



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

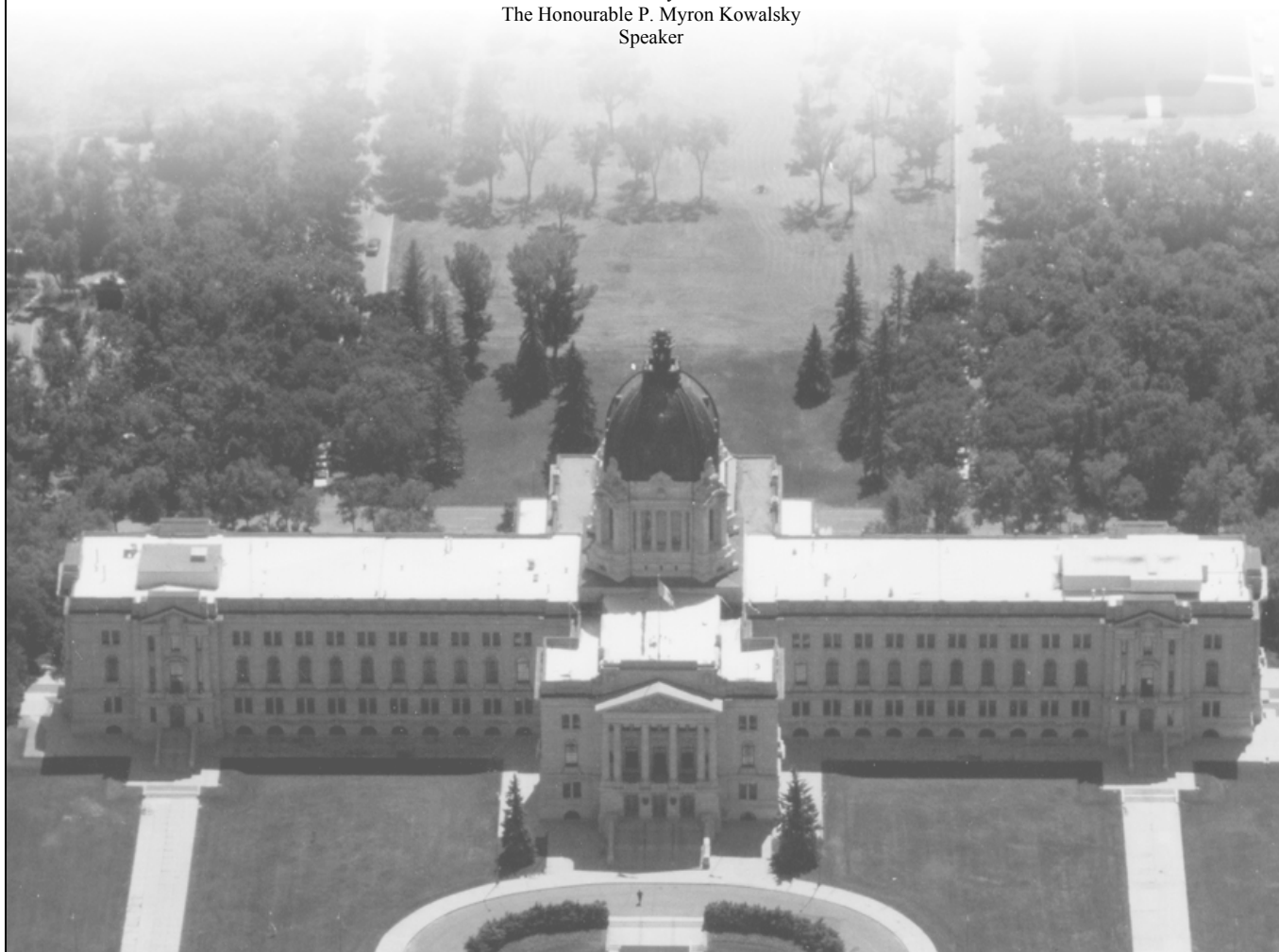
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
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 13:30.

Prayers

The Speaker: — Good afternoon to all.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on behalf of constituents from the community of Climax who are concerned about changes made to the Border Health Centre and the recent announcement of changes that were affecting the entire province. 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 actions to ensure that the Border Health Centre in Climax remains a 24-hour facility.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise today on behalf of people who are concerned about employees who would like to communicate to the appropriate officials when they believe the safety or quality of health care is being jeopardized to Saskatchewan citizens. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to introduce and support whistle-blower legislation.

The people that have signed this petition are from Kuroki, Wadena, Codette, Hendon.

I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present regarding the Claybank Brick Plant. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reconsider the decision to reduce funding to the Claybank Brick Plant.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good people in Briercrest, Claybank, Avonlea, and Moose Jaw.

I so present.

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 their health care services. 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 facilities providing health care services in the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy are not closed or further downsized.

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

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

I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens opposed to closures and possible reduction of services at Davidson and Imperial health centres.

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Simpson and Watrous.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition from constituents who oppose the possible reduction of health care services in Wilkie. 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 ensure that the Wilkie health centre and special care home maintain at the very least their current level of services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Wilkie and district.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in the House to present a petition on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan concerned with the loss of ambulance service. 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 the Dodsland and Luseland ambulance services are not discontinued.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Luseland, Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of citizens who are concerned about the low level of maintenance on Highway 99. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and provide dust suppression on the gravelled portion of Highway 99 between Junction 6 and Craven.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the community of Craven.

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 paper nos. 63, 97, 106, 157, 167, 180, 182, and 183.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 48 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Health: how much money did the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority save by recently combining units and reallocating beds?

And also to the Minister of Health: how much money did the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority spend in overtime for nursing positions in each quarter of the fiscal year 2002-2003?

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

National Aboriginal Awareness Week

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May 25 to May 28 is Aboriginal Awareness Week across Canada. It's a time to recognize the many diversities and rich wonders of the Aboriginal cultures and to honour the many contributions that Aboriginal people have made to our country. All members of the House are deeply committed to working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people to ensure the social, political, and economic successes play a continued and important role in our diverse and developing country.

Here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we respect the spirit and intent of the treaties that were signed more than a century ago. We know that these treaties are a contract signed by two parties, which means all Canadians have obligations and rights under treaty agreements. Treaties are to be honoured for as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the river flows. Saskatchewan would not have the potential that it has today had the treaties not been signed. Through peace and goodwill the five treaties signed in Saskatchewan allowed settlement and immigration. This in turn fostered growth and development.

We owe much to our First Nations neighbours, Mr. Speaker, and what a better time to say thank you than during Aboriginal Awareness Week.

Yet while we celebrate the richness and diversity of Aboriginal cultures, Mr. Speaker, we also acknowledge that there are also many outstanding issues that must be addressed if we as a province and a nation wish to move forward together. It is important that all parties involved do all they can to ensure the continued social, political, and economic successes of First Nations people in Canada. By doing so, Mr. Speaker, we will all succeed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Missing Children's Month

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May is Missing Children's Month in Saskatchewan. This month has been highlighted by the 13th annual Green Ribbon of Hope Campaign to increase public awareness about National Missing Children's Day, which was yesterday, May 25.

The green ribbon of hope is recognized as a symbol to remember missing children and to seek their safe return. It is also used as an expression of our thoughts for missing children, their families, and friends. Proceeds generated by the Green Ribbon Campaign will enable Child Find to continue their mandate of assisting in the search for missing children.

Mr. Speaker, this month also allows us to recognize the hard work of Child Find Saskatchewan and Child Find Canada. These volunteer organizations play an enormous role in the search for missing children. Not only do they put up the missing posting . . . children posters which we are all familiar with, but they also work closely with law enforcement and other agencies around the world to locate and return missing children. Child

Find also creates awareness and provides educational programs to help parents and to help streetproof kids.

Mr. Speaker, a missing child is a thought that is almost too hard for any parent to bear, let alone the rest of us in society. I congratulate Child Find for its work in reminding us that there are still missing children and I recognize their ongoing efforts in finding and getting all these kids safely home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Governor General's Award to Wynyard Couple

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 16 in Saskatoon several Saskatchewan emergency medical service personnel were awarded the Governor General's Award for excellent service. Among those dedicated individuals were a husband and wife team, Tom and Bonnie Prime of Wynyard. Since 1978 the Prime family has been providing high-quality EMT (emergency medical technician) and ambulance service to this community.

It all began when Tom Prime obtained his EMT training 32 years ago. At that time there was no provincial EMT training program in Saskatchewan. So in 1974 Tom bought up the EMT training program from the United States and personally trained 19 EMTs out of a total of 22 across Canada.

Since that time Tom and Bonnie have built up their emergency service in Wynyard. In 1989 they obtained a partnership for service in Wadena, Rose Valley, and Foam Lake. At that time Bonnie also obtained her EMT advanced training and since then their son, Kelly, has also received his emergency service training.

Now Wynyard is unique in having on staff three full-time advanced EMTs, far above the provincial codes. They're rightly proud of their achievements and their only concern is a provincial trend towards public emergency service in rural areas. Without a guarantee that private service contractors will be maintained in the future, they are left wondering about selling the family business to their son.

However, I would ask all members to join me in congratulating Tom and Bonnie Prime on their great record of service to Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

Skills Canada Saskatchewan Competitions

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, every year Skills Canada Saskatchewan hosts Olympic-style skills competitions that provide students with an opportunity to compete in over 30 trade and technology categories. This year's competition rewarded students from across the province for excellence in

their trade. Categories included: traditional trades; new, emerging trades and technologies; and non-traditional or communication areas.

Mr. Speaker, each category is designed by technical experts from education and industry. The competition is open to students of all ages and provides them with an opportunity to access the newest technologies while communicating with industry experts who serve as mentors.

Mr. Speaker, the winners from each category go on to represent Saskatchewan at the national skills competition in Waterloo. Three students who were recognized at the provincial competition live in my constituency of Saskatoon Fairview. Chris Graham and Evan Sikorsky of Mount Royal Collegiate won silver in the TV video production category and Lane Smith, also from Mount Royal Collegiate, was awarded silver in the mechanical CADD (computer-aided drafting and design) category.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure my colleagues will join me in acknowledging Skills Canada Saskatchewan for working to promote future employment in trade and technology and for encouraging students to excel in their chosen area. Congratulations to all the participants at their skills competition, and I wish them luck in their future endeavours.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Biggar and Better Thinkers Toastmaster Club Anniversary

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Saturday, May 15, I attended the 15th anniversary celebration of the Biggar and Better Thinkers Toastmasters Club, a club who I've had the honour of being a member of for the last 11 years.

The program included the call to order, the sergeant-at-arms, Margaret Cooke. Toastmaster for the afternoon was Pieter de Haan, invocation by Geoff Cooke. Toast to the club and the Queen was said by Joanne Kral. Welcome and congratulations were brought by the president of the club, Bev Kernohan; the deputy mayor of Biggar, Jim Besse; and myself, representing the province; also from area no. 40 governor, Darlene Currie; and district no. 42 lieutenant governor, Troy Wruck. And entertainment was provided by Wilma Kurulak for the afternoon.

Table topics Chair was Jean Itterman for the afternoon and the theme was humorous things in various aspects of people's lives. Don Robson spoke of humorous things in his work throughout his life. Wil de Haan spoke about funny things on her holiday. Ken Kernohan spoke of humorous things in sports that he had participated in. Madeleine McTaggart spoke of funny things that happened to her horses and while riding the horses.

And Mickey MacLellan wrapped up the session with the meaning of life. She says, we are all angels with one wing; we need to embrace each other. An impromptu speech was given by Mr. Geoff Cooke, who is a cancer survivor.

And on behalf of the club, I would like to wish them another 15 years. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

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

Moose Jaw Natural Gas Refuelling Station

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, SaskEnergy and the city of Moose Jaw are taking a step toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Last week SaskEnergy officially opened the province's sixth natural gas refuelling station in Moose Jaw, and over the next four years the city of Moose Jaw will be converting 18 vehicles to natural gas.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when compared to traditional gasoline-burning engines, natural gas vehicles emit 20 per cent fewer greenhouse gases. Not only is natural gas a greener option, but it's also a less expensive fuel option for businesses and consumers, and that's certainly a matter of growing interest these days.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the opening of the Moose Jaw natural gas refuelling station means compressed natural gas is available 24 hours a day to the city of Moose Jaw and other Moose Jaw fleets interested in using natural gas vehicles. Drivers elsewhere in the province who choose to go green can also find SaskEnergy's 24-hour card-lock systems in North Battleford, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, and Yorkton.

Mr. Speaker, there are already a number of jurisdictions throughout the province operating natural gas fleets including the city of Regina, the Saskatoon and Regina police services, the school divisions in the Qu'Appelle Valley, Kamsack, and Nipawin.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that my colleagues will join me in recognizing the city of Moose Jaw and SaskEnergy and all those across the province that are helping to build a green and prosperous economy here in our Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Visit to Westminster

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well it's a pleasure to again rise in this Assembly after a short absence in attendance with a Commonwealth parliamentary visit to the parliament of Westminster. Mr. Speaker, it was an excellent conference with representation from six of the seven continents. The only one who didn't have a representative there was Antarctica.

Mr. Speaker, part of the discussions that took place on this particular conference . . . we had the opportunity to visit a farm in England called Goodwood Estates, and this farm, Mr. Speaker, shows the diversity that can be accomplished when you set your mind to it. There was tourism, there was a

racetrack, there was a very large dairy farm, and all of the products from that farm were utilized on the farm until they reached a final product for sale to the consumer.

Mr. Speaker, also I think an interest, an item of interest to this Assembly was the visit we had to the parliament in Westminster for a Prime Minister's question period when there was a breach of security. And you may have heard about this on the news. We were there when it happened. And it showed, Mr. Speaker, that there needs to be consideration given to security of this Assembly as well as all the other parliaments across the Commonwealth, Mr. Speaker. And I look forward to discussing that.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Members, I would request leave of the Assembly to revert back to introduction of guests.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — It has been granted. I recognize the member for Yorkton.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to the House. I want to recognize in the west gallery this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, Mayor Sharon Armstrong from the town of Wynyard. And with her today is Elizabeth Zahayko, who is the vice-president of the chamber of commerce. Elizabeth has in the past also been the president.

They're both here today to look at a project that they're working on in their constituency, of which the member I'm sure from Arm River-Watrous is familiar with. And any of us who know Sharon know that when she is working on a project that she'll get everybody engaged in it in a short space of time.

And so this afternoon I want to welcome Elizabeth to the House for the very first time, and to Sharon. And good luck in your work as you put together the project for Wynyard to keep that part of Saskatchewan growing. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also want to welcome the mayor from Wynyard here today. And the member is quite right in saying that I know Sharon very well and I know she's very strong-willed. And I wish her and Elizabeth all the luck in this new project that they're working on in Wynyard.

The short time I've known Sharon I know why Wynyard is one of the communities that are growing out in the constituency. And she has been fighting very hard to keep that growing, and I know she will do that in the future. And I'm looking forward to riding with her in a upcoming parade in Wynyard in June. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Appointment of Crown Investments Corporation President

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition received a copy of a letter to the Premier from the Peepeekisis Cree Nation governing council of elders. The letter expresses the council's concerns about the Premier's appointment of Tom Waller as head of the government's Crown Management Board. The letter says, and I quote:

... the progress of our community has been greatly diminished as a result of Mr. Waller's actions when he acted as legal counsel for our First Nation. As a result, the ... (RCMP) initiated a criminal investigation. We have recently been informed that the two-year investigation is complete and the file has been forwarded to the Crown Prosecutor's office.

Mr. Speaker, is that true? Is Tom Waller the subject of a criminal investigation?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Crown Management Board.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member will know, Mr. Waller was appointed as the president and CEO (chief executive officer) of the Crown Investment Corporation effective March 1, 2004. And prior to his appointment, he was a partner with the law firm Olive, Waller, Zinkhan & Waller.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to have confidence in Mr. Waller's appointment. He is a respected member of the bar in the province of Saskatchewan. He has served on numerous boards and community groups, and we feel quite comfortable with his appointment as the president and CEO of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, the letter dated May 19 — sent directly to the Premier and cc'd (carbon copied) to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition of the Saskatchewan Party — raises a number of other concerns that I think the Premier must have known about. And I quote again from the letter. It says:

We expect ... the Government of Saskatchewan would have ascertained these facts in the process of selection of a new Chairperson. We feel compelled to express our concerns with the appointment of Mr. Waller ... given our experiences of the alleged criminal activity.

Mr. Speaker, was the Premier aware of this criminal investigation when he appointed Mr. Waller as the Chair of Crown Management Board?

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister responsible for the Crown Management Board.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the member reads a letter of which I have not had the opportunity to see.

Mr. Speaker, we are quite confident that Mr. Waller brings honour and integrity to the position as CEO and president of the Crown Investments Corporation. Mr. Waller is an active citizen in the city of Regina. He is a respected member of the Saskatchewan bar.

And, Mr. Speaker, I don't appreciate the insinuation by the member opposite, as this forum gives a citizen in this province no opportunity to defend themselves.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, my questions are not of the integrity of Mr. Waller; my questions are of the Premier as to whether or not the Premier knew that the gentleman was under investigation before he appointed him to the management board. That is the question, Mr. Speaker.

If Mr. Waller is the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation, is it appropriate for him to remain as Chair of the Crown Management Board while this investigation is underway?

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister responsible for the Crown Management Board.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much. Well, Mr. Speaker, what this line of questioning indicates to the people of Saskatchewan is that if you write a letter to anybody in government or any member of the opposition, that it could become the subject of question period, Mr. Speaker. What this indicates is that you can say and do anything and besmirch a person's reputation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Waller is a respected member of the Saskatchewan bar. Mr. Waller is a active citizen in the city of Regina. Mr. Waller is, and continues to be, the president and CEO of the Crown Investments Corporation, Mr. Speaker. And we have faith in Mr. Waller's ability to lead the Crown Investments Corporation on behalf of this government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Waiting Times for Prostate Cancer Surgery

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Last week the Saskatchewan Party raised the case of Stan Szostak. Mr. Szostak was diagnosed with prostate cancer and told he would have to wait four months for surgery in Regina. What Mr. Szostak was not told, Mr. Speaker, is the wait for prostate surgery in Saskatoon is only about four weeks.

Mr. Speaker, why did Stan Szostak have to come to the legislature and then go to the media to find out the wait for prostate cancer surgery is three months shorter in Saskatoon than it is in Regina?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that question from the member opposite, as this explains exactly why we started our saskurgery.ca Web site to deal with wait-list issues. Because on that wait-list information Web site, it does show that there are differences in the length of time for various procedures throughout Saskatchewan. And one of the challenges is to make sure that information is available to the public, it's available to the family practitioners, and it's available to the specialists.

As many people know we're in this process of developing that information and having it available for everybody, and it's unfortunate in this particular situation that that information wasn't available to the individual concerned. But the information is now available and we understand that he's working on getting the appropriate procedure.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, according to CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) news reports last night and this morning, Stan Szostak was diagnosed with prostate cancer in April. He drove from his home in Preeceville to see a specialist in Regina. The specialist told him the wait for his surgery would be four months, but nobody in the health region, nobody at the Surgical Care Network, nobody at the Department of Health, nobody advised Mr. Szostak that he'd have to wait just four weeks if he had the same surgery done in Saskatoon instead of Regina.

Mr. Speaker, whose job is it to make sure that Stan Szostak and hundreds of cancer patients like him are told all about their treatment options including significant differences in cancer surgery waiting times?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, this is exactly the purpose of the saskurgery.ca Web site and the information that's there. We want to have the whole process of booking for surgery be as open as possible. We're in the process of developing that and making sure that the information is available to patients, available to family physicians, and available to specialists.

We will continue to work on that to do an even better job than we are now, and the challenge always is how to get the information to people who are greatly concerned. I encourage all people, if they have questions, to go to those sites. Also talk with the people who run the registry or with the client representatives in the health authorities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has been bringing the health care concerns of many Saskatchewan families to the legislature, stories of people who have died while waiting on much too long lists for diagnosis and treatment, families with loved ones who continue to wait for much-needed medical care.

Mr. Speaker, the minister often talks about all these new processes, all the new committees that the NDP has established, but the real only question that cancer patients like Stan Szostak are really interested in is this: how is all this new bureaucracy helping to improve health care delivery for Saskatchewan families? When Mr. Szostak was never advised by anyone, not his family physician, not his specialist, not the system, that he could cut his wait for cancer surgery by three months by going to Saskatoon in Regina. What is all this bureaucracy doing to help people like Mr. Szostak?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, in our budget this year, which we are now increasing the health amount by 173 million, we have some specific dollars — two and a half million dollars — allocated to deal with wait list challenges in Saskatchewan. And what we are doing, Mr. Speaker, is using the information that we're getting from the whole system that we have to allocate resources where there are some challenges in meeting the targeted time frames that we have set out. That's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker, and we need to continue to work in that way to make sure that dollars go to assist in those areas. But we also have to make sure that there's an education of the public, of the family physicians, of the surgeons in the province, of all of the options that are available. And we'll continue to work at that, but we're not done yet.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, CBC journalists Stefani Langenegger and Geoff Leo decided to find out why Stan Szostak and other prostate cancer victims are not being advised of all their treatment options. And here's how Ms. Langenegger, an experienced legislative reporter, described her attempt at getting answer from the NDP's (New Democratic Party) health system, and I quote:

... it's an exercise in total frustration ... I (can) ... only imagine how you'd feel if you were a patient ... It took two of us 3 solid days ... we talked to people (at) ... the Department of Health, the Surgical Care Network, Stan's specialist, 2 health authorities and no one gives you exactly the same answer twice.

Mr. Speaker, if two experienced reporters are that frustrated by the NDP's health care system, how in the world can the minister expect ordinary citizens of Saskatchewan to deal with the bureaucracy he's created?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as I explained previously, we are doing what we're doing in this whole area to make sure that we can provide information right across the system. We're not done with the process. We have education to do, we have . . . But we have the information in a better form than we've had ever before.

Mr. Speaker, it's also an area where we in Saskatchewan are ahead of all of our counterparts across the country as we work on this particular issue. And it's clearly part of the federal discussion right now around what do we do in Canada to deal with some of these challenges.

Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize the fact that, within the health care system, the professionals and all others who are working within the health care system work very diligently and in a dedicated manner to provide the best care for our Saskatchewan citizens. And I know that sometimes it always doesn't work out exactly right, but we need to affirm the good work that many people in Saskatchewan are doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Utility Rate Comparisons

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Last week the NDP released its comparison of utility rates across Canada. And guess what, Mr. Speaker? It turns out the NDP spent 65,000 taxpayer dollars on a study, only to confirm that the Premier has broken yet another election promise.

During last fall's provincial election, the Premier claimed Saskatchewan had the lowest cost bundle of basic utility services in Canada. But last Wednesday the minister was forced to admit that it wasn't true then, and it isn't true today. Why did the Premier spend \$65,000 of taxpayers' money on a study that served only to confirm what most people in Saskatchewan have already figured out, that you just can't trust what the Premier or his NDP government says at election time or later.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister responsible for the Crown Management Board.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when the Premier announced the New Democratic Party vision for Crown corporations last September, he used information that was contained in the 2003 budget, which was the information that showed that Saskatchewan had the lowest bundle of utility rates in the country for 2002, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is also true that last July the Saskatchewan Energy had a rate increase where the cost of natural gas to our citizens increased, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the information that was shown to the people of this province last week shows that in large urban centres we pay about \$2 a month more than the province of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the difficulty that we have with Manitoba is that they have cheap hydroelectricity. And we also note with

interest, Mr. Speaker, that Manitoba Hydro, up until its third quarter, had about a \$340 million deficit.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — So now we know, Mr. Speaker, that the election promise made by the Premier was based on faulty information from the Department of Finance. What a neat and easy way to shift blame.

Mr. Speaker, it's bad enough the Premier wasted \$65,000 of taxpayers' money trying in vain to prove that he kept at least one election promise, but now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier is spending another \$75,000 of taxpayers' money to mail a brochure on his broken promise to every household in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, even the consultant that the NDP hired to do the utility rate comparison called it, and I quote:

Dangerous to rely solely on information in the brochure, when comparing the cost of utility services across the country.

Why is the Premier spending a total of \$140,000 of taxpayers' money to distribute inaccurate and potentially misleading information about utility rates instead of simply admitting the NDP wasn't accurate with the facts before or during last fall's election?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Crown Management Board.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, when . . . (inaudible) . . . the New Democratic Party's vision for Saskatchewan's Crowns, he indicated at the time that each year the Government of Saskatchewan was going to report to our citizens on how our Crowns were doing.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of that there is going to be a pamphlet sent out to our citizens indicating the revenues and expenditures for the various Crowns in the province of Saskatchewan, so that our citizens understand that our Crowns are doing very well and that they provide a dividend to pay for important public services like health and education.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to bring into this House a Bill that's going to make sure that should, should that group of people, that group of men and women, ever become the Government of Saskatchewan, that the people of this province will have a say whether or not they privatize . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, the brochure that's going out is just a graphic representation of misleading facts. And the government is spending \$75,000 to mislead the people of

Saskatchewan on their election promise of last fall. Mr. Speaker, the NDP has decided to mail a brochure to every home in Saskatchewan with that information comparing utility rates in Canada. And their own consultant says that the brochure could be misleading.

Mr. Speaker, the question is: will the Premier do the right thing today — scrap the NDP's plan to spend \$75,000 of taxpayers' money to mail out inaccurate information, and simply admit that the NDP has broken another election promise?

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister responsible for the Crown Management Board.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the members opposite that we are not going to mail out inaccurate information. I also want to indicate to the people of Saskatchewan that we're going to indicate on that pamphlet that all of this material is available . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. The minister responsible for the Crown Management Board.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, we're also going to indicate to the people of Saskatchewan that they can find all of this material on the CIC Web site compliments of SaskTel, Mr. Speaker, which has the broadest ability to provide high-speed Internet in this province versus every other part of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

I'll tell you something else, Mr. Speaker, that group of men and women did their utmost to discredit our Crown corporations prior to the last election, led by the Leader of the Opposition. And you know what, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan didn't buy it last fall and they're not buying it now, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Closure of Herbert Hospital

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. On May 18 the NDP announced that 15 long-term care beds and 7 acute care beds in Herbert would close along with the closure of the Herbert hospital. No public consultation. No opportunity for local input.

Mr. Speaker, the mayor has e-mailed the Minister of Health, inviting him to come to Herbert to tour the existing hospital and long-term care facilities and give the people of Herbert an opportunity to show the minister just how devastating his plan to close the hospital will be.

Will the minister make the commitment today to go to Herbert and explain to the people of that community why the NDP thinks it's a good idea to close the hospital and cut acute and long-term care beds?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we looked at a number of

challenging options throughout the province around dealing with the amount of resources that we had. One of the things that we looked at was those communities where there were some opportunities to maintain community health services but integrate facilities. Herbert is one of those communities, and there are some various options about how to do this.

I know that the Cypress Regional Health Authority officials are meeting with the town of Herbert and others there as they look through the various options about how to do this. And I know that they will work with the community as they do this. If at an appropriate time there is an opportunity for me to go to Herbert, I will be happy to do so. I know many people that live in that area and I'll be happy to sit down and talk with the people there. But the important thing is that we make the best use of the resources that we have right across the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, the mayor of Herbert is saying that one day after the NDP announced its plan to close 15 long-term care beds, seven acute care beds, and the Herbert hospital, the health region in Swift Current called to ask if four people needing long-term care beds could be transferred to beds in Herbert. Apparently nobody in the NDP told the people in Swift Current about their bed closure plans either.

Mr. Speaker, Herbert's health care facilities are often used to relieve the pressure on Swift Current's overcrowded facilities. So the NDP's decision to close acute and long-term care beds in Herbert will negatively affect health services in Swift Current too.

Will the minister support the Saskatchewan Party motion to hold public consultations in Herbert before the NDP padlocks the doors of the Herbert hospital for good?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan Health officials, the Cypress Regional Health Authority officials, will be working with the staff in the facilities in the Herbert area as well as with the community as we move forward with a plan to provide an integrated facility such as we have done in many other communities across the province.

We've been able to continue to provide the kinds of services that are needed in particular communities; as well as through the consolidation of the operations, have long-term savings for the health care system in general.

We need to continue to work with everybody and look at options that provide this kind of positive impact on the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, we've put \$173 million into this year's budget for health care and we are using those dollars as carefully and effectively as we possibly can.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the NDP was once again trying to defend how it blew 28 million taxpayers' dollars on the SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company) disaster.

The minister for Sask Water got up and said, well it's not really \$28 million. We sold the sheds for 5 million so we only lost \$23 million. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not true. The \$5 million book value of the sheds had already been written down. The taxpayers did lose \$28 million. And what the minister said wasn't true.

Will the minister apologize for providing false information to the House? Will the minister apologize to the public for trying to downplay the losses at SPUDCO? And more importantly, will he apologize for blowing 28 million taxpayers' dollars on the NDP's phony potato partnership?

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister for Sask Water.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the hon. member for the question.

And the hon. member is correct in one area, Mr. Speaker, and that is that the book value that was held by Saskatchewan Valley Potato Corporation should be built into this consideration. And when it is, Mr. Speaker, the information that I provided in the House a few days ago with respect to the cash that I expect will be in place by the end of the month from the sale of storage sheds, the \$7.4 million, that's accurate.

But I think it's fair enough for the member to say that we need to take account of book value and that's about \$5 million, Mr. Speaker. And therefore the gain in terms of cash from the sale of the sheds to date is not a \$7.4 million reduction, Mr. Speaker; I think it would be fair to say that it's a reduction of a little over 2 million.

But let me make one other point . . .

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

I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP isn't any better at reading financial statements than they are growing potatoes, and they should never be allowed to do either.

And even today, instead of admitting they made a huge mistake, the NDP is still trying to justify the SPUDCO disaster.

Mr. Speaker, here's the bottom line. The NDP signed a phony partnership that really wasn't a partnership. Taxpayers lost \$28 million. Local farmers and businesses lost millions more. The government is now being sued for millions more and the NDP so far has learned absolutely nothing.

Mr. Speaker, rather than coming up with phony figures to try to

justify this disaster, will the minister just admit his government made a horrible mistake and apologize to the people of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:15)

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister for Sask Water.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there's nothing phony about the numbers that were provided, and the member's clear on that. I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, I'm acknowledging that it's important to take account of book value, and I acknowledge the member's point on that. But there's nothing inaccurate about the fact that \$7.4 million in cash has been received, and that's good news for taxpayers, Mr. Speaker.

And let me tell the member one other important point that he conveniently forgets, Mr. Speaker, and that is that these seven storage sheds have now made possible a major expansion in potato production harvesting in . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order. Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. Order. The member may complete his response if he wishes.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, in 1996 before those sheds were built we were looking at about 70,000 tons of potato production a year in the province of Saskatchewan. Last year, Mr. Speaker, we had 185,000 tons, Mr. Speaker, and local producers have benefited very substantially from that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 57 — The Irrigation Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 57, The Irrigation Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — Order, please. It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture that Bill No. 57, The Irrigation Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order, please. I would ask . . . I would ask the . . . I would ask the member . . . I would ask the . . . Order, order. Oral question period is over. Order.

The motion has been carried for first reading of Bill No. 57. When shall this Bill be considered a second time?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Next sitting of this House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a first time and ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 58 — The Cities Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 58, The Cities Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 58, The Cities Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a first time and ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 59 — The Ambulance Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 59, The Ambulance Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 59, The Ambulance Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered a second time?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a first time and ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Reference by Name to Members of the Public

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, before we proceed any further, I would like to bring to the attention of members a reference from Marleau and Montpetit, reference with respecting to name members of the public in this House. And it reads as follows:

Members are discouraged from referring by name to persons who are not Members of Parliament and who do not enjoy parliamentary immunity, except in extraordinary (Order . . . except in extraordinary) circumstances when the national interest calls for the naming of an individual. The Speaker has ruled that Members have . . . (the) responsibility to protect the innocent, not only from outright slander but from any slur directly or indirectly implied, and has stressed that Members should avoid as much as possible mentioning by name people from outside the House who are unable to reply and defend themselves against innuendo.

I would like to bring that to the attention of the member from Canora-Pelly and would ask him to pay special attention to that article.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

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

The Speaker: — Order, please. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and convert for debates returnable questions no. 350 through 357 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses for questions 350 to 357 have been submitted. Excuse me, I would like to make a correction. Responses . . . Questions no. 350 to 357 have been converted to orders for returns (debatable).

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to stand and respond on behalf of the government to written question no. 358.

The Speaker: — Response to 358 has been submitted. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again

I'm extremely pleased to stand on behalf of the government and table responses . . . or pardon me, convert for debates returnable questions no. 359 through 391 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Questions 359 to 391 have been converted to orders for returns (debatable). I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to stand and answer on behalf of the government written questions no. 392 through 397 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to 392 to 397 have been submitted. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm very pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and convert for debates returnable questions no. 398 through 400 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Questions 398 through 400 inclusive have been converted to orders for returns (debatable). I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased to stand and answer on behalf of the government written questions no. 401 through 405 inclusive.

The Speaker: — 401 to 405 have been . . . responses have been submitted. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm very pleased to stand on behalf of the government and convert for debates returnable questions no. 406 through 436 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Questions 406 to 436 have been converted to orders for returns (debatable).

I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, to facilitate the work of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies and the Standing Committee on the Economy, I move the House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that this House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 14:26.

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CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. L. Calvert
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
Minister of Health
Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. P. Prebble
Minister of Corrections and Public Safety

Hon. F. Quennell
Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Hon. C. Serby
Deputy Premier
Minister of Rural Revitalization

Hon. M. Sonntag
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs
Minister of Highways and Transportation

Hon. L. Taylor
Minister of Government Relations

Hon. A. Thomson
Minister of Learning
Minister Responsible for Information Technology

Hon. H. Van Mulligen
Minister of Finance

Hon. M. Wartman
Minister of Agriculture and Food