

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again this afternoon on behalf of citizens of Moose Jaw and district who are concerned about the lack of dialysis services. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause government to take necessary action to provide the people of Moose Jaw and district with a hemodialysis unit for their community.

Mr. Speaker, signatures on this petition again are all from the city of Moose Jaw and I'm proud to present on their behalf.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I rise to present a petition on behalf of people from my constituency who have deep concerns over the condition of Highway 47 South between Estevan and the Boundary dam resort. 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 and make necessary repairs to Highway 47 South in order to avoid serious injury and property damage.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by people from Estevan and Bienfait.

I so present. Thank you.

Mr. Wall: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure again to rise on behalf of residents in my constituency who are proposing something constructive to accomplish a new permanent CT (computerized tomography) scanner for Swift Current instead of the used one, which I was told just this morning by my friend Curly Hofer that some people can't even fit in and use. The prayer of their petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reconsider its plan to allocate a used CT scanner to Swift Current and instead provide a new one.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from the city of Swift Current and the village of Waldeck.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I rise today on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan concerned with the state of health care in the area. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure continuation of the current level of services available at the Kindersley Hospital and to ensure the current specialty services are sustained to better serve the people of west central Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, the entirety of this petition is signed by the good folks from Kindersley.

I so present.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens opposed to Saskatchewan Crop Insurance 2003 premium increases.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to have Saskatchewan Crop Insurance reverse the 2003 premium increases, restore affordable crop insurance premiums to our struggling farmers.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Hanley and Davidson.

I so present.

Mr. Lorenz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on concerns of the deterioration of Highway 14. The petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to recognize the deplorable condition of Highway 14 from Wilkie to Biggar and take the necessary steps to reconstruct and repair this highway in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth in rural Saskatchewan.

And as duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Your petition is signed by folks of Wilkie and district.

I so present.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of citizens concerned with the condition of Highway 22, particularly that section from Junction 6 to Junction 20. 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 22 in order to address safety and economic concerns.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And this petition, Mr. Speaker, all the signatures come from the community of Earl Grey.

I so present.

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan and Alberta, and their concerns are with the government's handling of the Crown land leases. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take the necessary steps to ensure current Crown land lessees maintain their first option to renew those leases.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from Shell Lake, from Lloydminster, Marwayne, and Spiritwood.

I so present.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition signed on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are concerned that deregulation and privatization in the electrical industry is causing electrical rates to dramatically increase in other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker. The prayer reads as follows:

Whereupon your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government of Saskatchewan and the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to assure the people of Saskatchewan that deregulation and privatization of the electrical industry in Saskatchewan, including SaskPower, will not be allowed.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by the good citizens of Regina.

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. 12, 18, 36, 114, 116, 119, 120, 124, and 141.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I'll be moving a motion that the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations be concurred in, but before doing that I should just like to make a few remarks concerning the report.

This report deals primarily with recommendations the Crown Corporations Committee has adopted with respect to the public disclosure of payee information by Crown corporations. Although there are long-standing rules of the Legislative Assembly for the public disclosure of payee information by government departments, Crown corporations have operated differently. There has always been a sense, Mr. Speaker, because these Crown corporations must operate as commercial enterprises, that they should operate on an arm's-length basis

from government.

It is fair to say that these recommendations in the report, Mr. Speaker, will enhance significantly the public accountability of Saskatchewan's Crown corporations and bring them more into line with government departments, while respecting their need to protect commercially sensitive information and the competitive environment in which they operate.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments as to the background for this report. There is a detailed description of the history leading up to today's report in a report to the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations regarding disclosure of payee information by CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) Crown corporations and related entities. This is a report dated February 2003 by the Provincial Auditor.

It's fair to say that this matter has had sporadic attention paid to it by the legislative committees, both the Public Accounts Committee and the Crown Corporations Committee, over the years. This became more focused a couple of years ago, in 2001, when the Provincial Auditor in his Spring Report outlined a very specific process for disclosure that might be followed by Crown corporations.

When the Crown Corporations Committee met in December of that year, they referred the matter to the Provincial Auditor and the Crown Investments Corporation and asked them to submit a report. Each entity submitted a report and an opinion was also received from the Information and Privacy Commissioner, who is also an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislative Assembly will know that this is one more step in many steps that have been taken over the course of the last 12 years or so to improve the public's understanding of and the accountability of our Crown corporations.

Annual reports and financial statements have been strengthened over the course of these last 12 years or so. For example, the government is now required to publish summary financial statements which provides an overview of all government financial activities, including those of the Crowns. Reporting standards and practices have improved.

Also, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the process of accountability, it's important to note that the independence of the Provincial Auditor's office has been strengthened significantly. And of course the Saskatchewan rate review panel has been established by the Government of Saskatchewan to conduct independent reviews of rate change requests from Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker.

Members and the public will also appreciate the fact that there has been external recognition of the government practices, reporting and disclosure policies of the Crowns by groups such as the Institute of Public Administration, the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management, and most recently, Mr. Speaker, by the Provincial Auditor for the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I should like to thank the Provincial Auditor and all of his staff, the Information and Privacy

Commissioner, the Crown Investments Corporation, and the various Crown corporations who helped the committee in its deliberations in this matter in reporting and also in the discussions. We thank them for their assistance and co-operations.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I should like to pay a tribute to all of the members over the years who have worked in this matter and have brought this file forward to today. And that includes both members of the opposition and the government, and I thank them.

And, Mr. Speaker, having said that, I would move, seconded by the member for Swift Current:

That the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations be now concurred in.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well just very briefly on behalf of the opposition, we will be supporting the motion that's before the Assembly. We just want to make some clarifications as to the work that was done at committee and what the opposition was saying at committee with respect to the process that's in this report for determining what information, what pay information, should be disclosed and what should be considered confidential.

Mr. Speaker, we would have preferred if the Privacy Commissioner, the independent officer of this Legislative Assembly, would be automatically inserted into the process and that his concurrence would be required before any information was withheld from members of the committee and therefore from the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. The difficulty that we had, Mr. Speaker, was that there was no way yesterday when we were resolving the issue to determine if that would cost the taxpayers more money if more resources would be required by the Privacy Commissioner.

We did let the commissioner and members of the committee know, however, that when that information is available, when we have a cost estimate and in fact if it's cost neutral as the commissioner thought it may be, that we in the Saskatchewan Party would want to bring that forward again just so the committee can rely on an independent officer of the legislature to ensure that all of the information that can and should be made public to taxpayers is.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, and with that commitment to reopen this in the future if that information is forthcoming, the opposition will be supporting the motion and I'll be seconding it before the Assembly here today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 66 ask the government the following question:

To the Industry and Resources minister: could the minister please provide the percentage of oil that was drilled in Saskatchewan and that subsequently went to the United States in the calendar year 2002?

And also similar questions for 2001 and 2000.

And also a similar question dealing with natural gas.

I so present.

(13:45)

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 66 ask the government the following question . . .

The Speaker: — Order. The member's . . . I proceeded to introduction of guests, and I would ask on behalf of the member for us to revert back to notice of motions and questions.

Leave granted.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Julé: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 66 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: within the catchment area of the Humboldt Hospital, how many people travelled to Saskatoon or other centres for renal dialysis in the year 2000?

And, Mr. Speaker, I have similar questions for the year 2001 and 2002.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I would like to introduce sitting in your gallery, a group of students, 11 . . . grade 11, and also 11 students from the grade 11 from the town of Kenaston are here today. With them is their teacher, Mrs. Kerpan, and also chaperones, Laverne Ringdal and Della Siroski.

I hope that they will find the proceedings very informative and very entertaining. And through you and members will join me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure this morning to . . . or this afternoon to introduce to you and through you to all of the members of the Assembly some very distinguished guests in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker. These are representatives from a number of excellent Hutterite colonies from across the province. They are here on a tour with the Legault Agro, a Swift Current-based business and will be attending the Farm Progress Show later this day.

I had a chance to meet with the gentlemen earlier this morning here at the legislature and I don't think the whole group is here right now; there was a larger group. And I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I don't know if all of these colonies are represented still now in the legislature but I'll run them down for members in any event.

Mr. Speaker, represented here today are folks from the Swift Current colony, Hodgeville, Bone Creek, Tompkins, Earview, Simmie, Waldeck, Main Center, and Spring Lake, Mr. Speaker.

And I know all members will want to join with me in welcoming them. I know I want to especially welcome Curly and Pete from the Swift Current colony just north of the city of Swift Current, and ask all members to join with me in welcoming them here to the Assembly today and wishing them well at the Farm Progress Show later this day.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: —Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the member from Swift Current in welcoming the colonies to the Assembly this afternoon. We had scheduled a meeting as well with them through my office. They're here for the Farm Progress Show.

I was unable to meet with them, Mr. Speaker, because I was on a national conference call as it relates to the BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy), but my officials had the opportunity to meet with them.

The colonies across the province provide a tremendous contribution to not only the industry of agriculture, but I know make many contributions to the benefits of communities as they have the dialysis unit, I believe, in the Swift Current area. And I have had the pleasure of working with the colony during the Vanguard flood a couple of years ago when I was the minister of Municipal Affairs, and we had a great deal of support from the colony in helping us with the Vanguard flood.

So we'll set up another opportunity to meet, and I too ask all members of the Assembly to join with me in welcoming them to the Assembly this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker and members, I'd like to direct your attention to the east gallery where the entire gallery is occupied by people from the wonderful community of Tisdale. They're representatives of the Tisdale Elementary School.

There are 66 students from grade 4 and 5 here today. And they're accompanied first of all by their teachers, Mr. Rodney White, Mrs. Lorna Ratuszniak, and Ms. Diana Martinson. And then in addition they've got a contingent of, I think, parent chaperones to keep an eye on things. They're Mr. Trachsel, Mr. Brown, Mrs. Ellis, Mrs. Weber, Mrs. Edmunds, Mr. Gabriel, Mrs. Cantelon, Mrs. Armstrong, Mrs. Oleksyn, Mrs. Fairburn, Mrs. Barnett, Mrs. Verboon, Mrs. Walton, Mr. Butters, and Mrs. Kendall.

And I hope that the number of chaperones are no indication of

the challenges of dealing with these grade 4 and 5 students because I'm going to meet with them later and I'm going to need all the help I can get.

So, Mr. Speaker, and members, would everyone please welcome this contingent of wonderful people from Tisdale.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Saskatchewan Athletes Bound for National Hockey League

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations go to two young local sports celebrities that are originally from the Rosetown-Biggar constituency who are on their way to the NHL (National Hockey League).

Recently 19 year-old Dan Baum from Biggar signed with the Edmonton Oilers. Dan has spent the last four years playing with the Prince George Cougars of the WHL (Western Hockey League) as an assistant captain. If Dan doesn't make the Oilers lineup right away, he will play for the Oilers farm team, the Toronto Roadrunners. We know that Dan will find this different and more of a challenge but it will be the chance of a lifetime and a challenge that we're sure he's up to.

Also last Wednesday, 24-year-old Quintin Laing, originally from Harris, signed a contract with the Chicago Blackhawks. Clinton played four years with the Kelowna Rockets of the WHL and then was originally drafted to the Detroit Red Wings. From there he became a free agent. After his junior years, he joined the East Coast Hockey League, the Norfolk Admirals, which is owned by the Blackhawks.

I would like to congratulate Dan and Quintin, and being a hockey fan, I look forward to watching both of my constituents play in the NHL some day.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

2003 Saskatchewan First Nations Summer Games

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm absolutely thrilled to invite everyone to Meadow Lake this summer for the 2003 Saskatchewan First Nations Summer Games, to be hosted by the Flying Dust First Nation. The games take place July 5 to 10.

The 2003 Saskatchewan First Nations Summer Games will bring approximately 3,400 athletes, coaches, officials, and visitors to the Meadow Lake area next month. It is estimated that this event will inject no less, Mr. Speaker, than \$2 million into the local economy.

The Summer Games will include competition in various sports, however, they are about much more than sports. The Saskatchewan First Nations Summer Games provide a venue for the promotion of First Nations culture. They also serve as a forum to increase awareness of healthy lifestyles.

The Saskatchewan First Nations Summer Games provide an opportunity for communities to work together — in this case,

the Flying Dust First Nation, the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, the town of Meadow Lake, and the Meadow Lake School Division. It's groups like these and events like this that truly ensure Saskatchewan's future is wide open.

So again, Meadow Lake is the place to be this summer and 2003 Saskatchewan First Nations Summer Games is the event to be at. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

City of Regina Centennial

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, she's going to be 100 years old tomorrow, and I doubt there's a member on either side of the House who won't agree with me, who says that she grows more beautiful with each passing year. Of course, Mr. Speaker, I'm referring to Regina, the Queen City of the plains.

From its humble beginnings as a mere pile of bones on the bare Canadian prairie to the bustling economic engine that it is today, Regina has proven itself to be as innovative and resourceful as the many people who have been happy to call this city home.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow — June 19 — marks the official 100th birthday of Regina, and in usual Western style, citizens of this great city are taking four days to celebrate. There are all kinds of events and ceremonies being offered — from Thursday's activities in Victoria Park to Sunday's multi-faith forum in the City Hall. And so we encourage Regina residents and their fams to take the time to enjoy of many of the venues as possible.

Over the years Regina has proven itself to be a bold entrepreneur, a city of opportunity and promise, a city of vision. At the same time, Regina hasn't forgotten what built this city, nor has it forgotten the people that helped to build it. Regina is a busy, sprawling centre with many of the amenities of a much larger city with a small-town pace and community focus.

To list all of Regina's many achievements and great successes this past century would be . . . take too long, but I cannot forget to mention the distinguished Legislative Building, Mr. Speaker.

On the occasion of Regina's 100th anniversary I think something we can all agree on, I ask that we all congratulate Regina and wish her many more years of success and prosperity.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Team Saskatchewan Goes to Washington

Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, Team Saskatchewan, a trade delegation including representatives from government, industry, and the universities, is heading to BIO 2003 in Washington, DC at the end of this week.

BIO 2003 is the largest biotechnology conference in the world. Since Saskatchewan is a world leader in biosciences and home to 30 per cent of Canada's biotech industry, it's important that we attend.

Team Saskatchewan will have an opportunity to make contacts with other members of the international biotechnology community, showcase our achievements in agricultural biotechnology research, and promote Saskatchewan as an investment destination for businesses in the biotechnology sector.

Mr. Speaker, BIO 2003 is a forum for Saskatchewan companies to build strong business relationships, attract new business partners, and increase international awareness of the opportunities Saskatchewan has to offer the world.

Pyxis Genomics, Prairie Plant Systems, Phenomenome Discoveries, Saskatchewan Drug Research Institute, the University of Saskatchewan, and the Canadian Light Source will all be accompanying the Minister of Industry and Resources on this mission.

I'm sure that all members of this Assembly will join me in wishing Team Saskatchewan every success in efforts like theirs that ensure Saskatchewan's future is wide open. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Royal Visit

Mr. Lorenz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since our province's inception at the turn of the century, Saskatchewan has enjoyed a long history of being honoured by the royal visit from various members of the monarchy.

From the names of our cities and towns to the names of our streets and buildings in Saskatchewan, distinguished and celebrated connection to the Commonwealth can be found in communities throughout our province.

Mr. Speaker, a royal visit was always eagerly anticipated by the public and meticulously planned by the protocol office on both sides of the Atlantic. Where royalty is concerned, it goes without saying that time is of essence and there can be little room for error, keeping in mind, Mr. Speaker, that all members of the Assembly know that for the past six months Saskatchewan has been preparing for the visit of Your Royal Highness Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex.

From June 19 to June 22, Prince Edward will be visiting communities as of Regina, Lloydminster, Melfort, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw in preparing a number of official events, among them celebrating award presentations and opening ceremonies.

And as in the custom with the royal visit, Mr. Speaker, Prince Edward's itinerary has been arranged according to themes — history, heritage, youth, Aboriginal people, and arts. On this last theme, Mr. Speaker, we note that the Earl of Wessex has been the royal patron of the Globe Theatre here in Regina since 1992. This is the first and today the only patronage appointment he has granted in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, as it has been with past royal visits and as it will undoubtedly be for the royal visit yet to come, Saskatchewan will welcome His Royal, member of . . . Earl of Wessex with

our trademark warmth and Western spirit.

Mr. Speaker, as the province prepares for his arrival in Regina today, we take the opportunity to wish him all the best. May he thoroughly enjoy the visits in our wonderful province. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

End of Session

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a moment here to clarify for our television audience that despite the repetitive nature of some of the recent proceedings in this Assembly, they are not watching a summer rerun. We are live. Do not adjust your set.

But little business is being conducted. Indeed this session's business is pretty much concluded. If the Sask Party wanted to, we could wrap up in a few hours and save the taxpayers thousands of dollars a day. Instead, day after day, it's the same questions being repeated over and over again; questions they already know the answers to.

But the real question, Mr. Speaker, is why? Why are we still sitting? Why are taxpayers footing the bill to keep the Assembly in session when there is little reason?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I submit that we are sitting in here because the Sask Party wants the legislature in session until the by-election in Carrot River Valley is over in the hope of furthering their cause every day during question period. It's pure politics — not even a hint of responsible opposition, Mr. Speaker, and at a cost to the taxpayers of thousands of dollars a day.

(14:00)

So you viewers at home, do not adjust your TV sets but get ready to adjust your wallets and ante up your share of these extra costs because apparently, for their own political reasons, the Saskatchewan Party wants us here for at least another seven days or so, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Team Diabetes Canada

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about a remarkable young lady from Regina Beach who's plan . . .

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk about a remarkable young lady from Regina Beach who's planning to travel to Iceland this summer. Sixteen-year-old Jillian Barber will travel to Reykjavik, Iceland, in August 16, 2003 as part of the Team Diabetes Canada running team who'll be running a 22 K marathon in that country.

Ms. Barber who learned that she was suffering from juvenile diabetes this past April is working hard towards raising money

that will go towards diabetes research. Presently Jillian is training for the run along with her friend, 17-year-old Craig Gaube of Lumsden who'll be running with her in the marathon titled, Fire Meets Ice.

Indeed the marathon will begin from areas of geysers and volcanoes and end at a glacier icefield. The training these young people do to get ready for the marathon consists of running 10 kilometres five times a week in preparation for the Iceland marathon. Ms. Barber said that we are by far the youngest ones on the marathon team, at least from our area.

Jillian is very confident about raising the 5,500 each of the runners need to participate in the marathon. It's a lot of money and goals that we have to meet but I know we can do it, Jillian says. She went on to say that her and her friend Craig are both excited about going to Iceland. Clearly we have two very committed young Saskatchewan people who are working hard to raise funds for diabetes research around the world.

I would ask all members of the Assembly to join me congratulating Jillian Barber and Team Diabetes Canada for their remarkable efforts in the fight against the illness. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Support for Beef Industry

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that the member from Regina Victoria can't recognize the significance of what may be the biggest crisis that this province has ever had to face. And maybe he has nothing to do, but I think the Agriculture minister does. And my question is for the Minister of Agriculture.

Cattle producers and feedlot operators across Saskatchewan are anxiously waiting for details regarding the national BSE compensation package announced yesterday by the federal minister. Yet even this morning details from the province are scarce. The Saskatchewan Party has obtained a Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization briefing note on the federal-provincial BSE package. It describes the BSE compensation package that was apparently presented to the federal cabinet yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, this document states that, although this will be a national program, the individual provinces will administer it. So, Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm that the province of Saskatchewan will be administering the compensation program and, if so, explain how.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the recommendation from the federal government and discussion with the provincial ministers is that it may very well be administered by the provincial government. The federal government and the provincial governments have yet not determined on what

formula or on what manner in which the compensation package will be administered because we're still not finished our negotiations.

We had a discussion again this afternoon or at noon today with all the Ag ministers across the country and Mr. Vanclief. And the administration piece is part of that discussion along with a couple of other issues that remain unresolved, which we anticipate will be resolved within the next hour or two when we go on to yet one more conversation with the federal minister and agricultural ministers to complete our negotiations.

That's the process that we've been using to date, Mr. Speaker, and there are no solid confirmations yet to be made as it relates to administration.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — The document states that the compensation package will be capped at a total of 460 million. The slaughter portion is projected to cost 420 million; the purchase segment, 30 million. And 10 million is allocated for administration costs. The document also states the program will end either when the US (United States) border opens or when that \$460 million is gone.

Mr. Speaker, how are the dollar amounts for each segment of this package arrived at or what is being negotiated to arrive at those dollar amounts?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the federal minister announced that this package would be \$460 million. Yesterday the federal minister announced that there would be allocation to three areas — that there would be allocation to producers, that there would be a cost for administration, and there in fact would be an allocation for packers. That's where the \$460 million comes . . . how it comes to.

The level of participation today by the provinces and the federal government has been determined.

What has not yet been determined, Mr. Speaker, is the timeline from which the package will be offered up and the degree in which we're asking for compensation and the opening . . . and the language that we're going to be asking for as it relates to the compensation to the industry vis-à-vis what the requirements will be as it relates to the request that the federal government is making to the opening of the border.

Those are the issues that remain unresolved which we hope that we'll have some resolution within the next couple of hours.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, this briefing note states that this program will cover fed cattle, culled cows and bulls, and veal calves. And that payments will be available to all cattle sold and slaughtered after May 20.

Although the minister told reporters yesterday that his understanding was that this package was essentially the same as

what the premiers had proposed two weeks ago, there's a big difference according to this briefing note. That difference involves a sliding scale deficiency payment rather than a constant deficiency coverage of 90 per cent as proposed by the premiers.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain what the sliding scale deficiency payment will mean for producers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, when the federal government and the provinces have concluded their communications and their discussion on what the package will be ultimately, I will be calling a press conference later this day. There will be a communiqué from the federal minister, Mr. Speaker, and we'll outline not only the details of the package but we'll also outline the level of funding that will be made available to each sector which will be covered. I'll have the industry sitting beside me who will also articulate the involvement that the industry has had.

And I intend to do that as soon as I come off the conference call later this afternoon with the industry and my officials from my department, and personally to outline the details of the package.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, is a sliding scale deficiency payment being considered?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — There are a whole host of options that have been considered and there are a whole host of options that are being discussed. I am not about to negotiate a national package on BSE in the floor of the Legislative Assembly with the party of the opposition. I'm not prepared to do that, Mr. Speaker.

What we've been doing, Mr. Speaker, is negotiating a package for the industry and we've been doing that in consultations with the federal government and all of the provinces. And to date, Mr. Speaker, the opposition has been co-operative in how we've been allowed to do our work.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition today should wait until we complete our work at the national level and after we're finished with that work, Mr. Speaker, we'll be pleased to advise the members of the opposition. We'll invite them to the press conference. They can take that detail, Mr. Speaker, and they can provide that then in the same fashion that we'll know it.

But we should be quoting information that will be accurate and reflective of what the Canadian package is, as opposed to the member standing up today and proposing that she may have at her disposal today all of the detail.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, if I'm hearing the minister correctly, in other words he appreciates the opposition co-operating but we'll discuss this only when it's a done deal, and that's a decision made by his side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, unlike the proposal put forward by the premiers, this sliding scale deficiency payment means producers will still absorb a greater portion of the losses if the market price declines. According to the briefing note, there is apparently concerns that the 90 per cent coverage, as suggested by the premiers, would create, and I quote:

. . . moral hazard problems in the industry.

This suggests that markets would be distorted by the beef industry trying to take advantage of the government assistance. Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain the concerns surrounding moral hazards?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing that's further from the truth when the member opposite stands up and says that we only consult with people after the deal's done. That's absolutely not true, Mr. Speaker.

Because when you take this issue of BSE, there isn't a individual in Canada who pays attention to the information that's been provided by the governments across the country — provincially and federally — and provided by all of the medias across Canada, and exceptionally, Mr. Speaker, by this province. We've had exceptional reporting.

That the member opposite should say, and stand up in the House today, that what happens is that they find out about this thing when it's a done deal — nothing further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. Because, Mr. Speaker, what we're doing, Mr. Speaker, today is that we're discussing and negotiating a package of national issue, Mr. Speaker.

And I say to the members opposite, they will have consequential repercussion at the international trade table. And we should be extremely careful about how we share information today that is . . . that needs to be . . . That we need to be sure, Mr. Speaker, that it's absolutely accurate. And we should not be surmising, Mr. Speaker, what that is.

And you'll know, the Leader of the Opposition will know, as everybody else will know when we finish and complete the negotiations that include not only the provinces and the industry, Mr. Speaker, who've been at the table the whole time, and the federal government who needs to negotiate a trade package with the US. Then we'll all know, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a comment on the moral hazard since the minister won't comment on my question.

The idea that the beef industry may be, some way, be able to manipulate the slaughter system is absolutely ridiculous. First of all, this is an industry that prides itself on it being self-reliant and thrives on a free market system. Secondly, when cattle start moving, Mr. Speaker, the slaughter plants are going to have a limited capacity to handle the volume of the cattle offered.

So, Mr. Speaker, does the province agree with the sliding scale

of the deficiency payment that's being proposed?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I didn't want to go here, but I am going to now because the member opposite has said, on a number of occasions on behalf of her party, things that have been harmful to the industry across Canada and agriculture, Mr. Speaker — harmful.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, it is exactly that very same party of which that member opposite stood in this House on a number of occasions and said that we needed to do what crop insurance is to reduce the level of years of recovery to eight to nine years as opposed to fifteen. It's that member who said that, Mr. Speaker.

It's that member, Mr. Speaker, over there who said that the . . . asked us how much the provincial government is going to pay to NISA (Net Income Stabilization Account). The provincial government pays nothing to NISA; the money goes from the federal government to the accounts, Mr. Speaker, of the individual producers.

And it is not . . . That member, Mr. Speaker, also said on behalf of her leader and that party that we should be sharing, Mr. Speaker, today . . . we should be sharing today in trade injury. It's that member on the support of her leader, Mr. Speaker, who doesn't believe in national subsidy. And we've heard him, as the Canadian Alliance leader, on many occasions.

And I say to the member opposite, do not push the moral issue button with the United States. Do not do that, Mr. Speaker. Because what we're doing is negotiating through the national government to make sure that when we go to lift the borders and provide the compensation, it does not provide injury to the industry. And that's the advice we've got from the industry and from the . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, it saddens me to hear such a desperate answer from that minister because it had nothing to do with the question. So I'll ask it again. Does the province, does this government, agree with the sliding scale for a deficiency payment?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we're going to support at the end of the day a package that's going to be concluded through the work of all of the provincial ministers across the country — Agriculture — and the federal minister.

And we're going to support a package at the end of the day of which the industry has led, Mr. Speaker, and that the premiers, in fact, have in fact endorsed, Mr. Speaker, not only in Saskatchewan but across the country. That's the package that we're going to support. And in a couple of hours, Mr. Speaker, we'll have that package concluded.

And I say to the member opposites, do not get in the way of a

negotiated package at a national level because you have a history and a record here, Mr. Speaker, of every time you intervene at . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. I would remind the member to make all of his statements through the Chair.

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, every time that the Saskatchewan Party has intervened on a national policy — and I've said this on many occasions and it holds true on every front — it has cost the Canadian producers and agriculture producers money, Mr. Speaker. It comes out of their jeans. And so I say to the members opposite that they should stay out of this debate completely until they have the facts and the information.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order.

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, there's a part of the compensation package that is a huge concern to the beef industry, and that is the quick end to the program. The program ends the earlier of the day that the US border reopens for Canadian beef or cattle less than 24 months of age or August 31, 2003.

Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely unacceptable and particularly affects the feedlots because they would have just a few hours after the border opens to move their animals and qualify for compensation. These are animals that they would have already suffered significant losses on, yet this program is not going to provide any help for them at all.

Mr. Speaker, why did the minister agree to the abrupt end or is he going to agree to the abrupt end of the program?

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, I'm going to agree to a package at the end of the day that will be agreed on by all of the ministers and the industry across Canada and the federal government; that's what I'm going to agree to at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to say to the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, I want to say this to the member opposite, that they should remember that the negotiation and compensation has been, has been directed, Mr. Speaker, has been directed by the industry. And we, Mr. Speaker, have been part and parcel of the development of that package all along with our industry.

And so when the member opposite stands up today or the member from Cannington chirps from his chair and says what is to be brought to the table, I'd like to ask the member from Cannington what he's brought to the table on agricultural policy in the last four years, Mr. Speaker. And I can tell you what he's brought — he's brought exactly the same thing as the member from Biggar has brought, Mr. Speaker, and the member from Watrous has brought. They brought zero to agricultural policy, Mr. Speaker, in the last several years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the briefing note also states that some provinces have expressed concern about equitable

access to limited slaughter facilities. It states an industry and government committee will be established to monitor the equitable access issue. That's definitely true for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell us what role Saskatchewan will have on this committee, when this committee will start its work, and when it will be expected to come up with a plan to deal with this issue?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Well, Mr. Speaker, what will be required here is that when the package is concluded and the compensation has been determined to which levels it will be made and to what degree the formula will apply and how long the compensation package will be in place, what we'll need then, Mr. Speaker, is that across Canada we have a good inventory on all of those feedlots that are over 1,000 head upwards. We have a good inventory of those. And we have a good inventory, Mr. Speaker, on all of the packing houses.

What we do not have in Canada, Mr. Speaker, is a good inventory of those family farms today that have small numbers of feeding animals.

And we want this package to be equitable and fair and transparent. And the way in which we believe that that can best be done is by establishing within provinces working coordinated committees led by the industry, then working through coordinated interprovincial committees through the packers to be sure that those people who are the small operators in Canada, the small family farms, will have the same access to the packing plants in the domestic market as do the larger feedlots. That's the intention, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Consequences of Occurrence of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Ms. Harpauer: — Yesterday Japan gave the US and 25 other beef export countries a July 1 deadline to start certifying their beef products as BSE free. That is an enormous concern. How the US reacts to Japan and South Korea's demands will directly impact the US market for Canadian cattle and beef products. Yet our producers have heard nothing from our government about how we intend to address Japan's concerns, both as an exporting country to those Asian markets but also as . . . to the US.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us what Canada and Saskatchewan's response to Japan's concern will be?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Mr. Speaker, the negotiations of trade at the international level is conducted by the federal levels of government. And we have said on a regular basis, in our correspondence and in our discussions with the federal government, that it will be imperative for us to be able to access the international marketplace in the way in which we have in the past.

The dilemma that the federal government is finding today is that they now have a request from Korea and from Japan in which they are indicating that we should, in order for them to buy product . . . or the American product into the future, what needs to happen is that they have to purge themselves of Canadian beef. This would be an unfortunate exercise, Mr. Speaker, if Korea and Japan, in buying US product, would have to purge all of their product of Canadian beef.

The federal government has now had a number of conversations with the Japanese governments. The Minister of Agriculture federally has had a conversation with the levels of government from Korea. I expect that the trade ministries that are involved in each of those areas have also had those kinds of discussions because, Mr. Speaker, it is an international level of dialogue that occurs at our national level.

And I know that our Minister of Agriculture nationally has been speaking on behalf of Canadians to try to ensure that we can get the movement of beef product back into the international marketplace.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Metis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. How much money did the provincial government provide to the Métis health and addictions council of Saskatchewan in the 2003 budget?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that specific amount with me but I will get that and provide it to her.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, the Health department provided the Métis health and addiction council with \$2.2 million in 2002. And in that year the Métis health and addiction council budgeted nothing for corporate publicity, but actually spent \$17,000. They budgeted \$78,000 for staff and board travel and meals, but they actually spent almost double that amount, 132,000. Meanwhile the council budgeted 72,000 for client recreation and education activities, but actually spent just \$5,300. And while they budgeted \$81,500 for food to serve to needy clients, the council actually spent just \$71,000 on food.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP (New Democratic Party) allowing the Métis health and addictions council to drastically increase promotions, publicity, staff and board travel costs, while at the same time making huge cuts in the level of service and support the council provides to its clients?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I will check into the information that the member has provided and provide a response in due course.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, the minister has already received this information. It is filed in the financial reports that are tabled

and that are available in the library.

And the minister also received a letter which he has also replied to, and I'd like to quote from the letter that the Minister of Health received from a person that is concerned about what is going on at the Metis Addictions Council. And I quote:

There has been serious misappropriation of funds and mismanagement within the Council and it is continuing and will continue until some action is taken.

This information has been sent to the Minister of Health, and it's the same old reaction from the NDP. They turn a blind eye and refuse to do anything. Again no accountability of taxpayers' dollars — \$2.2 million from the Department of Health and the Minister of Health refuses to ensure that the dollars are spent appropriately.

Mr. Speaker, what are the NDP covering up now and who are they protecting?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as it relates to this specific matter I will look into the questions that the member has asked.

But what I would say to that member is that we work with people and with organizations and we figure out ways of making sure that they're accountable. When there are concerns that are raised, we investigate those concerns and deal with those concerns. That's how we operate on this side of the House. We have some basic respect for people and how they organize things.

And we're going to continue to do that because that's what works in Saskatchewan. What works here is that we work together with people to provide the kind of care that's needed and when there are problems, we sit down and we figure out how to fix them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, the minister knows full well what is going on and if he doesn't, he shouldn't.

This information is tabled. It is their financial documents from the Metis Addictions Council. I received this document by going to the library. It shows clearly the misappropriation of funds. The money is not spent as it was budgeted for.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has acquired a memo dated May 8, 2003, written by the program director to the Regina office staff of the Métis health and addictions council of Saskatchewan. The title of the memo is, Snacks For Clients. And here is what it says, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

Please be advised that once again I am telling staff that TOAST IS NOT to be served for snack. Clients are to eat left overs from what was served for the day . . . We are going through to much bread and we are on a tight food budget.

Mr. Speaker, why is the NDP allowing promotion costs and

board travel and food costs to skyrocket, while at the same time the money spent for clients on food is being cut and the clients are told that they are eating too much bread? And I'd be happy to table the memo.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, if we need any evidence that this session has gone on too long, I think that last one is exactly an example of that.

Mr. Speaker, what happens in our province is that we have many organizations that provide services and we continue to work with those organizations . . .

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

(14:30)

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, in this province we need to work together with our First Nations, Métis, Aboriginal people because they are a very important part of our future. Unfortunately that member's questions on a daily basis go to attacking all of these people who are working hard to try to develop programs for their people.

The people in the New Democratic Party who form this government want to do everything that they can to make sure that that type of attitude, that type of question, is not a part of Saskatchewan and never will be. Mr. Speaker, we're going to stay and work hard with our friends and with the people that we want to provide services in the province because that's the important thing to do.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

ExpressAddress Service

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The talent and ability of Saskatchewan people to work together is one of the province's greatest strengths. It continues to be the building block of innovation that begins right here in our province, becoming the model for others to follow. I'm pleased to rise in this House to tell the members of such a leadership and launch this morning of a new Web site in Saskatchewan, one that's on the leading edge of customer service and co-operation.

This on-line service, ExpressAddress, is the result of an innovative partnership of the province's two largest cities and four Saskatchewan Crown corporations. I had the pleasure of joining Saskatoon mayor, Jim Madden, and councillor Mike Badham, representing the city of Regina, in announcing this service which is indeed groundbreaking. It marks the first time that the cities of Saskatoon and Regina, together with the four Crowns — SaskEnergy, SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), SaskPower, and SaskTel — have partnered to introduce a major customer service enhancement.

Mr. Speaker, this Web-based customer service solution is cost-effective in a service that offers site visitors the

convenience of communicating a move to all the partners at the same time. It is through this co-operative effort in pooling of expertise and financial resources that Saskatchewan is now the first province in Canada to offer a multiple organization on-line address change service.

This contribution to the province's growing reputation as a vibrant centre for advances in technology and technology-based services reflects a Saskatchewan moving forward with confidence and a future wide open with opportunity.

Using this one-stop service, Saskatchewan people can easily connect, transfer, or disconnect residential services for telephone, electricity, natural gas, and water. Site visitors can also easily update their address or their driver's licence, vehicle registration, and various city services.

Mr. Speaker, out-of-province visitors to ExpressAddress can use the site to apply for any of these services when moving to Saskatchewan, making their move to our province much easier. ExpressAddress can be accessed, I should say, by visiting www.expressaddress.com directly or by linking through one of the Web sites of the participating partners.

This is a significant accomplishment, Mr. Speaker, given that the founding partners came together just over a year ago and began developing the on-line address change service shortly thereafter. Crown corporation investment in this project reflects a commitment to working to provide value to customers and to Saskatchewan through continuous improvement of service and offering customers further choice in accessing services. The partners are inviting more organizations, cities, or towns to join ExpressAddress which will make it an even more valuable service.

I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating the cities of Regina and Saskatoon and our Crowns on this tremendous accomplishment. I'm sure we can look forward to future customer service developments that will result from their continuing effort and co-operation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the minister and his officials, Mr. Burgess, for providing us with a copy of the statement here this afternoon in advance of the minister rising in the House today.

You know, Mr. Speaker, what we have here is, I think, what most people would consider a relatively positive thing. I think there are some questions that automatically come to mind. When they talk about this service being provided to the cities of Regina and Saskatoon, certainly that's a good thing; it's a positive thing.

But there are other cities in the province of Saskatchewan where this also might . . . the service might work quite well and also where all of the Crowns have a presence. And so it will be interesting to hear in the days ahead from the government as to their intention to expand this service to the rest of the province because if it is as effective as it sounds like it may be in Regina and Saskatoon, then the same is true . . . then the same would be true for the smaller but equally important cities of the province,

including my own hometown of Swift Current, Mr. Speaker.

I think the other thing that this announcement demonstrates again — and mind you it's a rare demonstration that we get from this government — but it demonstrates it again that when our Crown corporations focus on the province of Saskatchewan, as they have with ExpressAddress, when the major Crowns, SaskTel, SaskEnergy, SaskPower, and SGI, the very Crowns we're talking about today in this member's statement, when they focus on Saskatchewan, when they stick to their knitting — instead of worrying about people changing addresses in Newcastle, Australia they worry about helping people change addresses in Saskatoon and Regina — when that happens, good things happen in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

That's what the Saskatchewan Party has been saying for a very, very long time, that good things happen when our Crown corporations work on things and work together. As the minister has pointed out, they worked co-operatively to get ExpressAddress up and running here at least in two cities. They've worked together and what have they been worried about? They've been worried about Regina and Saskatoon, not Atlanta and not Nashville, as the NDP (New Democratic Party) would have our Crowns worried about.

So we hope that the government and the people of the province take from this yet another, yet another positive proof of the good that can come when our major Crowns focus on this.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as the minister mentioned, this particular service is going to allow people to, with ease, change their addresses here in the province of Saskatchewan and send out, rather, notification of address change to all of the various agencies that you'd want to do that when you move, Mr. Speaker, to all of the agencies you want to notify of a pending move.

But as the minister noted in his remarks, in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, this Web site that's provided is also going to enable those outside the province wanting to move into the province to arrange for hookups of their utilities and their services that they want; to notify the cities of Regina and Saskatoon.

That is very interesting and a positive development, Mr. Speaker. Because right now under the NDP government there are precious few people moving into the province so not a lot of demand for that service. But soon, and very soon, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party in government in just a few months will enact its plan to grow Saskatchewan and to attract new people here. And then that service that the minister announced today will be welcomed indeed and will be used mightily by people wanting to move into the province.

And even the member from Athabasca is kind of reclined in his chair but he's agreeing, Mr. Speaker, because he knows it's true. The service, this ExpressAddress is going to be a positive development especially when all of the people will be . . . come pouring into the province under a Sask Party government.

So, Mr. Speaker, we'll be watching this closely to see that the service can expand to other centres if indeed it's working. We'll ask questions I think as to why, why other cities weren't included in . . . at the outset, and hope that that can occur, and

know that the lines will be burning when the election's called, the government changes, and people will be moving into the province wanting to utilize this service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Saskatoon Southeast on her feet?

Ms. Lorjé: — With permission, Mr. Speaker, to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Lorjé: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I draw your attention to your gallery. I would like to introduce to you and through you two visitors to Saskatchewan from India, Dr. Sanjay Krishna and Manjula Krishna. They are visiting the Hindu temple here. I would also like to introduce their host who lives in Regina, Mr. Airi.

Mr. Speaker, I have travelled throughout India from the very north by the border of Nepal right to the south to Cape Kanniyakumari where I witnessed the sunset at the confluence of the major oceans of the world. I've also seen first-hand the reverence and respect of the various deities, and I see that reverence and respect reflected here in Saskatchewan in our own Hindu temples.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in welcoming our visitors and wishing them a pleasant visit in Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, with leave to introduce guests.

Leave granted.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Along with the member opposite, I would like to welcome our guests from India to the Saskatchewan legislature. I hope you enjoy our fine city of Regina and the province, especially since you're here during Farm Progress Show. There are lots of things to do in the city and with Regina's 100th anniversary this weekend it gives you lots of opportunities to visit.

And again we'd like to welcome you to Regina and Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions nos. 744 through 748 inclusive.

The Speaker: — 744, '45, '46, '47, and '48 have been submitted.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I at this time move that we convert for debates returnable question no. 749.

The Speaker: — Question 749 converted to orders for return (debatable).

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased to once again stand on behalf of the government and table response to written question no. 750.

The Speaker: — The response to 750 has been submitted.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Hours of Sitting

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The purpose of the motion is to delay the proceedings of the House and also the conclusion time of the House tomorrow by one hour.

Mr. Speaker, as I think all of Saskatchewan is aware, we are anxiously awaiting the arrival tomorrow morning of His Royal Highness, The Earl of Wessex, as Prince Edward comes to pay Saskatchewan a visit. He'll be arriving in the morning. All of us here as members of the legislature will be included, invited to take part in the reception of His Royal Highness here at the Legislative Building.

And then at noon hour, Mr. Speaker, a very important event in the history of Saskatchewan, particularly the history of the capital city here in Regina. As we all know, the city of Regina is celebrating its centennial and very much welcomes the presence of His Royal Highness here to take part in that celebration.

As part of that celebration tomorrow, at 1:05 to 2:35 is a luncheon that is being hosted by the mayor of Regina. And the mayor has very graciously extended an invitation to Regina members and also the Premier, I believe, to join with the mayor and His Royal Highness in this centennial celebration of the city.

In order to accommodate the centennial celebration here in Regina and not to impinge on the function of the Legislative Assembly, then, Mr. Speaker, I'm simply asking that the House will delay the starting time and also the concluding time of the House tomorrow by one hour. And therefore I move, seconded by the Government House Leader:

That, notwithstanding rule 3(1), the sitting hours of the Assembly on Thursday, June 19, 2003 shall be from . . .

Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I'll move that again:

That, notwithstanding rule 3(1), the sitting hours of the

Assembly on Thursday, June 19, 2003 shall be from 2:30 p.m. until 6 p.m.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

Motion agreed to.

(14:45)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 43

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Belanger that **Bill No. 43 — The Forest Resources Management Amendment Act, 2003** be now read a second time.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure this afternoon to rise and make a few comments on Bill No. 43, a Bill, Mr. Speaker, to amend The Forest Resources Management Act.

Mr. Speaker, we've taken, on this side of the House, taken some time to take a look at this Bill thoroughly. We've, unlike the minister, have taken an opportunity to meet with people from the forestry sector to get some input on this Bill. We've actually . . . are still awaiting, Mr. Speaker, some responses from the forestry sector as to their opinions on this Bill and how it may help or hinder, Mr. Speaker, the forestry sector in this province.

And certainly I think, Mr. Speaker, we need to make a few comments upon . . . on the statements that the minister made when he did second reading on this Bill the other day. And I think it's important that people of Saskatchewan, we have to understand clearly how this minister has again not followed through on his responsibility as a minister enabling the forestry sector to become a significant, a significant force in the setting up of this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, you can imagine to our surprise when this Bill was first introduced for first reading and we all received a copy of it, and we made a few phone calls into the forestry sector to ask their opinion of it and what they thought of it, imagine our surprise, Mr. Speaker, to find out that the forestry sector had no idea, had no idea that this Bill was actually on the table.

Apparently, Mr. Speaker, this minister, the minister of Environment and Resource Management had made a phone call to a couple of the players in the forestry sector in this province, asked them a question or two about how they thought things were going with the softwood trade injury that the United States has imposed upon the Canadian and the Saskatchewan forestry sectors, and from that, from that, Mr. Speaker, the minister was able to deduce that he had done consultation with the forestry sector.

Well, Mr. Speaker, my advice to the minister is that consultation actually means sitting down with the forestry sector and going through the Bill and helping them to understand where this government wants to go, helping the . . . the forestry sector helping the government to understand how the trade injury tariffs have been applied against Saskatchewan, have created a great deal of concern in the forestry sector to those who both invest in it and those who work in it.

Mr. Speaker, that's what consultation is about, is that you're talking to the forestry centre. Simply making a phone call to them and saying, good day and how are you, is not consultation. And, Mr. Speaker, that is the response that we are starting to get back from the forestry sector.

And I'm going to say, Mr. Speaker, to the minister, that we are doing further consultation in the forestry sector and if we continue to get that kind of a response, that no real consultation has taken place to date — and in fact, no real consultation is going to be taking place at any time in the near future — then we're certainly, on this side of the House, we're going to be holding the minister responsible for that lack, that lack of respect due to such a huge industry in this province, Mr. Speaker, industry that provides thousands of jobs, an industry that brings hundreds of millions of dollars into this province, and the lack of respect showed to that industry by this minister.

Now, Mr. Speaker, today is after the middle of June now, and certainly it's reaching that time when all members start to think about, we've been here long enough, that it's time to start thinking about spending some time with our families, giving us a time to reflect upon our constituencies and the good people that live in it. And what does this NDP government do? Well today, Wednesday, June 18, we're getting in . . . finally getting into serious debate of Bill No. 43.

Well, Mr. Speaker, here we go again with an NDP government trying to make significant changes to how we do business in this province on the eleventh hour — an eleventh-hour government trying to desperately hang on to power with eleventh-hour solutions.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as we look at this Bill and the timing of it — after all it was only a week ago approximately that it was introduced — and now, now we hear that the members on the other side, the member from Regina Victoria, he wants to go home. The member from Regina South, he wants to go home. The member from Moose Jaw North wants to go home.

This is rather odd, Mr. Speaker, because I can remember at a time when the member from Moose Jaw North and the member from Regina Victoria — at this time, in the late '80s — did not want to go home. They wanted to stay here day after day. Day after day they wanted to stay here, Mr. Speaker. And so on the eleventh hour, on the eleventh hour they bring Bill No. 43, Mr. Speaker, that's going to have significant impact on the forestry sector, and then they say to the House they want to go home — we've had enough; we want to go home.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, if they really want to do something and really want to go to work, they should be willing to start earlier in the year — introducing Bills such as Bill No. 43 earlier in the year — so that we can have significant input

from the forestry sector, from those people who will most be significantly affected by this Bill, prior to the eleventh hour, Mr. Speaker. That's what we should be doing; we should be starting earlier.

And if they're going to come in the middle of June, Mr. Speaker, with a Bill that is going to have such a dramatic effect on the forest industry in this province, then this NDP government should be prepared to stay here till the middle of August, just like the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to stay here and make sure this Bill is done right and it benefits the forestry sector. And not, and not, Mr. Speaker, like this minister, the member from Athabasca, who has no idea — and I think he has no idea, Mr. Speaker — what's in this Bill or otherwise, otherwise, they'd be willing to start tabling it, Mr. Speaker, leave it on the order table, Mr. Speaker. And we'll bring it back next year under a Saskatchewan Party government where this Bill will be designed right to benefit the forestry industry, to benefit the workers in the forest industry, Mr. Speaker, to benefit those who invest in the forest industry in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

That's what, that's what should be done, Mr. Speaker, have that member talk to his leader. That's what he should do, Mr. Speaker, when you bring Bills like this — talk to your leader who will then go across the pond to Frank Hart and ask for permission to call an election. That's what this minister should be doing, instead of bringing a eleventh-hour Bill such as Bill No. 43.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what's happening with this Bill is that the government — in their wisdom or lack of it, lack of advice from their support staff in this Department of Environment and Resource Management, Mr. Speaker — has decided to come with a Bill that will try to encourage, encourage the federal government in Canada and the United States federal government to try to resolve the issue of the injury tariff that the United States has applied against the forest industry in Canada and Saskatchewan, and its entire forestry sector right across the main here in Saskatchewan.

So now, Mr. Speaker, what we know is that the United States of America has decided that because of the way we do forestry business in this country, where the primary amount of forestry in Canada is actually owned by the Crown — and that's right across all the provinces and the territories and it's just the way it is in Canada and no one is arguing that point — what the United States government is saying, Mr. Speaker, is that they see that there's an opportunity here for an unfair advantage for dumping by the Canadian government and its provinces into the United States softwood market.

Let me explain that a little bit, Mr. Speaker, because in Canada, because in Canada the provincial governments and the territories arbitrarily set stumpage fees, the stumpage dues that are applied to the forestry sector to attain the rights to harvest softwood lumber and hardwood lumber in this province, Mr. Speaker. And whether it's this province or it's our neighbours to the west or the east or to the north, we use the same processes very much.

Mr. Speaker, our largest consumer for forestry products, the

United States of America, they do business a little differently. What they do, Mr. Speaker, is that they look at this as a resource to benefit the people of their constituencies. And so then, rather than just arbitrarily set a rate for what the stumpage fees will be, Mr. Speaker, they put it up for bid. So a tract of forestry land — and whether it's controlled by the state or whether it's controlled by the federal government, which there's some of that in the United States or whether it's controlled privately — if someone wants to be able to have an opportunity to go into those mature forests, Mr. Speaker, several companies, several logging companies will actually bid on those tracts of land. And the highest bidder then is awarded the opportunity to go in there and harvest that timber.

But, Mr. Speaker, what the United States is feeling — and after all it's their country and then we're the ones trying to do business there — is that because there's a significant spread between what the forest companies in the United States are having to pay at different times for allotment and what happens in Canada, they feel as though the Canadian forest companies have unfair advantages because at different times, depending upon market conditions in the United States, is that stumpage fees can be significantly lower in Canada. That's what they're saying.

Now the reality of course is that WTO (World Trade Organization) has stated that it's not really an unfair advantage. But there's really no way to enforce a WTO ruling and we're kind of stuck with the whims and the wishes of our largest consumer for our softwood products.

So what we're having to do, what we're having to start doing in Canada is try to find a way to negotiate our way around this dispute, friendly dispute, but still an irritant, Mr. Speaker, between ourselves in Canada and our friends to the south who still want to consume our product.

Now we know, Mr. Speaker, that the American consumer is paying a slightly higher price for housing in the United States now because of this injury trade duty. Mr. Speaker, we've heard numbers somewhere in the vicinity of about \$1,300 per house. And certainly the federal government in Ottawa has prepared, prepared, Mr. Speaker, an advertising campaign into the United States to help the American consumer understand that it's actually costing them a little more for housing in the United States because of the injury tariff.

Of course we're not seeing any breakthrough in that area yet so obviously the message is not getting out as significantly as we'd like it to but at least it was a step in the right direction, Mr. Speaker, helping the American consumer understand that they're paying more, they're paying more, Mr. Speaker, for their finished homes than they would if the injury trade tariff was not there.

So, Mr. Speaker, what it seems to be starting to happen now across Canada is that there's discussions going on as to maybe what we need to do is get away from the old way of doing business in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and go to a new way of doing business. Now, Mr. Speaker, of course this is a bold step for Canadians to take, and certainly, Mr. Speaker, for the NDP government it's a very bold step.

And so then today we see this Bill, Bill No. 43, An Act to amend The Forest Resources Management Act, Mr. Speaker, that talks about addressing or talking about . . . they want to talk about talking about the changes that may need to take place in the forestry sector.

But, Mr. Speaker, the forest resources in Saskatchewan are the sole responsibility of the people of Saskatchewan. This Bill talks about putting Saskatchewan in a stronger position as a negotiator to go to the federal government to get Saskatchewan at the table so that the federal government can negotiate around the trade duty that's been applied, the injury trade duty that's been applied against all the entire forestry sector in Canada.

Well, Mr. Speaker, lo and behold and much to the surprise of the Saskatchewan Party, the forestry sector's not in favour of that at all, Mr. Speaker. And the ones we've talked to so far are disappointed that this Act actually does not go anywhere near where they feel, Mr. Speaker, this Bill needs to go.

(15:00)

I want to give you an example, Mr. Speaker, of where we could go, where we could go, Mr. Speaker, with the forestry sector in Canada, and specifically in Canada . . . or in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, in relationship to the forestry sector, a sector that provides huge dividends for the people of Saskatchewan through its stumpage fees, through the income tax earned from the workers in the forestry centre . . . sector, through the corporate taxes that are paid by the corporations working here although a lot of them aren't making a lot of money right now because of the injury duty and that's unfortunate for us in Saskatchewan. But there's huge dividends to be paid here into the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there are some jurisdictions in Canada who are looking at changing the way they do business in the forestry sector between government and business — those people in the forestry sector who get out of bed every day and create wealth for their province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, these jurisdictions are looking at going to a quasi-system that faintly resembles the way the American forestry sector does business for softwood lumber, but it would be a made-in-Canada solution. And we applaud that, Mr. Speaker. There are jurisdictions in this country that are looking at a made-in-Canada solution that will help, that will help their jurisdictions from a position of strength and be able to eliminate this trade injury duty that is being applied against the forestry sector in the different jurisdictions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it appears as though if a jurisdiction in Canada now — whether they be east of us or west of us or north of us — decides to change the way they do business in the forestry sector that will give them an upper hand, the rest of us are going to pay a price for that, Mr. Speaker.

What's going to happen here is that they're going to be able to put themselves in a position of strength to be able to get their softwood lumber into our largest customer, into our largest customer, the United States of America, and offset this trade injury duty, Mr. Speaker.

Now Bill No. 43 should be allowing the people of Saskatchewan and the forestry sector the opportunity to be able to be on the front lines, Mr. Speaker; of getting the co-operation of the federal government in the United States away from the trade injury duty and allowing Saskatchewan's softwood lumber into the United States without the trade injury duty. That's what this Bill should be doing.

It'll give Saskatchewan such a significant upper hand, Mr. Speaker, that retailers, wholesalers and retailers will want to come to Saskatchewan to buy our product — not only because it's a very good product, Mr. Speaker, and I think everyone in Saskatchewan understands that Saskatchewan people create very good products — but they will come here because we will be very, very competitive. Also because we will have eliminated this significant trade injury duty that the United States has applied against our province and all provinces because of the way we do business here and they don't like the way we do things.

And so we need to adapt. After all, they're the customer. They're the customer, Mr. Speaker. We need to adapt what we do to the wants of the customer and not have the customer adapt to what the seller wants. After all, Mr. Speaker, if I was to decide that I wanted to buy a half-ton, I'm certain that the car salesman isn't going to try to sell me a limousine if I want to buy a half-ton. He's going to sell me a half-ton because that's what I want to buy.

And the same principle applies here. They want our product but they want to be seen as buying our product on a level playing field with their people in the United States, with their forestry people in the United States. That's all they're asking for.

It's actually not a big deal. It probably, Mr. Speaker, it probably will not create in the province of Saskatchewan any difference, any difference to the coffers of the provincial government. In fact, in fact, Mr. Speaker, we are having debate on this side of the House as to whether or not this may even increase, increase what is brought into the coffers of the Saskatchewan government if we just change the way we do business with the forestry sector just a little bit.

Now we have a jurisdiction in Canada, Mr. Speaker, that is making a bold decision. They are deciding that of all their allotments, all their allotments in their province, they're going to have those forestry companies that have been granted these allotments to put up 20 per cent of those allotments, Mr. Speaker, on a bid system.

Now how this is going to work then, Mr. Speaker, is that the company that has this allotment will also be allowed to bid, but other forestry players will also be able to bid on those allotments too. The highest bidder wins.

What it does, Mr. Speaker, is that it establishes a benchmark in that jurisdiction, right across the industry, as to what that timber is worth, what that timber is worth for stumpage, Mr. Speaker. That stumpage will flow into government coffers.

In reality, Mr. Speaker, it may actually raise stumpage fees in those jurisdictions. It may actually raise them, Mr. Speaker; more money into government coffers. What it has in all intents

and purposes of creating, Mr. Speaker, is getting around the trade injury duty that the United States has applied against that jurisdiction.

Now that jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker, they'll be paying a little higher stumpage fees but if you get rid of that trade injury duty, it'll actually be cheaper doing business there. It'll actually be cheaper to do business there.

What does that mean for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? Well, Mr. Speaker, what it means is, is that some of our players in the forest industry who sell into the United States . . . And there are a few of them and they sell very large volumes into the United States — I can think of Carrier Lumber; I can think of NorSask Lumber in Meadow Lake; Carrier Lumber, Mr. Speaker, in Prince Albert; I can think of Weyerhaeuser in Big River; very, very large players in this province. Not huge players from what the United States see as bringing product into the United States, but certainly creating a tremendous amount of jobs here in Saskatchewan and with very efficient mills, Mr. Speaker. These are three of some of the best forestry companies in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, what it's going to do is . . . They have long-term customers in the United States. Weyerhaeuser has a very good client, retail/wholesale client in the United States. Carrier Lumber has a very good, long-term, retail/wholesale customer in the United States. NorSask Lumber has a long-term consumer in the United States; it's retail/wholesale, Mr. Speaker.

Now if that consumer, if that consumer, Mr. Speaker, suddenly finds out that we have a neighbour in Canada that can provide that product just a little bit cheaper, well you know how business is done, Mr. Speaker. They're going to go there. They're going to go there, Mr. Speaker.

And what is that going to mean to the people of Saskatchewan? Well, Mr. Speaker, the forestry industry then is going to have to take a hard look at being able to do business in Saskatchewan when we have another player in Canada that is usurping all the rest of the other provinces.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is what this Bill should be talking of. It should be providing the forestry sector in Saskatchewan a significant leg up so that we are not usurped, by one of our neighbouring jurisdictions and other provinces, in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but providing a level playing field so that we can actually get a leg up. And what's wrong with that, Mr. Speaker? Provide the forestry sector in Saskatchewan with a leg up on their other competitors in Canada. Now we want to wish them all the best in the business world, the rest of the forestry sector in Canada, but, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan should look after the people of Saskatchewan. What's wrong with that, Mr. Speaker? Why not . . . Why can't we, as a government in Saskatchewan, give our forestry sector a leg up?

That's what this Bill should be talking about. That's what this minister should have been bringing before the House rather than have his, rather than have, Mr. Speaker, have his officials bring to us a Bill that kind of talks about giving the forestry sector a leg up but doesn't spell anything out in here.

He talked about, in his speech to the House the other day, Mr. Speaker, he talked about regulations. We'll do it by . . . We'll talk about this stuff, we'll have this Bill in place, we'll have this Bill in place, and he talked about in his speech, we'll have this Bill in place. We may not just proclaim it, but we'll have it sitting there, you know, we'll pass it and we'll have the Lieutenant Governor agree to it and . . . But we may not just enact it right away; we'll just have it sitting on the books just in case we need it. But what it'll do is . . . and it'll give the federal government a little more strength to operate from.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we know on this side of the House how much we should be depending upon the federal government to bail us out. And we heard this afternoon about how well the federal government is looking after us, and the provincial Minister of Agriculture saying well he doesn't know what's going on and the federal government hasn't notified him of too much yet and there are some things being proposed and he doesn't know very much about it.

Well, so you can imagine our enthusiasm — or complete lack of enthusiasm is the right term, Mr. Speaker — that if we have this kind of a wishy-washy Bill, Bill No. 43, that it's going to give this provincial government a bit of a leg up in order to help the federal government negotiate with the Americans.

Well what we should be doing, Mr. Speaker, is having the province of Saskatchewan and the Government of Saskatchewan looking after the people of Saskatchewan and not crossing their fingers and pointing at Ottawa to solve our problems here. That's what this Bill should be.

So, Mr. Speaker, as we read through the Bill and had it looked at by the forestry sector, and we're continuing to receive responses from the forestry sector, we don't see anything in here that's going to guarantee to the forestry sector any opportunity to get that trade injury duty sidelined. There's nothing in this Bill to indicate that. This Bill talks about helping the federal government. Well the federal government won't help us; we should be looking after us.

This Bill should be talking about setting aside allotted forestry lands on a yearly basis; on a yearly basis, Mr. Speaker, to help out the forestry sector get around the trade injury duty put on to us by the forestry sector.

We have talked to some of the players in the forestry sector. What they see needs to happen is to go to a big system. We need to go to a big system for some of our forestry sector. Not all of it. They don't think it's necessary to bid on every tree out in the provincial forests. What they think is that a portion of that, a portion of that, Mr. Speaker, could be put up for bid — it could be on an annual basis; it could be on a five-year basis or a ten-year basis — to try to provide, try to provide for the industry a base point, Mr. Speaker. It could be applied to this, to the province of Saskatchewan, to it's . . . (inaudible) . . . a base point of what that timber is actually worth standing.

Now nothing in this Bill, nothing is in this Bill to indicate to us that that's exactly . . . that's what's going to happen. Now the provincial government should be taking the initiative on having some land set aside for bid that will help us, Mr. Speaker, establish a base price as to what that timber is worth.

That's what happens, Mr. Speaker, when . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

Mr. Wiberg: — Well, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. And it appears as though we've hit a sore spot with the NDP government. They're just not comfortable, just not comfortable with getting into this idea of business. They don't seem to have a grasp of how business works. They want to control business. They want to own business. They want to run business. Their success rate has been less than minimal at best.

And so, Mr. Speaker, after all, when we take a look at this track record of this government, SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company) comes to mind and certainly the member from Northcote will remember that, the success of SPUDCO.

This Bill should be talking about the success, the expansion of the forest industry. Mr. Speaker, that's what this Bill should be addressing.

The forest industry in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is really only taking baby steps. And we need to grow the forestry sector in this province, Mr. Speaker, where . . . Actually, this side of the House believes we could grow the forestry sector by another 10,000 jobs, not cut by 5,000 jobs as indicated in this province by the NDP government but actually grow it by 10,000 jobs.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when you grow an industry by 10,000 jobs, the service sector grows by 20,000 jobs. That's what happens, Mr. Speaker — 30,000 more jobs in Saskatchewan. Young families working in Saskatchewan, paying taxes, contributing to Saskatchewan coffers, the Saskatchewan government coffers.

(15:15)

Now the member from Athabasca thinks that that's amusing, Mr. Speaker. He thinks that having people living and working in Saskatchewan is a joke. Well, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we know, we know that young people want to come to Saskatchewan and participate in the forestry sector.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that there are investors in the forestry sector that want to come to Saskatchewan and do business. But are they coming, Mr. Speaker?

Well where's the Alberta newsprint company? They aren't even on the radar screen any more. They actually wanted to set up shop, Mr. Speaker, in the Prince Alberta area. Nobody even knows where they are. What happened to them, Mr. Speaker?

I think, you know, some time in the near future, this government and this minister is going to have to answer that question. What happened? What happened to the Alberta newsprint company?

Is there anything in this Bill, anything in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, that will encourage corporate players, corporate investors — like the Alberta newsprint company — to come to Saskatchewan? Well on this side of the House, we don't see anything in this Bill.

Well, Mr. Speaker, these are the type of concerns that we as a Saskatchewan Party have about this Bill. This government should be using this opportunity to create business expansion in the forestry sector in this province. And instead at the last minute this NDP government hesitated, Mr. Speaker. They just couldn't give up control of business in this province. This government wants to control business in this province.

We say, Mr. Speaker, that the people who work in the forestry sector, that those people who invest in the forestry sector, have the best knowledge to create wealth in the forestry sector, Mr. Speaker — and not the NDP government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I followed the comments by the minister, I noticed that the minister talked about the people of Saskatchewan receiving a fair return, a fair return for our resources.

And certainly on this side of the House we want to try to find out through the next few days, and should this Bill ever get to Committee of the Whole — and, Mr. Speaker, of course we know that we've started to hear rumours that there may be some pressure on the government to just leave this sit on the order table — we want the minister to be able to explain to us how this Bill is going to be able to provide to the people of Saskatchewan a fair return for the harvest of Crown timber.

What this Bill talks about, Mr. Speaker, is the provincial government, provincial government having a forestry player in this province, Mr. Speaker, prepare a plan to harvest timber, bring it into their yards, and then decide well we really have no use for this, for this timber so maybe what we'll do is we'll ask the government if we can put it up for tender; we'll put it up for tender. The government calls this establishing a fair market value.

Well that timber, Mr. Speaker, is in someone's yard. Fair market value for that timber needs to be established for a mature forest standing, Mr. Speaker. That's how this Bill needs to be structured. We don't see that anywhere in this Bill. This Bill talks about harvested logs, harvested sawlogs to be used for softwood lumber. This Bill needs to be talking about unharvested, unharvested sawlogs for the softwood industry. That's what this Bill needs to be talking about, Mr. Speaker.

Why couldn't, why couldn't this government take the chance, take a chance, and allow some of the yearly harvest allotment be put up for tender? It wouldn't be a big deal, Mr. Speaker; there are fully qualified people in this province who would be able to handle that chore for them. They would be able to set up an on-line system maybe, Mr. Speaker; something real simple where we wouldn't have to gather the entire forestry sector in a single building somewhere and point out tracts of land and they could bid on it to be able to harvest that over the next five years and what have. They could probably do this on-line, Mr. Speaker, they could simply do it from their office.

Now do you imagine that, Mr. Speaker, being able to continue to do business as a businessman from your office. Now it's certainly, of course, something that the NDP wouldn't understand because they would prefer to jump on the government planes and fly all over the province and cut ribbons.

But, Mr. Speaker, this Bill should have provided an opportunity for the government to establish fair market value for our standing timber. It would, Mr. Speaker, give the forest industry in Saskatchewan such a significant advantage in the softwood lumber sector, Mr. Speaker, that maybe, just maybe, Mr. Speaker, we would be able to usurp that trade injury duty applied to the forestry sector in Saskatchewan so that we can reduce that huge cost to the forestry sector.

And, Mr. Speaker, that would allow the forestry sector to be able to compete on a playing field with their counterparts, with their major counterparts in the United States of America — those are the people we have to do business against. That's where our competition is coming from. Not only competing with companies and provinces in Canada, Mr. Speaker, we have to compete much, much more globally then.

This Bill could have gone down that road, Mr. Speaker. It could allow the forestry sector to have such an advantage in the consumer retail market with our largest customer, the United States, that there would be investment pouring into Saskatchewan, that people would be moving to Saskatchewan, that the Saskatchewan Party agenda to grow the province by 100,000 people in 10 years would be too small a number, that we could actually double the population of Saskatchewan in the next 30 years. Can you imagine that, Mr. Speaker — doubling the population of Saskatchewan over the next 30 years? This Bill could have led us in that direction, Mr. Speaker.

But no, Mr. Speaker, the minister's office was not comfortable with that. They weren't comfortable with the opportunity to be able to give the forestry sector the opportunity to compete in the global market. Mr. Speaker, it is this lack of vision, it is this lack of vision by this NDP government that is going to bring a great deal of concern, a great deal of concern to the forestry sector, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that the member from Cumberland is not clear on what this Bill is about. So why don't, why don't we spend a little time, Mr. Speaker, helping to enlighten him? We know that in the constituency of Cumberland there's a significant amount of forestry that could be taking place — it could be taking place, Mr. Speaker — and in fact there was a company that wanted to come here and do business. But at every turn, every turn, Mr. Speaker, there was a roadblock put in front of them.

That member had every opportunity to be able to help that company negotiate into Saskatchewan to provide jobs, provide jobs in his constituency — good quality, high-paying forestry jobs in his constituency — and he didn't do, he didn't do one thing to help his constituency. Instead he put roadblocks up on this company so that they couldn't come here and invest, and now they're not here.

When you get an opportunity to help your constituents, Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent upon you to do that, and not as the member from Cumberland did and put roadblocks in front of investment in the province of Saskatchewan and in your constituency.

So, Mr. Speaker, we want to . . . We also want the people of Saskatchewan and present members of the NDP government to

understand that what's lacking in this Bill . . . Now of course we hear the member from Meadow Lake wanting to participate in the debate. And certainly sometime in the next few days we're going to give him an opportunity because, after all, I'm sure that there are forestry sector people in his constituency that are going to be very concerned about this Bill. They may have already let him know, Mr. Speaker, what they think of this Bill.

And maybe in debate, Mr. Speaker, in the next few days on this Bill, the member from Meadow Lake will be able to get up and explain to this House what the forestry sector in the constituency of Meadow Lake thinks of this Bill. That's what he should do, Mr. Speaker. Because certainly we're starting to hear, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House that those people in the Meadow Lake constituency who are involved in the forestry sector have a great deal of concern about this Bill.

Now they're going to be sending to us their written comments in the next few days. And we're looking forward to that because we think it's important, we think it's important, Mr. Speaker, that their concerns be brought forward to this legislature so that the people of the constituency of Meadow Lake, that the people of the province of Saskatchewan understand that this Bill does nothing more than talk about the trade injury duty, Mr. Speaker, and it really, it really has nothing to do with helping the forestry sector. It really . . . (inaudible) . . . to help the forestry sector to get around, around forestry investment in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in this Bill, in this Bill there are, there's some portion . . . there's one portion that actually the minister decides to define what a sawlog is. Well we find that hugely amusing because we certainly know that in his department we have concerns about some of the advice he might be getting as to what a sawlog is. We're thinking, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House that the forestry sector kind of knows what a sawlog is. Because after all, this, Mr. Speaker, is where the trade injury duty is being applied. It's being applied to softwood lumber.

It's not being applied to OSB, oriented strand board. It's not being applied to ply board, plywood created in Carrot River. It's not being applied to finger joint material. Mr. Speaker, that's when you take the ends of trees — and some are two feet long, some are three feet long, some are four feet long — you cut them into two-by-fours or two-by-threes and then you splice them together to create a two-by-eight or a two-by-ten. And that trade injury duty does not apply to those materials. Mr. Speaker, it does not apply to some finished products, to the finished product.

What if a small company . . . and I know of some that, Mr. Speaker, that want to do some small-scale manufacturing. I met a gentleman who wanted to build rafters, and be able to ship them into a retail market, in northern Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, this product is considered a finished product and is not subject to the trade injury duty. So, Mr. Speaker, we should be, we should be helping those companies to try to do what's best to get into . . . around the trade injury duty.

But this government says that they want to define a softwood log. But you know, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to a softwood log, you find some of the larger softwood species in this province — and we could take a look at white spruce or black

spruce and some of them get to quite a large diameter in this province — the bottom part of the tree, Mr. Speaker, is actually considered in the logging industry as a peeler. And that material, Mr. Speaker, is used for plywood. Well plywood, Mr. Speaker, then is not subject to the trade injury duty.

So the bottom part of that tree then needs to be very carefully eliminated, eliminated from, Mr. Speaker, this bid system because it doesn't apply, Mr. Speaker. Because the Americans are only concerned about our softwood lumber, dimensional softwood lumber — two-by-threes, two-by-fours, two-by-sixes, three-by-fours, three-by-sixes, three-by-tens — that's what they're concerned about. They're concerned that we're providing an unfair advantage in that market.

So we have to be very careful in the definition of a softwood log, a sawlog, so that we don't apply, don't apply across the entire main what this could be, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the softwood trade injury.

So, Mr. Speaker, we also know that the softwood duty does not apply to OSB, but then OSB, Mr. Speaker, is created from a hardwood. And I just want the member from Athabasca to know that the trade injury duty is only applied to softwood lumber, not hardwood, Mr. Speaker. And OSB, Mr. Speaker, is not subject to the trade injury duty because it is made from a hardwood, one. And number two, Mr. Speaker, it is also a . . . more of a finished product, value added, and therefore is not subject, Mr. Speaker.

Well I thought I'd just help the member from Cumberland to understand that, Mr. Speaker, so that he knows that places such as Carrot River don't need to worry about that. Tolko Industries have less to worry about the trade injury duty, Mr. Speaker.

(15:30)

So I think, Mr. Speaker, it is this kind of lack of clear definition when it comes to defining, defining softwood sawlogs that is raising some concern in the logging industry, in the forestry industry in Saskatchewan. This government wants . . . leaves this section of the Act, this clause so wide open that it could be interpreted by a different minister on a different day, differently.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's why you have legislation, Mr. Speaker. You outline in the legislation very, very clearly how this is going to apply. You don't leave it up to . . . you don't leave it up to regulations that can be changed in a minister's office at a whim.

You want it clearly outlined in legislation so that our consumer — our consumer, the United States of America — can see it upfront, clearly. This is what the Government of Saskatchewan is doing, this is how they're going to get around the softwood tariff, Mr. . . . the trade injury duty, Mr. Speaker; and we can play ball with the forestry sector in the province of Saskatchewan. That's what needs to be clearly outlined in this Bill.

Which keeps me on a point here that, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about . . . (inaudible) . . . jurisdiction in Canada, wanting to clearly define the establishment of a base price for their stand of

trees.

If we don't clearly outline, Mr. Speaker, the exact amount of how much the forestry sector is going to be put up for bid, Mr. Speaker, on a yearly or a five-year basis, then we still haven't, we still haven't been able to demonstrate to our consumer — our number one consumer, the United States of America — that we are establishing a clear and identifiable base price for softwood lumber and the stumpage, Mr. Speaker, so that they know that we have usurped their argument for an unfair trade advantage.

That's what, that's what needs to be very clearly defined in this Bill, Mr. Speaker. And I think that if this government had done that, say they'd have put 5 per cent . . . We'll say we'll put up . . . 5 per cent of our allotment every year will be put up for bid, and we'll use that say for this year. And next year we'll put up 5 per cent for a five-year allotment, and it's just wide open for bidding; anyone can bid on that.

Of course this government should know about bidding. After all they're the ones that wanted to get involved with some . . . with some Clickabid opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

I think, Mr. Speaker, this government should know enough about that that if we'd have done that, if we'd have set up a portion of our forestry sector aside to a bid system — a clearly defined allotment of X amount of hectares or an X amount of cubic metres — if we'd have went down that road, we would have been able to establish a definitive base price that could be applied, Mr. Speaker, across the main to the softwood lumber industry which, Mr. Speaker, would then be able to give the forestry sector such an advantage over our competitors to the east of us, to the west of us, to the south of us, to the north of us, that consumers would be coming to Saskatchewan to get our high-quality Saskatchewan products, Mr. Speaker.

That's what could have happened if this Bill had been done right — done right, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are some concerns that the minister, and whoever that may be in the near future, Mr. Speaker, is going to give himself some pretty significant powers to nullify an agreement with a specific member of the forestry sector. And the forestry sector, they must have some concerns about this I would assume.

Let's take an example, Mr. Speaker. What if a management company — Mistik Management comes to mind — has put together a five-year plan for harvesting a sector of the Saskatchewan forest in the northwest. And they've invested significant amount of dollars in this, Mr. Speaker. There will have been environmental impact studies done, which they do out of their own corporate coffers, and there have been planning done for roads, Mr. Speaker. They may even have gone so far as to do some road building in that area, Mr. Speaker.

And then with 15 days notice — with 15 days notice — the minister can come along to a forestry partner such as this and say to them, in writing, just send them a note, saying we've decided that this chunk of forest over here, Mr. Speaker, we've decided to put that up for bid. Or we want you to put it up for bid because the government is not putting anything up for bid.

They want the forestry sector to sell amongst themselves to establish a base price.

And that we find a great deal . . . (inaudible) . . . So a company or a management partner such as Mistik Management has put significant financial input into developing access to this property so that they can harvest our over-mature Saskatchewan forest to create jobs in the northwest, to create wealth in the northwest; and the minister with 15 days notice can simply say, well no, we've decided to do something a little different.

So what is in this Bill that will provide any enthusiasm to the forestry sector should the minister decide to do that? Well the minister has said, well we'll reimburse, we'll reimburse their stumpage fees that they've invested in it.

But, Mr. Speaker, they've invested more than the stumpage fees in this. They've had people working there with good . . . high-quality trained people, good salaries. That's lost. They've had environmental impact studies done; and you take Mistik, that must cost them hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to do this. That's lost — no reimbursement for that. They simply do this out of the goodness of their heart.

I would be suspicious, Mr. Speaker, that Mistik Management won't be that terribly excited about this. In fact they may have already contacted the member from Meadow Lake and the member from Athabasca on this, that they have some concerns about these kind of things.

I think that might have already happened because I know we're going to hear back from that, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be hearing back what they think about this and who they've talked to and when they were talked to about this Bill. The forestry sector is going to be telling us when they were talked to about this Bill.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, this NDP government is going to get quite a shock when they find out that the Saskatchewan Party again has done their job and opened this government up to the light of day, Mr. Speaker, because after all, we know, Mr. Speaker, that this NDP government wants to go home. They want to go home. They've had enough of this. They've had enough of question period. They've had enough of reporters asking them questions. They want us to go home.

Well actually, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan want them to go home right after the next election. So they can just call an election, Mr. Speaker, anytime they want and then they can go home for as long as they want because there'll be a Saskatchewan Party government running this province, Mr. Speaker. And the people of Saskatchewan are more than looking forward to that, Mr. Speaker.

And we certainly won't be bringing, we certainly won't be bringing inconsequential Bills, Mr. Speaker, like Bill No. 43, Mr. Speaker. And that member from Prince Albert Northcote knows full well that this Bill No. 43 is one of the most inconsequential Bills to help the forestry sector that ever came in this province. This is not going to help the forestry sector, Mr. Speaker. This is only going to help the NDP government maintain control of Saskatchewan's forest industry.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're not sure why the government, at the eleventh hour again, would come with the Bill with such a significant impact on the forestry sector, a Bill, that we're starting to hear back now from our forestry partners in the province, that is going to have more hindrance, more hindrance to the forestry sector than is already placed upon them.

Now let's talk about some of the hindrance in the forestry sector, Mr. Speaker, so that people of Saskatchewan can realize how this Bill, Bill No. 43, is going to further burden the forestry sector in this province.

Mr. Speaker, did you know that there's a mill just outside the city limits of Prince Albert — I guess it's on the edge, I'm not sure if it's in the city or just on the edge of the city — Wapawekka Lumber. It's preparing to start up again. Because of the slowdown in the forestry sector because of the trade injury duty, it was temporarily closed so that they could clear up some of their lumber they had sitting around, and now they're going to be calling workers back to work.

But every day, every day that mill was closed, Mr. Speaker, they paid corporate capital tax. That mill didn't earn one dime but it earned money for this NDP government through the corporate capital tax.

Mr. Speaker, they're talking about another mill being closed down in this province for a short period of time to help alleviate supplies, Mr. Speaker. It too will continue to pay the corporate capital tax, Mr. Speaker, and so that this . . . Mr. Speaker, this government will continue to drive away investment in this province because of their insensitivity to the forestry sector.

Bill No. 43 does nothing, Mr. Speaker, to alleviate those concerns. It is these type of concerns, Mr. Speaker, that is holding back, that is holding back investment in the forestry sector.

Now certainly the government has taken, has taken significant credit — has taken significant credit — for what's happened in the forestry sector. Well let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, most of those plans — most of those plans — started to see the light of day in the 1980s. They started to see the light of day in the 1980s and were finished in the 1990s and this NDP government is taking credit for something that was developed prior to that. They're taking credit for the forest industry's wanting to be here in Saskatchewan doing business, Mr. Speaker.

Do you know that, Mr. Speaker, that what happened when a company tried to come to Saskatchewan and this government told them, this government told them that the only way that they would be allowed to do business in this province is if they took government money? Nobody ever found out from this government. We've asked questions whether this company even wanted government money. The government insisted: if you want to do business here, you have to take our money.

That's taxpayers' money at risk, putting taxpayers' money at risk for absolutely no reason other than these . . . this NDP government wanting to be tycoons.

Mr. Speaker, it is this lack of faith — it is this lack of faith, Mr. Speaker — in the forestry sector that is going to have the

businesses and investors taking a hard look at investing elsewhere rather than in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this Bill isn't doing anything to alleviate those fears.

This government continues to operate at the eleventh hour; this isn't the first time it happened. They want to do a little project in Prince Albert. The only way they could see, the only way they thought they could pull that off, Mr. Speaker, was on the eleventh hour. At the eleventh hour of course they had to get something going, you know, Mr. Speaker.

After all they don't seem to be able to do anything in the light of day. In fact they want to all go home. They all want to go home, Mr. Speaker, rather than this. This should be a significant Bill, this should be a significant Bill to promote the forestry sector in the province of Saskatchewan and this government wants to go home.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if they think this Bill is so significant then they should be prepared to stay here for the next few days and continue to debate from their perspective the merits of this Bill. We certainly, we've certainly gone through the minister's remarks. There's nothing in his remarks to enthuse us on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill is going to benefit the forestry sector in this province.

It is that kind of lack of initiative to promote the forestry sector in this province, Mr. Speaker, that concerns the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, that concerns the forestry sector, that concerns those people who work on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker, in the province of Saskatchewan. That's, that's why we need to have some significant debate on this Bill, Bill No. 43, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why the Saskatchewan Party is going to continue to work with the forestry sector to get their input on this Bill. And that's why the Saskatchewan Party will ensure that the people of Saskatchewan are going to be able to get an opportunity on a daily basis, on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker, to see how this NDP government operates, or more appropriately, doesn't operate.

Which is why, Mr. Speaker, this government wants to go home, because they don't want the people of Saskatchewan to see how they operate. They want to go home, operate by orders in council so that the people of Saskatchewan do not see what this government is doing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, investment in the forest industry is a significant, significant sector in the province of Saskatchewan. It brings jobs; it brings wealth into the Saskatchewan government coffers, Mr. Speaker — that's what the forestry sector does.

So what's in this Bill to encourage private sector investment in the province of Saskatchewan? Well, Mr. Speaker, what we appear to be seeing in this Bill, what we're seeing in this Bill is an opportunity to actually drive private industry investment out of the province of Saskatchewan. That's what we're seeing in this Bill.

(15:45)

Why wouldn't, why wouldn't this NDP government — or even

more appropriately, Mr. Speaker, the member from Prince Albert Northcote who actually has a pulp mill in his constituency and a paper mill in his constituency — be out supporting, supporting, Mr. Speaker, the forest industry rather than supporting a Bill that attacks the forestry sector?

Now why wouldn't the member from Prince Albert Northcote be doing that, Mr. Speaker? That's what would seem to be appropriate. When you have a pulp mill and a paper mill in your constituency, you'd think that you'd be working hard — I would be, Mr. Speaker, I would be working hard for that sector — on their behalf because it brings high-paying, quality jobs, long-term jobs, careers, careers to constituents in your constituency.

But no, what happens, Mr. Speaker? The minister is approached, the member from Prince Albert Northcote is approached with concerns about the forestry sector. And what does he do, Mr. Speaker? He runs, he runs to the bureaucracy and saying what should I do about this?

Well who's running this province, Mr. Speaker? On this side of the House we believe that the government should be running the House, not party hacks and flacks. Is that where this came from, Mr. Speaker? Is that where this Bill came from? Does this Bill come from a group of people who are more concerned about controlling the forestry sector rather than creating opportunity in the province of Saskatchewan?

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's what we're seeing in this Bill. We're seeing a government that is so afraid to turn a little bit of control over to the private sector — to create jobs, to create wealth, to create opportunity — that they come with a wishy-washy Bill that talks about the trade injury duty but does not clearly define how it can be overcome.

The people of Saskatchewan, the forestry sector doesn't want to talk about trade injury duty. They want hard-core solutions. There are no hard-core solutions in this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why the Saskatchewan Party wants to continue to work with the private sector, the private forestry sector, to come up with solid solutions. To not only save the forestry sector but to create such an advantage in Saskatchewan — a natural advantage, one of our clear natural advantages that we have over a multitude of other jurisdictions — that consumers will want to buy our products, that investors will want to come here, Mr. Speaker, and invest in Saskatchewan, create quality, high-paying careers in Saskatchewan, so that the forestry sector will be a significant part of helping to grow Saskatchewan by 100,000 people in 10 years.

That's what this Bill should be trying to address, Mr. Speaker, rather than having a government-appointed bureaucracy at the upper levels who are more concerned about protecting their jobs on a day-to-day basis rather than looking after the forestry sector. That's what's not addressed in this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that a Saskatchewan Party is going to be willing to work with the forestry sector. The Saskatchewan Party and a Saskatchewan Party government will make the decisions. We're not going to have party hacks and flacks that are appointed to make decisions for us. We're

perfectly capable of making decisions. You know very well, Mr. Speaker, you take members like the member from Rosthern, perfectly capable of being able to work with the private sector to make sound business decisions, Mr. Speaker.

So in order that we can grow Saskatchewan, one of the areas will be the forestry sector. One of the most significant areas will be the forestry sector, Mr. Speaker; that's what we need to happen. Even the member from Kindersley — although, Mr. Speaker, we know that there's not a lot of trees in the Kindersley constituency — at least he understands the business concepts to promote the forest industry, that this could be a big saviour, that this sector could be a big saviour for the province of Saskatchewan. That's what we need to see in this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think what we want to do is I would like to go through the forestry sector on a more localized basis to see how it kind of helps . . . how this helps . . . how this Bill is going to help or hinder, Mr. Speaker, the . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Why is the member from Prince Albert Northcote, the Government House Leader, on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I've been listening very closely to the member opposite, the second reading of this Act which is an Act that is intended to assist this province and the industry, the forestry industry, in assessing the American markets, The Forest Resources Management Amendment Act, 2003.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the debate coming from that member is clearly nothing to do with this piece of legislation. It's dealing with trade, it's dealing with access to trade, and rules by which the allocation in the forestry industry operates here in this province.

And I would ask you to rule and to ask that member to stay at least close to the Bill.

Mr. Heppner: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, with leave to respond. I've been listening with substantial interest and attention to the speaker and the issues that need to be addressed that are in that particular Bill. And that's what we're discussing, where this deals with the Bill. It deals with trade, it deals with access, it deals with softwood, it deals with companies and what they can do with their particular allotment of lumber, when they can pass it on and when they can't — all very critical, Mr. Speaker, to growing this province, all very critical to having a change in how the softwood and how the industries are being dealt with.

And so I find that absolutely everything he said relates to this particular Bill.

The Speaker: — I thank members for their intervention. On second readings we ordinarily allow a great deal of latitude. I want to ask the member however to tighten up his script a bit, and I also ask the member to refrain from denigrating anybody in the civil service in the course of debating policy in the House.

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So I think it's important, I think it's important from my perspective, and forestry is a big part of the constituency of Saskatchewan

Rivers. This Bill, Bill No. 43, is going to have significant, going to have significant impact on it.

And certainly if the member from Prince Albert Northcote wants to participate in the debate, the Saskatchewan Party opposition will be most pleased to allow that opportunity in due course.

But, Mr. Speaker, in the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers, the trade injury duty is having a great deal of negative effect upon the smaller forest sector participants, and because of that trade injury tariff is that what we're seeing is that small logging operations, forestry operations — whether they were primary producers right in the forest harvesting the trees or whether they started into value-added, doing some sawing, Mr. Speaker, and whether there was also planing involved — when you get into the significant trade injury duty that was put on the forestry sector in this province, Mr. Speaker, I think, I think it's important that the people of Saskatchewan and the NDP government understand the negativity that has been brought upon my constituency specifically. And so I think it's important that we just take a few minutes to go through that.

Now on the east side of my constituency, Mr. Speaker, we have out in an area — Love, Garrick, Choiceland, White Fox — we have some small forestry operators out there that over the years have done, have done some good work in providing a little bit of employment for their neighbours. You know they need some of the young people to operate the skidders, they need some of the young people to work in the timber yards where they're sawing.

And, Mr. Speaker, when you end up with such a significant tariff such as this trade injury duty has impacted on the province of Saskatchewan, they suddenly, they suddenly, Mr. Speaker, reach a level where this duty has put them at risk of being able to operate, and that's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because these small operators provide jobs on a more localized basis. They bring wealth back into small communities.

Maybe it's not the huge wealth of a Mistik Management, NorSask lumber, or Carrier Lumber, or Weyerhaeuser, but they still bring, they still bring . . . have a significant impact upon their small communities. There's jobs created. Young people working in Saskatchewan.

When those opportunities are lost, when they get a little bit of timberland for their forestry operations and then suddenly, you know they're trying to sell into a market that is so negatively impacted, and it's felt right across North America, Mr. Speaker — this trade injury duty is felt right across North America; it's not only selling into the United States, it's felt here — is that what happens then is that these small operations need to tighten their belts and they tighten their belt right to the point, Mr. Speaker, where they need to start laying people off.

And suddenly the spending power in those small communities is immediately impacted. If you have a small operator who is suddenly, you know . . . who had hired maybe six, eight, or ten people and he's got to go down to two or three, that's going to have a significant impact on a small community.

Because after all we're not talking about communities the size

of Swift Current or Melville, we're talking about communities the size of . . . you know that of 150 or even 75, like you take the community of Love. And all of a sudden you know, Mr. Speaker, this has a significant impact on the local repair shop, it has a significant impact on some of the other smaller local businesses, Mr. Speaker, because those people aren't there spending money in their community.

These young people, for all their vim and vigour, you know they . . . Friday night comes, they want a box of beer, well suddenly they don't have the money for a box of beer. So what do they do, Mr. Speaker? Well there's nothing for them at home; they go to Alberta.

Now I know, Mr. Speaker, we're not supposed to talk about our young people going to Alberta and how right things are there. But the Saskatchewan Party would like to see these young people staying here, working in the forestry sector in Saskatchewan and not Alberta.

That's why Bill No. 43 needs to have a hard look at it, a hard look at by the forestry sector, by the forestry sector, Mr. Speaker, so that the people of Saskatchewan understand that this Bill is really not going to have the impact that it needs to have for the forestry sector, that is needed to protect jobs in our communities in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, closer to my home community at Paddockwood-Christopher Lake area, there's a couple of smaller operators in there who actually have found some niche markets with hardwood. They're moving along with that. They've also found some . . . They had found, up until this trade injury duty, some niche markets in the softwood lumber area.

One of the foresters was able to get an allotment for softwood sawlogs, Mr. Speaker, so that he could . . . He was building . . . or cutting material, Mr. Speaker, for the pallet industry in the United States and was doing quite well at it. So you can imagine his alarm, Mr. Speaker, when all of a sudden this trade injury duty was applied to the province of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan lost its exemption from the softwood tariff that had been generally applied prior to that and was suddenly . . . and suddenly you know he was out of business, Mr. Speaker. He couldn't compete any more because he was having to pay the softwood tariff, the trade injury duty, Mr. Speaker, to his American competitors. And it provided to the American competitors an unfair advantage.

Now, Mr. Speaker, jobs were lost because of that in my constituency. Maybe they weren't big-paying jobs but they were reasonable; the young people were quite happy with them. You know, Mr. Speaker, it provided an opportunity for these young people to earn a quiet living in my home area. They spent their money. Many of us understand quite clearly that young people are quite liberal in their spending habits. That money stayed in the local communities — it was spent in the local grocery stores; it was spent in the local hotels. They needed more clothes so they were buying, they were buying, Mr. Speaker. They needed a better vehicle. That money was staying in our home communities. Those jobs are lost. We lost those young people to Alberta, Mr. Speaker; they went and found other opportunities. That's sad.

This Bill does not address that, Mr. Speaker. That's what concerns the Saskatchewan Party. That's what concerns the people of Saskatchewan. That's what concerns the forestry sector. That this Bill is so wishy-washy, it's just not strong enough to protect our forestry sector from those external forces.

We need to understand, Mr. Speaker, that this is a global market. We're not isolated. As much as the NDP, Mr. Speaker, would like to build a wall around this province and to keep people out, the fact of the matter is what we need, Mr. Speaker, is we need to be tearing down those walls. We need to join that global market. We need to show the people of North America and the world that we have a Saskatchewan . . . we have a Saskatchewan advantage. You know what, Mr. Speaker? That's what we see. That's what we need.

(16:00)

And certainly from the, certainly from the remarks we're hearing from the government side of the House, on this side of the House we clearly understand that they have no idea what's in this Bill. They have no idea. They have no idea what that . . . That's why the Saskatchewan Party, unlike the NDP government, is carrying out due diligence.

So what's the government's response? We got backbenchers on the other side with disparaging remarks. That's what we're getting from this NDP government. Mr. Speaker, if that's the best they can come up with is disparaging remarks, imagine what the people of Saskatchewan are thinking — imagine what the people of Saskatchewan are thinking. This is a government that got into power by accident, that has tried to set an agenda to move this province even further left. And instead, when people question them on their motives, we come up with disparaging remarks.

What they should be coming up with, Mr. Speaker, is a clear and definitive plan, not asking the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker — not asking the Saskatchewan Party — to solve their problems in the forestry sector. They should be coming up with the solutions themselves.

But, Mr. Speaker, on the west side of the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers, forestry is big business — big business, Mr. Speaker — hundreds of jobs, very well-paying jobs, Mr. Speaker. And so what's happening there, Mr. Speaker?

What has this trade injury duty done to that community? It has created such an aura of uncertainty that there is . . . that the people in this area are unsure whether they should try to stay with the forestry sector in Saskatchewan. Should we stay with it just in case it improves? Should we stay with it in case there's a quick election, Mr. Speaker, and this NDP government is gone, or should we start looking, should we start looking for careers elsewhere?

It is these kind of people that are going to take a look, are going to take a look at this Bill, Mr. Speaker, and say, what's in this for our community? What's in this for my family? Is this, Mr. Speaker, is this the type of Bill that is going to put confidence in the industry in my community that we're going to be able to stay in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? Is that what's in here, Mr. Speaker? These people aren't going to see that. They're not

going to see that, Mr. Speaker.

Is there going to be the confidence that we're going to establish a definitive benchmark for the pricing for stumpage fees outside the government, Mr. Speaker? That's what these people are looking for on the west side of my constituency. They're calling me and saying, we got this Bill coming . . . you got this Bill coming, you're going to have to debate it. What's in it for me?

Well we've been going through this, we've been going through this, Mr. Speaker. We've read this Bill. We've sent it out to the forestry sector. We can't find . . . Good news is not coming back on this, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I can't . . . I'm going to, in all honesty, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to have to tell these people that this government is not bold enough, is not bold enough, Mr. Speaker, to be able to set a definitive direction in forestry that will ensure long-term careers, long-term investment in the forestry sector in Saskatchewan. That's unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, what I'm going to have to tell them. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not looking forward to that day, and that day is on me right now and I'm going to have to do that.

I'm not the only member that's going to have to do that. Right across the Parkland area and into the North, we're going to have to do that. The future member from Meadow Lake is going to have to do that — Ron Dosdall. The future member from Athabasca, Greg Ross, is going to have to do that. The member from Rosthern-Shellbrook is going to have to do that. I'm going to have to do that. Allan Kerpan, the next member from Carrot River Valley, is going to have to do that, Mr. Speaker.

We're all going to have to say to our constituents that this Bill is so weak and this government was so unwilling, so unwilling to be able to work with the forestry sector, to work with the forestry sector to create strength, to create strength in the forestry sector, Mr. Speaker, so that the people of Saskatchewan would be able to go into the global markets, Mr. Speaker, with so much of an advantage, with a natural Saskatchewan advantage that we would be able to usurp, we'd be able to usurp, Mr. Speaker, we'd be able to usurp what other jurisdictions are not doing in their part of the world.

We need to start looking after Saskatchewan first and not worrying about what other jurisdictions are doing. Examples have been set. They're going to get a leg up on us, Mr. Speaker, and we can't allow that to happen in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, the member from Prince Albert Northcote thinks that this is such a good Bill. If this was such a good Bill, why wasn't it introduced — oh — in say, April? It could have been introduced in April . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Now the member from Regina South is talking about, we couldn't get a deal reached. Well imagine that, an NDP government unable to reach a deal.

We heard the Minister of Agriculture get up on a daily basis; he can't reach a deal on anything. We get the member from Prince Albert Northcote getting up and having to apologize to the House. This is the . . . for the deals that he's made. The people of Saskatchewan are extremely leery about this government trying to make deals.

We had to wait to the last minute . . . They had to wait to the last minute to make a deal. They just couldn't get a deal made. We don't know who they made the deal with. We certainly know that the forestry sector is not excited about this Bill so obviously they couldn't have arranged a deal with them. So who'd they reach a deal with? They reached a deal with the federal government. They want the federal government to save our forestry sector.

The federal government can't even save themselves, Mr. Speaker. They can't save Western Canada from problems with the livestock industry. So how much, Mr. Speaker, are we supposed to . . . How are we supposed to trust this government to be able to turn to the federal government to save the softwood trade dispute?

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party is not prepared to wait for the federal government and Bill No. 43 . . . and this weak and ineffective Bill No. 43 to save the forestry sector.

What we're saying, Mr. Speaker, is that this Bill should have been strong enough, this Bill should have been strong enough right from the get-go that we would bypass, we would bypass the federal government. And we would have, that we would be at the negotiating table — not the federal government on our behalf — not having us, not having this government sending representation to the softwood debate meetings, and not even being informed where the meetings are being held and being left outside in the rain. We would actually be at the table because we'd be the ones negotiating.

So that's what, that's what should have been in this Bill. But what now . . . But, you see, this government, and the member from Prince Albert Northcote he said, well it's somebody else's responsibility to look to after . . . it's somebody else's responsibility to look after our softwood lumber.

Well, Mr. Speaker, he's sooner going to find out in the next provincial election that it was his responsibility to look after the softwood lumber injury in this province. And he should have been the one looking after the softwood lumber sector in his constituency and he dropped the ball again. That's what he's going to find out in the next provincial election.

That's why, that's why those members over there should have been sitting down with the minister from Environment and Resource Management and saying, you better structure a Bill that's strong enough to protect our forest industry and not be wishy-washy, and not be dancing around the issue, and not saying we're going to hold meetings, and not saying we're going to talk about this some more and we'll bring some stuff up to the table, and who's going to bring the doughnuts and who's going to bring the coffee.

This Bill should have been definitive. We'll have X amount of allotment that's going up for bid on a yearly basis or a biannual basis or a triannual basis. That's what this Bill should have been saying, Mr. Speaker.

There is nothing in here to say that there's going to be anything to solve the softwood trade injury duty for the province of Saskatchewan. All they're saying is, is that we'll put this in place and maybe, and maybe the federal government will be

able to use this as a, see Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan is thinking about this, they're thinking about it.

We don't sell softwood lumber to Ottawa. Our consumer, our primary consumer is the United States of America. You know that's what we need, Mr. Speaker. We need to prepare a Bill in this province that will deal with our consumer and not worry about, not worry about what the federal government may or may not do for us. Because we certainly know to date, Mr. Speaker, we certainly know to date that the federal government's ability to look after the people of Saskatchewan when it comes to the softwood trade injury duty, that the federal government has not done one thing to solve that problem.

So having a Bill that's saying we're concerned about it is not good enough. Why, why cannot we join what other jurisdictions are thinking about, why can't we be the first to the plate saying we want into that American market, we want into that American market with enthusiasm, Mr. Speaker, so that we can have a competitive advantage, a competitive advantage for the people of Saskatchewan, for the people who work in the forest industry, for the people who invest in the forest industry? That's what this Bill should have been about.

But as usual the minister from Environment and Resource Management was unable to do that, was unable to convince his department, was unable to convince his department that forestry is important in Saskatchewan. Can you imagine that, Mr. Speaker? A department that looks after forestry that doesn't think forestry's that important. You want to hold meetings so you find ways to restrict the forest industry. They don't want to give us a leg's up.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that the members on the government side of the House understand clearly the devastation that has already been wreaked on the forest industry in Saskatchewan; that further damage will happen to the forestry sector unless we get aggressive and start to think about saving it, we start to think about growing it. Bill No. 43, Mr. Speaker, doesn't indicate any of that.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the forestry sector is starting to tell us that this Bill is an attack on the forestry sector, that this Bill will further hinder the ability to do business in Saskatchewan. We can't afford — we can't afford, Mr. Deputy Speaker — to hinder the forestry sector in this province.

We're already hindering mining development. We're already only doing nothing more than discussing what could be happening in the diamond mining sector. The government's only willing to talk about it. We need to be aggressive.

The chance was here, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the chance was here. Bill No. 43 could have set a vision. We could have set a vision, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that would have given Saskatchewan's forestry sector such an effective advantage when it comes to doing business in a global market. Mr. Deputy Speaker, people would have been pouring into Saskatchewan to do business here. We'd of had to fix our highways because they'd have been coming in here so fast; that's what we'd been having to do. There'd be so much money pouring into government coffers from forestry revenues, from personal income tax, from corporate taxes, that this is . . . a

Saskatchewan Party government would have to pay down debt. That's probably what we'd have to do.

That's what this Bill should have been talking about, Mr. Speaker, growing the forestry sector so that it becomes such a significant impact in this province, Mr. Speaker, that the forestry sector will be second to no one in a global market, Mr. Speaker. We would be second to no one.

When you start doing business, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in a global market, Mr. Speaker, then what, what happens is, is that you've got to, you've got to be able to go out and be aggressive in that global market. Saying that no, no, in Saskatchewan we like to do things differently, we like to control the forest industry and we like to hinder economic development — that's not good enough. That doesn't create jobs, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Bills like this don't help to create jobs.

There is concern, there's real concern, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the forestry sector that this is going to stop jobs. It's going to slow . . . not only slow down job creation, it's going to actually eliminate jobs in the forestry sector. It's going, it's going to put, it's going to put that part of the forestry sector at such significant risk we may never see it again. We may never see it again, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We can't afford to lose that section of the forestry sector to another jurisdiction who suddenly decides, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be more aggressive than we are willing to be; that we are willing to put faith in our forestry sector, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

(16:15)

If this government is unwilling to get out of the way, then maybe what we should do, Mr. Speaker, is have an election. That's what we . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wiberg: — Maybe that's what we need to do. We don't have to worry about the government getting out of the way then, this NDP government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan will take care of that for us.

Because a Saskatchewan Party government is certainly, is certainly going to be very hesitant about putting roadblocks. We know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the business sector has much more empowerment, much more empowerment, to be able to create wealth and jobs in the forestry sector than the government ever could.

In fact, in fact what is being demanded and not seen in this Bill, is that if we put the rigid regulations in place, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so that the forestry sector knows how to play the game in this province, that they will come. They will come here. They want to know what it's going to take to do business here. They don't want to have to guess at it on a yearly basis. They want clear, definitive legislation that says, this is how you're going to do forestry business in this province. That's what they want, Mr. Speaker.

They want to know that the people of Saskatchewan are

concerned about the forestry environment. They want to know that in clear, definitive legislation, if you go into a provincial forest, Mr. Speaker, that they're going to know exactly what the rules are to protect that environment for the long term, for the long-term safety of that . . . And, Mr. Speaker, if they had that, a clear vision, Mr. Speaker, they would be here.

Instead, instead what they've got is they've got such a regulatory, regulatory regime in this province that is undefined on a daily basis. It's such a nightmare, Mr. Speaker, that what happens, Mr. Speaker, is that they have to define forestry business and the forestry sector has to define their own, define their own regulatory processes.

Let me explain that: why this Bill is not going to help the forestry sector, Mr. Speaker. I had a gentleman phone me, has done business with the Lac La Ronge First Nation for a multitude of years. He refused to tell me how long it was because then it would start to indicate how old he is and . . . Although I do know how old he is.

But and so then, Mr. Speaker, what happened was he had been doing business with the Lac La Ronge Indian Band for a forest product. He had an agreement with Weyerhaeuser. He had a good working relationship with the people in La Ronge to be able to move product from . . . that was left behind by Weyerhaeuser that they couldn't use, product that they couldn't use, and he hauled that product to Lac La Ronge and it was used by the Lac La Ronge First Nation.

Imagine to his surprise that even though Weyerhaeuser had already spent significant amount of their own resources for . . . and environmental processes, Mr. Speaker, to deal with this allotment that, imagine his surprise when he found out that he was going to have to go through the same process a second time.

They wanted to know, like, how large his camp was going to be, when he didn't have one. They wanted to know how he was going to dispose of the used oil when he changed oil in his skidders, when he doesn't have any. They wanted to know what he was going to do with the waste product from having people staying in the bush for any significant amount of time. Well, Mr. Speaker, imagine the surprise when there wasn't any.

After all, this gentleman had a small operation. It's called a picker truck, Mr. Speaker. One man goes up into the forest and loads it up with his own . . . with the picker right on the truck, ties up the load, and drives away with it. Nice, neat, and clean. Nothing left behind; environmentally friendly; making . . . maximizing use of the product in the forest. So imagine his surprise when they asked for an environmental review of what he was doing, when he wasn't doing anything that needed to be reviewed.

So we had to work with this gentleman and the department to help the department to understand that this gentleman was running an upfront operation that had been in business for years in Saskatchewan's forests, that had no impact environmentally on Saskatchewan's forest. And when they were able to accept that, he was able to go back to work. But in the meantime, in the meantime he lost a lot of time; he lost a lot of time.

So, Mr. Speaker, how is this Bill going to help this gentleman have the certainty, to have the certainty that he is going to be able, be able to go into the Saskatchewan forest on a daily basis with the long-term safety that is required, required for him to want to do business, to want to do business in Saskatchewan. This Bill, Mr. Speaker, in no way addresses that concern.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is this . . . I think this, what it does for us, what it does for us is clearly define that the Saskatchewan Party is willing to provide leadership, willing to provide leadership in the forestry sector and the NDP government is waiting for the Saskatchewan Party to give them some sort of a hint as to where we need to go with the forestry sector.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we're not quite as enthused about that as we used to be. After all, it was our idea to go to a 110-kilometre speed limit and they finally borrowed that.

And so then, Mr. Speaker, I think, I think the NDP government because of its tiredness, its lack of ability to want to look for a new vision is starting . . . they're really not prepared . . . is really not prepared to bring forward legislation that will show a definitive direction for forestry in this province. In fact, in fact, Mr. Speaker, I don't think this NDP government can see the forest because of the trees. And it's because of that, Mr. Speaker, that they're so blinded by what is in front of them, that they're not being able to see beyond it.

And the reality is, is that as much as Saskatchewan is a bright light, as much as Saskatchewan is such a bright light, just a pair of sunglasses will dim that light, Mr. Speaker.

And we can see into the future. We can see that the forestry sector will have such a tremendous impact in the future, Mr. Speaker.

And if this Bill, Bill No. 43, if this government, this minister would have had the intestinal fortitude to be able to bring such a definitive Bill, the Saskatchewan Party, well, we'd have had to vote for it. I would have been willing to support that.

If they would have said, Mr. Speaker, if this government would have said we're going to set aside an allotment that is going to go up for bid every year so that we can establish a base price for standing timber so that we can alleviate the fears of our largest consumer, the United States of America, that we are not establishing an unfair trade advantage, the Saskatchewan Party would have accepted that. We'd have been vocal in supporting it.

We would have been vocal . . . supporting that because, Mr. Speaker, it's part of our policy to support the forest industry. We want to support the forest industry. We don't want to put roadblocks in front of them. We don't want to say to them well, you know, today we're a little concerned that you're cutting those trees over there and we need to hug them for another few more days.

The reality is those trees are going to come back. Those trees are going to come back, Mr. Speaker. It is a renewable resource. If managed appropriately, if managed appropriately, we're going to have in this province a forest that will be second to none anywhere, Mr. Speaker. But it needs management.

We need to know that when harvesting is taking place, that in due course that forest is replaced with healthy seedlings; healthy seedlings, Mr. Speaker, that are going to replace the canopy that was recently lost. A canopy, Mr. Speaker, that is going to do a little bit of carbon sequestration, if I may be so bold. Imagine that, Mr. Speaker.

What's in this Bill to help alleviate those fears? There isn't anything here. In fact the forest industry is concerned that because of the attack on it, because of the continued attacks on it, is that . . . They're concerned that they're not going to be able to do business in this province. How are we going to have people, corporations here, and businesses, small businesses wanting to work in the forestry sector investing, investing, investing in Saskatchewan so that we can provide a high-quality product, a high-quality product, Mr. Speaker, for the United States market that this government is not that concerned about losing? They don't seem to be that concerned about losing it. If they were concerned about losing it, we wouldn't be seeing this Bill.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, if the forestry sector was so excited about this Bill, we would have received completely, completely different comments back from them.

Now if the government has some comments that they'd like to share with the Saskatchewan Party opposition on the support for this Bill from the forestry sector, from the forestry sector — those that actually go out and cut the trees and turn them into lumber or into paper or into plywood — we'll certainly, we're certainly willing to take a look at them. In fact maybe the members opposite would like to table those letters, Mr. Speaker, so that we can all have a chance to take a look at how much support, how much support there is in the forestry sector for this Bill.

I think the members opposite have a golden opportunity here to be able to provide to the Saskatchewan Party, provide to the Saskatchewan Party clear support for this Bill. It's an opportunity for them to do that, Mr. Speaker, after all. But you know, but maybe we're going to end up in the same place we have been in the past, Mr. Speaker. After all the Deputy Premier said he had letters of support and then when he went to table them, well then he kind of didn't. Just kind of . . . well because they weren't really letters of support. They were just letters, you know, from his mother saying that she loved him. We need more than that. We need more than just saying that yes, we're a forestry sector and things need to change. That's not support. That's not support from the forestry sector.

Support from the forestry sector is saying this is a Bill that's doing a good job for the forestry sector; that we're going to be able to become more competitive in the North American and world markets. That's what . . . the kind of letters we want to see. But maybe the minister, maybe the minister and his colleagues have letters definitively saying that.

Actually I don't see any arms waving over there, holding up letters, saying we're . . . we'll show them that . . . those letters. I don't see any hands up over there. So we're kind of suspicious that even though they say we've got letters of support, that the fact of the matter is that maybe there isn't. Maybe there wasn't any letters.

And so then what this government should have done — worked hard, diligently with the forestry sector, worked hard and diligent with the forestry sector so that the forestry sector could have had clear and definitive input into where this Bill needed to go.

Have we heard any of that? Well the minister got up and said, well we talked, we consulted with the forestry sector. Well imagine the surprise of the forestry sector that they didn't even know the Bill was coming. We have heard comments from the forestry sector they didn't even know the Bill was coming, Mr. Speaker. Now what kind of consultation is that? That's not consultation.

So if you talk with someone and you pass the time of day talking about the weather, that's not consultation, Mr. Speaker. Real consultation is pulling all the players together, all the players together in the forestry sector — the primary producers, the manufacturers — it is bringing those people together with the consultants in the forestry field, pulling them all together and having a brainstorming session with them. And having a brainstorming session with them to talk about what's needed for the forestry sector.

Instead, instead, we see a Bill that the forestry sector is saying well, maybe they actually . . . We've had members of the forestry sector thanking us for providing them with a copy of the Bill because they didn't know the government was even going to introduce it. The government didn't . . . They didn't know. The government had not given a clear . . . Didn't know that the government was going to introduce it. We didn't know they were going to do that, the forestry sector said to us.

In fact you can imagine their surprise when we started handing . . . contacting them and saying the government has introduced this Bill, and we'd like your input on it. We see a couple of holes in it; we see that it could be going in the right direction. And so then imagine our surprise when we send them a copy of the Bill and they start saying, the government never even told us they were going to introduce the Bill. We heard that from the forestry sector.

(16:30)

And so then . . . so now, Mr. Speaker, the member from Prince Albert Northcote is talking about support from the forestry centre. Well now the forestry centre, the forestry centre is a building. So the building is supporting a Bill. Well now isn't that just great, Mr. Speaker — we have a building supporting a Bill.

The fact of the matter is, the real players, the real players, Mr. Speaker, in the forestry sector, aren't a building. They're financial investors; they're loggers; they build forestry equipment. That's who the players are, Mr. Speaker. That's who the players are.

You know something, Mr. Speaker? If this government would have taken the time to talk to the forestry investors, those people that work in the forestry sector, we would have had clear and definitive — clear and definitive — direction for the province of Saskatchewan when it comes to the trade injury duty that's been applied, that's been applied against the

province of Saskatchewan and the entire country of Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it appears as though that the member from Prince Albert Northcote wants to table a letter. Maybe the member would like to table that letter and show us, and show us clearly, who in the forestry sector is supporting this Bill. Who's supporting this Bill?

The people of Saskatchewan want to know, if you have such strong support for this Bill, Bill No. 43, that this is going to solve all the problems of the forestry sector, then maybe the member from Prince Albert Northcote should hand that letter in so that the people of Saskatchewan know that it exists, so that the opposition Saskatchewan Party can have a look at it.

But the reality is, the reality is, he just wants to wave a piece of paper at us. Anybody can wave a piece . . . The people of Saskatchewan are demanding more than just waving a piece of paper. It could have been written by anybody.

Now if the member wants to clearly have the people of Saskatchewan know who supports this Bill, then what he should do, he should table that, he should table that information. You know, not just receive it, just not receive it from the member from Athabasca and say, we've got support, we've got support — won't say who it's from, won't say who it's from. So why don't you, why don't you table? Why don't . . . why doesn't he table it, Mr. Speaker?

What we have heard, what we have heard very clearly, very clearly, from some parts of the forestry sector already, Mr. Speaker, is that there is not overwhelming support for this Bill. In fact what we're hearing, we'd be surprised if there was any support in the forestry sector, in the forestry sector. In fact what they think, what they think, Mr. Speaker, is that this is an attack on the forestry sector — that this could, this could be the beginning of putting a nail in the coffin for the forestry sector in Saskatchewan. They're outraged. Some of the players are outraged over this. They say, why are we staying here? We can do business anywhere.

The fact of the matter is, forestry companies don't need to just do business in Saskatchewan. It's a global market, Mr. Speaker. This isn't about Saskatchewan or Canada or North America. This is about doing business in the world. It's a global market, Mr. Speaker. And we need to provide the forestry sector in Saskatchewan a significant advantage so that what this forestry sector will do is be able to bring investment into Saskatchewan at such a rate that it would astound even the NDP.

Of course it doesn't take that much, pardon me, Mr. Speaker, to astound the NDP government. It certainly wouldn't be astounding to the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, how much investment's going to flow into Saskatchewan. There will be companies setting up here. They will be cranking out softwood lumber. They will be tapping into American markets that we don't even know about yet.

They will be usurping, they will be usurping our competitors to the west of us. They will be usurping our competitors to the east of us right out to the Atlantic coast. Because after all, Mr. Speaker, once you cut that tree you can ship it anywhere when it reaches the finished product. And we can be competitive. We

can be competitive anywhere.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's what this Bill should have been talking about — creating such a competitive advantage for the forestry, for the forestry and community in Saskatchewan that we would be renowned. We would be renowned. Saskatchewan would be renowned in the global forestry community for its ability to create forestry sector business. That's what, the kind of Bill we should have been talking about, Mr. Speaker. That's what we want to see in this Bill, Mr. Speaker. That's what the Saskatchewan Party is going to do.

Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, when the member from Rosetown-Biggar is going to be the premier, what kind of Bills that we're going to have to promote the forestry sector, Mr. Speaker? That's what we're going to be seeing, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, if this government is unwilling, unwilling to be, to be the leaders, the industry leaders in forestry, then maybe what they should do is just step aside. Call an election. Let's get it over with. And then the people of Saskatchewan, and certainly up in my area of the world, up in my area of the world they're going to be able to have a chance to be able to send back to Regina the appropriate representation they've been used to for the last almost four years and which, which, Mr. Speaker, they know that the forestry sector is going to have a voice; is going to have a voice in this House, Mr. Speaker.

And if they call that election, Mr. Speaker, Bills such as Bill No. 43, they know will never see the light of day. That's what, that's what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker. Because this Bill, this Bill talks about restricting that. This Bill talks about restricting, restricting doing business in Saskatchewan. That's what this Bill talks about.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? This Bill does not significantly, does not significantly have any impact — does not have any impact — on the forestry sector. In fact the impact will be negative.

That's why the forestry sector what we have heard from already . . . And there's going to be more information coming to Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, that's going to definitively tell us that what we need to do is have a Bill, is going to have a Bill, Mr. Speaker, that will help the forestry industry and not, and not be another attack, another attack on the forestry sector.

Because we know, we know, Mr. Speaker, that there are people who . . . investors in forest, investors that want to come here and do business. This side of the House has certainly heard about Ainsworth Lumber, has certainly heard about Ainsworth Lumber that want to come and do business here. And what happened? This government put more roadblocks in front of the them than anybody even knew existed.

So what happened? What happened? Another forestry company, actually courted, courted by this government, come in here, do business. We'll make sure you have a wood supply. What happened to that wood supply? Nobody ever saw it again. Nobody ever saw it again, Mr. Speaker. It was all, it was all promises. The NDP are big on promises.

Is that what this Bill's about, Mr. Speaker, just more promises?

We'll talk about, we'll talk about making the changes but we're not going to put them in legislation. We'll talk about doing it in regulation. Regulations could be changed at the drop of a hat, Mr. Speaker.

We want good, solid legislation that clearly defines how our forestry sector needs to operate. It needs to clearly define, Mr. Speaker, that when it comes to allotting wood stands, woodlots in this province, in the Crown forest, Mr. Speaker, that we need to have an exact number put in there.

What is that number, Mr. Speaker? What is it going to take? Does the NDP government know? Is it going to take 5 per cent of our logging operations on a yearly basis? Is it going to take 10 per cent? Is it going to take 15 per cent, 20 per cent, 25 per cent? Is that what it's going to take?

Are we going to have to clearly define in legislation exactly how much of our yearly allotment for forestry is going to have to be put up for bid? Is it going to have to be done on a yearly basis? Does it have to be done on a yearly basis? The minister didn't clearly indicate that in his remarks. Is it going to have to be done maybe on a five- or ten-year cycle? Are we going to be able to do it that way, Mr. Speaker, for a large section of the forest to be set aside for a forestry operator . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wiberg: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly amusing on this side of the House that suddenly the NDP want to participate in this debate. You know, eleventh hour, eleventh hour they bring this Bill, and all of a sudden they want to participate in debate also.

They were kind of hoping they could sneak this through, hoping that the Saskatchewan Party would be quite as willing to go home as they were. Of course we're kind of enjoying question period, Mr. Speaker, a lot more than the NDP government is. And I guess so maybe that's why the NDP government's a lot more anxious to go home right now than we are.

But, Mr. Speaker, this Bill follows a whole line of things that this government just can't seem to get right. This Bill needed to clearly establish for the forestry sector, for those who invest in it, for those who work in it, that we are going to become competitive with our largest consumer, the United States of America.

No, this Bill unfortunately was unable to go quite that far. Instead they kind of had to . . . kind of had to get beside it. We want to leave it up to regulations; we'll talk about, we'll talk about that we need to do this, but we'll leave it up to regulations.

Well our consumers, our consumers are wiser than that, Mr. Speaker. Our consumers know — our consumers know, Mr. Speaker — that regulations by this NDP government can change pretty quickly. Actually they already know that. They know that when you come here to do business in Saskatchewan that there's going to be regulations put in place, and a week or two weeks or two months later they could change. They could

change at the whim of this NDP government.

They know that this government is more interested in being a business tycoon than allowing business to operate. After all, all we have to do is look at some of their shining examples. If they would just allow the forestry sector to operate, if they would just allow the forestry sector to operate, Mr. Speaker, we'd have such a growing province.

We wouldn't have to worry that . . . they should . . . If they allowed the province to operate rather than get involved in SPUDCO and Coachman Insurance and Retx.com. We need to stay out of that, Mr. Speaker. We need to stop wasting taxpayers' dollars investing in business. Business wants to invest in business.

Business wants to come to Saskatchewan and work in the forestry sector, Mr. Speaker. They want to have the assurances that when they come here, they're not going to put such an undue burden on them, such an undue burden that they're not going to be able . . . that they're going to be able to compete in a global market.

After all we . . . Is our . . . who are our competitors? Is the competitors Weyerhaeuser in Saskatchewan competing against NorSask lumber in Saskatchewan? Those aren't competitors. Those aren't competitors, Mr. Speaker.

The competitors are Saskatchewan against the world. We need to go out, compete in that market. It's not about trying to protect . . . It's trying to protect our forest industry is what we should be doing. We should be promoting our forestry sector to such an extent that they want to come here and invest even more.

Can you imagine? Can you imagine NorSask lumber wanting to expand their operation? Weyerhaeuser wanting to further expand their operation? Other companies wanting to come to Saskatchewan? Ainsworth so anxious to come in here they're actually stampeding over us? Carrier wanting to not only have one mill here but maybe two or three or four mills? Alberta Newsprint wanted to come to Saskatchewan.

That's what this Bill should be trying to address. That's what they should be trying to address.

Now we know that there's some problems in the forestry sector and certainly this trade injury duty has put a great deal of stress on the forestry sector. And I'll use an example, Mr. Speaker, is Zelinsky Lumber in La Ronge. Zelinsky Lumber is having a hard time trying to keep the doors open, Mr. Speaker. The member from Athabasca knows that. That company, Zelinsky Lumber knows — knows — that we need to find a way to eliminate that trade injury duty. We need to eliminate that trade injury duty.

And what, what, Mr. Speaker, is in this Bill to do that? Why would the government be so afraid of setting a vision for forestry in this province that they weren't able to clearly define in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, the exact, the exact amount of allotment that would be put up for bid on an annual, biannual, triannual basis, whatever needs to be done. We would assume that the forestry sector and those people involved in

international trade would have an idea of what we need to do here. They must be able to get good advice from that.

(16:45)

Why couldn't that be clearly defined in here? Are the Americans going to buy into the concept that, well, the Saskatchewan government was willing to talk about it? Another thing, does this government think that that's all they need to do that we're willing to talk about it, we'll have a regulation on this?

On this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we are firmly of the belief that it takes more than a regulation to attract people to the province of Saskatchewan, to attract investment in the province of Saskatchewan, to get rid of that trade injury duty that the United States has applied not only in the province of Saskatchewan but right across the Canadian main here, Mr. Speaker.

But let's not worry about Canada; they already have provincial governments — Manitoba, Alberta, Ontario, British Columbia. Forestry is the responsibility of the provincial government, and it is the responsibility of the provincial government to overcome that trade injury duty, Mr. Speaker. It is not entirely incumbent upon the federal government to get rid of it.

They have tried. We have got a ruling from the WTO. It looked . . . It's favourable but without an enforcement, without an enforcement, how are we supposed to, Mr. Speaker, be able, be able to force our largest consumer to adhere to it? Because they know . . . They still believe, Mr. Speaker, that because of the way we do business with our forestry, the way we do business with our forestry sector, northern Saskatchewan and in Canada, they are still going to see it as an unfair advantage.

What they want, what they want is a benchmark set by the industry. We'll set a benchmark by the industry if we allow, if we allow the industry to set the benchmark, Mr. Speaker; if we had legislation that would allow the industry to set a benchmark for the forests in Saskatchewan so that we can maximize those benefits, maximize those benefits for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We think, we believe very clearly that we'd have an opportunity to get into that American market like you would never have believed possible, Mr. Speaker.

You know what, Mr. Speaker, we are firmly committed that the United States, our largest consumer of our softwood forest products, wants to do business in Saskatchewan. We believe that.

But we also know that they might want to do business in Manitoba or Quebec. They don't care. It's a global market, Mr. Speaker. They want to be able to work with a jurisdiction that operates on a market-driven basis. That's what they're looking for, Mr. Speaker. And we believe Saskatchewan can get to that point. We believe that if business in Saskatchewan, the forestry sector was given the advantage, Mr. Speaker, what would happen was that we would start, we would start to usurp other jurisdictions for business.

Now as much as we might want to worry about them, we need to look after ourselves first. After all we have a very large

sector in this province that thinks we can double the population in 30 years.

And a clearly defined Bill, Mr. Speaker, a clearly defined Bill 43 would have clearly outlined for the forestry sector, clearly outlined for the people who work in logging, work in the sawmills, work in the paper mills, work in the pulp mills, that they would have had the assurances that we'd have been growing Saskatchewan instead of just fighting a rearguard action as we see in this Bill, Mr. Speaker. This Bill needs to be about more, needs to be about more than giving the Canadian government a negotiating tool.

The Canadian government has shown clearly that they are stumped on how to solve this. They want to negotiate some more. They're stumped on how to solve this problem. We know how the problem should be solved. This provincial government, the NDP government, should know how the problem should be solved.

We know that we have a neighbour in Western Canada knows how this problem should be solved. The forestry sector is some excited about that, Mr. Speaker. They know that they're going to be able to grow that forest industry in that province. You know what, you know what, Mr. Speaker, we could do that here. We could clearly do that here.

If this Bill would have been strong enough, if this Bill would have been strong enough to outline for the forestry sector in legislation how this allotment would work for a bid system, if you would have put that in legislation, if, Mr. Minister, if that minister would have put that in legislation, Mr. Speaker, you know what? We believe that the forestry sector would have been very pleased about that.

We know, we know that the Saskatchewan Party . . . The people of Saskatchewan know the Saskatchewan Party is very clearly onside, Mr. Speaker, with allowing the benchmark for stumpage to be set by the private sector, Mr. Speaker.

This Bill stops two steps short of that. It stops two steps short of that. It puts . . . They want to put in the legislation that the minister will decide what softwood lumber . . . what a softwood lumber treaty is when, Mr. Speaker, the industry will already, will do that.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the benchmark, that the benchmark for stumpage needs to be clearly outlined so that the forestry sector can go to the United States and say, see we've got a benchmark we've established, when it has not been established by government. That's what needs to happen. And that benchmark, Mr. Speaker, needs to be established by the forestry sector in the forests, not at the mill.

This Bill talks about, Mr. Speaker, what should happen is that if a forestry partner in Saskatchewan has taken out its allotment, its annual allotment as they're bound to do by the forestry agreement that all the forestry sector must sign, they have an X amount of timber, of cubic metres they must take out every year. And if they're unable to sell all of that and if they have logs, and if they have logs left over that could be turned into softwood lumber, they can put that up for sale. They can put that up for sale.

This Bill's talking about well that's how we're going to establish a benchmark for what our timber's worth. Well you know, Mr. Speaker, it's going to take a little more than that. To have one forestry company selling delivered logs to a sawmill and then selling it to another sawmill is not going to establish a base price for stumpage. That's not going to cut it, Mr. Speaker.

Well I can see the member from Athabasca is kind of surprised that we'd actually read the Bill far enough to establish that this was actually in there — that they weren't going to clearly outline bidding for timber in the forest; they wanted it done, they wanted it done at the lumber mill. So I think, Mr. Speaker, what they should have done, is if they'd had, if they'd have consulted with the forest industry as they are not wont to do, they would have found out that this comes up just a little bit short.

Now the member said, from Athabasca, that we should've got legal counsel on this.

Well I think the minister should have got legal counsel on this because he would have found out that, if he would have got legal counsel on this, that this Bill comes up a day late and a dollar short, as this government is usual to do. Instead he's allowed himself to be swayed. He's allowed himself to be swayed by a sector out there that has no vested interest in growing Saskatchewan by 100,000 people in 10 years. That's how this Bill reached the point of where it's at.

So, Mr. Speaker, why, why didn't the minister when he had the opportunity to work with the forestry sector, to work with the forestry sector to be able to come up with such a vision for forestry in this province that, Mr. Speaker, we'd have been creating jobs, we'd have been creating high-paid careers, career, Mr. Speaker, I'm saying, fairly clearly in the forestry sector?

That's what we should have had, Mr. Speaker. This Bill should have been leading us in a future for vision for the forestry sector and not, and not merely providing what this provincial government is hoping is a bargaining tool for the federal government. That's what this Bill's about, Mr. Speaker.

If the minister had read this Bill and not simply the notes, if he'd have done . . . read this Bill instead of just the notes from his department, he would have found out that this Bill is nothing more than a . . . is a hopeful, is a hopeful bargaining tool for the federal government.

This Bill should have been clearly outlining that the Saskatchewan province is not going to participate any further with trade injury discussions. We are simply going to overcome them. We're going to do it internally. The forest resources of Saskatchewan belong to the people of Saskatchewan. That's, that's what this Bill should have been about.

Instead, instead the minister brings an eleventh-hour Bill hoping to sneak it through the House in a hurry. Apparently he wants to go home. The minister wants to go home because he's certainly, he's certainly worried about his constituency. Greg Ross is causing lots of problems for the minister up in Athabasca.

It's because of Bills like this though, Mr. Minister, that's creating problems in Athabasca. It's because of Bills like this,

Mr. Speaker, where there is no clear definition of how this is going to create jobs in Athabasca. That's what's missing in this Bill. This Bill is about talking about stuff. That's what this Bill's about.

All they needed to do, Mr. Speaker, was say, we're going to go out in the Crown lands and on a two-year basis, five-year basis, eight-year basis, set aside 20 per cent . . . or maybe 15 per cent. What about 15 per cent, Mr. Speaker? Could have set aside 15 per cent.

What's it going to take? Has the government heard definitively from the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs what it's going to take? What percentage the forests are going to have to be set aside on an annual, biannual, triennial basis for bidding? For bidding in order to establish a benchmark for a stumpage fee that will get, that will get us around that trade injury duty that has been applied to the forestry section in Saskatchewan that is so injurious to the forest industry sector in Saskatchewan.

What is happening, Mr. Speaker, what is happening, Mr. Speaker, is that we're losing jobs in Saskatchewan.

I remember very clearly, Mr. Speaker, when the former premier in 1999 said we need to have a forestry policy in this province that would create 10,000 more jobs — 10,000 new jobs in the forestry sector in Saskatchewan.

What's happened? What happened? What happened to that promise by Roy Romanow? I'll tell you what happened to that. It was shortly after that, that that former Premier Roy Romanow decided he wanted to try a new career.

And how did that help the . . . So how did this new government, how did this new Premier help out the forestry sector by having 10,000 more jobs, 10,000 more jobs in the forestry sector? Well the forestry sector has told the Saskatchewan Party, through that transition period, they probably lost, they probably lost 5,000 jobs.

And so then you promise 10,000, you lose 5,000 — that's 15,000 jobs difference. You can imagine what that would have meant to government coffers to have 15,000 more jobs in the forestry sector today than what we would have had, Mr. Speaker, at the start of this new Premier's mandate — 15,000 new jobs.

There'd been corporate taxes being paid. There'd been personal income taxes being paid. Those people would have been paying PST (provincial sales tax) on their purchases. They're well-paying jobs, Mr. Speaker. Those are well-paying jobs in the forestry sector.

So we would have benefited by creating more jobs in the forestry sector rather than have the member from Athabasca lead us down the road of losing jobs in the forestry sector.

That's all that's been . . . that will be the legacy, that will be the legacy, Mr. Speaker, of that member of this House. That will be the legacy that member is going to have to take home to Athabasca that this Bill, that this Bill . . . this Bill will not solve the unemployment problems in La Loche. This Bill will not solve the unemployment issues in Buffalo Narrows. It will not

solve the unemployment issues in Ile-a-la-Crosse.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(17:00)

The Speaker: — It now being past the regular hour of adjournment — order, please — and . . . Order please, members. Order, members. It now being past the hour of adjournment, and pursuant to an order of this House, this House does now stand adjourned until Thursday, June 19 at 2:30 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 17:01.

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