



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

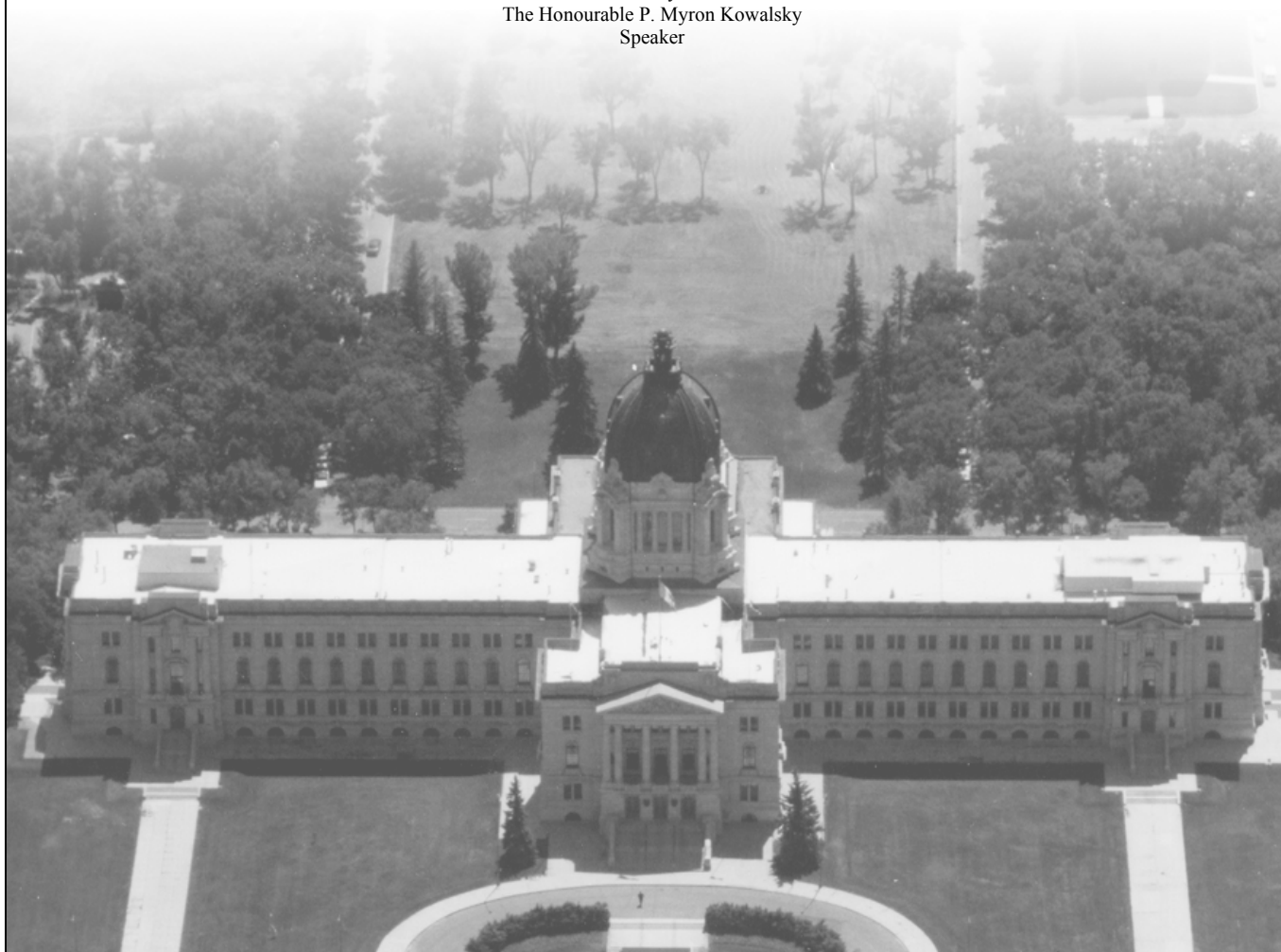
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — On behalf of the 600 people that showed up at a public meeting in the community of Climax last night with concerns about their health care facility and the hours of operation, I'm pleased to present the following petition:

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.

Mr. Speaker, these two copies of the petition come from the communities of Frontier, Shaunavon, Val Marie, Climax, Bracken, and other areas in the immediate area. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Swift Current.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise on behalf of citizens concerned about health care closures in southwest Saskatchewan. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government, through the legislature's Human Services Committee, to hold public hearings in each of the communities affected by the changes recently announced by the Minister of Health, prior to those bed closures, facility closures, and layoffs taking place.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today, why they are from the community of Swift Current, as well as the town of Vanguard.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by people who want to save the Luseland and Dodsland ambulance services. Mr. Speaker, they are concerned the loss of services will put residents of these areas at risk in emergency situations. Mr. Speaker, 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 Dodsland and Luseland ambulance services are not discontinued.

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

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of signatures here, but they seem to come primarily from the communities of Plenty, Ruthilda, and Dodsland.

And I am pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

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 downsizing or closure of the Craik Health Centre. 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 Craik Health Centre is not closed or further downsized.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Craik, Holdfast, Davidson, Chamberlain, Penzance, and Elbow.

I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have petitions to present on behalf of citizens around the Claybank area. There is a number of them here. I've been a little lax over the last 10 days and hadn't presented any, so they're piling up. So I'm going to present them as a group today. 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.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed from people as far away as Victoria, Australia, who've seen the plant and think it's amazing, to people from Avonlea and Moose Jaw, all around the province.

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 citizens from my area that are concerned about the bulk beer discount structure. 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 reinstate the bulk beer discount structure cancelled in the recent provincial budget.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by residents of Estevan, Benson, Macoun, Bienfait, Oxbow, Weyburn, and Lampman.

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 the premium increases in crop insurance and the reduction in overall coverage. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all necessary actions to reverse the increase in crop insurance premiums and the reduction in coverage.

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

And I have several petitions, Mr. Speaker, and they are signed by residents of Weyburn, Regina, Gladmar, Minton, Ogema, Viceroy, Assiniboia, Ceylon, again Weyburn, Pangman, Regina, Oxbow, Lampman, Lake Alma.

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 who are very concerned about the closure of the Border Health Centre from a 24-hour facility to an 8-hour facility. And it affects an awful lot of people in southwest Saskatchewan. 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 actions to ensure that the Border Health Centre in Climax remains a 24-hour facility.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions here that are signed by the good folks of Orkney and Val Marie.

I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here that citizens are concerned that this government isn't listening to them.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government, through the legislative Human Services Committee, to hold public hearings in each of the communities affected by the changes recently announced by the Minister of Health, prior to those bed closures, facility closures, and layoffs taking place.

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

Signed by the citizens from Davidson, Saskatoon, Kenaston, and Bladworth.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a balance of petitions from the community of Radisson, from constituents opposed to the closure of the Radisson School. 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 Radisson School fall under the two-year moratorium on school closures, and allow the community and school division the opportunity to consult on alternatives to the closing of the Radisson School.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I have a petition signed by over 200 people from Radisson, also a few from Prince Albert.

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents of Saskatchewan who are concerned about closures or downsizing of their health care facilities without public consultation, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government, through the legislature's Human Services Committee, to hold public hearings in each of the communities affected by the changes recently announced by the Minister of Health, prior to those bed closures, facility closures, and layoffs taking place.

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present on behalf of residents of Kenaston.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Mr. Speaker, once again I rise in the Assembly to present a petition on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan concerned with the state of 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 the 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 citizens of Kindersley, Dodsland, Flaxcombe, Plenty, Coleville.

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. 47, 48, 76, 165, 166, 174, 178, 182, 187, 196, and 201.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great pleasure for me today to introduce a group of students from Stewart Valley School in Stewart Valley in the north part of the constituency of Swift Current. There are 14 grade 6, 7, and 8 students in your gallery and they are accompanied by Mrs. Karen Hanel as well as Kevin Regier, who I believe is the principal at Stewart Valley. He's nodding his head yes.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to have a chance to visit with the students after the proceedings. I hope they enjoy watching question period, watching the proceedings here today. And I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly several guests that are seated in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker.

First of all I'd like to acknowledge Robert Doucette and also Bob McLeod, who work very hard on behalf of Métis people in the province of Saskatchewan. They were both candidates in the most recent election and, as I said, I know they've worked very hard for Métis people for years in the province and I'm sure they will into the future as well.

So please join me in welcoming them here to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the Assembly I'd like to introduce a group of people in the east gallery.

Mr. Speaker, there's 11 grade 11 and 12 students from the Limerick High School. They're accompanied by their teachers, Douglas Charabin and Jeff Feeley. And they've chaperones with them: Bev Cranfield, Lianne Topola, and Edie Klein. And I'll be meeting with the group shortly after question period, and

I'm sure they will have a number of questions related to the proceedings here today.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to help me welcome them to their legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, through you, and to all members of the Assembly, two people sitting in your gallery — perhaps they can give us a little wave. It's Don Ackerman and his wife, Dolores. They're the proud parents of one of our Pages, Donovan Ackerman.

And while I'm on my feet, I'd also like to introduce to you, Jenn Ruddy. Perhaps you could stand up and give us a little wave. She is the researcher in the NDP (New Democratic Party) caucus office, and I've gotten to know her very well and have great admiration for her skills and talents. She is also the editor of *The Commonwealth* magazine which is the publication of the New Democratic Party and she does a very competent job in all her roles.

And I'd like to welcome them all to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sitting just behind the fine delegation from Stewart Valley is another fine delegation from the community of Eston in the Rosetown-Elrose constituency.

I'm very pleased to welcome 13 Grade 6 students from the Eston Composite School. They are accompanied by their teacher Heather Pielt and by a number of parent chaperones who got to come along for the ride and also tour Regina and who knows where else. They include Lynne Warren, Cheryl Hughes, Glenda Olson, Janet Reimer, and Rob Lobdell.

I'd like to welcome the Grade 6 class here. I hope you enjoy the visit that you have to your legislature and all of the other activities. I'm looking forward to meeting with you a little later in the day. So if you have any specific questions you want to ask about what goes on here, by all means do so.

And I'd also like to particularly welcome Rob Lobdell to the Assembly. Rob has been the spearhead behind West Central Road & Rail in the Rosetown-Elrose constituency. A big grand opening of the facility in Beechy on Friday, so I'm sure we'll see Rob there for that occasion.

To all the folks from Eston, a very warm welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join my hon. colleague from Meadow Lake in recognizing two very special guests.

As one of the members of this Assembly who is also Métis, I want to recognize my fellow Métis, Mr. McLeod. And of course as we all know, they were very active or he was very active in the housing portfolio during his tenure in Saskatoon. And also, Mr. Doucette, who's also been very active in Métis politics.

And I want to take this opportunity to welcome my fellow Métis to the Assembly today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with members across in welcoming Mr. Doucette and Maurice to our Assembly. I know that they've been going through a lot of work lately, and they've been going through some tough times when it comes to the work that they've been doing for the Métis people. And I want them to know that we appreciate their hard work. So I'd like to welcome them to their Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Greystone.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce to members of the Assembly, Mr. Ormond McKague, who is sitting in the west gallery. And he's made a huge contribution to education in our province and has served on the boards of many community-based organizations. And it's very nice to have you here today, Ormond, and I ask all members to join me in welcoming him. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly, I would like to introduce 15 grade 6, 7, and 8 students from the Gainsborough School seated in the east gallery. Along with the students is Ms. Patricia Wolensky, their teacher, and Mrs. Nicole Jedel, their assistant. And I'd ask everyone to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce two guests seated in your gallery, in the Speaker's gallery, Ms. Carolyn McKay from Craven and Mr. Norm Kish from White City, members of the hoteliers' association of Saskatchewan, and their first time in the Assembly. I'd ask everyone to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member from Rosetown-Elrose in welcoming Mr. Rob Lobdell to his Assembly. As the member from Rosetown-Elrose indicated, he's been extremely instrumental in the company West Central Road & Rail which saved historically one of the most productive lines for grain movement in all of Canada and had record numbers, as a matter of fact, in 1956.

Particularly interesting, Mr. Lobdell was . . . spearheaded the movement to build a grain-loading facility just west of Laporte, Saskatchewan, and really has become a centre of economic focus for the communities of Eatonia.

So I'd join with the member from Rosetown-Elrose and ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming Mr. Lobdell to his Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

60th Anniversary of the First Co-operative Commonwealth Federation Government

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sixty years ago today the people of Saskatchewan elected the first CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) government under the leadership of . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the CCF slogan during that groundbreaking, bitterly contested election was Humanity First. And, Mr. Speaker, this proved to be the theme for the next 20 years of progressive CCF governments in Saskatchewan. The CCF immediately introduced free medical care and hospital care for pensioners, those on government support, and cancer patients.

Mr. Speaker, humanity again came first when the CCF government moved quickly to protect farmers from foreclosure, while the big banks and the government in Ottawa stubbornly resisted.

Humanity came first when the CCF introduced The Trade Union Act, the most progressive labour legislation on the continent.

And humanity came first with the establishment of the first arts board in Canada, a professional civil service — the envy of the country — rural electrification, the introduction of affordable auto insurance, and the development of a strong Crown sector which anchored a proud record of economic achievement.

Mr. Speaker, and though it took 18 years to fully implement, humanity was indeed first when the CCF enacted the first fully funded, universal medicare program in all of North America.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Today I ask all my colleagues to join in paying tribute to the accomplishments of Tommy Douglas and the first CCF government for putting humanity first and making Saskatchewan Canada's heartland.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Delisle Credit Union Celebrates 50th Anniversary

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Saturday evening, my wife and I had the pleasure of attending the 50th anniversary of the Delisle Credit Union. There were a number of greetings and congratulations from distinguished guests. But the most informative and interesting comments came from the original board members.

One speaker began his comments by asking, who can remember having a two-day rain? A few hands were raised. Then the question came, who can remember the last time there was a three-day rain? Fewer hands were raised. Then of course a gentleman said, I remember back in the 1950s when it rained for a week.

The next speaker began to tell a story by saying, I think someone tried to break a hole into the side of the credit union with the intention of robbing it. Another gentleman jumped up from the crowd and finished the story saying the hole was made and the police watched the attempted robbery from across the street before arresting the people.

In closing, the ACRE (Action Committee on the Rural Economy) report recommended billions of dollars of investment is needed in the coming years.

I believe the credit union movement and members will be well placed to help grow Saskatchewan a very substantial way in the future.

Please join me in congratulating the Delisle Credit Union on its 50th anniversary.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Renowned Political Studies Professor Retires

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a fitting day to pay tribute to those who have played a large part in shaping and defining politics in Saskatchewan. I would like to recognize the accomplishments of a political studies professor at the University of Saskatchewan who has decided to retire after 40 years of service. Dr. David E. Smith started his very successful career in 1964 at the University of Saskatchewan in the department of economics and political science. He became a full professor 10 years later in 1974.

In 1985 the department was split up and Dr. Smith joined the

newly created department of political studies where he has been until now. Dr. Smith has built an international reputation with his expertise in many different areas, such as voter registration procedures, Saskatchewan politics, Canadian federalism, and public policy.

He has lectured in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, and Korea. He is the author and/or editor of 7 books, 40 book chapters, and dozens of scholarly journals. Dr. Smith inspired thousands of students over his tenure at the University of Saskatchewan, including many members of this Assembly.

Dr. Smith will be missed by the university, his colleagues, and his students. I would like to congratulate Dr. Smith on his long and successful career in the academic world and wish him all the best in his retirement. Saskatchewan is a better place because of people like Dr. David E. Smith. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Western Canada Farm Progress Show

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every year tens of thousands of farmers from Saskatchewan, across Canada, and around the world converge in Regina for the Western Canadian Farm Progress Show. This year's show begins tomorrow and runs through Friday, and is expected to be bigger and better than ever, Mr. Speaker.

The Farm Progress Show has come a long way in the last 26 years. It first grew out of ideas discussed by members of the Regina Chamber of Commerce and the Regina Exhibition Association who saw in it an arena to showcase the newest innovations in farm technology, Mr. Speaker.

It soon became apparent that the real success of the show was in bringing farmers and manufacturers together so that they could learn from each other, Mr. Speaker. Exhibitors receive valuable feedback and insights from farmers on how their equipment is working, and farmers get to see how the latest farm machinery and technology can be used all in one place, Mr. Speaker.

Today, the Western Canadian Farm Progress Show is recognized as one of the premier dryland farm equipment shows in North America and has an increasing global appeal.

Mr. Speaker, this year's show will require about 100 acres to allow the over 700 exhibitors to display and demonstrate their products. These will include 11 innovative local, national, and international manufacturers who will be introducing over 20 new products to the public.

Mr. Speaker, the Western Canadian Farm Progress Show is a world-class event that Regina and Saskatchewan can be proud of. I want to congratulate everyone involved for their contributions to the show's ongoing success and to its well-deserving reputation for excellence around the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

Ten Best Reasons to Stay in Saskatchewan

Mr. Kerpan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well we are rapidly approaching the end of the session, and young people all over Saskatchewan are graduating from high school and post-secondary institutions. So, Mr. Speaker, here are the 10 best reasons to stay in Saskatchewan according to the NDP.

Number 10: the province will soon be smoke free.

Number 9: all the money that people will save by not smoking may be used to help them pay their wiener roast tax.

Number 8: speaking of the wiener roast tax, while it is only \$3, if the wood is wet will we have to pay more for the extra weight?

Number 7: if more people leave the province, then it stands to reason that there'll be more room left for the rest of us.

Number 6: we're going to allow fires to play a more natural role in the environment. If something goes wrong with this plan we can always blame it on the federal government.

Number 5: we were once told that we have the lowest utility rates in Canada. Although this is not the case, we are told that at some point maybe we will.

Number 4: we will lower the drinking age. This new, innovative idea will result in our young people staying in Saskatchewan because they won't be able to drink and drive and get out of the province.

Number 3: we were almost named the American capital of culture.

Number 2: the bridges. In Saskatchewan we have determined that the part of the bridge you drive on is actually not required. In Prince Albert, however, if you wind her up at the top of the hill you'll probably make it almost all the way across before you fall into the river.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the number 1 reason to stay in Saskatchewan, according to the NDP, is that it'll only cost 25 cents to make a phone call.

Mr. Speaker, it makes one wonder why you just don't load mama up and we move the cows and we all go to Manitoba.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Achievement Award in Nursing Health Human Resources

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, the Eastridge One Quality Workplace Group at the Parkridge Centre, located in the constituency of Saskatoon Fairview, has won the first Achievement Award in Nursing Health Human Resources.

This award recognizes and celebrates individuals, employers, and groups who have played a key role in identifying, advocating for, and implementing innovative initiatives that promote healthy workplaces. It is awarded by the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Mr. Speaker, Eastridge One is home to 36 residents with cognitive impairments such as dementia, Alzheimer's, or frontal lobe injuries. It is one of Parkridge Centre's six community mosaic neighbourhoods, and in January 2002 began as one of the three Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association pilot projects in the SRNA quality workplace program.

The Eastridge One team has built a strong and supportive work environment that includes not only nurses, but also all of the interdisciplinary team members and residents of Parkridge Centre. Members of the quality workplace team include registered nurses, registered psych nurses, special care aides, nurse managers, social workers, physical therapists, and environmental service staff.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize all members of the Eastridge One team for the commitment to making Parkridge Centre a healthy, fun and progressive place to work and congratulate them for receiving this award.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Outstanding Athlete — Dale Wig

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, we often hear about the successes of sport teams, but rarely the accomplishments of individual athletes and I'd like to change that today.

Dale Wig, a 15-year-old student from the community of Eastend, put together a remarkable performance at the Saskatchewan High School Athletic Association Provincial Track Meet in Saskatoon the weekend of June 4 and 5.

This grade 10 student's string of successes began Friday evening with a 1,500 metre race. Dale won his first gold medal and set a provincial record with a time of 4 minutes and 21 seconds. On Saturday morning, Dale ran the 3 kilometre race in a time of 9 minutes 27.56 seconds, capturing another gold medal and shattering yet another provincial record. On Saturday afternoon, this fatigued young man still had another 800 metre race to run and he settled for second place at a time of 2 minutes and 8 seconds . . . 8.84 seconds.

Now Dale has been training six days a week since February and it's through a combination of his hard work and commitment to running, as well as outstanding athletic ability that contributed to this level of success. His desire and dedication to the sport should be applauded and also should serve as an inspiration to his peers.

Now Dale says running came naturally to him when he first started in grade 8 but he's quick to give credit to the Eastend School; and his parents, Bill and Laurie, for their support; and also to his coaches, Chris Vuksic and Ted Galeta from Regina.

Mr. Speaker, I know we'll all want to hear more of Dale's successes in track and field in the years to come. But at this time, I'd like to congratulate Dale on his outstanding achievements at the provincial level and wish him all the best as he continues his pursuits.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Discount Structure for Off-Sale Beer Outlets

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority.

On April 1, the NDP government eliminated the SLGA (Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority) discount on packaged beer sales over \$100,000 per year. That effectively lifted \$5 million per year from the pockets of hundreds of small hotel, restaurant, and tavern owners across Saskatchewan.

When the NDP made the announcement two months ago, bars, restaurants, tavern owners said it would have a devastating effect on their businesses and that it would lead to job cuts. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what has happened.

Will the minister admit that it was wrong for the NDP to take \$5 million per year out of the tills of small businesses that sell off-sale beer and will the NDP government immediately reinstate the volume discount sales over \$100,000 per year?

(14:00)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated in the House before, there are six provinces in this country where hoteliers are not even allowed to sell beer. As I have also indicated, there is still a discount for hoteliers who sell off-sale beer — which they have a monopoly on for chilled beer, Mr. Speaker — on the first \$100,000 in sales.

I want to say to the member and to the House, Mr. Speaker, that I have already indicated that we will monitor the situation. And if indeed there is a shift of beer sales from hoteliers to the liquor stores owned by government, we will take another look at the policy, Mr. Speaker. It is not yet time to do so because it is not . . . not enough time has elapsed since the budget.

But I have said to the House and I say again, that if what the hoteliers say is true we'll monitor that, but we do not have evidence of that at the present time, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, well that just shows how little respect the NDP have for small businesses in Saskatchewan. If we see, we'll take time, Mr. Speaker.

Well the minister seems to think it's fine to take \$5 million from the tills of hundreds of small businesses. And when those businesses said the NDP's decision to eliminate the discount package on packaged beer sales would be devastating, here's what the minister said in the Moose Jaw *Times-Herald* on April 14, and I quote:

If . . . (someone) says . . . this change is . . . bankrupting them, and they're (at) a . . . big hotel in Saskatoon or Regina or Moose Jaw, we can always sit down with them and go through their books because . . . I don't believe it . . .

Mr. Speaker, does the minister still think small-business owners across the province are lying to him? Is the minister . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member's language, use of language is inappropriate in this legislature. I would ask him to withdraw the line on lying.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker; I withdraw that.

Mr. Speaker, is the minister saying that businesses' books are not accurate? Does the minister still think the small-business people are being inaccurate in their comments? Is the minister still willing to sit down with those hotel owners and show them how his NDP government's decision to take \$5 million from the till is actually going to result . . . isn't actually going to result in losses or employee layoffs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, what I've indicated to the House, what I've indicated to the media is that the licence to sell chilled beer and to have a monopoly to do so is something that is of value, Mr. Speaker. That is what we have said. And we have said, unlike the opposition, that we're going to see what actually happens, to see if there's a shift between the hoteliers — as they fear may happen — and the government liquor stores. If that happens, Mr. Speaker, then we've said we would take a look at it.

But naturally — and most reasonable people would understand, Mr. Speaker — we have to wait until the numbers are in. The opposition does not have numbers for the first quarter of beer sales, Mr. Speaker, because those numbers aren't in yet. We have simply said we will look at the evidence and if what the hoteliers say is true, we will listen to them, Mr. Speaker. What could be more reasonable than that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister budgeted \$5 million of evidence that there was going to be money taken from the hoteliers.

Mr. Speaker, two of the small hotel business owners that the minister says he doesn't believe, two of those small-business owners have come to the legislature today. They operate small hotel taverns in White City and Craven. And they, like hundreds of other small-business owners, operate family-run hotels, restaurants, and taverns across this province; who woke up on the day after the NDP's devastating budget and found the minister's proverbial hand lifting \$5 million from their tills.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister do what he said he will do and meet with these two hotel owners so the minister can see first-hand how his NDP government is devastating their small businesses and killing jobs?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, of course I would be willing to meet with these hoteliers. I've already spoken to one of the hoteliers in the gallery, and I'll speak to them again if they so desire.

I simply say to the member opposite — who undoubtedly is going to tell us that beer sales have dropped in the province of Saskatchewan — that beer sales are directly related to weather, Mr. Speaker. And you sell . . . The members may laugh but most reasonable people know you sell more beer when it's hot and sunny, Mr. Speaker. Beer sales may be off this year because, I don't know if the members opposite have noticed, but it has been cool and rainy, and beer sales may be off, Mr. Speaker.

We will wait and see what happens over the weeks ahead, to see what happens during the time when more normal weather patterns occur. Most reasonable people, Mr. Speaker, know that we drink more beer when it's hot. Perhaps the opposition doesn't drink beer. I don't know. But that's what most reasonable people understand, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well not all of the month of May was rainy and cold, Mr. Speaker, and the evidence is clearly there. The owner of the Craven hotel is here today and she says the NDP decision to eliminate the discount on beer is costing her small business \$10,000 a month. The owner of the Ice House Tavern in White City is also here and he says the NDP's decision to eliminate the volume discount is devastating his small business. The owner of the Ehrle Hotel in Regina, Mr. Speaker, recently posted a sign on the door of his small business that said and I quote from the Leader Post, June 2, quote:

. . . thanking, Premier Lorne Calvert for helping us find an opportunity to lay off a hard working employee and also for helping us to increase offsale prices which in turn offend our valuable customers.

Mr. Speaker, hotel and tavern owners across the province in big

cities and small towns are saying the same thing. The NDP's decision to eliminate the volume discount is devastating their businesses and costing jobs. Will the minister admit the NDP is wrong and immediately reinstate the volume discount sales over \$100,000 and meet with the two hoteliers that are here today?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I've already indicated to the member I would meet with the hoteliers here today; I've already spoken to one of them. But I want to say to the member who continues to think that we're not entitled to question anything that is said that yes, I remember the owner of the Ehrle Hotel being in the media saying that he would lay people off. And one of the things he explained was that because he lost \$1.50 in discount, he had to mark up his beer \$4.50 a dozen in order to make a profit.

And I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I don't know why an off-sale establishment would have to mark up beer like that in order to make money. Perhaps the member opposite can explain that.

But I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that we will deal with the hoteliers reasonably and fairly when the evidence is in but contrary to what the member says we should do, we will ask questions and we will look at the evidence when the evidence is in, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Crystal Methamphetamine

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last night I had the opportunity to ask the Premier some questions about crystal meth and this is what he told this Assembly and I quote:

. . . members opposite have identified in the course of this sitting a particular concern around crystal meth. — a concern that is shared by this government, a concern that I'm sure is shared by the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that deserves the Premier's commitment. Parents clearly do not have enough information on this uniquely dangerous drug. We need to pull together parents, schools, Aboriginal groups, addiction workers, public health officials, law enforcement, municipal and community groups to increase public awareness. We need to be proactive by educating to stop people, especially our young people, from ever trying this dangerous and addictive drug.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier commit today to supporting a series of public education meetings about crystal meth this fall in communities throughout Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I certainly agree with what the Premier and the member opposite have said about drugs as a problem for young people. It has been our preference to do this in two phases. One is certainly to make sure that young people in the schools have access to information; and second of all, to make sure that parents have access to more information about this particular drug, but actually about all drugs and the risks available.

We've embarked . . . this session I've made the commitment that we'll put new resources available on the Web site to help parents talk to their kids, and indeed we've identified in previous answers that we're working with the school system to identify through new curriculum and existing curriculum, the threat that this and other drugs pose to young people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, crystal meth is unique enough that other jurisdictions have taken a lead on the issue. Nine ministries in Alberta make up an interdepartmental committee on stopping the spread of crystal meth. Alberta is also in the process of organizing a western summit on this very issue, hopefully by this fall. British Columbia is set to release a strategy dealing specifically with crystal meth later this summer. In the United States there is an 89-member bipartisan Congressional Congress to fight crystal meth.

Mr. Speaker, we are not asking the government to reinvent the wheel. With so many other jurisdictions tackling this issue, there are plenty of resources and information to be shared. Mr. Speaker, crystal meth requires attention from both sides of this legislature and a multitude of groups in our community.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: will he help our young people by being proactive on this issue? Will the Premier commit to holding public meetings this fall throughout Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, we have made it clear that we're not interested in reinventing the wheel here either, that where there are resources available, whether it's in terms of discussion guides to help parents talk to their children, whether it is other resources that are available from around the continent or elsewhere, that we're prepared to make those available to Saskatchewan people, and we'll do that. I think that this is a useful exercise.

It is this government's preference that we continue to make drug awareness education a priority within the school system; that we believe that the family has an important role to play in terms of talking about these issues with their children, and we will commit to making sure resources are available to assist them in that task.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, we're not asking the government to forget about the other drugs causing problems in our communities. And as my colleagues and I have repeatedly said in this Assembly, crystal meth is unique. Unlike other drugs that cannot be produced locally, crystal meth can be produced right here. It can be produced in Porcupine Plain. It can be produced in Weyburn, Tisdale, Regina.

In the United States, the bipartisan Congressional Congress to fight crystal meth has called for devoting resources specifically to meth prevention education rather than a more broad drug prevention education, and is encouraging states to integrate meth education for both students and parents into anti-drug education classes.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Learning has shown nothing but reluctance to tackle this particular issue head-on. And so today we are asking the Premier . . . And I'd like to quote from what the Premier said again last night, and I quote:

But I tell you I commit myself and this government to finding the best solutions that we can find for our young people . . .

And so today I'm asking the Premier, will he be bold and proactive and do something to help our young people? Will he commit to ensure that meth-specific curriculum is available in all schools in the fall? And will he hold public meetings throughout Saskatchewan this fall to educate all people in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Crystal meth is not the most significant threat to young people in terms of drugs today in our society nor is it the only one that is readily available. What we need to make sure is that we have a drug awareness campaign that is in place that takes into account the specific role and help that teachers can provide in terms of talking to students, that parents can provide in talking to their children.

But we also need to be mindful of the fact that there are other serious threats that are equally important to be dealt with — not the least of which is solvent abuse, which is prevalent in many of our communities unfortunately — and, while the member may not like to acknowledge it, is of course readily available.

There is a problem with Ritalin and Talwin, which continues to be a problem in many of our communities. That is another problem that needs to be addressed also. There continue to be concerns about drug usage from drugs such as marijuana, in terms of dealing with young people at developmental ages. All of these issues need to be dealt with appropriately.

I fail to understand what having a group of legislators wandering around the province will do or bring to this debate that can't be dealt with by making sure we have better resources available in our schools and making sure that we've got information available for parents to talk to their children.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

World Meat Congress

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, right now the World Meat Congress is underway in Winnipeg. This important meeting takes place once every two years, bringing together hundreds of meat industry representatives, government officials, and producer groups. This meeting comes to Canada at a very important time for our livestock industry. It is an opportunity to tell the world that our beef supply is safe and that international borders should be reopened immediately to Canadian beef. This begs the question to the Minister of Agriculture. Why is he here? Why isn't he at this important meeting, working to get borders open for Saskatchewan and Canadian livestock producers?

(14:15)

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we recognize the importance of this meeting in Winnipeg and we have appropriate staff at that meeting. We've also been in discussion with the other ministers across the country, and the minister from Manitoba, the Hon. Rosann Wowchuk, is presenting the provincial Ag ministers' position there. And we expect some good things to come out of here in terms of developments for slaughter and processing in Canada in the post-BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — Well, Mr. Speaker, one thing's for sure about the minister. At least he's consistent. He never misses an opportunity to miss an opportunity. I note that the Manitoba Minister of Agriculture is addressing this conference. So is federal Ag minister Bob Speller, who is currently in the middle of an election campaign and whose seat may be in peril back at home. Even so, both of these ministers are attending this important conference. Why isn't our minister there?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, we do have appropriate staff at this meeting who are monitoring the discussions and will brief me fully on what the discussions are there, and tomorrow I will also be meeting with Minister Speller who will be in Regina, and we'll be talking further about issues around BSE and other agricultural issues of pertinence to the province at this time. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, the minister knows the Saskatchewan Party has always co-operated when it comes to making sure ministers can attend important meetings during the session. This is no exception.

Mr. Speaker, the World Meat Congress is being held just a few hours away in Winnipeg. It lasts until Thursday. There is still time for the minister to attend. I can attend with him if he's worried about the NDP's majority in the Assembly. Let's go right now. Government leaders should be taking every opportunity possible to lobby on behalf of Canadian producers to get borders reopened. Why is the minister not attending this crucial conference?

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

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge that we have had good co-operation with the critic from the Sask Party in Agriculture and Food, and I appreciate that in terms of other journeys that we've made. Given the critical time and the nature of some of the Bills that we're moving through the legislature at this time, it seemed to me that with the level of official that we had at that meeting, and with the importance of the work that is going on in this House, the decision was made that I would attend here and make sure that the information is provided to the Sask Party as we move the Bills through, and make sure that our producers get the best support that they can through the legislation that we are proposing. Thank you.

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

Métis Nation of Saskatchewan Elections

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, Robert Doucette was declared winner of the Métis election for president. A few hours later, Dwayne Roth was declared president. The next day in question period, I asked the minister what was going on, and he said, and I quote: "Mr. Doucette is still recognized officially as the newly elected president of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan."

But the same day, Mr. Roth was declared the winner again. Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain what's going on, and why did he tell the House that Mr. Doucette was recognized as president, when apparently it wasn't the case?

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And again, I appreciate the co-operation that I have received from the critic on this issue. We've been speaking daily on it.

The quote that the hon. member read was entirely accurate, and if you heard at the very end, she said so far, and that was the case. That was the most recent information I had at the time when I answered the question in the House. I have to say generally though, Mr. Speaker, that we, I think it's fair to say, are troubled by the reports that we've received around the election. I have been monitoring this fairly closely. I've instructed my staff to review the events as best they can, and report back to me within the next few days, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we are also troubled with the events that are going on. And more than that, I'm concerned that the election paints all Métis people with the broad brush perception that there is incompetence, or worse yet, that there is corruption. And I think it's the government's job to ensure that not everybody wears that.

Mr. Speaker, at a recent committee meeting the minister said that if he had concerns that the results of the election did not reflect the will of the Métis people, he would, and I quote, "... give consideration to what the department and myself as minister would do."

Mr. Speaker, the minister has provided funding to ensure fair Métis elections. He's acknowledged that he has a role to play in ensuring fair elections. Can the minister tell me what he's going to do to address the huge concerns about the recent Métis election?

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Well thanks again, Mr. Speaker, and again many of the points the member makes are the same concerns that I share as well. I have said in committee, and I said to the hon. member personally, and I will now say it again in the legislature here today, that once my officials report back to me, if it is apparent that the wishes of the Métis electorate are not reflected by the leadership that are there today, Mr. Speaker, then we would give consideration to the relationship that exists between the province and the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, that can be ... that can take several different ... several different directions — thank you. It could include, first of all, Mr. Speaker, it could include the stopping of the tier 1, tier 2 meetings. It could affect the funding that the province provides. Those are all considerations. I will want to wait though, first of all, for my officials to report back to me to give me a more complete and accurate picture of those events, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar.

Procurement of Centennial Medals

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well it appears that the future is not quite open for Saskatchewan-based companies. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Provincial Secretary: Next year is Saskatchewan's 100 anniversary and the province is getting ready to celebrate. Part of that celebration will be the awarding of 3,500 Centennial Medals to Saskatchewan people who have made a major contribution to our province. But according to a CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) news report, those 3,500 deserving people will be getting medals made by a company in Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Government of Saskatchewan purchasing Centennial Medals in Quebec instead of using a manufacturer in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) is following normal procurement policies and will be issuing a tentative purchase, the Centennial Medals, on behalf of the Provincial Secretary. And I'm advised that at least one Saskatchewan supplier will be bidding to fill the order, and as of today no medals have been purchased and no contracts signed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Laurie Artiss is a well-known Saskatchewan business capable of making high-quality medals. And I'm sure that there are other businesses in Saskatchewan that would be interested in working as well. But the government's spokesperson has indicated that all the province's medal requirements have been purchased outside the province by the same Quebec company since 1985. And no wonder Saskatchewan-based companies are not bidding on these contracts, Mr. Speaker.

Will the NDP establish a new policy of supporting Saskatchewan businesses when it comes to buying medals commemorating the contribution of people who have worked to build Saskatchewan, instead of shipping the work off to Quebec? Mr. Speaker, why does the Provincial Secretary think no manufacturer in Saskatchewan has the capability to make the Centennial Medals?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — As I've said earlier Saskatchewan Centennial Medal will be recognizing those citizens who have made notable contributions to our province. SPMC is following its normal procurement policies. And following standard procedures SPMC will be advertising its intentions to order the medals. And one of those firms was from Quebec. But there's been a local Saskatchewan supplier interested, so now we're putting it out in tendering process. So we're just following standard process.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order please. Ministerial statements. I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just before giving my statement I would seek leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member for Regina South has requested leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, I'd like to thank

the Assembly. I'm very pleased today to be joined by four individuals in the west gallery. These individuals are with the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board. And I would just ask them to give a wave as I introduce them and hopefully pronounce their names correctly.

Conrad Pura, who is the executive director of the Labour Force Development Board. He is joined today by Abu Bockarie, who is part of the Racialized Canadians Reference Group. As well we are joined by Afroze Naqvi, who is with the Education and Training Providers of SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology), and Alan Mills who is a business representative with the Labour Force Development Board, with Crew Call.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Recognition of Prior Learning Becomes Policy

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to rise in the House today as the Minister of Learning to announce the provincial framework for the recognition of prior learning in Saskatchewan has been approved as government policy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — This policy is about giving credit where credit is due. By recognizing prior learning and implementing this new policy we can help ensure maximum benefit from, and full utilization of, the skills of Saskatchewan people.

The recognition of prior learning utilizes a process that examines an individual's knowledge and skills with the goal of recognition and/or accreditation regardless of how the knowledge or skills were acquired. It's a way to address the challenges of skills identification and assessment in a knowledge-based economy where continuous learning must be encouraged and supported. In doing so, we can better contribute to the social and economic prosperity of our province by recognizing and making better use of what our people already know and can do.

It is interesting to note that according to the Conference Board of Canada's 2001 report, *Brain Gain, The Economic Benefits of Recognizing Learning and Learning Credentials in Canada*, that Canada does in fact have a learning recognition gap. It says that if that gap were eliminated, business would benefit from fewer skill shortages and a more productive workforce. It also notes that the Canadian economy would benefit from an additional up to 5.9 billion in income annually, attributed solely to increased productivity.

Mr. Speaker, in October of last year the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board submitted the *Provincial Framework for Recognition of Prior Learning in Saskatchewan* to the province for review. That framework marks the culmination of nearly three years of consultation, discussion, and project work

led by the Labour Force Development Board in partnership with a broad range of stakeholders.

The framework has now been thoroughly reviewed and I am encouraged by the possibilities that it offers. Mr. Speaker, we do need to encourage and take advantage of the vast array of knowledge and skills Saskatchewan citizens have in order to move Saskatchewan forward by promoting more growth and prosperity in our labour force and our economy.

As such, I am pleased to announce that we are now moving forward with a full provincial framework. The framework will lead to improvements in our learning recognition system so that skills Saskatchewan citizens possess can be recognized and they can be applied to ensuring that people receive credit for their accomplishments and to better help them participate even more actively in our future.

On a practical level this new approach will help advance the career path for individuals at different stages of their lives and careers. It's of particular benefit to those whose skills have not been traditionally fully utilized or appreciated in the workforce. Certainly this includes Aboriginal people, immigrants and refugees, women, and individuals undertaking career transition.

In the past few years there has been a growing awareness and support for this type of program as an effective career development approach that fosters an individual's ability to identify, document, demonstrate, and manage the knowledge and skills gained over a lifetime. By developing and utilizing existing skills and knowledge, we can effectively reduce barriers and create opportunities for those seeking education and work. Mr. Speaker, recognition of prior learning will lead to greater prosperity for Saskatchewan people, businesses, co-operatives, and our communities.

As we move forward with implementing this framework, a provincial coordinating group will be formed this fall. This group will be co-chaired by Saskatchewan Learning and the Labour Force Development Board. And it will seek advice and representation from a diverse group of Saskatchewan citizens.

Its first priority will be to concentrate on those occupational sectors which are experiencing skill shortages, such as the health sector, and it will engage professional and regulatory bodies and associations to develop practices that improve the recognition of qualifications and out-of-country work experience of highly skilled immigrants to help resolve these skill shortages. As such, this new direction fits well with our government's immigration strategy.

(14:30)

Mr. Speaker, in closing let me say that the adoption of the *Provincial Framework for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Saskatchewan* as government policy will promote and support the recognition of all learning contributing to the development of a skilled, flexible, and responsive labour force making Saskatchewan an even better place to live, to work, and to raise a family. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise today and respond to the minister's statement on behalf of the official opposition.

Recognition of prior work can be an aid in reducing the skilled worker shortage that Saskatchewan faces today, like in the trades such as carpentry, plumbing, welding, and others. By recognizing prior work experience abilities and skill sets some people may be able to gain credit for courses and receive accreditation in their given field. This might help with worker shortages in areas where Saskatchewan is in desperate need — like health care, for example.

This process has to be done properly, with a clear and thorough process and procedure in place as to how previous work experience will be recognized in the form of accreditation. There's been much debate within academia as to the merits and process of recognition of prior work. This debate and opinion must be considered by government as we go forward with policy frameworks. Due diligence has to be done to ensure that standards and qualifications are put in place so safety or quality of work is not compromised.

The Saskatchewan Party supports initiatives to increase participation in today's knowledge economy. Human capital is a crucial component of a successful economy and a successful province. By recognizing previous work experience and skill sets, workers will be able to move more quickly into the work force, acquire better employment, and become more productive.

We encourage the minister to actively consult with trade organizations, professional and regulatory bodies, and other groups to develop a system of recognition that will help Saskatchewan alleviate skilled worker shortages and move forward in the knowledge economy towards success and prosperity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

TABLE OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I would at this time table a *Report on the Overarching Personal Information Privacy Framework for the Executive Government* dated June 15, 2004, submitted by the Saskatchewan Information and Privacy Commissioner.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased to stand on behalf of the government and table a response to written question no. 501.

The Speaker: — Response to 501 has been tabled.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, to facilitate the meetings of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure, as well, the Standing Committee on the Economy, I move this 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 14:34.

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

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Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation
Provincial Secretary

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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