Department of Post-Secondary Education, in the year 2000-2001 and the cost of conducting each of these to the government.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 65

Ms. Draude: — To move order of the Assembly for return 65, seconded by the member from Melfort-Tisdale:

To the Minister of Learning: The name of each published departmental policy report, study, review or consultant's report undertaken by this department or its predecessor the

Department of Education and the Department of Post-Secondary Education in the year 1999-2000 and the cost of conducting each of these to the government.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 66

Ms. Draude: — I move, seconded by the member from Melfort-Tisdale that an order of the Assembly to return 66 showing:

To the Minister of Learning: The name of each published departmental policy report, study, review or consultant's report undertaken by this department or its predecessor the Department of Education and the Department of Post-Secondary Education in the year 1998-1999 and the cost of conducting each of these to the government.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak against the resolution . . . or return no. 66, and subsequently as well for the . . . through to return no. 72, for all the same reasons.

Mr. Speaker, all hon. members will be aware that there has been a recent reorganization, and the departments of Education and Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training, along with the Provincial Library and the early childhood development unit from Saskatchewan Health have been consolidated to the new Department of Learning and created the need for the consolidation of many files within the new department.

The transition of the files among all the department's units makes this collection of information a hugely time-consuming task, and we would require person hours that are hard to estimate but large without a doubt to search through the information from government storage.

And as we go through these, we'll see here, Mr. Speaker, that these requests go back as far as 10 years. It is an immense amount of time that would be required to compile the responses. And for that reason I'm noting as well that the responses have been provided for going back as far as the fiscal year '99-2000. I will speak . . . I move . . . well I will speak against this resolution and urge the House to defeat it.

Motion negated on division.

Return No. 67

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I move an order of the Assembly for return no. 67, seconded by the member from Melfort-Tisdale:

To the Minister of Learning: The name of each published departmental policy report, study, review or consultant's report undertaken by this department or its predecessors the Department of Education and the Department of Post-Secondary Education in the year 1997-1998 and the cost of conducting each of these to the government.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, for the remainder, through to item 33, return no. 72, I won't repeat but the arguments are exactly the same as in the last question and that we'll be voting

against all of those returns, Mr. Speaker.

Motion negated on division.

Return No. 68

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, that I move an order of the Assembly to return no. 68, seconded by the member from Melfort-Tisdale:

To the Minister of Learning: The name of each published departmental policy report, study, review or consultant's report undertaken by this department or its predecessors the Department of Education and the Department of Post-Secondary Education in the year 1996-1997 and the cost of conducting each of these to the government.

Motion negated on division.

Return No. 69

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, that I move an order of the Assembly for return no. 69, seconded by the member from Melfort-Tisdale:

To the Minister of Learning: The name of each published departmental policy report, study, review or consultant's report undertaken by this department or its predecessors the Department of Education and the Department of Post-Secondary Education in the year 1995-1996 and the cost of conducting each of these to the government.

Motion negated on division.

Return No. 70

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, that I move, seconded by the member from Moosomin, to move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 70 showing:

To the Minister of Learning: The name of each published departmental policy report, study, review or consultant's report undertaken by this department or its predecessors the Department of Education and the Department of Post-Secondary Education in the year 1994-1995 and the cost of conducting each of these to the government.

Motion negated on division.

Return No. 71

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, that I move, seconded by the member from Estevan, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 71 showing:

To the Minister of Learning: The name of each published departmental policy report, study, review or consultant's report undertaken by this department or its predecessors the Department of Education and the Department of Post-Secondary Education in the year 1993-1994 and the cost of conducting each of these to the government.

Motion negated on division.

Return No. 72

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, that I move, seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 72 showing:

To the Minister of Learning: The name of each published departmental policy report, study, review or consultant's report undertaken by this department or its predecessors the Department of Education and the Department of Post-Secondary Education in the year 1992-1993 and the cost of conducting each of these to the government.

Motion negatived on division.

Return No. 73

Mr. Wakefield: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Moosomin, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 73 showing:

To the Minister responsible for Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation: (1) Provide all the details concerning the provincial government's lease of a new aircraft including details regarding the Saskatchewan Government Growth Fund and any private companies involved in the lease. (2) Whether the government will table the cost analysis it used to compare this lease arrangement with the cost of using charter aircraft.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 74

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Estevan, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 74 showing:

To the Minister of the Environment: Whether the Minister can please provide which cities, towns, villages and hamlets currently have permits to dump sewage effluent and/or raw sewage into provincial lakes, streams, rivers, ponds, waterways and all other bodies of water.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 95

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy, to move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 95:

To the Minister of the Environment: (1) For each municipal sewage treatment plant in Saskatchewan, please provide what the specified requirement was in terms of allowable coliform count in water being discharged in the year 2001. (2) In the case of each facility, please provide the number of times that this requirement was breached and on what date such a breach did occur in the case of each facility. (3) Please provide what the coliform count was on those days.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 96

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Kelvington-Wadena to move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 96, and this is as per return no. 95 but referencing the year 2000.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 97

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Estevan, that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 97 as per no. 96, but referencing the year 1999.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 98

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Arm River, that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 98. This is as per no. 97, but referencing the year 1998.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 99

Mr. Kwiatkowski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood, that an order of the Assembly do issue for a return no. 99. This is as per return no. 98, but referencing the year 1997.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 104

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I move that, seconded by the member from Melfort-Tisdale, that an order of the Assembly for issue no. 104 showing:

To the Minister of the Environment: (1) The amount of revenue that was generated in 2001-2002 from various environmental charges and/or taxes placed on consumer products and the amount of this revenue that was used in environmental programs. (2) Please provide the breakdown in revenue for the various environmental charges and taxes.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 105

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker I move, seconded by the member from Lloydminster, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 105 showing:

To the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation: (1) With regard to the new Sound Stage in Regina, the number of productions that are currently being produced there. (2) The number of booking contracts that have been signed for future productions, and the value of each of those contracts. (3) Please provide what the original budget was for the

development of the new sound stage in Regina. (4) Please provide what the current projection is of the anticipated total cost.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 117

Mr. Brkich: — I move a motion, seconded by the member from Cannington, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 117 showing:

To the Minister of Social Services: The amount that it did cost to move each home that was relocated in the year 2001 under the “Housing Authority” program.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 118

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move a motion, seconded by the member from Carrot River Valley, that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 118 showing:

To the Minister of Social Services: The amount that it did cost to move each home that was relocated in the year 2000 under the “Housing Authority” program.

Motion agreed to.

Return No. 126

Mr. Hillson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the hon. member for Lloydminster, to move that an order of the Assembly do issue for return no. 126 showing:

To the Minister of Health: (1) Whether the Minister will provide an itemized statement as to how the \$33.3 million dollars from the September 2000 initiative announced by the Federal Liberal Government for purchasing crucial diagnostic and treatment equipment was spent in Saskatchewan. (2) Please provide what diagnostic and treatment equipment was purchased and please provide the cost. (3) Please provide what purchases were made other than diagnostic and treatment equipment, and the cost. (4) Whether there is any money left from this health initiative by the Federal Liberal government that has not been spent.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 18:42.