



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

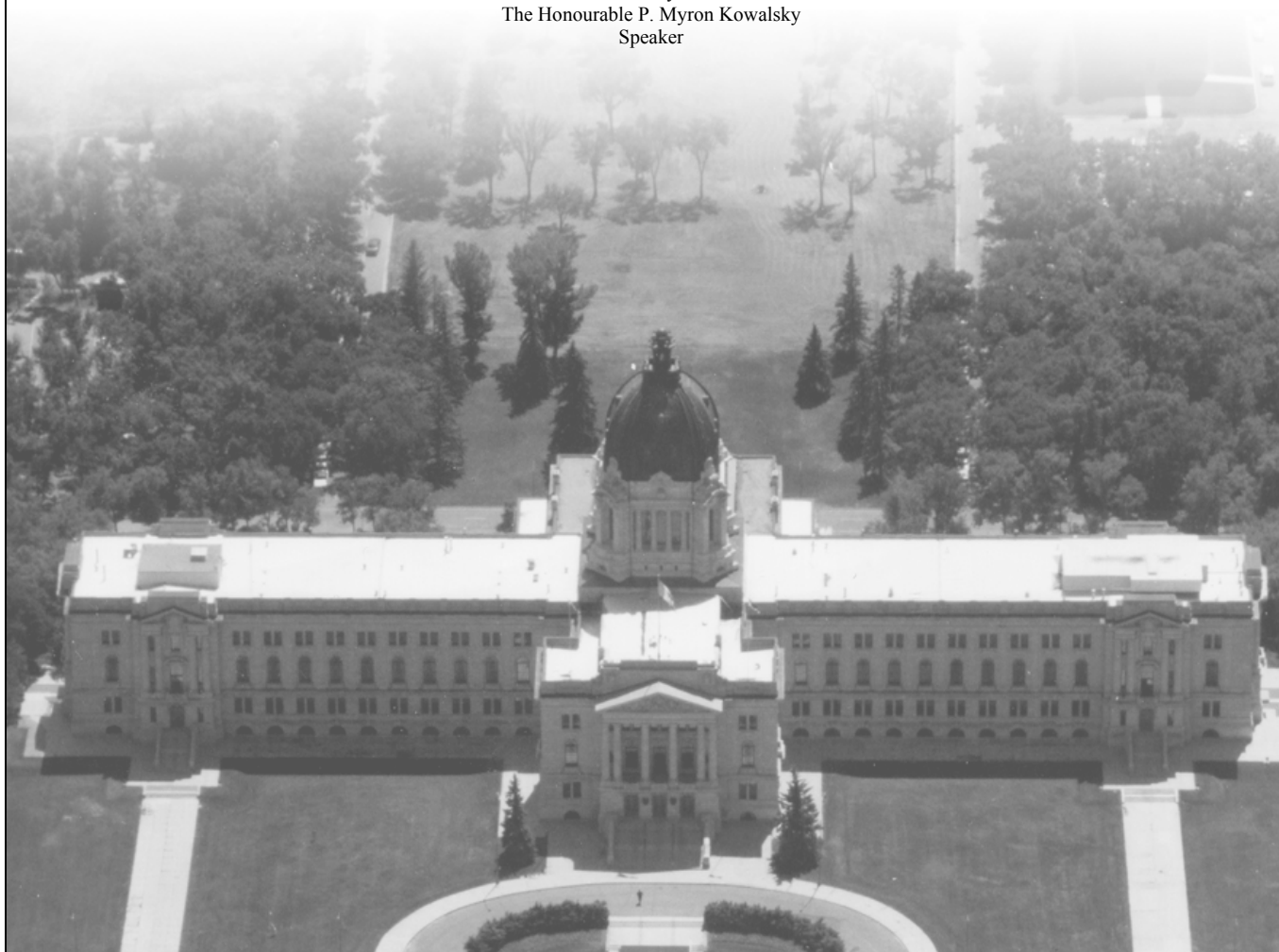
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

Speaker — Hon. P. Myron Kowalsky  
 Premier — Hon. Lorne Calvert  
 Leader of the Opposition — Brad Wall

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
Addley, Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Bakken, Brenda	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Borgerson, Lon	NDP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Calvert, Hon. Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Cline, Hon. Eric	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Crofford, Hon. Joanne	NDP	Regina Rosemont
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Dearborn, Jason	SP	Kindersley
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Gantfoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, Glenn	NDP	Moose Jaw North
Hamilton, Doreen	NDP	Regina Wascana Plains
Harpauer, Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Ben	SP	Martensville
Hermanson, Elwin	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Higgins, Hon. Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kerpan, Allan	SP	Carrot River Valley
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Kowalsky, Hon. P. Myron	NDP	Prince Albert Carlton
Krawetz, Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lautermilch, Eldon	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Ted	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Morgan, Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, Hon. John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Prebble, Hon. Peter	NDP	Saskatoon Greystone
Quennell, Hon. Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Serby, Hon. Clay	NDP	Yorkton
Sonntag, Hon. Maynard	NDP	Meadow Lake
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Hon. Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Thomson, Hon. Andrew	NDP	Regina South
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Hon. Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
Wakefield, Milton	SP	Lloydminster
Wall, Brad	SP	Swift Current
Wartman, Hon. Mark	NDP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

The Assembly met at 10:00.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to present a petition on behalf of Crown leaseholders in the constituency of Cypress Hills. Their 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.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by producers from the community of Maple Creek.

I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to rise on behalf of the people from the Porcupine Plain area to present a petition about their concern for their hospital. The prayer reads:

Wherefore you petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to . . . government to take the necessary actions to ensure that the Porcupine Carragana Hospital is not closed or further downsized.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the possible closure or downsizing of the Herbert Nursing Home. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the Herbert Nursing Home is not closed or further downsized.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Herbert and Gouldtown.

I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Estevan.

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise

today to present a petition on behalf of people from my constituency who are very concerned about the closure or downsizing of long-term care beds, as announced in the recent provincial budget. 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 action to ensure that Mainprize Manor & Health Centre is not closed or further downsized.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by people from Midale, Macoun, Ceylon, and Alameda.

I so present. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are very concerned about the possible closure of long-term care beds. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that long-term care facilities in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency are not closed or further downsized.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Radville, Ogema, and Bengough.

I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Wood River.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise with a petition from citizens of my constituency that are very, very concerned about the possibilities of losing more health care facilities and long-term care beds. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that Lafleche & District Health Centre is not closed or further downsized.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by the good citizens of Lafleche, Glentworth, and Fir Mountain.

I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**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 my constituency that are concerned 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 my hometown of Spiritwood.

I so present.

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

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here calling on this government to repair and resurface Highway 15.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that this portion of 15 highway be repaired and resurfaced immediately so as to remove the safety hazard to all motorists who rely on this vital road for transportation and economic purposes.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Raymore.

I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition from constituents against the closure of Biggar's rural service centre, Environment office. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to reverse the decision to close the rural service centre and Environment office in Biggar.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Biggar and district.

I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan that are concerned with health care in the region. 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 that current specialty services are sustained to better serve the people of west central Saskatchewan.

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

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

I so present.

#### 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 papers nos. 63, 72, 73, 128, and 145.

#### NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 34 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: in what locations is your department expanding rural service centres; and, further to this, what is the proposed budget for each of these expansions?

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — Well, members, I have a very special guest to introduce to you seated in the Speaker's gallery. She is my grandniece and her name is Lesia Rathje. And Lesia has come here today from the city of Saskatoon with her grandmother, my sister Audrey Langhorst, who is here in North Battleford. And I ask all members to welcome them to the legislature today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

#### Presentation to Senate Committee

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, April 28, I was invited by the Minister of Finance to be part of a Saskatchewan delegation that would travel to Ottawa to make a presentation to the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance. This committee has received numerous delegations from other provinces as well as individuals, most notably Professor Thomas Courchene on Wednesday, April 21, 2004.

I want to indicate to this Assembly that the Minister of Finance for Saskatchewan made a strong presentation and that his remarks and the formal position paper he put forward were well received. The minister indicated in his opening remarks that both the government and the official opposition were raising the

equalization issue collaboratively on behalf of all Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, the Chair, Senator Lowell Murray, indicated that that consensus approach seemed to be a strong message that was being delivered by the minister on behalf of Saskatchewan residents.

A presentation and question-and-answer period, Mr. Speaker, was to last about one hour, and that presentation was about 10 minutes short of two hours. And the minister, I must indicate, handled the questions very well and responded on behalf of Saskatchewan people in putting this issue forward.

Mr. Speaker, the issues raised in the paper were the five key issues, I think, that the minister has indicated in the House. But I want to end by a quote from the minister's remarks. And he said:

The issue of fairness has united Saskatchewan and goes beyond partisan politics. The reason is evident — at stake is the level and quality of key public services provided to our citizens and, indeed, all Canadian citizens.

Now is the time to correct the current inequities in the equalization program.

Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw North.

### Third Annual Bell Walk for Kids

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, every year professional counsellors at Kids Help Phone answer calls and on-line questions from troubled and abused young people across the country. Last year children from nearly 3,000 Canadian communities received help from this line, and here in Saskatchewan 23,000 young people had their concerns addressed.

Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, May 2, Kids Help Phone will be hosting its third annual Bell Walk for Kids in more than 35 communities across the country, including Regina, Saskatoon, Yorkton, Prince Albert, Kamsack, and Moose Jaw's Wellesley Park in Wakamow Valley. This is the first year the walk will be held in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, and organizers are hoping to raise about \$5,000.

Last year the Bell Walk for Kids raised approximately one and a half million dollars nationwide and attracted close to 25,000 participants. This year the Bell Walk is hoping to raise \$1.6 million to ensure the Kids Help Phone can continue to provide the support that troubled and abused children need and deserve.

Mr. Speaker, the Bell Walk for Kids helps get the message to our young people that this service is here for them. I ask all members to join me in acknowledging the counsellors at the Kids Help Phone and all those involved with the Bell Walk for their dedication to helping our children. And I invite everyone to take part in this fun and important event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

### High-speed Internet Service

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past January I was contacted by Ken Garinger, the high school principal at Young. He told me that SaskTel had not yet installed high-speed Internet service to his community, as SaskTel officials had promised for the early fall of 2003.

Principal Garinger could not get a clear answer as to when the service would be installed, so he approached my office. He said that his school had been ready for the distance courses offered by high-speed Internet, similar to those already offered in Watrous and other rural centres. The high school had purchased the computer upgrades needed for high speed, and the students had already chosen their courses for the year.

I followed this up with a call to SaskTel's minister's office where an MA (ministerial assistant) informed my staff that high-speed service may not be installed until maybe this coming fall or not at all. So far my letter to the minister has not resulted in any clear answers to this concern.

Today the high school and the Young community still have no firm date from SaskTel. It appears as if this government is breaking yet another promise to rural residents, one that leaves our students and citizens at great disadvantage to those who already have high-speed Internet. This is yet another example of the NDP (New Democratic Party) attack on rural Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Meadow Lake.

### Credit Unions

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Credit unions provide a vital service to Saskatchewan communities, employing more than 2,900 people in towns and cities across our province. Credit unions have grown into a strong and important part of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, not only are Saskatchewan credit unions a part of the very fabric of our province, but they're also sharing their knowledge and financial expertise with the rest of the world. In January, Joan Baer, manager of the credit union in my hometown of Goodsoil, travelled with seven other Canadians to Ghana to work on development plans for local credit unions. While there, Ms. Baer assessed and gave advice to a number of credit unions, some that were more advanced than others obviously.

Mr. Speaker, through this program, run by the Canadian Co-operative Association, Ms. Baer says one of the most important lessons she has brought back is a greater appreciation for the grassroots of credit unions. Ms. Baer says the program was not only about teaching, but it was also one of learning. She says, and I quote:

Sharing experiences, ways of doing business and culture with another credit union in another part of the world is a very humbling experience. Although we are so far apart and different in some aspects, there is a great deal of commonality.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in acknowledging Saskatchewan credit unions for their importance in our economy, and I thank Ms. Baer for taking Saskatchewan's co-operative spirit and knowledge to the rest of the world. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Biggar.

#### Closing of Rural Service Centres

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a sad day in our province. Barring a last minute reprieve from the NDP government, this is the day all but a handful of rural service centres will close in Saskatchewan.

In my constituency, the Biggar office will close, services will be lost to producers, and jobs will be lost in the community. This is only the latest blow the NDP government has targeted at rural Saskatchewan. Throughout the years we have seen time and time again as the NDP has moved to strip rural communities of more and more services . . . At a time when we continue to hear the members opposite pay lip service to the concept of rural revitalization, every action they take, every policy they come up with seems designed to make sure rural revitalization remains elusive.

(10:15)

Mr. Speaker, how much money will be saved through this action? It is unclear, keeping in mind that at least some of the offices used for rural service centres remain under lease to SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) for some years. In Biggar the lease extends to December 31 of this year. Will the NDP honour this lease to the RM (rural municipality) of Biggar? The loss of revenue will result in higher taxes to the ratepayers in the RM of Biggar.

Mr. Speaker, when these closures are complete, the NDP seems intent to land an even more devastating blow — one that rips more health care facilities out of our communities.

People from rural communities such as Biggar have one question for the members opposite: when will their attacks against people in small towns and rural areas stop?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

#### Saskatoon Principal Named Canada's Best

**Mr. Addley:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm married to a teacher; I have two brothers who are teachers, and my father is a retired principal — so I know the value of education.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very especially pleased to share with the Assembly that a principal of a school in my constituency of Saskatoon Sutherland has been honoured with a prestigious national award. Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Association of Principals is in Saskatoon this week for their annual convention and has honoured Ms. Patricia Prowse of Brunskill School with their Distinguished Principal of the Year Award.

The award is presented in recognition of outstanding achievement and leadership in school administration and education.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Prowse is a self-described lifelong learner. She holds a bachelor's and master's degree in education and is currently completing a bachelor's degree in psychology.

Apparently, Mr. Speaker, that passion for learning has also translated into a passion for teaching. Ms. Prowse has been a teacher in the Saskatoon Public School Division for 23 years. She says she was drawn to the profession because, quote, "We have a real responsibility to educate our children and make our world a better place."

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all my colleagues will join me in congratulating Ms. Prowse on receiving this honour from her peers and in thanking her for her hard work and dedication to students and education that earned her this award. I look forward to visiting Brunskill School and congratulating Ms. Prowse in person in the near future. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cannington.

#### Addressing Disabilities Issues Conference

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I had the opportunity to attend the third biannual Addressing Disabilities Issues Conference in Saskatoon, and the title for the conference was "Building Communities, Living, Laughing, (and) Loving."

And, Mr. Speaker, this was a conference that brought together people from across the province that deal with the disability issues, that deal with . . . that dealt with all of the issues, be they physical, mental, medical, or aged. And, Mr. Speaker, the Co-Chairs of this conference were Bev Duncan from the Saskatchewan Voice of People with Disabilities and Carole Morrison from the Canadian Mental Health Association.

And it included, as I said, people from across the province: Saskatchewan Health, Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres, Saskatchewan Association for the Rehabilitation of the Brain-Injured, the Saskatoon Health Region, Métis Employment and Training of Saskatchewan, Canadian Paraplegic Association, Saskatchewan Association of Community Living, North Saskatchewan Independent Living Centre, Autism Treatment Services of Saskatchewan, the Gary Tinker Federation.

Mr. Speaker, as well as through the caregiver groups from across the province, it also included clients and parents, Mr.

Speaker. There was a lot of discussion; there was very good sessions. And fact is it was set up such that there was too many sessions; you couldn't attend them all because they were running concurrently, Mr. Speaker, but it dealt with issues ranging from the needs of clients to abuse of the system, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's a program worthwhile continuing.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

### ORAL QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Melfort.

#### Motion for Moratorium on Health Facility Closures

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, within a few weeks this NDP government is expected to announce its plans to close hospitals and long-term care homes throughout Saskatchewan. They plan to do this with no public input from the communities that will be losing their hospitals and senior homes, just as they did in 1993 when they closed 52 hospitals throughout Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in today's paper CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) is running ads calling on the public to speak out on the closure of long-term care beds. We want to give the public that chance. Later today, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party will introduce a motion calling for a moratorium on any health facility closures until public hearings are held in every affected community.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier support this motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, a couple of days ago the Leader of the Opposition brought forward a document as if he had found some sort of amazing piece of paper that . . . when I explained it to him, it seems that no further questions arose because what that document was, was part of our long-term planning and working as we go forward with our budgets.

In this budget this year, we have \$160 million. Those amounts were announced to the regional health authorities on March 31. They are now working very diligently around how the increased money that they have can be used to provide ongoing services. It's including looking at many different parts of their operations. We're going to continue with that process. It's something that we've been working at for a number of years, and it includes discussions with many of the people involved. And we think that that's an appropriate way to deal with this, and we're going to continue with the process that we've developed.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Melfort.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, in the early 1990s this Premier and this NDP government closed 52 hospitals. They said it would fix the health system. It didn't. Then they closed the

Plains hospital. They said that would fix the health system. It didn't. The NDP prescription for health care isn't working, and now they want to double the dose.

Mr. Speaker, if the NDP is so convinced that their planning process is going to result in closure of hospital beds and senior citizens' homes, if they really believe that that makes sense, will they commit to hold public hearings in every affected community before these closures take place?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan we have lived with 50 years of change in health care, and we're going to be living with change in the years to come. There's no question about that. I think the real issue is, how do you manage change, not only in health care but in all of the communities? And you continue to work with people, with institutions that we've developed as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, we in our action plan in December 2001 set out goals for what we wanted for our health care system. We've met many of those, but there are many more challenges that we're going to address. We're going to continue to do that with the people within the health care system, with the people of Saskatchewan because that's how an NDP government does it.

Mr. Speaker, the member, the members opposite have a situation where they have no health care policy, and they don't seem to be wanting to develop any. We're looking forward to their contribution to the health care discussions.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Melfort.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan understand how an NDP government does things. In the last election, the Premier didn't say a word about closing hospitals. He didn't say a word about closing long-term care beds. In fact in December 2001 when they announced this action plan that the minister refers to, the Premier said it didn't make sense at all to close any further hospitals, that there was no financial benefit to be granted by closing these hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, it looks like the Premier is about to break another one of his promises. Is that the way the NDP government does health care policy? He needs to hear from the Saskatchewan people before they take this unilateral action. They need to listen to Saskatchewan people and not just to a bunch of senior bureaucrats living in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier support our motion? Will he commit to having hearings in every affected community before the closures take place?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite

would just go forward to the member who is sitting just in front of him and ask him how to talk about what we're doing as it relates to health care, I think he'd get a good example of how you can talk positively about the issues of equalization, the issues of sharing on costs of health care, because those are key points in how we can afford the health care system across the country. And practically, what we need to do, Mr. Speaker, is work together as the member for Canora-Pelly is with our Finance minister as we move forward in addressing many of these issues.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government's budget did not include another amount of money this year that would allow for any expansion. We're continuing to look at the resources that we have. We're going to work with the people involved in the system to make sure we have the right kind of care.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

#### Public Consultation on Health Facilities

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, the people of Herbert and those in surrounding communities are concerned about the future of their hospital and the future of long-term care beds in their town. Rumour has it that the Herbert hospital is slated for closure. People in the area are concerned the hospital will close and be replaced with something less or nothing . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order please, members. I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, I know members opposite think this is funny, but the people of Herbert don't. People in the area are also concerned the hospital will close and be replaced with something less or nothing at all. Also on the chopping block are 15 long-term care beds.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Health, will he promise today to travel to Herbert and to consult with people in the community and the area before the NDP closes the hospital or any long-term care beds?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, this is very serious business. We are working hard to deal with the resources that we've got to make sure that we plan the right kind of care for across this province.

Mr. Speaker, people are working hard in local communities and at the regional health authority boards and at Saskatchewan Health to deal with \$160 million of new money into the health care system. But it doesn't mean that everything's going to be the same. Mr. Speaker, we have to move forward and look at how we provide services, how we do the things that we do.

This is not a Saskatchewan problem; this is a national problem. We're working on a national stage as well, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that the kinds of goals that we have for our own

friends, neighbours, relatives are also the kinds of goals that we have for Canada. That's why the minister . . . member from Canora-Pelly supported our Minister of Finance in Ottawa . . .

**The Speaker:** — The member's time has elapsed.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

**Mr. Elhard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Health.

In the constituency of Cypress Hills, the town of Gull Lake has 33 long-term care beds at the Gull Lake special care home. And health care professionals in the community of Gull Lake are hearing that the NDP will be closing all 33 of those long-term care beds in the community. This of course, Mr. Speaker, as you can appreciate, is very distressing and worrisome to the people of Gull Lake including those with relatives living in that long-term care facility.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister promise the people of Gull Lake today that he will travel to the community of Gull Lake and consult with the community before the NDP government closes all the long-term care beds in that town?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, every regional health authority in the province received an increase in the funding that was available to them. It's not sufficient to have everything running exactly the way we had it going last year, but it allows for us to have discussions in communities, in the regional health authorities, in the whole province about what kind of care do we need in the long term.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have been very diligent in bringing forward cases around some of the very highly expensive care that takes place in our tertiary care centres in Saskatoon and Regina. We end up having to try to look at how do you balance the costs there of those very expensive things with some of the costs that are out across the province. We're doing that. We're doing it very carefully because that's the kind of administration that we are. We are very concerned about individuals and people, and we're going to make sure that we get the best care for everybody.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

**Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to ask a question of the Minister of Health on behalf of the people from Porcupine Plain and community.

The residents of this area are very upset that their health care facilities are also at risk in the NDP's upcoming round of health care cuts. Residents are worried that the NDP will make significant cuts that will affect the services by both the Porcupine Carragana Hospital as well as the Red Deer Nursing Home.



And, Mr. Speaker, the people are speaking out. In a letter . . . (inaudible) . . . health care in the community, the Porcupine Credit Union writes, and I quote:

We request that sufficient dialogue be held with the community to review all possible options.

Will the minister honour this request? Will he commit today to meet with the people of Porcupine Plain to discuss all options before the NDP make decisions that affect their hospital and their nursing homes?

(10:30)

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, we are going to take the extra resources that have been provided to us in this budget and work with all of the regional health authorities and all the communities to make sure that we use these resources in the most appropriate way possible. This includes much discussion in boardrooms. It'll include discussion in communities. All of these things are important.

Mr. Speaker, we have been working very diligently to try to make sure that our system provides the care for people — the highly technical, expensive care — but care with access right across the province. That's our goal. We're going to continue to do that.

And I ask the members opposite, if they have some ideas or suggestions, get them out in the community. There are no ideas that come from that side; we're waiting for them.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is also for the Minister of Health, and the suggestion I would have is to support our motion this morning.

I represent yet another community in this province whose residents are concerned about the future of its health care facilities. People in Kerrobert are concerned the NDP is looking at downsizing the Kerrobert Hospital and reducing services by cutting 14 long-term care beds. As one concerned citizen who wrote me put it, quote:

Our health care has already been reduced in this area more than once. We believe that if greater difficulties are put on the population to receive health care, there would be a self-imposed neglect inflicted.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP have caused problems for the people of Kerrobert. They don't want to be targeted by the NDP's . . . (inaudible) . . . Will the minister promise today to hold public meetings in Kerrobert to discuss all options before he and his NDP government reduce services and cut long-term care beds?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, we have been having discussions in this province for a number of years around the kinds of care that we need, and we set forward a plan in December 2001. We've been working with that plan in communities right across the province. We will continue to do that.

This year we have \$160 million in new resources for health care. We're going to be using that money very carefully. Of that money, much of it is going to the regional health authorities. They have been working with us on how to allocate that money within their regions. That work is ongoing. It will include making sure that all communities have some kind of an interest in what happens because it's important that every person in Saskatchewan feels like they are going to have the access to health care that they need.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Martensville.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the member from the Battlefords got up and he told this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and I quote, "We know that we continue to have a crisis in health care." Yes, the NDP does have a crisis in health care, and they have no one to blame, Mr. Speaker, but themselves.

After the last round of cuts to health care where the NDP closed 52 rural hospitals, cut nursing education seats and fired nurses, Saskatoon hospitals began to feel the crushing effects, Mr. Speaker. Today ER (emergency room) doctors warn of patients dying or being disabled because of staff shortages. Patient safety is put at risk in overcrowded ERs. Nurses are overworked and have low morale, and surgeries are being cancelled because of tight budgets.

Will the minister commit today to hold public meetings in areas where closures are being considered so that the situation in Saskatoon will not continue on a downward spiral?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I invite some of the veteran members on that side of the House who have been here for many years to contribute to the debate on health care in Saskatchewan by suggesting some proposals that relate to . . . how do we finance health care? How do we manage health care? How to we move forward in our Canadian situation in a way that supports our economy? Because those are the key issues as we look at health care.

Health care is a basic part of what it means to be a Canadian. It's very clear that the Prime Minister is recognizing that, as we go forward in this election. We are going to continue to talk about health care for years to come because it's very crucial in how we build our economy.

Mr. Speaker, those members opposite seem to have vanished as it relates to health care policy discussions. We urge them to have some policy conferences in their party and give us some

ideas.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Ms. Bakken:** — Mr. Speaker, Regina hospitals have also suffered at the hands of the NDP. We all remember it was the NDP government that closed the Plains hospital. Doctors in Regina tell us that the shortage of beds and the increase in waiting times escalated when the Plains hospital was closed.

Mr. Speaker, we not only lost beds at the Plains hospital, but we also have continued to see a reduction in beds at both the General and the Pasqua hospitals. Bed closures have led to an extraordinary number of days when Regina hospitals are on code burgundy. In fact Regina General was on code burgundy for 24 full days from January to March. Mr. Speaker, that is one month out of three that the Regina General Hospital was on a code burgundy. And there are times when both the Regina General and the Pasqua Hospital are on code burgundy.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit today to consulting with people in Regina and throughout the province of Saskatchewan before he and his NDP government launch another attack on health care?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, we are working with the people right across the province who are involved in the health care system, and we are going to continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I got into trouble in this House before, making comments about that member's policies on health care, but I think there is no question that she is one of the members who is very much in favour of privatizing our health care system in Canada. Mr. Speaker, I ask those members to either come forward with that kind of a proposal so we can debate it or else admit that they're changing their proposal so that we can get something that is positive here in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we in this government are very concerned about making sure we have health care here today, tomorrow, and for our children and grandchildren because that's what's going on right now in this country . . . is we're having a debate on the future of health care. Mr. Speaker, I urge those members to get involved.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

#### **Expenditures for Proposed Ethanol Plant**

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is for the Minister Responsible for Investment Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, Points West Consulting is a Regina-based lobby firm with very close and well-known ties to the NDP. When Broe industries of Denver, Colorado, needed to hire a lobbyist that could influence NDP cabinet ministers in Saskatchewan in the negotiation of the imaginary Belle Plaine

ethanol deal, they hired Points West Consulting.

And earlier this week, the NDP's Minister of Industry and Resources admitted that Points West was paid \$163,000 by Broe industries to lobby the government with regard to the NDP's imaginary Belle Plaine ethanol deal. The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that the minister also admitted the taxpayers of Saskatchewan are on the hook for 40 per cent of the bill. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why is the NDP using \$65,000 worth of Saskatchewan taxpayers' money to pay part of the political lobbying bill for Broe industries?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the minister for Investment Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Well this is the same question we had yesterday, Mr. Speaker, except yesterday I think we had the member suggesting that the Premier or the NDP or the government had hired Points West, and at least today the member acknowledges it was Broe industries, Mr. Speaker, that hired Points West Consulting.

And as I explained to the House yesterday, Mr. Speaker, Points West in fact was a consultant for Broe industries before the ethanol deal was conceived. Broe industries had no presence in Saskatchewan. My understanding is that Points West Consulting operated an office where they worked on this project for a year and a half. They billed Broe industries \$164,000 of which I think about \$25,000 went to third parties. They netted about \$129,000 for a year and a half's work by various people at various times.

The member wants to cast aspersions on that. There was nothing untoward about it whatsoever, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the facts are from information received through freedom of information. The NDP government is paying Points West Consulting more than \$65,000 for political lobbying. And the minister just indicated that, yes, Broe industries hired Points West. Broe industries hired Points West to lobby on their behalf, lobby this government regarding an ethanol project in the province of Saskatchewan.

However, Mr. Speaker, it would seem to me the taxpayers would agree with Broe industries paying Points West for the lobbying effort. The question, Mr. Speaker, is why are the Saskatchewan taxpayers on the hook for \$65,000 to pay the NDP's friends in Points West for lobbying the NDP upon behalf of Broe industries for this ethanol project?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Investment Saskatchewan.

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Mr. Speaker, the member has indicated . . . the member has put words in my mouth that I did not say. The member indicated that I said that Broe industries hired Points

West to lobby the government. I have never made that statement because that statement is not true, Mr. Speaker.

Broe industries hired Points West Consulting to manage their ethanol project and their office in Saskatchewan which, as I said, Points West did for the period of a year and a half. Broe industries is entitled to contract with whichever party or corporation in Saskatchewan they wish to contract with, Mr. Speaker. And people in Saskatchewan are entitled to do business regardless of what their political affiliation may be.

And by the way, I'm aware that there are people that worked for Points West Consulting of various political persuasions, including supporters of the members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

#### Costs of Closing Rural Service Centres

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Minister . . . Mr. Speaker, we've heard this morning that the NDP is planning to close long-term care facilities in many communities across the province. And many communities are also worried the NDP is about to close more hospitals or reduce the number of acute care beds in those communities.

Today is also the day when the NDP is slamming the door on rural service centres in 22 communities across Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, how much taxpayers' money will be spent to shut down these 22 rural service centres?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, indeed today the rural . . . the extension services are being transitioned from 31 to 9. Mr. Speaker, we have done extensive work to try and make sure that we are providing the very best resources that we can for agricultural producers in this province.

The analysis has been done. We see the use that was being made of those extension services. And we think that by this new structure where there are agrologists in each of the nine centres, and where there are eight agrologists plus a chief agrologist in the call centre, that we will be providing the kind of information that producers are looking for, and we will be building for the future.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite keep sniping at this program but as Kevin Hursch says in his article, they had no plan during the election for agriculture: they have put no plan forward for agriculture today. Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. We're carrying it forward, and it will be successful for producers in this province. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the

Minister of Agriculture has to recognize that this is no rumour; this is in fact the closure of 22 service centres. He can call it what he likes.

The town of Canora is one of the communities losing its rural service centre today. In Canora the NDP government leases the office space that houses the rural service centre from the town. In fact the rural service centre is located in the town hall. And the town of Canora has a lease contract for \$17,000 per year through 2012. Mr. Speaker, the town of Canora expects to be paid in full for the leased space. That's \$17,000 per year for the next eight years — approximately \$136,000.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm the government will pay the town of Canora in full for the lease? And will the minister tell us how much taxpayers' money will be spent in total to buy out all the lease arrangements in the 22 communities that will lose their rural service centres today?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the department will be working with all of the leaseholders, and in the end the estimate is that we will be saving over \$2 million by this transition. But not only that, Mr. Speaker, we will be preparing for a future where there will be much more success in agriculture in rural Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have heard from the members opposite that this government is attacking rural Saskatchewan. Well let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, what that is about. We are attacking rural Saskatchewan with money. We put over \$500 per capita into rural Saskatchewan in this province — more than any other province. During a time of extreme crisis last year, Mr. Speaker, we put, over budget, \$130 million into rural Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we are attacking also with programs that will build for a very successful agricultural future in this province. That's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

(10:45)

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

**Ms. Junor:** — With leave to introduce a guest, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Order, please, members. The member for Saskatoon Eastview has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Saskatoon Eastview.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, a constituent of mine, Sharon Mathiason, up in the west gallery. She's here today because she just conducted a news conference in the Cumberland Gallery highlighting the deadly effects of

chiropractic neck manipulation. Sharon's daughter, Laurie Jean, died following a chiropractic neck manipulation in February 1998. Laurie Jean was 20 years old.

I'd like to congratulate Sharon for her perseverance and tireless dedication in the fight to prevent any other person from suffering the devastating effects of chiropractic neck manipulation, and I ask all members of this Assembly to welcome Sharon.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just before I begin my ministerial statement, I ask leave to introduce two guests.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The member may proceed.

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature, two women who are in the west gallery. One is Donna Brunskill, who is the executive director of the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association and the other is Karen Eisler, who is the membership coordinator of the same organization. And I ask all members to welcome them here to the legislature.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Regulations for Nurse Practitioners

**Hon. Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to advise my colleagues in the legislature that our government recently passed regulations that allow for the licensing of nurse practitioners. This measure furthers the government strategy to improve basic front-line health care services for Saskatchewan residents.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to a high-quality health care system which is accessible to all Saskatchewan residents, and one that is sustainable into the future within the resources that we have available. It is a health care system that is fundamentally strong and also one that is facing rapid change. Every day we are introduced to new health care technology and new ways of delivering services. Our government is responding by making changes in our health care system so that Saskatchewan residents receive the quality services they deserve.

These regulations support The Registered Nurses Amendment Act, 2001, Mr. Speaker, allowing for a new way of delivering health care to rural, northern, and urban residents by expanding the scope of practice of registered nurses.

Mr. Speaker, nurse practitioners are specialized registered nurses with advanced training who can diagnose and treat common illnesses and prescribe medication. As part of a team, they work with physicians and other health professionals in primary health care locations across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the vital role that nurses play. They are the heart and soul of our health care system. They are committed and dedicated to the people who need their special care, expertise, and compassion. Anyone who has come in contact with the health system as a patient or in support of family or friends can attest to the important contribution that nurses make in delivering quality care.

I believe that offering registered nurses greater career opportunities by expanding their scope of practice will encourage them to stay and work in Saskatchewan. This is especially important, Mr. Speaker, as we follow up with our action plan commitment of keeping and attracting health care providers to Saskatchewan, as well as our Throne Speech commitment of making our province ready for the next generation. Mr. Speaker, the future for nurses in Saskatchewan is truly wide open.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank nurse practitioners for their vital contribution to nursing care in Saskatchewan and I want to extend a warm welcome to them as official members of the primary health care teams across the province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the opposition critic for Health, the member for Melfort.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure that I rise today in response to the ministerial statement and in doing so to welcome Donna and Karen to the Assembly this morning.

Mr. Speaker, I think that there are many things that we disagree with the government and many things that we surprisingly do agree with. And one of the things that we surprisingly or not so surprisingly agree with the government is the importance that we place on the role of nurses and primary health care teams across this province.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it is important to recognize the many contributions that nurses make to the health care system in Saskatchewan. For years they have been right at the forefront of providing quality health care to Saskatchewan residents. And, Mr. Speaker, as of relatively recently nurses have been challenged to move up their scope of practice and move to a more important role in the health care system as nurse practitioners or nurse people that are in the forefront and operating much more independently.

Mr. Speaker, this concept was recognized when the legislation was changed to The Registered Nurses Amendment Act and I'm pleased to see that the government has followed through with the appropriate regulations to define appropriately the role of nurse practitioners in the province.

Mr. Speaker, this allows nurse practitioners and nurses to indeed work as more important contributing members to primary health care teams, to also even act a lot more independently in many instances in our communities. These opportunities for nurses in Saskatchewan are not restricted to rural or remote locations, but indeed have important roles even in an urban setting.

So, Mr. Speaker, we very much supported these changes to The Registered Nurses Act when they were introduced and we very much support and want to make sure that they are able to operate at their full scope of practice. And so we very much support that these regulations are in place and we look forward to seeing the positive outcome of these nurses operating to their full scope of practice in the communities across Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions no. 249 and 250.

**The Speaker:** — Responses to questions 249 and 250 have been submitted. Why is the member from Melfort on his feet?

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to proceed with private members' Bills now and then revert to the 75-minute debate.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Melfort has requested leave for the Assembly to proceed to private Bills first and then revert to the 75-minute debate. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted.

#### PRIVATE BILLS

#### SECOND READINGS

##### **Bill No. 301 — The Bethany College Amendment Act, 2004**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Martensville.

**Mr. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The college at Hepburn, traditionally known as Hepburn Bible Institute, is in my constituency and I've known of that school for a long time. It's been around I believe since the beginning of the previous century. It has served the Christian community in that area very well, in fact not only in that particular area but provincially and internationally.

And in keeping with the times, they find the need there to go ahead and change their name somewhat to accommodate their

business interests and the recognition that they want as a Bible college. And, Mr. Speaker, to that end I move Bill No. 301, the Bethany Bible College amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Martensville that Bill No. 301, The Bethany College Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Clerk:** — Second reading of this Bill and referral to committee.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

##### **Bill No. 302 — The Fountain of Life School of Ministry Inc. Act**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Fountain of Life School of Ministry was founded in 1997 and since that time have enjoyed certification through the Government of Saskatchewan Department of Learning as a private vocational school. Their purpose, however, has been to train ministers of religion.

When the school was formed in 1997, the national occupation code described a minister of religion as a vocational career that requires only two years of post-secondary training. Since that time the code has been changed to require that a minister of religion have a bachelor's degree, and therefore the Fountain of Life School of Ministry is petitioning the government in order to confer degrees in religious studies and theology, thus allowing the school to conform with the national occupational code standards for this vocation.

And therefore at this time, Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 302, The Fountain of Life School of Ministry Inc. Act be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Moosomin that Bill 203, The Fountain of Life School of Ministry Inc. Act be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

**Clerk:** — Second reading of this Bill and referral to committee.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

**Bill No. 303 — The Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association Amendment Act, 2004**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to have within the fine riding of Regina Elphinstone-Centre the headquarters for the Saskatchewan School Boards Association. Now of course they've been known for many, many years as the Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association. They've recently changed their name and in terms of keeping their legislation up to date, they have come forward with a request pursuant thereto.

As such, Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 303, The Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Regina Elphinstone east that Bill No. 303, The Saskatchewan School Trustees' Association Amendment Act be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills. Is it the wish of the Assembly to adopt the Bill?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion's carried.

**Clerk:** — Second reading of this Bill and referral to committee.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

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

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly to move a motion regarding the absence of a member for a conference.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Melfort has requested leave to move a motion with respect to the absence of a member for a conference. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The member may proceed. I recognize the member for Melfort.

## MOTIONS

### Leave of Absence for a Member

**Mr. Gantfoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the member from Regina Douglas Park, by leave of the Assembly:

That leave of absence be granted to the member from Cannington from Monday, May 3, 2004 to Friday, May 21, 2004 inclusive, to attend a parliamentary visit in Westminster on behalf of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Melfort, seconded by the member for Regina Douglas Park:

That leave of absence be granted to the member for Cannington from Monday, May 3, 2004, to Friday, May 21, 2004 inclusive, to attend the parliamentary visit in Westminster on behalf of this Assembly.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

#### Affirmation of Support for the Canadian Wheat Board

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. It is my great honour and pleasure today to rise on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan caucus to move a motion. I'll read the motion so that my statement, my comments can . . . people will understand where I'm coming from.

Later in my speech I will be moving:

That this Assembly affirm its ongoing support for the Canadian Wheat Board and its historical mandate to conduct the orderly marketing of grain on behalf of Canadian farmers.

Mr. Speaker, I am honoured because of my personal heritage, my grandparents who fought hard and were lifelong farmers and lifelong supporters of the Saskatchewan wheat board . . . or the Canadian Wheat Board. And it served them very well.

I am proud to stand because my heritage includes my parents who farmed and were . . . and continue to support the Canadian Wheat Board, as do many other families. But more importantly, I want to stress this: I'm proud to speak for the future, which includes my daughter, my son-in-law, my grandchildren, who are in their third year of farming and who are proud supporters of the Canadian Wheat Board and who understand what this issue is all about — my grandchildren perhaps less so than the older ones in that.

Mr. Speaker, the wheat board . . . I just, I want to talk a bit about . . . The mission of the board is, and I quote:

The . . . (Canadian Wheat Board) markets quality products and services to maximize returns to western Canadian grain producers.

That's their mission. This is what the wheat board is all about. They have goals to develop, to attract and develop markets worldwide. The member for Kindersley, I invite you to speak to

this motion . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Good, and when it's your turn I invite you to speak to it. You tell, you tell . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. I would ask the member to make his remarks toward . . . to the Chair, please.

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

What the wheat board is all about, Mr. Speaker, is so that agriculture producers can get the fairest return on their labour, on their investment. They invest their land, their time, their machinery, their fuel cost, their seed, and so on, to produce the best quality crops, grains in the world. And that's indisputable. They produce, Canadian farmers produce the finest wheat and durum wheat.

Incidentally on durum wheat, something I found out as I was researching this, the Canadian Wheat Board actually trades . . . Nearly two-thirds of the durum wheat in Canada is traded through the Canadian wheat . . . or in the world, rather. Two-thirds of the durum wheat through the world is traded through the Canadian Wheat Board.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite don't want to understand the wheat board. There's no one so deaf as anyone who refuses to listen, Mr. Speaker. And it's a real shame, because the wheat board is something that is in place. It is there to protect and to enhance life for rural Saskatchewan, many of whom are constituents of many of the members opposite. There's none, I repeat, there's no one so deaf, Mr. Speaker, as he who will not listen.

The Australian Wheat Board conducted a little study. The Australian Wheat Board is set up . . . There are many similarities between the Australian Wheat Board and the Canadian Wheat Board. Single-desk marketing is one of the key elements of what the wheat board is all about, Mr. Speaker, much like . . . I'll get into OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) in a bit, in a minute. But first, the Australian Wheat Board did a study on its 2000 crop year and they determined that the Australian Wheat Board returned to Australian farmers \$13 a tonne more by having single-desk marketing as opposed to survival of the fittest.

Mr. Speaker, the Australian Wheat Board and the Canadian Wheat Board have many similarities, as I say, in their structure. They have many similarities in how they operate, and they both believe in single-desk marketing. And as a result in Australia there was in 2000, \$250 million more returned to Australian producers, or Australian farmers, as a result of the Australian Wheat Board. A similar picture could be painted in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'd mentioned OPEC and I want to get back to that. The wheat board in many ways is similar to OPEC, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, based mainly in the Middle East, but also in Venezuela. And what OPEC has decided to do, Mr. Speaker, what . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, please. Order, please. This is the 75-minute debate. There's usually room for six or seven people to speak on it and I'd like people to speak on it one at a time.

I recognize the member for Regina Coronation Park.

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, I thank you. What OPEC has decided to do is they grade their oil. There's various grades of oil because all oil isn't equal, just like all wheat isn't equal — is not equal, all barley is not equal, and all durum fits into various grades. So you grade it, you set a benchmark price. And the OPEC companies have agreed not to compete with each other on price for the same product. That's an important distinction. So they have single-desk marketing.

And the member for Kindersley will keep chirping and not listening. There's much he could learn — maybe not from me but there's much he could learn on the Canadian Wheat Board. He could actually listen to his own constituent who chairs the Canadian Wheat Board and obviously is a very, very firm supporter of single-desk marketing.

In fact I heard, I heard that Ken Ritter, the Chair of the Wheat Board, being interviewed on the radio just the other day. And Mr. Ritter — the member for Kindersley's constituent, Ken Ritter — says, you cannot, you simply cannot have single-desk marketing and open market at the same time. It just does not . . . you have one or the other but not both at the same time.

And in fact the wheat board, Mr. Speaker, has done some very good advertising of late, advertising that many cattle producers can relate to. And I commend them on pointing out the reality about a wheat board that includes single-desk marketing versus a wheat board that does not. Because without single-desk marketing there's very little reason to have a wheat board.

Mr. Speaker, I point out that over many years . . . Well let me back up. In 1998 the wheat board Act was amended and 10 of the directors are now directly elected by grain producers, directly. You must have a Canadian Wheat Board permit book before you can vote in this election, simple as that. Ten out of fifteen are directly elected, five are appointed by the federal government, which houses the responsibility for the Canadian Wheat Board Act — its legislation, if I might put it that way. And they have some responsibility to backstop if the bottom fell out of prices.

But since 1998, over 80 per cent of the directors of the wheat board that have been elected by farmer/producers — over 80 per cent of the directors elected — have stated in their election that they are supporters of single-desk marketing, and they are overwhelmingly supported, overwhelmingly supported. They have had instances where a director was elected on an opposite policy, and when he saw what the results were, that director flipped and became a believer in single-desk marketing and one of the staunchest supporters of the Canadian Wheat Board that they've ever had.

Mr. Speaker, to go to single-desk marketing as the opposition would have us do, pits farmer against farmer. It is simply put: if two farmers are vying for exactly the same market, they're competing against each other. You either have . . . you either believe in single-desk marketing or you don't, and I can see that one of the members does not, Mr. Speaker, by the actions.

Mr. Speaker, this draws a definite line. Members on this side of the House know the value of single-desk marketing. We know

that when you can do a study and show that you can get \$13 a tonne more into agriculture producer's pocket, this is a valuable resource. We know that the Canadian Wheat Board has its expenses come out of and are paid for by farmers in the pool. We know that. So it's not a subsidy. I want to say that. But we know that the Canadian Wheat Board puts money into the pockets of farmers.

What do farmers need? I've yet to have a farmer come to the Legislative Chamber and say oh, we don't need money. In all of my time being an elected member, I've yet to have a farmer — or anyone else, for that matter — come to the Legislative Chamber and say, oh don't worry about a support program; we've got lots of money.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we've got the Canadian Wheat Board, which is one of the best methods of enhancing the income of grain producers in Saskatchewan and indeed in Western Canada — in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, and into the Peace in British Columbia. We already have the Canadian Wheat Board. We already know that this enhances the lives of Saskatchewan's, in particular, producers.

We have a situation where the Conservatives in Alberta have introduced — I shouldn't say the Conservatives in Alberta, I should say a private member who happens to be a Conservative in Alberta — introduced a motion to do away with the Canadian Wheat Board. Now it's a private member's motion, I will say that. But it's the ideology that is shared by far too many members on the opposite side of this House. It's an ideology that is dangerous for Saskatchewan's grain producers.

Why in the world are they so determined to take \$13 a tonne or . . . roughly, out of producers' pockets? Why do they want to take that out of my son-in-law and my daughter's pocket? It's not like they've got too much money out there; I know that. Some, in fact . . . In fact, I'll venture to say, it's tougher farming today than when I grew up on a farm. It's tougher to earn a living on the farm today than it was then, Mr. Speaker.

So why is it that members opposite are so determined to do away with the Canadian Wheat Board? Why is it, Mr. Speaker, they're so determined to have this rugged individualism that pits farmer neighbour against farmer neighbour against farmer neighbour?

And you know what? When you have that sort of an effort, farmer selling against farmer, one is going to win. Let's assume I'm the smartest of the neighbours this year and I win and I sell my product. Just, just bear with me. Let's assume that. Well then, what happens next year when my neighbour is more desperate and needs the cash and says, I'm going to drop the price, I'm going to get the jump on that other, that neighbour. He's smarter than me that year, but we both lose because we're in this endless drive to the bottom, Mr. Speaker.

We don't need to drive to the bottom. We need to elevate ourselves above that. We need to support the Canadian Wheat Board. We have a proven product.

Mr. Speaker, my time is drawing nigh and I am most interested in hearing members opposite — particularly the member for Carrot River Valley who actually spoke at a Western Canadian

separation meeting saying we should outlaw, should do away with the Canadian Wheat Board. And I'm interested in hearing other members also, where they stand on this.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and my pleasure to move:

That this Assembly affirm its ongoing support for the Canadian Wheat Board and its historical mandate to conduct the orderly marketing of grain on behalf of Canadian farmers.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Order. Would the member indicate the seconder to the motion.

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the House. The hon. member for Meadow Lake is the seconder of the motion.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Regina Coronation Park, seconded by the member for Meadow Lake:

That this Assembly affirm its ongoing support for the Canadian Wheat Board and its historical mandate to conduct the orderly marketing of grain on behalf of Canadian Farmers.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Meadow Lake.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Sonntag:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to second the motion, that being:

That this Assembly affirm its ongoing support for the Canadian Wheat Board and its historical mandate to conduct the orderly marketing of grain on behalf of Canadian farmers.

You know, Mr. Speaker, as I listen to the heckling from across the way, I find it kind of interesting. And I've made this observation, Mr. Speaker, over the last, oh, I don't know, month or month and half, Mr. Speaker. It appears to me, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite have some difficulty in accepting democracy. They have difficulty in accepting and understanding the process where, when the public in whatever constituency — whether it's a constituency of Saskatchewan, or whether it's sort of Western Canada, Mr. Speaker — when the electorate makes a decision, they have a difficult time accepting that decision.

It appears that they still have not accepted the decision of the majority of the people of Saskatchewan in this last provincial election. And it seems to me it ties in very nicely into this debate, Mr. Speaker. Because by the amount of criticism that I hear from across the way, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that they have difficulty as well accepting the notion that, through a democratic process, the majority of producers also believe in the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Speaker.



I encourage, I encourage them, Mr. Speaker, to put forth, continue to put forth, Mr. Speaker, their positions on this because that's important to have a healthy debate. It really, truly is.

But when the electorate through a democratic process have made a decision, Mr. Speaker, those members opposite should accept that. That needs to be continually challenged, but they should accept that and get on with life, Mr. Speaker. And in this particular debate with the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely clear that the electorate, the producers have clearly said that they want the maintenance, Mr. Speaker, of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Speaker, eight of the ten, or 80 per cent, of farmer-elected directors currently support the single-desk selling mandate of the Canadian Wheat Board. Mr. Speaker, here's another statistic. Mr. Speaker, in the latest election of five Canadian Wheat Board members held in, in the election held in 2002, four of the five people elected, again 80 per cent, expressed their strong support for the single-desk selling mandate of the Canadian Wheat Board. And of the entire votes cast in the first round for all candidates running in the last election, those who publicly expressed their support for single-desk selling as indicated, Mr. Speaker, they received approximately 56 per cent of the vote, while those expressing support for the marketing choice only received 44 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's clear that Saskatchewan continues to support the continuation of the Canadian Wheat Board single-desk selling authority because we think that it increases — increases, Mr. Speaker — the returns to wheat and barley farmers and is supported by, as I've indicated, a clear majority of producers. And again, that should be respected by members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, benchmarking research conducted by the department of agricultural economics at the University of Saskatchewan, indicates they . . . indicates Canadian farmers, *FARMGATE* wheat returns for 2000 and 2001 were \$10.49 per tonne higher — I repeat higher — compared to the returns under market conditions without the Canadian Wheat Board's single-desk selling.

As a 10, as 10-year average, wheat and durum wheat production in Saskatchewan is 13.53 million tonnes. The annual value of the single desk to Saskatchewan producers is estimated at a whopping \$142 million, Mr. Speaker.

The single-desk selling authority enables the Canadian Wheat Board to have economic influence on behalf and to the benefit of producers with grain handling companies and the railways. Commercial agreements, Mr. Speaker, in place as part of the agreement on grain handling and transportation yielded, I am advised, savings of 11.2 million, Mr. Speaker, in the second quarter of '03-04 crop year alone.

These savings are distributed to farmers through the Pool accounts. They are in addition to the 7.9 million in savings that were generated in the first quarter of the year, Mr. Speaker.

Grain producers have clearly, I think, demonstrated their wish — and I've said this — to maintain the current single-desk

marketing authority through the Canadian Wheat Board. And four of the five current directors, as I've indicated, were elected by producers in Saskatchewan. And eight of the ten directors elected by producers throughout the Canadian . . . throughout Western Canada support the single-desk selling.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, the operation of the Canadian Wheat Board has likely assisted — and I think this is an important piece to note, one that is a bit more difficult to measure — but has likely assisted in the expansion of the value-added activity in wheat and barley on the Prairies. And there is certainly a greater share of national milling activity . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Here we go. Well if the member would listen, here's one of the examples, Mr. Speaker. There is many experts in the area, Mr. Speaker, who feel that there's a much greater share of national milling activity in Western Canada compared to the northern tier states and to the Canadian barley malting activity as is concentrated in the Prairies.

And I encourage the members opposite to debate that. And as I said, it's not a perfect science. But generally experts in the area would agree that this is one of the value-added areas that has resulted as a direct result of single-desk marketing and the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the number of challenges to the Canadian Wheat Board from out of the US (United States) by producers, it tells me something, Mr. Speaker. It says to me just . . . I'm not necessarily an old person, Mr. Speaker, but having . . . It just seems to me when people protest something, it has had an influence on their life. If you were of no significance, have no influence, generally people sort of ignore you. But there have been a huge number of challenges to the Canadian Wheat Board. It tells me that the Canadian Wheat Board has been successful in marketing their products and our products and Western Canadian producers' products into the US.

If they were unsuccessful in marketing those products, I don't think you would hear much complaining out of the US, and you would have very few appeals. Fortunately for us, Mr. Speaker, I think we have been . . . I think we knew the results, but fortunately for us, the rulings have always been in support of the Canadian Wheat Board. And I suspect that there will be many more challenges to the Canadian Wheat Board. But it tells me, Mr. Speaker, that the Canadian Wheat Board is not insignificant. It tells me that they have been largely successful in the marketing of those products into the US.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go on a little bit into the recent discussions on the legislation that's being proposed in Alberta, if I could. The legislation, as I understand it, does not propose to do away with the Canadian Wheat Board, but it talks about giving producers a choice. I will argue that ultimately it really does propose to do away with the Canadian Wheat Board because that's ultimately what would happen through sort of a national choice.

And I want to . . . Because I think it summarizes fairly well, I want to quote from a letter to the editor in the *Leader-Post* of April 29, just today, Mr. Speaker, from the current Chair of the Canadian Wheat Board, where he says . . . And I'm just going to pull out a couple of sections. It's in reference to the Alberta Agriculture minister, Shirley McClellan. He says this:

At a time when many farmers are suffering from financial hardship, when governments are struggling to find funds to help them, when farmers are witnessing consolidation and concentration of power in . . . grain marketing system and disappearing margins, this announcement can only be greeted with surprise and disappointment.

The current system for marketing wheat and barley in Western Canada includes an open domestic market for feed grains and a single-desk approach to selling grain in the export and human consumption markets.

Farmers are smart businesspeople (he goes on and says), as McClellan herself has often acknowledged. Why have the majority of farmers voted in three consecutive . . . (Canadian Wheat Board) elections for directors who support this single-desk approach? They had the choice and they chose the single desk because a majority of them believe that in today's globalized grain market the best way for Prairie farmers to thrive is to band together.

That's in free-market Alberta, Mr. Speaker, in free-market Alberta. And I could go on but I think that that very well summarizes, Mr. Speaker, what Alberta producers think about this. I think that Premier Klein, and the Agriculture minister will be surprised by the reaction of Alberta producers to this proposed legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I see that I'm also getting close to the end here as well, but I want to talk about some of the things, if I could, Mr. Speaker, about what has also gone on in Alberta. You know, the Alberta government pushed for a continental barley market, Mr. Speaker. They kept barley out of the Canadian Wheat Board for a time. And I argued that was a bad choice because, in three months, barley prices dropped by one-third and, after 90 days, it was reinstated to the Canadian Wheat Board and quickly bounced back to its previous price.

The Alberta government deregulated the hog industry because Peter Pocklington, Mr. Speaker, said that he could not compete with Alberta's pork single desk — a bad choice. The Alberta hog price industry was a disaster for farmers there, Mr. Speaker, and only for 18 months in the past five years have hog farmers had profitable returns for slaughter hogs.

Mr. Speaker, the Alberta government deregulated power, natural gas, and sold off Alberta government telephones. That was a disaster as well, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Regina Coronation Park, seconded by the member for Meadow Lake:

That this Assembly affirm its ongoing support for the Canadian Wheat Board and its historical mandate to conduct the orderly marketing of grain on behalf of Canadian farmers.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

**Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's my great pleasure to enter into this debate over the monopoly powers of the Canadian Wheat Board.

The member from Regina Coronation Park, in moving this motion — that member clearly not a farmer, Mr. Deputy Speaker — compares the Canadian Wheat Board to OPEC. He correctly points out that OPEC has power in the marketplace because they control most of the oil exports in the world. But he fails to recognize that the Canadian Wheat Board represents only a very tiny proportion of exported wheat and barley in the world and an even tinier, much tinier proportion of the production, wheat and barley production in the world.

He states incorrectly that the Alberta legislature is entering a Bill . . . entering into debate on a Bill to do away with the Canadian Wheat Board. Mr. Speaker, that is simply not true, and that member either knows or ought to know that it is not true. And that member and others on that side of this Hon. Assembly ought to show more interest in the truth.

The member from Meadow Lake goes on to make wild claims about the benefit to Western Canada of the Canadian Wheat Board — numbers taken right out of propaganda of the wheat board. And I will be balancing his claims, I will be balancing his claims off of some facts during my discussion of this motion.

Americans — Americans who deal in the private grain trade and understand the price discovery mechanisms at play in the private grain trade and understand how commodity exchanges work and how commodity exchanges arrive at those prices, those transparent prices of privately traded grains — do not trust the Canadian Wheat Board price-setting mechanism as being transparent or even reflective of any value whatsoever for Canadian grain. And they will continue to harass us in trade disputes as long as we cling to this system that is so out of step with free enterprise, with their system, and with the way the grain is marketed and priced in the rest of the world.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the end of my comments, I will be proposing an amendment to this motion, and that amendment will be seconded by the member from Kindersley.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, farmers believe that there are many reasons why the Canadian Wheat Board is not delivering the best price and highest profit margin that they should be receiving for their grain. One of those reasons is the inefficiency of the organization.

Mr. Don Baron — a former editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press* among other career accomplishments and author of the book, *Canada's Great Grain Robbery* — states bureaucratic red tape is stealing the cash needed to make the industry viable. The poor structure, accountability, incentives and management have long since overpowered any benefits of the single-desk seller. Mr. Baron incidentally goes on to challenge the idea that there ever were any benefits to single-desk selling. But in any event, farmers pay for the administration and other deductions out of the Wheat Board's stated price.

According to the study entitled, *The Economics of Single Desk Selling of Western Canadian Grain* by Professors Colin Carter

and R.M.A. Loyns of the University of Manitoba, there are few incentives for the Canadian Wheat Board to reduce any of their costs. The Canadian Wheat Board's financial liabilities are fully guaranteed by the federal government. It does not have a bottom line and at best as many political reference . . . Therefore the board does not pursue improvements in the industry and in the way that market forces would.

Carter and Loyns document that because of this the following are extra costs that farmers must pay for single-desk selling. Cost item, wheat board administration, \$1.80 a tonne for wheat and \$1.75 extra for barley. For protein and grade giveaway, \$2.85 a tonne for wheat. Delays in varietal development, \$4 for wheat and \$4 for barley a tonne.

Free farm storage for excess malting barley, five fifty a tonne for barley. Excessive handling charges, \$4 a tonne for wheat and \$4 a tonne for barley. Overage, demurrage, extra freight and port congestion, \$3 a tonne for wheat and \$3.10 a tonne for barley.

Excess cleaning, \$2.35 a tonne for wheat and \$2.80 a tonne for barley. Production inefficiency, \$4 a tonne for wheat and \$4 a tonne for barley. Delays in wheat board payments — this is interest costs to farmers — \$4.10 a tonne for wheat and \$3.35 a tonne for barley.

Total extra costs per tonne because of the Canadian Wheat Board single-desk selling regime; \$26.15 a tonne for wheat and \$28.50 a tonne for barley.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, in other words farmers pay dearly for inefficiencies that a single-desk seller has no incentive to reduce. In a free market, because of competition, there is more incentive to reduce costs in order to gain economic advantage.

The Canadian Wheat Board suffocates, the Canadian Wheat Board suffocates the western prairies. It nearly eliminates the domestic value-added industry. The *Prairie Agricultural Digest* states that Canada is the world's largest exporter of durum wheat, yet it is a huge importer of pasta. There are no value-added pasta plants in the Prairies because if they want prairie wheat, they must buy it through the wheat board and lose the economic advantage of purchasing it locally.

An example of this is the farmer-owned pasta plant facility that was to be built in southeastern Saskatchewan several years ago. Farmers sold shares and were prepared to buy locally grown wheat under contract and process it into pasta for export to the US similar to one of the large pasta plants — and very successful pasta plants — at Carrington, North Dakota. All that group needed was a Canadian Wheat Board exemption so they could legally buy their own grain. After weeks of waiting the decision was handed down — request denied.

Mr. Speaker, this would most likely cause the plant to move to North Dakota and surely it did. Now those same Saskatchewan farmers are buying shares in the facility at Carrington, North Dakota, and attempting to get a wheat board exemption to sell their wheat to that plant.

Mr. Speaker, the inaccuracies in the statements that the two members made in presenting this motion are incredible and

reflect a total lack of understanding of the issue by anyone on that side of the floor. There clearly are no farmers over there, no one who has any knowledge of the situation.

Mr. Speaker, we will not support that motion, and I tender this amendment to it. The amendment reads, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

That all words after Assembly be deleted and the following substituted: expresses its grave concern over the provincial government's ongoing failure to provide any vision or leadership when it comes to the adoption or formulation of innovative agricultural policy in Saskatchewan or nationwide, such as options in marketing.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Thunder Creek, seconded by the member for Kindersley:

That all words after Assembly be deleted and the following substituted: express its grave concern over the provincial government's ongoing failure to provide any vision or leadership when it comes to the adoption or formulation of innovative agriculture policy in Saskatchewan or nationwide, such as options in marketing.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Kindersley.

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I will be, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Why is the member on her feet?

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — On a point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member please to make her point of order.

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering where you would conclude that this amendment is in order in that it dramatically changes the intent of the resolution, where we are attempting to have a discussion, a private members' discussion on the Canadian Wheat Board.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member on a point of order . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I recognize the member for Biggar . . .

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to speak to the point of order. This motion is speaking to agriculture, to marketing, and we feel that it is totally appropriate that this amendment be allowed because it's part of the whole package that concerns the Canadian Wheat Board and the options of marketing.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order, order. I thank the member for her point of order and the member for speaking on it.

As members know in seventy-five minute debate there generally is a great deal of latitude to debate issues that are of importance to the public. And upon reading this, the last phrase — such as options in marketing — and the fact that it does deal

with agriculture, that I would view that this amendment is in order and that the member's point of order is not well taken.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Dearborn:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for that wise ruling and . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Anyways, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm getting lectured now by the member from Regina South. And as we're discussing the Canadian Wheat Board, much of what's come across from the other side has been nonsensical today. So where to start, Mr. Speaker?

My family has farmed in this province since before the province was founded. The farm that I live on with my wife and family will be 100 years old next year. My sons are the sixth generation living in the same house, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is my business. I understand it.

There are problems with the Canadian Wheat Board. We have never, we have never said that we want the Canadian Wheat Board destroyed. I know Ken Ritter. I've known him my whole life. I know the member from Regina South has, also knows Mr. Ritter. And Mr. Ritter ran on a ticket on opening up marketing options. He became the chairman of the wheat board — a board that is instituted by the federal government, that has five appointed members, that at the end of the day is under the federal government's thumb. And changes have been made.

Here is what the problem is, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The problem is essentially this. We exist in, we exist, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in an industry that is not allowed to market their own products. No one else in no other industry has these restrictions put on them. Ford makes a car. Ford decides how much the car should be sold for. Ford decides who gets to sell their car, how they advertise it. That's the end of the question, and the buyer pays the price.

At the end of the day, the grain grown on my farm, no. 1 Canadian durum, fifteen five protein right across the board last year . . . And you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that means it is the highest protein content. For the members opposite, that's rated by the Canadian Grains Commission. But we had stuff on our farm last year at 17.7 per cent. There should be, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a niche market just for that pasta, for the pasta produced out of that for high-end athletes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

If I were to do that, if I were to take that own grain out of my granary, break it up, put some water on it, chop it up, put it in a box and call it couscous, I would be a criminal, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is wrong.

The member opposite from Regina Coronation Park made this absurd, absurd statement that there is a parallel between the CWB (Canadian Wheat Board) and OPEC. Canada produces 1 per cent of the world's grains, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We control 21 percent of the world's export market.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1946 we controlled 50 per cent of the world export market. So how's the CWB been doing? They've lost nearly 30 per cent of world export market over the last 50 years. It gets worse and worse and worse. And what do we have to show for it? They send me more calendars every year. This is the reality, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now do I think everything about the wheat board is wrong? Absolutely not. There are some positives to it. Number one, I get to be paid. I know that it is guaranteed by the Government of Canada. Number two, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that the situation in trading into Asia with the Canadian Wheat Board sometimes has some advantages because of cultural differences. Asian countries often like to deal with a government institution. There are advantages there. Does it mean it has to be a single-desk seller? Absolutely not, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What also happens, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I go to sign a contract for the grain — and this is what members opposite just do not understand — I take 100 tonnes of durum and I contract it to the Canadian Wheat Board. That contract, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must honour — 85 per cent delivery or I pay penalties on . . . However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Canadian Wheat Board doesn't call for that contract, I don't get paid.

So in 2000, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I had a very good crop on my farm, only 60 per cent of my durum was sold. So I'm left at the end of the year locked into a system where 40 per cent of my crop cannot be used. This year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, producing the best durum in the world — no. 1, fifteen five protein — and they're likely only going to take 70 per cent of that production, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now if you put that in the course of over four years, you've had almost a year of production that you can't sell. This is a large, large problem to the crisis facing farm families today. Because orderly marketing is a failure.

There's a greater reason for this failure too, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When we hire our traders to sell our grain, their salaries are capped at around \$100,000, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When you start to trade grain for Cargill, you start at half a million US. Our traders don't do a good enough job. My farm, my family deserves the best traders in the world, done systematically. I use the best accountants; I use the best lawyers. I have a right to be able to sell my product wherever I want.

Members opposite, they like the Canadian Wheat Board because of the nature of control. And we should remember the Canadian Wheat Board was introduced by a Conservative government in the 1930s.

The Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was a voluntary organization until the Second World War. During the Second World War, for reasons of national security, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it became a single-desk selling agent and at that point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was conglomerated that we couldn't sell on an open market.

We need to move back to the pre-World War II situation. In 1919, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my great-grandfather on the free market netted \$45,000. That's much greater, Mr. Deputy Speaker, than many of my constituents made last year, and that was 1919. He had a free . . . And that was because of the end of the First World War and there was a shortage in grain.

We need those opportunities again. We need those opportunities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's not that the wheat board should be abandoned. Members from my rural municipalities

tell me we have positives about the wheat board and I support those.

What we do need . . . I hear the member from Athabasca yipping from his seat and wonder if he even has a clue of what durum wheat is, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It gets down to fundamentals about freedom. My family's been here for 100 years. We've grown grain every year on that farm. We plant every year. And at the end of the day, we're not allowed to sell our product the way that we see fit. And that's wrong, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And if the Canadian Wheat Board gave me the best price for my product, I would support them because that would be a good business decision. That's not the case, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Sometimes, as in this year, the crop year is 75 per cent over. The crop has only had 70 per cent movement and the payout of that has only been 60 per cent. This is the reason for a crisis in agriculture.

Why should we have to wait a year and a half to get our money for a product that when I move a non-board grain, I can get my full cheque in two weeks, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members opposite don't have a clue about what the future of agriculture holds. There are only two aspects to making money in agriculture — how much you produce and what you get for it. That's the end result. There are no other variables.

For years and years and years, we have been forced, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to produce more for less. We need to be in control of our own markets so at the end of the day we can capture the end-use market, the 500 per cent markup in the grocery store that is sold there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from what we get. We get 5 to 7 per cent of the actual price of food. We need canning factories in Kindersley. We need pasta plants in Swift Current.

And what do these members opposite say? Well if the government can't own it, if the government can't be in control of it, we don't want it. And that's why systemically they have managing the demise of rural Saskatchewan. That's why in my rural municipality, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have 17 farmers that are under 40 years old.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I expanded my farm 10 quarters this spring; I know what I'm talking about. The members opposite are no longer farming. They don't understand it, they don't get it.

Eighty per cent of the land in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is farmed by 20 per cent of the farmers. We have the situation where we are getting into fourth and fifth generation farms to create wealth here. And the only way to create wealth is to expand and capture end-use market, and we cannot do that through the Canadian Wheat Board; we cannot do that through a single-desk selling agency.

I hope the wheat board is around for years to come. Should they have a monopoly? Absolutely not. If I wanted to choose to sell my grain through the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and own shares in the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and get returns through the

Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, that should be up to me. It shouldn't be left up to a federal government that moves grain through Canadian Steamship Lines and Paul Martin who's robbed us for years and years, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I will be speaking against the motion in favour of the amendment. And I would windup by saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these members opposite should do their homework. They don't speak for farmers. They are managing our demise.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — With leave, and thanks to the Minister of Agriculture, to introduce guests.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member has requested leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That is carried. I recognize the Minister of Industry and Resources.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Cline:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, some visitors in your gallery who are from Saskatoon who I have known, and several members have known, for some time.

And they are Maureen Fryett, sitting in your gallery, who I believe still works for the Service Employees' International Union. And behind Maureen is Barrie Miller, who is a Crown prosecutor in Saskatoon. And with him is their son. And I'm afraid I don't know their son's name, but I'm sure he's taking an interest in this very lively debate in the Legislative Assembly and his parents are advising him as to the goings-on in here, and I'm sure it's very educational.

And I'd like other members to join me in welcoming these visitors here today. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, the Minister of Agriculture.

#### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

##### Affirmation of Support for the Canadian Wheat Board (continued)

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very happy to have an opportunity to join in this debate on the Canadian Wheat Board. And I want to start off by saying that some of the points that have been made by the members opposite are legitimate points in terms of the debate and the

questions that are being struggled with by producers across our prairies.

We certainly want to see value-added developments in the Prairies and we want to do that in ways that are sustainable. We want to see developments that will really work for the Prairies. There's been a lot of analysis, a lot of discussion made over the years around these issues and there is no clear conclusion that undermining the wheat board's mandate for single-desk selling will solve the problem.

And I want to harken back to a time earlier when we heard that what would make all the difference in the world for value-add in Saskatchewan would be if we just got rid of the Crow rate. That would really solve the problem and we would see a lot more value-add. Well, Mr. Speaker, one of the . . . There were many producers in the province that were pushing for that. There were many producers in the province who were saying don't do it; it will cost us in the end.

Well the most conservative analysis these days would say that it costs us about \$300 million a year. That's what it takes out of producers' pockets in this province, Mr. Speaker. And on top of that, Mr. Speaker, it has added increased costs for transportation in the province with the requirement to fix roads. So, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that those . . . some people see solutions in a quick fix — if you'll just do this, that's going to make all the difference in the world.

We have in place in the Prairies, with the Canadian Wheat Board, a democratic structure that producers have voted their board delegates in for years now and those delegates have brought with them a variety of different gifts and perspectives.

And two of the members that I would like to refer to are very high-profile members. Indeed, Ken Ritter, who is Chair of the board, came into this board saying that well, we should have options; we shouldn't be stuck into single desk. And when he got into the midst of it, he began to see the advantages that the wheat board actually brought for producers. And he began to see how they could work together, keeping those advantages, but by making some changes to the board, providing more options, that the board began to change.

I would also like to reference one of my friends and I would say at least an acquaintance of the member from Thunder Creek, who was also very adamant that the board, wheat board was causing all kinds of problems for producers in Saskatchewan; it was putting them at a disadvantage. I would like to speak very briefly about Rod Flaman who was in high school with the member from Thunder Creek and myself, and was adamant that the wheat board should be just simply gotten rid of.

Well Mr. Flaman got involved. He put his name forward to run as a director. He was advocating for dual desk. And I tell you this is a very intelligent man who has worked hard to understand the systems and brought the best of his background into the arguments.

He got in as a director of the wheat board and he began again, as with Mr. Ritter, to learn the broader functions of the board — how they work to gain an advantage for Saskatchewan and prairie producers; the kind of market research and intelligence

that they gain as they look throughout the world and see what's happening in the markets. And they bring that to bear in terms of branding the products that we have in this province and making sure that with those brands they are into the premium markets and getting the very best prices possible for producers on the Prairies.

With that new understanding and new vision, I have to comment on the courage of Mr. Flaman that he came back to all those people that he had been working with for the demise, or at least for options, came back and he began to say to his friends that he had worked with, we were wrong, we were wrong; this Canadian Wheat Board really does work for our benefit.

Well how does it do that, Mr. Speaker? Well there are a number . . . there have been a number of analyses done that I think, yes, they are disputed. They're disputed by people across the country. But I just want to quote a few of the facts here, Mr. Speaker.

The annual value, the annual value of single desk to Saskatchewan producers is estimated at approximately \$142 million. This has been verified over many years with different studies. Commercial agreements on grain handling and transportation yielded savings of 11.2 million in the second quarter of the '03-04 crop year. This in addition to 7.9 million savings that were generated in the first quarter of the year.

In 1997, Schmitz, Gray, Schmitz, and Storey, their study showed that benefits to barley producers of \$72 million annually over a 10-year period — that's 72 million annually of benefit to barley producers — stemming from the CWB single-desk selling.

In '96 the Kraft, Furtan, Tyrczniewicz study of the CWB noted that they generated benefits for prairie wheat producers of 375 million per year — that is 18 and . . . \$18.88 per tonne. By the CWB extraction, a premium for consistency, quality, and by reducing costs for producers through shared risk management with the federal government, they were able to get these kind of results for producers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think some of the issues that people raise around options, how do we get the best support for value-added in this province — a very, very important question. And I know that the directors of the wheat board have been working very hard to find ways of doing that.

And they have . . . As the member for Meadow Lake alluded to, they have managed to encourage the development of value-added. We have more milling, more malting in Saskatchewan, in the Prairies, than what we see in our counterpart northern United States. Why is that? Well it is because of the effect of the policies that the wheat board has developed and implemented in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Well I want to take a broader look as well. One of the realities that we have faced continually has been an attack by the Americans on the Canadian Wheat Board. Why is that, Mr. Speaker? If this wheat board is not providing an advantage to our producers, if it is not giving them something better, why is it that American producers would continue to attack the wheat board year after year after year? It is because, Mr. Speaker, they

are providing an advantage to the producers in this province.

I also want to look at the broader world because the world is indeed changing. There are countries that simply for many, many decades were importing wheat, barley, durum. And, Mr. Speaker, there have been many, many changes in their production methods. There have been changes in their ability to ship. And so we're seeing a really changing market out there in the world, and in that changing market we need to have every advantage for our producers that we can possibly get.

Now who is one of the key players in these developing markets, Mr. Speaker? One of those who is competing with Canada — is making inroads into the markets — is Australia. And how is Australia, this nation that is making such inroads into the markets, how are they choosing to market their grain? Is it on an open market system? No, Australia is also using a wheat board.

The Australian Wheat Board is producing premiums for their producers and bringing back in more returns for their producers than they would on the open market. They are marketing into places, Mr. Speaker, that we have been marketing into, and it is because they are using some similar processes that are very effective in terms of their marketing.

That said, I also want to point to some of the advantages that we have seen over these past years in terms of marketing itself. We have seen the wheat board and the marketing side of that go into markets in the world, branding our wheat as some of the best wheat in the world for producing bread and gaining a premium price on that. They have sold, they have sold malting barley into China. And that malting barley now in one of their best years over there, the Tsingtao beer, because of the quality of the barley that we have and the branding that has been made, 50 per cent of the make-up of that, of that beer comes from Canadian barley, marketed by the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Speaker, the folks who are working for this board are making inroads. They are bringing premiums for producers in the Prairies, and we do not want to see this undermined. Let the producers vote. Keep Alberta out of this. Let the producers vote and decide what kind of system they want, Mr. Speaker.

I speak against the amendment.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a privilege to enter into this debate this morning concerning the Canadian Wheat Board and marketing and, and options.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the point of order . . . that the member from Saskatoon Nutana really speaks to the mindset and the thinking of the NDP government. It's a very narrow view, a narrow view of, of farming in this province, a narrow view of agriculture. And the NDP haven't evolved with time in their thinking.

And I'd just like to go into a bit of history of, of agriculture and the wheat board, Mr. Speaker. Back in the '20s there was a

situation where the producers in Western Canada were, quite frankly, being shafted by the railways, by the grain companies, and the line companies. And it was a very, very serious situation. This evolved into the implementation of the Canadian Wheat Board and, and the Canadian Wheat Board did address those concerns at that time.

But since then the world has changed. The marketing options have changed in the world. The people in agriculture have evolved. Agriculture has evolved to a great extent. But the NDP are still stuck, not in the '40s and '50s — they're still stuck in the 1920s, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And as we've seen, the changes have taken place. Now agriculture and the agribusiness industry have evolved into many other crops, the canolas, the lentils; have diversified into livestock enterprises.

And, quite frankly, these people have voted, concerning the Canadian Wheat Board, with their feet. They've given up their permit books. They don't rely on the Canadian Wheat Board at all because they're growing crops or they've diversified into agriculture where the Canadian Wheat Board does not come into effect.

So when the members on the government side talk about the overwhelming support for the Canadian Wheat Board, it's not true, Mr. Speaker, because only people with permit books are . . . have the, have the ability to vote concerning Canadian Wheat Board. And as I've mentioned already, the agribusiness, farmers across Western Canada have already voted by changing their policies and their . . . on their farms and their crop rotations and their production in their own operations.

Mr. Speaker, I think the question this speaks to though is rural revitalization. That is the issue that we must look at everything . . . the context we must look at everything including the Canadian Wheat Board. Mr. Speaker, as we have seen that as the wheat prices have dropped over the years, there . . . that is not the way that the agriculture is going to evolve in this province.

I can only look back to the former minister of Agriculture in the Blakeney government and his comments were to livestock producers was that we will grow the product and we'll ship it. Well unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, those days are gone. We can't just grow it and ship it any more. What we must do is grow it, we must process it, we must package it, and we must do all this in Saskatchewan, in Western Canada, so that we produce the jobs. More taxpayers in this province, more businesses, more agribusiness services in the province by not just growing it and shipping it, but to increasing the value of these products in Saskatchewan.

And as an example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the whole debate around the pasta plant and the durum production, there's an example where the Canadian Wheat Board put a stop to a business that was wanting to be put up in Saskatchewan. And because of the Canadian Wheat Board interference, this pasta plant was not constructed in Saskatchewan. This pasta plant did not hire employees from Saskatchewan to work in this pasta plant and that is really the issue around the Canadian Wheat Board.

But what the Saskatchewan Party policy is, is that we don't

want to get rid of the Canadian Wheat Board. We just want the producers of this province to have that option — the choice — the voluntary choice of either selling through the Canadian Wheat Board or selling it on their own. And the producers of this province have the great experience and expertise in selling their products, non-board, as I've mentioned — the canola, the lentils, the peas, livestock, cattle, hogs. And so it's not that the producers of this province don't know how to market their products; it's a fact that the Canadian Wheat Board will not allow them to do it.

And I think if the Canadian Wheat Board was opened up to a voluntary situation, I believe that the Canadian Wheat Board would continue to be a very viable marketing tool for the producers in Western Canada, but it would be one option for the producer to sell to the Canadian Wheat Board.

If the supporters of the single marketing . . . single-desk marketing are so strong in favour of the Canadian Wheat Board, open it up to a voluntary marketing choice. Let the Canadian Wheat Board compete with other options out there. And I believe the Canadian Wheat Board will do a very good job under that competitive system.

I also believe that it will open up options for the producers of products to make decisions based on their own land, on their own expertise, their own farming situation, and also base their production decisions based on where they can get the best dollar. And as I said before, that choice should be given to the producers of Saskatchewan.

You look around, the members on the opposite side talk about other jurisdictions — Australia. Well let's just look in Canada. The Ontario Wheat Marketing Board, it's a voluntary board. It does a very good job. It's one player in the choice that producers have. And the Ontario marketing board does a very good. The producers in Ontario can make their own decisions based on their own circumstances in the marketplace, Mr. Speaker.

And when we look at other areas of production, organic producers, and again the Canadian Wheat Board has really a detrimental effect on the growth of organic industry, livestock industry, and diversifying into other areas in the province. And I believe the government has to take a real close look in their plans for revitalization, not just give lip service to revitalization but make substantial changes in the policies that they talk about. And I think the Canadian Wheat Board being allowed to be one option for marketing for producers is one that they should look at.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member's time has expired. We will now enter into a 10-minute question/comment period. I recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

**Mr. Hermanson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the member for Regina Coronation Park.

I happen to know that the member grew up on a farm, which is about six miles from my farm. And I remember when he lived on the farm, it was primarily wheat board crops that were

grown. His father and his colleagues grew spring wheat, durum, barley, a little bit of flax, which is an off-board crop.

But today, not only on that farm but on just about every farm in that community, the wheat board crops are the last priority for farmers. They will seed lentils; they will seed mustard; they will seed canola; they will seed peas; they will seed barley for sale on the open market or in local feed lots — anything but durum and wheat. And they wish they could grow more, but it's just not economically viable to grow wheat and durum and board crops like it was when he was growing up.

That's the real world today. So my question to the member is: why would he propose that there not be changes and more options to marketing grains, given the change in the farming patterns and cropping practices in the province?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Coronation Park.

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, I thank my former neighbour, as we grew up on farms that fenceline-bordered each other. Mr. Speaker, the reality is that Saskatchewan's farmers have done a terrific job in the main of diversifying the crops that they produce and so on.

Many of the newer crops that are being grown now simply weren't even open as an option. I recall as we were growing up, canola being a new crop developed at the University of Saskatchewan. And now you look at the important role that our Saskatchewan canola plays, where we're the biggest producer of canola in the world. I think it's amazing.

And canola is a non-board crop, Mr. Speaker. That's absolutely accurate. There are non-board and there are board crops. You either believe in single-desk marketing or an open market with respect to the board crops. And I'm curious which the members opposite believe in.

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

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the member from Biggar. My question to the member is: do you represent the constituents of Biggar?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I just remind members to put their comments to the Chair. I recognize the member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Well I thank the member from Nutana for asking that question. I certainly do represent the constituents from Biggar. I was elected by the constituents of Biggar, and I was actually re-elected. And I originally was elected by the members from . . . the constituents of Redberry Lake. And I believe I represent the constituents of Biggar far better than the member from Saskatoon Nutana and the members from the NDP government who quite frankly have no idea about agriculture.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Weekes:** — The member from Nutana, as I said before, has a very, very narrow view of agriculture. She's living in,



literally in the '20s and the '30s and '40s and '50s, and the world has changed. And this NDP government has not and will not change.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the member from Regina Coronation Park. Since he introduced the amendment, he also talked about the Australian Wheat Board and what they make. He has a ringing endorsement for the wheat board. He should have his fingertips . . . This is a question I get asked lots: what does it cost exactly to farmers . . . a bushel, to sell a bushel of wheat or a bushel of durum? He should have that at his fingertips since he has a ringing endorsement of the wheat board.

I've asked my wheat board representative, and he won't tell me. So I was just hoping that the member opposite would have that information on there because that affects, out in my area, the way people view the wheat board. Basically they don't know what it costs them personally to sell a bushel. Is it five cents? Is it \$1, \$2, fifty cents, whatever?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Coronation Park.

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am the member from Regina Coronation Park. It seems to me there's lots of members across the way that represent rural constituencies and should have those numbers absolutely at your fingertips. You tell us what the costs are.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to . . . I find it rather amusing that so many members opposite were born on third and think they hit a triple. Mr. Speaker, how is it, how is it that we heard in the debate a member opposite saying, oh, wheat board traders are restricted. Their salary's restricted to about \$100,000 a year. And that member bragged about the Cargill traders starting at half a billion dollars a year. How . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Half a million.

**Mr. Trew:** — Half a million, not half a billion. Thank you. But how is it that you can go from 100,000 to \$500,000 a year and somehow think that paying a trader \$500,000 a year is saving money?

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

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — To the member from Biggar: given that the member from Biggar just indicated that he certainly does represent the views of his constituents, how does he explain the, how does he explain the result in the last Canadian Wheat Board advisory elections where a single-desk marketing representative was voted for by . . . freely voted for by the

constituents of Biggar?

They support single-desk marketing. He says dual marketing. How does he square his previous answer with his remarks during this debate?

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — I'd like to thank the member for that question. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ran the last election on allowing the . . . (inaudible) . . . a choice in marketing in the Canadian Wheat Board, and I was re-elected. And I do represent the constituents of Biggar.

The point is, what does the members on the government side say to people in southern Saskatchewan who wanted a pasta plant and were denied by the Canadian Wheat Board to construct and build a pasta plant? And what do they say to those people that were going to be employed at that pasta plant and the producers of durum in that area? They answer to those people that they didn't care about them, and they will not change their policies.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, I represent a constituency who have farmers who are very keenly interested in the motion that we are debating here today. And we have farmers on both sides of the issue, and they hold very strong opinions. But one opinion that all of them agree on is that if there are changes to be made in marketing systems for any grains in this country . . . is that the farmers themselves should be making those choices.

And my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Does he agree that any future changes be made by the farmers themselves rather than having other interest groups such as chamber of commerces or federal, provincial governments dictating those changes?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

**Hon. Mr. Wartman:** — I thank the member for the question. I think it's a very good question, and in fact, in fact that is our position — that the producers should be making the decision. And we have made it clear in our discussions with Alberta that we think they should just, as a legislature, back out of this and let the producers make the decision.

We have also, Mr. Speaker, we have also seen that the producers have made a number of changes within the Canadian Wheat Board, and those changes have made it possible for add value developments in this province, including the development of pasta plants. And there is a process by which producers can be engaged in those developments.

We would like to see, Mr. Speaker, more and more of those developments and so would the Canadian Wheat Board. And the directors have continued to work to try and make sure that the options are there within the single-desk selling that will allow for those developments to take place.

So we do believe that the producers should be the ones who are making the decision ultimately.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the member from Biggar. Mr. Speaker, my question is: does the member from Biggar support a single-desk marketing system if in fact his constituents again vote for single-desk marketing system?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Biggar.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I'll thank the member for the question. That is a good point. Who gets to vote in the Canadian Wheat Board elections?

As I've said in my statement that so many people, producers, that do not carry Canadian Wheat Board permit books, they have voted. They have voted with their feet. They have voted against the Canadian Wheat Board. They sell off-board products. They have diversified into agriculture. And Mr. Speaker, if these people are allowed to have a choice in marketing, I am sure that they will accept that wholeheartedly. They . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Thank you. The 75-minute debate has expired. The next order of business is private members' motions, public Bills and orders. Order. Order.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Melfort.

#### Motion No. 2 — Proposed Inquiry on Health Care Facilities

**Mr. Gantefer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with pleasure that I rise this afternoon to speak to this motion that is a priority for the official opposition, given the current state and the proposed state of the health care system in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, right across Saskatchewan, people are again expressing their concerns and their consternation about what is proposed in this health care department, in the budget coming out of the recent tabled budget documents.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take some opportunity to recount some of the NDP's record in this regard that is more than a just a little concerning. Back at the beginning of the 1990s, then minister of Health, Simard, came up with a plan to change and reform the health care system in Saskatchewan. This had come as a result of the election and as a result of in the late 1980s the

Murray Commission travelling around the province and having hearings right across the province, and developing a model for where health care could be improved in Saskatchewan. And at the time the Murray Commission did a tremendous amount of work in conducting their investigation right across the province.

But of course this NDP government, not willing to look at something that was done in a very comprehensive and complete way when they formed government, had to come up with their own system that was based on an inability of them to really understand the impact of decisions they were about to make.

Mr. Speaker, they looked at the system in health care and they said, on some kind of philosophical-ideological way, on some kind of a way that was based out of senior bureaucracy in the Health department here in Regina making the determination that Saskatchewan had too many hospitals and too many health care facilities, that when they looked at it on paper, it was obvious, they said, that this was not going to do and this would not be appropriate for the future.

And instead of looking at the Murray Commission report that was tabled at the end of the 1980s that had done a very thorough and comprehensive assessment of the health care system in Saskatchewan, where they had actually done a very good job of travelling around the province, where they had done a very good job of having broad representation on the Murray Commission who had done a very good job of making sure that there were tremendous technical and medical and professional advisors to make sure that all of this was looked at in a very comprehensive way, they . . . Instead of dealing with it that way, they just simply got into this ideological kind of a little box that they get into and sat down and said, we've got to close hospitals.

And what they did is they refused to look at the professional proposal that was made in the Murray Commission, but they also refused to have any empathy or understanding of what the implications to communities were going to be as a result of their decisions. And so they closed 52 hospitals. And, Mr. Speaker, we can see the devastation that resulted.

And you know what's really kind of ironic is that at the time they said, we need to do this in order to make the health care system better. And it was pretty hard to disagree with it at the time because nobody knew exactly what the result was going to be.

It certainly was a major departure between . . . from the professional assessment of the Murray Commission. But people actually had to say, we know this is going to be very devastating for our community. We don't know where the people that counted on the health care services in our community are going to go to receive the services in the future.

But one of the things that actually protected communities a little bit is community centres and health facilities were in reasonable proximity one to another. And when closures occurred in one community, it was at least theoretically possible for the neighbouring community to pick up some of the burden that was inflicted on their neighbour by closure or conversion of their facility.

And so, Mr. Speaker, this government inflicted on the people of Saskatchewan in the early '90s the closure of 52 hospitals across rural Saskatchewan or their conversion to so-called wellness clinics. But at the end of the day, it resulted in fewer acute care and long-term beds to deliver services.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you do that kind of a thing, when you close 62 . . . or 52 hospitals and all the beds and programs associated with it, you have an awful lot of nursing professionals that are without a job. They were providing service in those communities and they were without jobs.

And so all of a sudden there began the process of bumping and seniority management. And so what it did is created an environment where there was absolutely no potential for young nurses to graduate and receive jobs in Saskatchewan. In fact many of the younger nurses who didn't have the seniority at the time were forced to leave the province, to leave the country, and try to establish their careers in another jurisdiction.

So not only did we lose every opportunity for young nurses to graduate from the programs to go and have a job in Saskatchewan, we actually had to let go some 600 nurses from the system who were surplus, if you like, as a result of all these closures. And then the government in their wisdom said oh, oops now we've created a problem; we've got this surplus of nurses and we have no jobs for them because we've closed all these institutions.

So now these rocket scientists and health care geniuses said, now that we've done this, in order to cope with the situation we created, now we got to gut the training programs because obviously we don't need nurses if we have no jobs for them. So these geniuses in the Department of Health then decided, oh now we got to follow up on one bad decision and we're going to compound it by making another bad decision, and we're going to make sure that the training programs for doctors and nurses and health care professionals are diminished almost to the point of extinction. And so that's what they did subsequent to their first decision.

And we try to understand of how these decisions, one leading to another in a comedy of errors and tragedy, has actually ended up to the situation where we are today. So we end up with a situation — we close the institutions; we close the beds; we remove the access to communities across Saskatchewan from these facilities.

And it isn't just communities in rural Saskatchewan. They closed the Plains Health Centre here in Regina which was one of the most important tertiary centres for southern Saskatchewan. They shut it down. And they said, oh don't worry. That's no problem. We don't need it. Our statistics — our bean-counters — have come up with the facts and figures that said we're all going to live well, we're going to live longer, and we're not going to need this sort of help. You know it was sort of . . . (inaudible) . . . the day, you know, get well, stay well, or farewell because that was your choices.

Mr. Speaker, where have you heard something like that recently? It's the same old mantra coming over and over again: stay well, be healthy, and then die quickly. What's changed, Mr. Speaker? Not an awful lot. There's been some people

changed. There's names changed in these governments, but the attitude remains essentially constant.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we ended up with a situation where we started to close institutions in communities, then we started cutting back on the training and the education of health care professionals. So here is the great wellness plan. Once, I think, that she saw the mess that she created, Ms. Simard left the portfolio — in fact left government. I think she at least finally realized that things were difficult.

And let me, while I'm on the topic, let's sort of let's trace the history. Then this individual came back in SAHO (Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations) and was in charge of negotiating contracts resulting in almost every single time with a health care strike in the province. And then what happens? She leaves SAHO and goes to BC (British Columbia), and guess what's going on in BC now? A health care strike.

You know, somebody should wake up and say, I don't know if this is a good idea — that this person has sort of got a track record going that maybe should be looked at. But they continue to do the mantra saying, we try to think that we know what we're doing in this whole health care field.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we coped with all of these problems going through the 1990s. And one time after another, it became increasingly, increasingly apparent that something was wrong with the system. We were coping with the fact that we went . . . because of the reaction to the decision to close beds and then the gutting of training programs.

All of a sudden somebody woke up overnight and realized that some of the health care professionals left with the seniority to be in the system were aging, and they were coming to retirement stages and so they were leaving the system. And all of a sudden someone looked around and said, oh my gosh, we don't have anybody graduating from education programs. Where in the world are we going to get people to operate the existing facilities? So then there was a mad scramble to try to start increasing the education training seats.

At the same time this was going on — the fore planning that somebody should have known what was going on — I think the SRNA (Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association) correctly identified that the challenges of the nursing profession were getting more and more acute and severe. And they made the decision rightly — and I support the decision — to move from a two-year program for a registered nurse to a four-year baccalaureate degree in order to be a nurse. So for two years you virtually then ended up with no graduates coming out because the program got extended almost two years from a two-year diploma program to a degree program.

So to make matters even worse, these people who are supposed to be looking forward into the needs of the health care system ended up with a situation where they more acutely exacerbated the problem of the shortage of nurses, firstly by gutting the training program and then not realizing that they were moving to a four-year program and that would create further delay in graduates.

And so the system went from being this surplus that they

created by gutting the health care provision facilities to one where it was obvious that we were going to be in an increasing shortage of health care professionals.

Now they didn't only do this at the nursing level. They did it on the technologists, the radiologists, the lab techs. They did it to the College of Medicine. Right across the piece there were cutbacks. And so, Mr. Speaker, we've got to take a look at how we are now moving forward into the current period of time.

You know, it was interesting. In 2000-2001, Mr. Romanow, the premier at the time, asked Mr. Ken Fyke, a health care adviser, to do an analysis and to do a report on what was required in the health care system in Saskatchewan. And Mr. Fyke made his report where he suggested that there should be further closures of small hospitals in Saskatchewan, that there should be secondary and tertiary centres, but that in his opinion it didn't make any sense to have the health care acute care facilities in rural Saskatchewan to the extent that was existing at the time.

And, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the tabling of the Fyke report in 2001, I believe, or the fall of 2000, Mr. Romanow actually convened the House committee on health to hold public hearings here in the Chamber. And so those hearings went on in the Chamber and the people of Saskatchewan, the Assembly of Saskatchewan, the government and the official opposition, had representations from across Saskatchewan, from every corner of this province, from many of the professional health care delivery agencies, to deliver what their opinion was on the Ken Fyke report.

And, Mr. Speaker, as a result of those hearings the Government of Saskatchewan came out with another plan that they called the action plan. And I would like to quote some of the points of the action plan. And one of the first one that comes off is the government's response to what they heard, Mr. Speaker — make this very clear — and it said a province-wide network of hospitals, no closures or conversions of hospitals. That's what they said.

And at the time, I remember the current Premier was questioned about the fact, why did his government decide after listening to the people that there was going to be an exemption to the way things were going to be conducted as a result of the Fyke's recommendation.

And the Premier said something to the effect that, we've looked at this very carefully and closely and we've analyzed the situation, and we recognize that there is no financial benefit, there is no benefit to the health care system for any further closures or conversions.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the system went forward recognizing that this was going to be non-productive to close hospitals and facilities as the Fyke Commission had recommended. And, Mr. Speaker, I think the logic is absolutely reasonable. If you're going to close the facilities that exist now after the 52 closures that this province has experienced a decade ago, if you're going to further close facilities, if you're further going to close long-term care facilities, where in the world are these people going to go?

Throughout the 1990s, what happened in many ways in the '90s

a lot of facilities were closed which were long-term care facilities that were lighter care facilities. They were level 2 and 3 facilities where people had some level of support that was needed, and they would actually choose to go into long-term care because that was the best alternative for their circumstance.

Through the 1990s, that became increasingly difficult to do as the government closed these facilities. They then, in exchange for that, started to increase the criteria for eligibility for individuals to go into the facilities. And so as a result of the decisions coming out of the '90s, at the present time people who are in long-term care institutions across the province are certainly far more severely in need of care than what they were in the 1990s.

And so it begs the question, if we're going to have people move away from these facilities, where are they going to go? And the statistics that we see — by and large across the province in the communities that are very worried about the future of their facilities — is that the demographics of the province is an aging population. There are more and more people who are going to get to the age where they require the use of these facilities. And more and more people are having to try to live at home independently with the support of home care as long as they can, but they're going to need the support of these kinds of facilities.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know when my mother needed the help and support — she lived a healthy life by and large until the last couple of years of her life — but when she came to the time of her life that she needed to seriously consider long-term care support, it was a very difficult decision for her. It was very difficult for the family to have the conversations with their mother who had been independent and a vibrant, independent individual for so many years, to realize that their health situation had deteriorated to a situation and condition that they needed the long-term care support that an institution would provide.

And she was even very reluctant to go into a facility in her hometown community, because she didn't want to leave her home — the home that her and dad had built and she had lived in most of her adult life. She was reluctant to leave that situation even to go to a facility in her hometown where she had friends, where she'd actually worked years before as a personnel in the facility. So she knew the facility, she knew the people, she understood many of them were her friends and neighbours, but she still was reluctant to go.

And many of our parents are in exactly the same situation. You hear it all the time for people who have parents in that situation; it's a very traumatic and challenging situation to be in when your parents get to the stage when everyone recognizes they need that help. And they reluctantly support, they reluctantly agree to maybe consider going to an institution that can help them in their own community because that's what they're familiar with. These are very trying, very challenging, very difficult times for our seniors.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when those times are not available, or those institutions are not available in their own community, it's absolutely terrifying for them to have to go to a bigger regional centre or to a tertiary centre, and it provides a very

difficult time in many instances where the support base of children and family and friends are in their local communities. It provides a very huge challenge for families then to travel some distance to the regional centre or whatever to visit and care for their parent that has to require the support of a long-term care home.

So there's many issues involved with this whole situation that are different than what you just look at as statistical spreadsheet in the Department of Health by senior bureaucrats. You've got to have some consideration and empathy for the circumstances of the families, for the children and the parents that are facing these challenges across Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our concern is, is that this decision as outlined in the budget is going to be made in isolation. It's going to be made by the Department of Health; it's going to be made by senior bureaucrats who are making decisions in isolation of the communities where these decisions are going to be affected. And so, Mr. Speaker, we have said that we think that it is absolutely critical before we get into this situation that we don't repeat the mistakes of yesterday.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it's really interesting, and I noticed in a *Leader-Post* article dated November 14, 2003, Mr. Romanow was interviewed about coming out of his role as the Health Care Commissioner that gave the Romanow report about the state of health in Canada. He was interviewed on November 14, 2003 in the *Leader-Post*. And in this interview, Mr. Romanow even admitted that his government, the government of which he was the premier of the day in the 1990s, made huge mistake when it came to changes to health care.

In his interview in the *Leader-Post* on November 14, Mr. Romanow, and the *Leader-Post* says, and I quote:

... has admitted the deep cuts to provincial health-care services in the 1990s were a mistake.

Romanow also admitted that his government was wrong to slash enrollments in nurse training programs.

He also said, and I quote, that the NDP:

... pushed the costs out of ... government's pockets and right into the pockets of farmers and business people and nurses (Mr. Deputy Speaker) ...

He also said that the drastic reduction in the prescription drug plan at that time made it no longer a, quote, "universal" program. Mr. Romanow said, and I quote:

"I don't take any pride in (it) ... but ... now (it's) reduced to basically those at the very bottom end of ... (the) scale, the very poorest," ...

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Romanow admitted in an interview that the decisions that they made in the 1990s — this NDP government made in the '90s — the decisions that were made when Mr. Romanow was the premier of the province, the decisions that were made when Mr. Romanow was the leader of this NDP Party, were a huge mistake that pushed the problems onto the poorest and the most least able to cope with the system.

Mr. Speaker, this is an incredible admission from a man who has at least had the courage to look at the system, to look in retrospect at the decisions that were made, and admit that he made a mistake and that his government was wrong. And he did that on the public record, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in light of that, it's just absolutely amazing that it seems as if this government — this NDP government, in absence of a plan that can potentially address these issues and consider them in their full context — is now proposing in this budget to have further reductions and conversions of long-term care and acute care beds in the province of Saskatchewan. That's incredible, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I don't know why it is or how it is that this government cannot understand that mistakes were made and if you're going to avoid those mistakes, you better consult with the people who are going to be affected by these decisions before you make the mistakes — not after.

Mr. Speaker, that's why we feel so strongly that we need to put a motion on the table that hopefully the government will seriously consider and say, before we make these closures and conversions that we are going to create an opportunity, that we're going to commit to going to those communities that are affected; we're going to go to those communities and we're going to listen to the people; we're going to listen to what impact the proposed changes are going to have on the community; we're going to listen to what impact the changes are going to have on the seniors of our community; we're going to listen to the community leaders as they tell us what the demographic statistics of their community are; how many seniors are there that are going to, in very short order, require long-term care services; what is the future of the community if these facilities are closed.

Mr. Speaker, we keep saying in this province that if we're going to grow the province, we've got to create the infrastructure and the support mechanisms so people will want to live and locate and establish successful businesses or farming operations or whatever in our rural communities. How in the world are we going to attract a family from out of country or out of province and other jurisdictions to come to our rural communities if there's no health care infrastructure there? How in the world are we going to do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It seems impossible for me to consider how that could happen.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is absolutely critical for the people of this province to have an opportunity to be listened to about the impact of these changes to their communities before they happen. Not in reaction to, not after the decision is irrevocably made, but before it happens. And, Mr. Speaker, we now have a very appropriate facility, if you like, in our standing field committees of this legislature to have this information brought forward.

Mr. Speaker, these policy field committees, when this House adjourns, have the ability without special permission of the House to follow direction of this House and conduct meetings in communities that are going to be affected by these changes and closures, to listen to the people — to listen to the people who have parents in these institutions; to listen to the people themselves that need the services of these institutions; to listen

to community leaders and to listen to health care professionals about what services are being provided so everything can be evaluated and judged in the total context.

I think, Mr. Speaker, this is critical to the future changes of health care, that the people of this province are engaged and understand what the process is and what the direction is going to be.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move a motion, seconded by the member from Wood River, that reads as follows:

That pursuant to rule 133(1), the Standing Committee on Human Services shall hold an inquiry and make recommendations regarding the future of health care facilities throughout Saskatchewan and that the committee shall:

- a) obtain from the Department of Health a comprehensive list of all health care facilities scheduled for closures or conversions;
- b) hold public meetings away from the seat of government in order that the fullest representations may be received without duly inconveniencing those desiring to be heard;
- c) hold at least one public meeting in each community with a health care facility scheduled to be closed or converted;
- d) have the authority to send for persons, papers, and records, and to examine witnesses under oath;
- (e) have the authority to receive representations from interested parties and individuals; and
- (f) have the authority to engage such advisors and assistants as are required for the purpose of the inquiry.

And, that this Assembly strongly urges the government to place a moratorium on all health care facility closures and conversions until such time as this inquiry has been completed and a substantive report presented to the Assembly pursuant to rule 133(4).

I so move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the member from Wood River.

**The Speaker:** — On the motion by the member for Melfort, seconded by the member for Wood River, will members take it as read?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Wood River.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well it's a pleasure for me to get up and speak to this motion, and I'm very happy to be a seconder for this particular motion.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to comment on the motion itself. And I think in light of what's happened in this budget, and where this NDP government is going with health care and their announced closures in health care, I think it's only fitting that this motion be honoured and agreed to by the government. I mean it's the least the government could do in their plans of again decimating the health services in this province.

So as per the motion, Mr. Speaker, one of the key issues right now out in the province, throughout the province, including the cities, is what health facilities are scheduled for closure or conversion. This is very typical of the NDP's medicare program. They really, really like to have people afraid of the health care system. And here's another system where . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Why is the member from Saskatoon Nutana on her feet?

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — With leave, to introduce guests.

**The Speaker:** — The member has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce to you and to all members of the legislature, Gord Nystuen, the former deputy minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization, who has taken on the new task of acting as the Premier's chief of staff.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe Mr. Nystuen has been formally introduced to the legislature, and I wanted the opportunity for all members to welcome him to our building.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Wood River.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

##### Motion No. 2 — Proposed Inquiry on Health Care Facilities (continued)

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, a list of health care facilities that are scheduled to be closed or converted. I think that is only fair to the people of this province that if this government — which they have already said they're going to do is close health care facilities and convert health care facilities — it's only fair to the people of the province to let them know. And by letting them know, Mr. Speaker, it takes away this fear factor.

And I use this fear factor because that is extremely typical of how this NDP government operates. They want the people of this province to be in constant fear. It's a medicare . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Why is the member from Saskatoon Nutana on her feet?

**Hon. Ms. Atkinson:** — The numbers of the legislature have dropped below quorum and I'd call quorum.

**The Speaker:** — Would the Sergeant-at-Arms please secure the doors so we can check for the quorum.

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, point of order?

**The Speaker:** — I can only entertain one point of order at a

time but . . .

**Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, when you ordered that doors were secured, the hon. member forced his way in after you ordered that.

**The Speaker:** — Members, I've just simply ordered the doors to be secured and it's not always easy to communicate out to the other members. I would just . . . I'd just have to rely on the Sergeant-at-Arms to have done his job properly.

I would direct now the Clerk to take a count for the quorum.

Excuse me if we're a little rusty on this, because we haven't had this for a while. But would all the members please rise and as their names are called, then they would please be seated.

Van Mulligen	Atkinson	Nilson
Harper	Elhard	Draude
Hermanson	Wakefield	Gantefoer
Bakken	Huyghebaert	Hart
Kirsch		

**Deputy Clerk:** — Mr. Speaker, including yourself there are 15 members present.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — There being a quorum present, debate resumes on the motion. I recognize the member for Wood River.

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to get up and continue my discussion on the motion. Again as I was talking, Mr. Speaker, the medicare program of the NDP government is working again on the people of Saskatchewan. The . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order please, members. I would just ask the Clerk once again to give us a record of the count.

**Deputy Clerk:** — Mr. Speaker, there was an error in the count. There are 14 members present including yourself.

**The Speaker:** — Order, please, members. Pursuant to rule 6, if there not being a quorum, it is the duty of the Speaker then to adjourn the House until such time that the House may resume and to record the names of the members present, and that has been done.

So this House therefore stands adjourned until Monday at 10 a.m., at 1:30 p.m. Sorry.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:53.

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Premier

Hon. P. Atkinson  
Minister of Crown Management Board  
Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission

Hon. J. Beatty  
Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation  
Provincial Secretary

Hon. B. Belanger  
Minister of Northern Affairs

Hon. E. Cline  
Minister of Industry and Resources

Hon. J. Crofford  
Minister of Community Resources and Employment  
Minister Responsible for Disability Issues  
Minister Responsible for Gaming

Hon. D. Forbes  
Minister of Environment  
Minister Responsible for the Office of Energy Conservation

Hon. D. Higgins  
Minister of Labour  
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. J. Nilson  
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Minister Responsible for Information Technology

Hon. H. Van Mulligen  
Minister of Finance

Hon. M. Wartman  
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization