



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

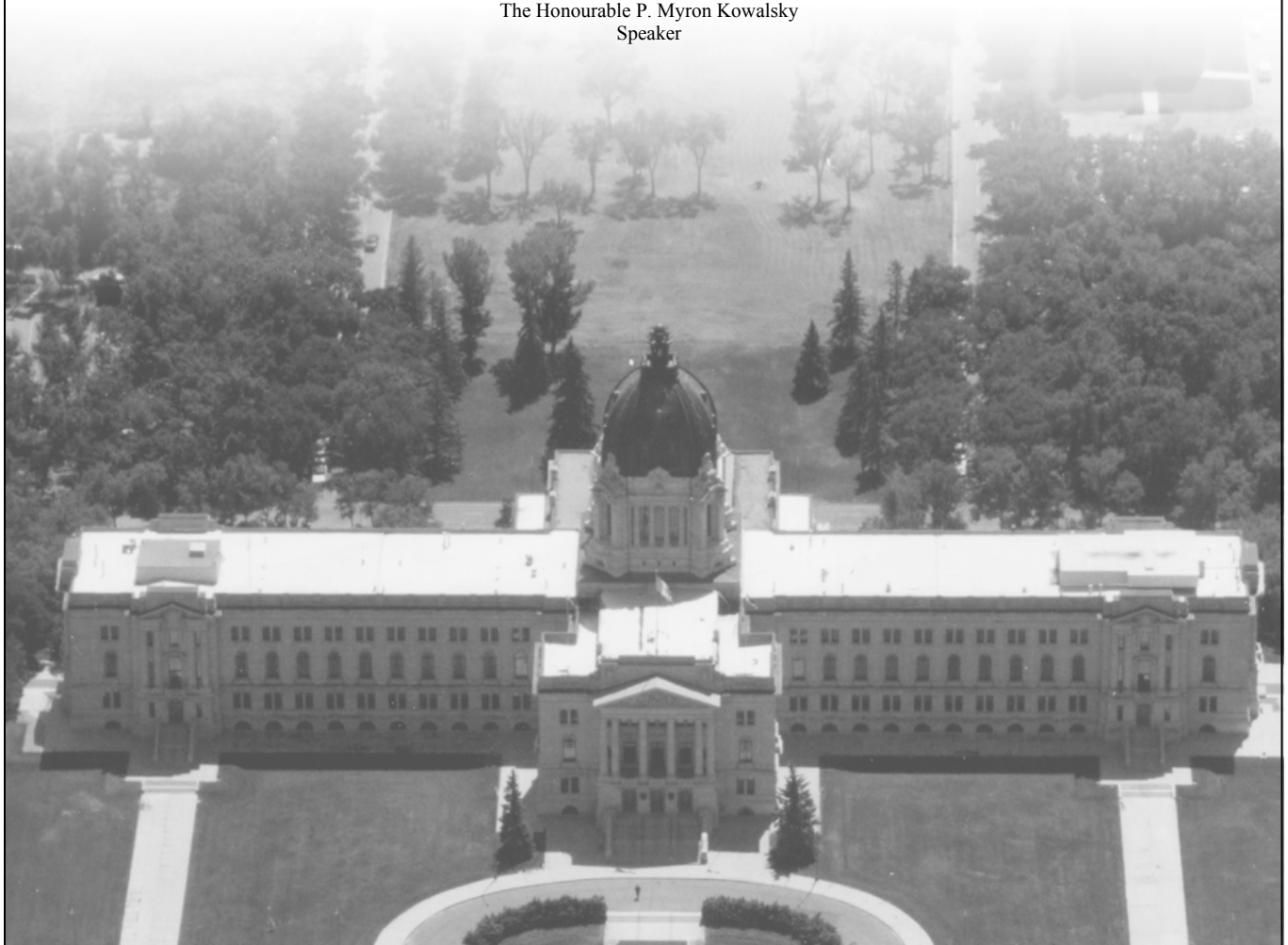
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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: — Welcome back to all the members. The first session of the twenty-fifth legislature will resume with routine procedures, presenting petitions. I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I present to this Assembly a petition signed by a number of individuals from the community of Wolseley regarding proposed school division amalgamations. And I read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to reverse the decision to force the amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan and continue reorganization of school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know the Southwest is a large area geographically, and so school amalgamation issues are very prominent in that area. I have a petition that reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to reverse the decision that forced the amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan and continue reorganization of school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these two pages of petitions are signed exclusively by constituents from the community of Burstall. I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with a great privilege I stand to present petitions from people from around the Claybank area regarding their 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 people from Regina, Moose Jaw, and Claybank itself. I so present.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a petition also on people that are extremely concerned about the forced amalgamation of school divisions, and the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to reverse the decision to force the amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan and continue reorganization of school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed in total by the good citizens of Rockglen.

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am rising in the Assembly to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan concerned with the CAIS (Canadian agricultural income stabilization) program. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the CAIS program receives adequate provincial funding, the funding formula is changed to ensure equal access to compensation, and to contribute funds to the latest BSE assistance package released by the federal government.

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures on this petition are from Mayfair and Leask. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here from the citizens from the town of Semans.

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition

from the residents of Asquith, Vanscoy and Grandora wanting to revisit the effects of the TransGas Asquith natural gas storage project. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately address the concerns of all individuals affected by this project, pay 100 per cent of the costs involved to rectify disruptions to water supplies, produce an environment assessment study encompassing a larger area outside the scope of the project, disclose the project's long-term effects on these areas, and consider alternative sources of water for the project.

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

I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the Assembly today and present a petition on behalf of residents of west central Saskatchewan and southwest Saskatchewan concerned with the forced school amalgamations. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to reverse the decision to force the amalgamation of school divisions in Saskatchewan and continue reorganization of the school divisions on strictly a voluntary basis.

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by individuals from Sceptre, Fox Valley, Lancer, Prelate, and Sceptre once again. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order a petition concerning a recommendation to expand the provincial sales tax, presented June 15, 2004, has been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) is found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby tabled as addendums to sessional paper nos. 47, 166, 170, 176, 182, 201, 203, 215.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 65 ask the government the following question:

To the Premier: on February 17, 2003, the Premier said in March 1997 the government believed it had an equity partner to share the risk of building storage sheds. Is there any written communication between Con-Force and the government that corroborates this statement by the Premier?

I give notice that I shall on day no. 65 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskWater: an October 21, 2004, Regina *Leader-Post* article states provincial cabinet minister, Peter Prebble, said Wednesday that the government did believe in 1997 that Con-Force limited intends to become an equity partner in the building of potato sheds for its failed SPUDCO venture. Is there any written communication between Con-Force and the government that corroborates this statement by the minister?

I give notice, Mr. Speaker, that I shall on day no. 65 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskWater: the June 25, 1998, SPUDCO review conducted by Ernst & Young recommended a definitive conclusion is required regarding a need for an order in council to authorize the financing of the construction of the potato storage facility, and therefore a legal opinion will be required. Mr. Speaker, was a legal opinion obtained and from what firm?

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question for the Minister Responsible for the Crown Management Board.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 65 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskWater: on August 21, 1998, Mark Langefeld of Judith River Farms Limited wrote to Ron Styles and Harvey Fjeld of SaskWater asking the following question: does Con-Force Industries really have a 51 per cent interest in the storage buildings, or is this a 100 per cent SaskWater operation? What was SaskWater's response to this request?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on day no. 65 I shall ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskWater: an October 10, 1998, SaskWater Corporation information item presented by Ron Styles stated that the member for Meadow Lake, at that time the Minister Responsible for SaskWater, had approved a strategy to create some financial expediency from Microgro through impacting the cash flow. What was the minister's intent in approving this strategy?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 65 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskWater: an October 10, 1998, SaskWater Corporation information item presented by Ron Styles stated that the member for Meadow Lake, at the time the Minister Responsible for SaskWater, had approved a strategy to create some financial expediency from Microgro through impacting the cash flow. What specific action did SaskWater take as a result of this strategy?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 65 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for the Crown Management Board: a November 18, 1999, CIC Board of Directors information item stated, at the end of 1999, SaskWater has \$3.9 million in trust liabilities either associated with Rafferty-Alameda completion or owed to Ducks Unlimited, which cannot be funded as the cash associated with these has been used to finance SPUDCO storage capital and losses. Who made the decision to use this money to finance SPUDCO storage capital and losses? Which minister or ministers approved this decision, and which ministers were aware of this decision?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on day no. 65 I shall ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for the Crown Management Board: a November 18, 1999, CIC Board of Directors information item stated, at the end of 1999 SaskWater has \$3.9 million in trust liabilities, either associated with Rafferty — Alameda completion or owed to Ducks Unlimited, which cannot be funded as the cash associated with these has been used to finance SPUDCO storage capital and losses. What action was taken to discipline or reprimand those responsible for using these trust monies to finance SPUDCO storage capital and losses?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 65 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Crown Management Board: a November 18, 1999, CIC Board of Directors information item stated, at the end of 1999 SaskWater has \$3.9 million in trust liabilities, either associated with Rafferty — Alameda completion or owed to Ducks Unlimited, which cannot be funded as the cash associated with these has been used to finance SPUDCO storage capital and losses. Was a legal opinion obtained with regard to this matter, and if so, what firm provided the legal opinion?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 65 ask the government the following question:

To the Premier: in May 2004, lawyers with the firm Olive Waller Zinkhan & Waller filed a \$10 million countersuit in the SPUDCO case which alleged that the plaintiffs circulated false or misleading information, that erroneous information as to the profitability was contained in the business plan, and that both the plaintiffs and their accountants negligently or wilfully misrepresented the economic potential of the potato venture. Is there any evidence that the government has to substantiate this allegation?

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question for the Minister Responsible for the Crown Management Board.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 65 ask the government the following question:

To the Premier: in May 2004, lawyers with the firm Olive Waller Zinkhan & Waller filed a \$10 million countersuit in the SPUDCO case, which alleged that the plaintiffs

circulated false or misleading financial information, that erroneous information as to profitability was contained in the business plan, and that both the plaintiffs and their accountants negligently or wilfully misrepresented the economic potential of the potato venture. Who within government authorized that decision to make these allegations against their plaintiffs and their accountants?

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question for the Minister Responsible for the Crown Management Board.

(13:45)

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on day no 65 I shall ask the government the following question:

To the Premier: on October 17, 2003 lawyers with the firm Olive Waller Zinkhan & Waller filed documents in court alleging that the Saskatchewan Party had committed to settle the SPUDCO lawsuit if it became government. Who within government authorized the decision to make this allegation in court?

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question for the Minister Responsible for the Crown Management Board.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no 65 ask the government the following question:

To the Premier: on April 28, 1998 cabinet approved a plan to obtain the financing for the four SPUDCO storage facilities with total debt of \$14.5 million, yet no effort was made at that time by the government to publicly correct the inaccurate portrayal of the arrangement with Con-Force as a partnership. The Premier was a member of cabinet at that time. What specific actions did the Premier take to encourage the government to correct the inaccurate portrayal of this business arrangement, and are there written documents supporting these arrangements?

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question regarding the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

I have the same question regarding the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

I have the same question regarding the member from Regina Rosemont.

I have the same question regarding the member from Saskatchewan Massey Place.

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question regarding the member from Regina Lakeview.

I have the same question, Mr. Speaker, regarding the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question regarding the member from Meadow Lake.

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question regarding former premier, Roy Romanow.

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question regarding Dwain Lingenfelter.

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question regarding Robert Mitchell.

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question regarding Janice MacKinnon.

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question regarding Ned Shillington.

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question regarding Berny Wiens.

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question regarding Eric Upshall.

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question regarding Judy Bradley.

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question regarding Keith Goulet.

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question regarding Carol Teichrob.

Mr. Speaker, I have the same question regarding Lorne Scott.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 65 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskWater: please provide a detailed, itemized accounting of all money spent by SaskWater and any other government department, Crown, or agency on SPUDCO, including all legal fees and legal settlements. Please provide the names of the persons, companies, and other entities that received this money, the amounts each received, and the goods and services the government received for these payments.

Mr. Speaker, I have a series of three more questions that I will not read but will present and table as well.

Mr. Speaker, I'm finished.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to introduce to you 27 students from St. Marguerite Bourgeoys School in my riding of Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Speaker, these students are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Dauphinais and Mr. Firnesz. And I'd like to make special mention of a single student by the name of Michael Zylak, who is the cousin of one of our Pages, Julianna Hill. Michael, do you want to give a wave to your cousin?

Mr. Speaker, I'll have the opportunity to have a discussion and juice with these students a little later on, but I'd just like everyone to welcome them to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce a guest who's visiting from Nova Scotia. I'm pleased to introduce Michel Dalrymple, who's the son of Mike Dalrymple who works in my office. So we're very pleased to have you here, and I'd like to ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming him.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to the House a couple of people from northern Saskatchewan. They're sitting in your gallery. Peter Bear; he's a member of the Northern Lights School Division and also part of the board for the Mamawetan Health Division. And I'd also like to introduce Doyle Vermette, also with the Northern Lights School Division, an entrepreneur in La Ronge. And I would like everyone to join me in welcoming them here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Saskatchewan Roughrider Game

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday football fans across the country were treated to one of the best ever western divisional CFL (Canadian Football League) finals. Unfortunately, it was a heartbreaking loss for our own Saskatchewan Roughriders, who dropped a 27-25 decision in overtime to the BC (British Columbia) Lions.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, the Riders acquitted themselves extremely well. They played hard, they played with heart, and they never gave up. And I'm sure all my colleagues will join me in congratulating them for providing Saskatchewan fans with another great season of Roughrider football.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, while Rider fans across the province were disappointed with the result of yesterday's game, it appears that some people took the game way too seriously. I understand that the Regina Police Service is investigating a number of events that took place at the Regina home of Rider kicker Paul McCallum. These incidents included vandalism to the McCallum home and threats to his wife and children.

Anyone who watched yesterday's game knows that McCallum missed a field goal in overtime, but anyone who also watched the game knows that football is a team sport and that the green and white had other chances to win and advance to next weekend's Grey Cup championship.

Mr. Speaker, Paul McCallum has chosen Saskatchewan as his

home and the place to raise his family. He works for SaskEnergy, helping to raise money for the Catch for KidSport program. Paul is a role model for children throughout Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in condemning the actions of a few and in offering our support to Paul McCallum and his family. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Congratulations to Saskatchewan Football Teams

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate two football teams that proudly carry the name of our province — the Saskatchewan Roughriders and the University of Saskatchewan Huskies.

The Riders deserve our congratulations on turning their season around. They had a great run at the end of the year, and in spite of the outcome, they played a great game yesterday. Frankly it wasn't the game that I expected to see a couple of months ago when I was driving home from their Labour Day loss to Winnipeg.

Congratulations also to the Rider nation, those estimated 18,000 Roughrider fans who filled BC Place Stadium yesterday. They made this province proud.

There are two things that political pundits and Roughrider fans agree on in this province. One, the Riders have never won the Grey Cup when the NDP (New Democratic Party) is in office. And two, we are all used to seeing Saskatchewan miss opportunities by aiming a little too far to the left.

Still, it was a great season for the Riders and a great season is continuing for the University of Saskatchewan Huskies. On Saturday the Huskies won the Canada West conference with a thrilling 21 to 20 victory over the University of Alberta Golden Bears.

So for all the Rider fans who are going to have a heartache watching the Grey Cup next week, I would encourage them to come to Griffiths Stadium this Saturday and watch the Saskatchewan Huskies beat the Saint Mary's Huskies.

Congratulations to the Riders. And I ask all members to join with me in wishing the University of Saskatchewan Huskies best of luck on Saturday.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier, the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Saskatchewan Athletes on World Stage

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, a few months ago in Athens, Greece, some of Saskatchewan's best and brightest took to the world stage as members of Team Canada at the 2004

Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Mr. Speaker, Canada's Paralympians included Amy Alsop, Rick Reelie, Mike Bacon, Allan Semeniuk, and Earle Connor, and Lisa Franks of Saskatoon — although Lisa's formerly of Moose Jaw; Bruce Heidt of Mankota; Clayton Gerein of Pilot Butte.

Saskatchewan's Olympians were Mike Mintenko of Moose Jaw; Nicolle Cargill and Rochelle deJong of Regina; Cam Baerg, Jake Wetzel, Erin Cumpstone, and Viola Yanik, all of Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, these Saskatchewan competitors accounted for two Olympic and six Paralympic medals, including a bronze, four silver, and three gold.

And as we know, Mr. Speaker, they were accompanied by other Saskatchewan residents there as officials and staff: Bill McFarlane; Todd Hinds of Saskatoon; Sandra Roberts of Swift Current; Regina mayor, Pat Fiacco; and Ryan Flannigan of Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, in our centennial we will mark the theme of the heart of Saskatchewan people. These Olympians and Paralympians are a shining example of the heart that has made this province great. And so I am very pleased to say that during our centennial year, during next spring's session, we will hold a special ceremony here at the legislature to honour their accomplishments, their dedication, and their hard work.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all colleagues to congratulate our Olympians and Paralympians.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Addictions Awareness Week

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this week is Addictions Awareness Week, which serves to raise awareness of the seriousness of addictions. This year's theme is Reality Check, and emphasizes the need to help youth and adults learn the real facts about addictions to alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and gambling.

Almost 10,000 people in Saskatchewan use drug and alcohol services each year. In the past five years, the number of people seeking help for addiction problems in Saskatchewan has risen by an alarming 16 percent.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most deadly drugs in use today is crystal meth. It is cheap, easy to make, extremely dangerous, and according to police services in Saskatoon, Regina, and other communities in the province, its usage is on the rise.

My colleague from Kelvington-Wadena is in Vancouver today participating in the western Canadian summit on crystal meth. We in the Saskatchewan Party caucus are determined to do what we can to raise awareness of the highly addictive nature and destructiveness of this drug, and hopefully, Mr. Speaker, in

doing so we can stop the spread of crystal meth and draw attention to the seriousness of all addictions.

The lost hopes and dreams of users, the impact on families, and the impact on the peace and safety of communities are all reasons why we must do what we can to find solutions. And that will help to make a positive difference in the lives of those affected, their families, and our communities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to talk about November 14 to 20, Addictions Awareness Week in Saskatchewan and across Canada.

The Government of Saskatchewan recognizes and applauds the efforts of individuals and organizations dedicated to treating and preventing addictions. Our government is committed to providing more comprehensive services to individuals with addictions and for their families.

Saskatchewan Health has identified community-based alcohol and drug programs as core services and supports many related initiatives every year. These include programs within the school system to address the needs of high-risk youth, workshops to improve public awareness, and training sessions for front-line staff.

(14:00)

Mr. Speaker, the drug crystal methamphetamine has recently had an increased profile and our government continues to address this issue in a variety of ways. For example, The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act is in part directed at illegal laboratory sites. The Saskatoon RHA (regional health authority) addictions services runs a crystal meth group that's adopted a harm reduction approach. In the Moose Jaw area, a drug strategy coalition has been formed to address issues related to the drug. Saskatchewan Health makes information available through a variety of sources including the Web site. And this month, Saskatchewan Health is participating in the Vancouver summit on methamphetamines.

The government recognizes that successful addiction policies and programming reduce health costs as well as human suffering. We will continue to work with the regional health authorities, community organizations, families, and the general public to provide effective programs and services for the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Esso Farm Community Growth Fund

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to applaud Esso on their community-driven initiative called the Esso farm community growth fund. In particular, I would like to congratulate Grant

Hawking of Sam's General Trucking in Kindersley on being accepted to this program and for making such a positive impact in three of the communities that his business services.

This program donates up to 1 cent per litre of fuel to non-profit community organizations from April 1 until November 30 of this year. The exact amount to be donated from this program will not be determined until December. The potential of this program could donate up to \$475,000 to rural communities in the Prairie provinces, with a maximum of \$25,000 to each dealer.

Grant has generously included three different projects including the Eatonville swimming pool project, the Luseland arena project, and the Eston fire truck refurbishment project.

Small-town Saskatchewan more often than not struggles with funding for their community facilities, and these are all very worthwhile efforts. It's truly a shame that our rural communities must depend on donations and volunteers to keep their services operational. And we are very grateful for corporations such as Esso who see this need and take a positive action to assist when necessary.

Today I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in applauding Esso, and associate Grant Hawking, for their commitment and donation to rural Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Women of the Dawn Awards

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Women of the Dawn is an organization dedicated to helping First Nations women and youth by encouraging self-reliance through counselling and career planning and by helping to enhance employment skills.

For the last 10 years, the Women of the Dawn have also been sponsoring the First Nations Awards and this year I had the privilege to attend. Mr. Speaker, this annual event not only acknowledges and honours the achievements of First Nation individuals, thanking them for their contributions to the larger community, but it also provides excellent role models for First Nation youth and encourages them towards positive personal and community development.

Mr. Speaker, this year's recipients of the First Nation Awards are Neil McLeod for arts and entertainment, the Charles Confectionary and Gas Bar for business, the William Kaysaywaysemat for community work. Rosalie Tsannie-Burseth received the award for education, Dwayne Durocher for journalism, Rozella McKay for medicine and health.

The Science and Technology Award went to Ashley Saskbrink-Harkema. The award for social work went to Grant Severight. Samantha Dustyhorn won for sports and recreation, and Tony Cote for veterans.

The Lifetime Achievement Award went to Theresa Stevenson.

And, Mr. Speaker, the SaskPower Youth Award for personal development and academic achievement went to Sera-Lys McArthur.

I ask all my colleagues to join me in acknowledging the ongoing contributions of the Women of the Dawn and in congratulating the winners of the 10th Annual First Nations Awards. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition and member for Swift Current.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Call for Public Inquiry into Saskatchewan Potato Utility Company

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the NDP SPUDCO scandal price tag is now 35 million taxpayers' dollars lost and it could grow. Mr. Speaker, that's the largest single government business loss in the history of the province. It is 10 times greater than the sponsorship scandal currently the subject of an inquiry that was voluntarily called by the Prime Minister of the land.

Mr. Speaker, this NDP government had no problem at all sticking taxpayers with the full bill for the SPUDCO scandal. Will they now provide them a full explanation? Will the Premier do the right thing? Will he pass this test of character, Mr. Speaker, and call a public inquiry into SPUDCO?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I think it would be fair to say that most objective observers would note that this has been one of the most inquired into circumstances in the history of the province.

But, Mr. Speaker, I need to correct the Leader of the Opposition when he talks about lost dollars. Mr. Speaker, the dollars are not lost. The dollars have been invested in agricultural diversification in our province. We have today, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan a potato industry that is four times the size that it was. Because, Mr. Speaker, because this is a government that believes in partnering, in working with communities, in investing in communities for rural diversification, for agricultural diversification, for building on the tremendous resource base of Saskatchewan.

Witness the growth of the potato industry. Witness the growth in forestry and in oriented strand board. Witness the hog industry. Witness the Centennial Foods in Saskatoon. Witness the Great Western Brewery. That compares, Mr. Speaker, with an opposition who says government should never invest with the people of Saskatchewan in building our economy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Witness. Witness, Mr. Speaker, a governing party, the NDP, and a Premier that has completely lost their way on the issue of trust with Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, there are important questions that no report, no inquiry have dealt with in this matter of SPUDCO. Mr. Speaker, they include the fact that the NDP gave false information to investors on this deal. They include the fact that the NDP broke contracts, Mr. Speaker. They include the fact that this government tried to drive another small enterprise out of business, destroying families, Mr. Speaker.

There has never been any inquiry into the fact that this government diverted 3.9 million trust dollars. Trust dollars, if you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, for Ducks Unlimited and Rafferty-Alameda; diverted them to its SPUDCO losses. There are no answers on this.

Now is the opportunity though, Mr. Speaker, for the Premier to pass a test of character and of honesty. Will he do the right thing and call an inquiry into SPUDCO?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I repeat, this has been one of the most inquired into circumstances in the province's history. And as the minister has said, unless there is evidence of some personal gain that is unknown to us or some criminal activity that is unknown to us, this issue has been inquired into significantly. But, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — I would ask members to, after the question is put, to allow the answer to be, the response to be given. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Now what is fact and the minister, and the member of Swift . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please; order, please. Order, please. Let's . . . Order, please. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, it's obvious we've been away from the Chamber for some time, but the opposition has not yet learned to listen to an answer.

Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition you would think would be supportive of issues and efforts that seek to build in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we have a potato industry today in that corner of our province that's four times the size of the industry prior. We have Centennial Foods in Saskatoon that's investment with people in building our economy. Mr. Speaker, we have investment in the forestry in oriented strand boards. We have investments in hog barns.

We have a plan, Mr. Speaker, and that's why Saskatchewan is a

have-province today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier says that the test for a public inquiry, that his test for an inquiry is whether or not there was any personal gain by anybody, I guess, or any political gain by he or his ministers or his party. We don't know the answer to that, Mr. Speaker, because the Premier won't come clean with Saskatchewan people. Had this court case never proceeded we wouldn't even have the answers we do have, Mr. Speaker. That's precisely the point.

They tried to cover up the nature of the phony deal with Conforce. Mr. Speaker, the NDP tried to cover the Ernst & Young report and prevent it from being released. They have not yet answered questions about what they did to Microgro, this small business they apparently drove from business and ruined families in the bargain. They have yet to answer any questions about the diversion of money from a trust fund, if you can believe it, Mr. Speaker, to SPUDCO. They've answered none of those questions.

This passes every single reasonable test for an inquiry. The test yet to be passed is the test for this Premier. Does he have the character, does he have the will, the courage to call an inquiry into SPUDCO?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, before I turn to the minister responsible for these specific questions, Mr. Speaker, let me repeat again. This issue, this endeavour has been more inquired into than any other, in my view, than any other in the history of the province. We have had private sector accountants look at this, the Deloitte & Touche firm. We've had the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker, review this entire file. I had my own deputy minister do a very thorough . . . (inaudible) . . . This matter has been investigated by the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) and there are literally thousands of pages of court documents that are all very public about this file.

Mr. Speaker, I repeat. As a result of these efforts, while I have frankly and freely admitted that mistakes were made, but the result, Mr. Speaker, of these efforts, are a potato industry in this province today that did not exist previously because it builds on what we have in term of planning for this province — planning which says we're going to invest in Saskatchewan people, and we're going to build the economy of Saskatchewan, particularly in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier knows full well that these questions we have highlighted today have not been dealt with in any of the reports, in any of the work he references.

But I have a quote for the Premier about the NDP's test for a public inquiry. It is as follows, and I quote:

I say to you, sir the very least that can take place is the establishment of a judicial inquiry which is independent and complete into your involvement, the cabinet's involvement, the advisers' involvement . . . in this mess. How about doing that?

Mr. Speaker, do you know who said that? Then opposition leader Roy Romanow said that, Mr. Speaker, and he was referencing GigaText, which wound up losing 5 million taxpayers' dollars. This is seven times worse than GigaText.

Behind the then opposition leader when he made these comments, Mr. Speaker, was that member, that Premier, then the member for Moose Jaw, banging his desk in support of an inquiry for GigaText. How, Mr. Speaker, are his principles today? Will he pass the test of character, courage, and honesty and call an inquiry into SPUDCO?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — . . . members opposite that we will pass the test of honesty by answering the questions that the member has asked in due course in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

But let me say first, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about the loss first. And it's a loss for which we on this side of the House apologize. It's a lot of money — \$35 million when you include the legal costs.

But I want to remind the member of the net loss to the Crown sector from the government that he was associated with from 1982 to 1991 — a net loss of \$317 million, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind him of the net gain in the decade that followed under the New Democratic Party, a net gain to the Crown sector and the taxpayers of the province of \$2.7 billion, Mr. Speaker. But I'll take our record against his any time of the day.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Isn't it amazing? It's amazing. The minister and the government of the day have had all of this time to answer these questions that he says there are answers coming for. He's had all of these months to do it and he gets up instead and spews 20-year-old rhetoric, Mr. Speaker.

I've got another quote from their former leader, from Mr. Romanow, whom I'm sure they applauded when he said these words, whom I'm sure that member applauded when he said this, quote:

You are covering up by refusing to give us the documents and the answers. I am therefore making this request of you. Will you set up immediately a full-scale, comprehensive, judicial inquiry into the actions of you and

your government in this fiasco mess?

Mr. Speaker, that's what Roy Romanow had to say. That was his question; that was his comment to the government of the day regarding GigaText.

I want to put it to the minister: I assume you supported, I assume he supported the then leader of the opposition when he made those statements. Does he support them today? Does he have the courage to institute, to initiate a public inquiry in SPUDCO?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the SaskWater Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, the case for a public inquiry will be if there's any evidence of personal gain or any evidence of criminal wrongdoing, neither of which there has been to date, Mr. Speaker, neither of which there has been to date.

(14:15)

But, Mr. Speaker, lest anyone think that this debate is not about government investment, one need only look at the advertisement that the leader for the opposition has run in *The Southwest Booster* on October 16, 2004, in which he says:

Government investment: should the provincial government risk taxpayers' money directly into business?

And then the rest of the ad is about SPUDCO. The rest of the ad is about SPUDCO.

And clearly what the opposition's agenda is all about, Mr. Speaker, is discrediting the concept of government investment in our economy. And let me say clearly, Mr. Speaker, that we apologized for the mistakes that were made in SPUDCO . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order please.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government completely fails to get it. They just simply don't understand the point of how you get the economy growing in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Premier . . . The Premier has said — and this minister says, well we've either answered all the questions and maybe we're going to answer some more questions — but certainly the Premier has said there has been enough inquiry; all the information, all the pertinent information has been released. It's not true, Mr. Speaker. It's simply not true.

The Saskatchewan Party, the Saskatchewan Party, has obtained another document that was never mentioned in his deputy minister's report. It was never mentioned in the Ernst & Young report. It was never mentioned in any form of inquiry by the

government. It's a briefing note from deputy premier, Dwain Lingenfelter, to premier, Roy Romanow, the date on it is July 30, 1998, and the deputy premier identifies serious problems with SPUDCO, including the fact that the government was breaking its own laws.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, why did the Premier never once mention this memo? What is he trying to hide, Mr. Speaker, and what was his government's response to this memo?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Water Corporation.

Order, order please. The member is jumping the gun. I just want to introduce . . . I recognize the member for the SaskWater Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, let's get right into the question of spending with lawful authority because this matter has been examined both by Pricewaterhouse, who is the auditor for SaskWater, and, Mr. Speaker, it's been examined by the Provincial Auditor, and including an examination and a special report in spring of 2000.

And both, Mr. Speaker, both Pricewaterhouse and the Provincial Auditor included that all expenditures that were made by SaskWater were made lawfully, Mr. Speaker. That's the simple answer to the question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, this is exactly the point. The government is unable to answer basic questions and get right to the point of the question of this particular memo. This is a pretty important question from July of 1998 when the deputy premier sends a letter to the premier which says, quote:

There are lapses in obtaining the requisite legislative authorities necessary to permit SaskWater Corporation to proceed in certain areas of business they have undertaken.

In other words the government's breaking their own laws, Mr. Speaker. In other words, the deputy premier of the day, Mr. Lingenfelter, lets the premier of the province, Mr. Romanow, know and presumably then the rest of cabinet, including that premier would know the answer to the question. Why has he never mentioned this memo? Why has he never mentioned the fact that this was brought before the cabinet? They knew of the misrepresentations involved in SPUDCO. And, Mr. Speaker, what specific action was caused by that memo?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Water Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, very simply put, this question of whether or not

expenditures were made with lawful authority was therefore examined in more detail. First of all, Mr. Speaker, we had the auditor's opinion for 1997 and Mr. Brian Drayton . . . Mr. Speaker, I want to go back because the memo was written in '98 but the questions about lawful authority pertain to spending in '97, '98, '99. So let's take one year at a time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Drayton, Mr. Brian Drayton, of PricewaterhouseCoopers made it very clear on December 4, 1998, as it pertained to 1997 spending, he concluded that examination of the company's internal controls and procedures to safeguard the company's assets as well as the company's compliance with legislative authority have been examined. "Those audits too . . ." he said, and this is a direct quote from him, "Those audits too were reported without reservation to the Provincial Auditor's Office."

Then, Mr. Speaker, he goes on to say, we agree with . . . I guess my time is up, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the minister responsible would highlight some people that would reference the fact that legal authority was granted, was received for the action the government took. The fact of the matter remains that the Ernst & Young report disagreed, apparently. The Ernst & Young report offers another opinion.

The head of CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan), the current deputy minister of Health personally appointed by the Premier, also disagreed. In his reference to his boss, the deputy premier, Mr. Lingenfelter, who felt compelled to write to the premier of the day, he was so worried that they were breaking their law. This is exactly why we need a public inquiry. You know why, Mr. Speaker? Because this minister's protestations and that Premier's words don't cut it with Saskatchewan people on this issue. They don't trust them.

Let's have an independent, third party, conducted-in-public inquiry. That's the purpose of the public inquiry Act. It ought to be used. Does the Premier have the courage, does the Premier have the character to submit SPUDCO to a provincial inquiry?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the Water Corp.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — In answer to the member's question, he's asking about lawful authority, Mr. Speaker. And let me say to him very clearly that the Provincial Auditor examined this with his staff team. And he reported in the spring of 2000. I want to remind the member what the Provincial Auditor concluded, and I quote from page 96 of his report:

SaskWater complied with necessary authorities for its investment in the potato industry.

And, Mr. Speaker, I stand by the conclusion that the Provincial Auditor made. The Provincial Auditor has already examined this issue. He's reached his conclusions, and government is satisfied that, in fact, expenditures were undertaken lawfully.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the people of the province don't trust this government. They don't trust that minister, they sure don't trust this Premier. He's broken every single promise he made since the last election.

Now he won't come clean on the issue of SPUDCO. For every single point or word or reference the minister can make with respect to the proper legislative authority, there are also third parties, credible third parties, and some of the most senior advisers to this government that say it wasn't there, Mr. Speaker. In fact, in this same document, in this same document from the deputy premier of the day to the premier of the day, that this government would have had privy to, the document also offers this: there is also at least one instance in which the information provided cabinet was not reflective of the transaction ultimately consummated. That information was provided to the premier and to the deputy premier and presumably to cabinet, Mr. Speaker, in 1998.

Who over there, who over there that sat in that cabinet will stand up today and say that on that day they stood up for the truth, that they asked their government to come clean to taxpayers? Did the Premier? No, apparently not, Mr. Speaker. Did the Deputy Premier? No, apparently he did not. Will the Premier call a public inquiry into the SPUDCO scandal?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for the SaskWater Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, we've made the bar for the public inquiry very clear and I stand by it. If there is any evidence of criminal wrongdoing, if there is any evidence of personal gain, a public inquiry . . . I will recommend to cabinet that a public inquiry be called. But, Mr. Speaker, the evidence on the matter of lawful authority, which is the issue that the member is now speaking to, I think is pretty clear.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, there were some opinions that all expenditures may not have been made lawfully, so, Mr. Speaker, opinions were expressed. So, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor examined this matter and in 1997, 1998, and 1999. We had both private sector auditors and the Provincial Auditor recommend this matter, and again a special report in the spring of 2000, and in every one of those cases both the private sector auditors and the Provincial Auditor concluded that expenditures had been undertaken lawfully and we consider that to be an adequate examination of that particular issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — What then would be an adequate examination? I would say to the minister and the Premier of this province, what then would be an adequate examination into the issue of the Ducks Unlimited trust, where this NDP government diverted \$3.9 million from that trust, Mr. Speaker, to cover SPUDCO

losses? What then, Mr. Speaker, would be an adequate explanation to the families that were destroyed when this government ran Microgro, a small business in Saskatchewan, out of business? What would be their adequate explanation?

What is the adequate explanation to the fact that this NDP government appearing to be willing to stop at nothing to hold on to power in the last election, manipulated our courts, Mr. Speaker, manipulated our courts with frivolous affidavits to, Mr. Speaker, positively influence their fortunes in the election? There are none — there are none. Yet there are no answers. That's why we need a public inquiry.

This Premier apparently lacks the character, lacks the honesty to do the right thing by anybody's measure and that, Mr. Speaker, is a public inquiry. We ask him to stand again and explain to the people what he's trying to hide, why he won't call a public inquiry into SPUDCO.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the SaskWater Corp.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I think the Leader of the Opposition will find out in the days to come, this government is going to be open and honest about its conduct as it pertains to SPUDCO and will take these questions one at a time . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, please. I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskWater Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Mr. Speaker, I want to take now the question of Ducks Unlimited which the member asks. And his allegation is that we did not fulfill our obligations to Ducks Unlimited. Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to make it clear to members opposite, there was no formally established trust fund. But, Mr. Speaker, there was a clear liability, a clear obligation to fulfill the commitments to Ducks Unlimited.

And let me report on what commitments have been fulfilled. For Ducks Unlimited, SaskWater has paid out over \$2.9 million since 1995; and the remaining liabilities, at the end of 2003, total \$530,000, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the original commitment that had been made, all but \$530,000 has yet to be expended, Mr. Speaker. And that obligation, I can assure the member, will be fully expended before 2018, which is the end of the agreement, Mr. Speaker.

So the commitment to Ducks Unlimited, Mr. Speaker, has been kept in full. And in fact I think members will soon find that this government will expend beyond the commitment that was made to Ducks Unlimited . . .

The Speaker: — Member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, that may be, that may be the saddest answer we will ever hear in this Legislative Assembly. I think it is pathetic, Mr. Speaker, that the minister — and apparently the Premier, who's grinning — would say it's okay to steal as long as you pay the money back before you get caught, Mr. Speaker. That was the argument that that minister just put forward. That's why the people of this province have lost complete trust in this government.

They don't believe a word the Premier has to say on anything. He's broken every single promise he made in the election campaign. His minister stands up — and the Premier, Mr. Speaker, smiling and nodding — when the minister says it's okay to divert the money as long as you pay the money back.

Mr. Speaker, there is only one . . . well there are two solutions. There's a two-part solution to get to the bottom of SPUDCO and make sure it never happens again. One is a public inquiry and the second one is a general election in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We would ask, we would ask, that the Premier at least take step one at this time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for SaskWater Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear to the member, to the Leader of the Opposition, first of all there was never an official trust fund established. There was no official trust fund. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, these were . . . the government always considered these as outstanding liabilities. The money that had been received was deferred, was treated as deferred revenue, and the Provincial Auditor always agreed with the treatment that the government had established. These accounting principles were supported by the Provincial Auditor, and frankly, Mr. Speaker, I will stand with the Provincial Auditor, and I reject the allegations made by the member opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:30)

The Speaker: — Order please. Order please. Order please. Order please. Before we proceed any further, members, I would just like to bring to the attention of the Assembly that in his 10th question, the Leader of the Opposition, I would ask him to take a look at his remarks because there was one stage where he came very close to attacking a personality as opposed to the issues and if that . . . could be perceived as a personal attack. And I would ask him to look at it and refrain from proceeding in that direction again.

And now we proceed to ministerial statements. Introduction of bills. Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Wall: — Before orders of the day, Mr. Speaker, I request leave to move a motion under rule 49.

The Speaker: — Would the Leader of the Opposition indicate

the nature of the motion?

MOTION UNDER RULE 49

Business Scandal

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The nature of the motion relates to the biggest business, government business scandal in the history of our province. It now stands at \$35 million of taxpayers' money. Mr. Speaker. It relates to the fact that it is 10 times greater than the sponsorship scandal down east which is now the subject of a review voluntarily initiated by the Prime Minister. And it relates specifically to the fact that on such an important issue as this, when we need to send a signal to the investment community here and outside of the province that we take these things very seriously and that we're committed to ensuring that they never happen again, Mr. Speaker, it relates specifically to those things. And so we request that leave.

The Speaker: — I heard the request from the Leader of the Opposition. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Leave is not granted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of Pages

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. Order, please. Members, before orders of the day I would wish to inform the Assembly that the Pages for this fall are Pages with experience from previous sessions, and they are Donovan Ackerman; Alex Arseneault, who will be with us tomorrow; Brock Egeto; Julianna Hill; Nikki McNaughton. And members of the Assembly, your Pages for this session.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I stand today on behalf of the government that's open and accountable on all matters to table responses to questions no. 507 through 510 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 507 through to 510 inclusive have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 57 — The Irrigation Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I will move second reading of amendments to The Irrigation Act, 1996.

Mr. Speaker, irrigation is recognized as a vital part of green agriculture, critical to bridging profitable crop and livestock production with value-added processing and agricultural manufacturing. It is a necessary component in achieving the agriculture industry's goals of attaining 15 billion in production and 16 billion in processing by 2025.

Expansion of the irrigated acreage in the province will further the momentum, and that will be generated for value-added processing if irrigation districts have alternative methods of acquiring capital for infrastructure projects.

Mr. Speaker, irrigators must be given the tools to help them expand to meet their irrigation needs. The Act needs updating in order to do just that. The amendments are the result of consultations with numerous stakeholders. The following organizations have provided input, Mr. Speaker: irrigation districts in Saskatchewan; Saskatchewan Irrigation Projects Association; Irrigation Crop Diversification Corporation; Saskatchewan Watershed Authority; SaskWater; and Saskatchewan Environment.

This dialogue, Mr. Speaker, has resulted in amendments that will usher in a new era of public and private partnerships to maximize the use of existing infrastructure which will create new opportunities for investment and value-added businesses.

Many of the proposed amendments are administrative in nature, but there are some dealing with irrigation districts that represent a significant change in their operation and in their governance. For example, the borrowing powers of irrigation districts will be clarified and enhanced to allow them to borrow more money over a longer term and invest it in water delivery infrastructure. Restrictions have also been removed on lending sources which gives the irrigation districts more options when seeking money for project expansion.

The transfer of irrigation program from SaskWater to Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization included irrigation infrastructure, but the Act needed to be amended to authorize the department to deal with infrastructure ownership, operation, and disposal. If or when the minister transfers ownership to a district, there will be an agreement between the district and the minister on how the district is to operate the works and conditions on which the district can transfer the works to a third party. This arrangement will ensure longevity of the project and protection of the public investment.

Another amendment removes all references to Saskatchewan Irrigation Projects Association, SIPA, in the Act, allowing them to reconstitute under other existing legislation. SIPA as a producer group will be better served if seen to be completely independent of government.

The irrigation certificate will be tied to the land rather than being issued to an individual, a measure which will save time and money.

And, Mr. Speaker, the changes to the Act I have described will

allow many different ownership scenarios of irrigation works to be explored and developed for our common goals of sustainability and self-sufficiency.

Mr. Speaker, I believe these amendments, developed in consultation with the stakeholder groups, will help realize the potential of irrigated farming as a self-sufficient, leading edge industry furthering agricultural development in the province. I would like to express my appreciation for all of the input we've received from the stakeholder groups throughout this process. These stakeholders recognize the importance of irrigation and of the development of a long-term water strategy for this province, as do other influential groups such as the Action Committee on the Rural Economy and Saskatchewan Agrivision Corporation.

Earlier this month, Mr. Speaker, Agrivision held a conference entitled Drought Proofing the Economy at which they unveiled a 50-year master plan for water development in Saskatchewan. The government will continue to co-operate with the federal government as well as stakeholders looking at the importance of water to our economy. We will continue to work within the context of our rural strategy. We will also introduce new strategies to build our agricultural economy and partner with business to make sure our efforts and investments are located in the best possible locations, the best locations for possible economic growth. These next steps hold tremendous opportunities for the agriculture industry and for this province, Mr. Speaker.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move that The Irrigation Amendment Act, 2004 be read a second time. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture that Bill No. 57, The Irrigation Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to respond to the minister concerning Bill No. 57, An Act to amend The Irrigation Act, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, it raises a number of issues, first of all the government's intention as far as economic expansion, expansion of the irrigation infrastructure in this province, and the development of irrigation value added industries and so on. As we know with their . . . what we've discussed in question period today with the SPUDCO debacle that they are not in any position to discuss or make any improvements in the irrigation system in the province.

I notice in the minister's response that they are talking about opening up to various ownership type of alternatives. And I think the people of Saskatchewan, after hearing what the government has done with SPUDCO, believe the government should be out of the business of doing business, and particularly in the irrigation area. As we know, we've lost a huge potential because of the government's mishandling of SPUDCO. They've shut down businesses. They've forced businesses in Biggar to go into receivership and go into bankruptcy concerning the Microgro situation.

And that's a serious problem with this government, how they deal with businesses in the province and how they deal with economic development. They believe they have to have their hands in the pie all the time and in competition with private businesses, and particularly with the irrigation and the potato business.

And the whole issue around SPUDCO in the past has left really a black eye on the industry around Outlook and in communities that are in my constituency — Biggar, for instance, who had a greenhouse and Microgro purchased that greenhouse from investors in Biggar. And the government, by its own account, forced this company into bankruptcy for the government's own political agenda, not thinking about the loss in jobs and investment in a town like Biggar or else in the province as a whole. As we know, with the lack of development in the potato business, we've lost a potato packing industry in Saskatchewan. It's gone to Alberta. And it's really left a black eye on that industry for really years and years to come.

When we talk about irrigation, it brings up many items that we need to look at. There's provincial agreements that Alberta has to pass on 50 per cent of its flow of the water to Saskatchewan, and also Saskatchewan must pass on 50 per cent of the water on to Manitoba. As we know, Alberta has an expanding economy and with an expanding economy and more residences as their population grows — mainly from people from Saskatchewan — their need for water increases dramatically. And as we know now in that Edmonton-Calgary corridor that they're thinking about putting restrictions on economic growth in that area because of the potential of lack of water.

Now in Saskatchewan we're not using anywhere near the amount of water that is passed on to us through the agreements. And one has to wonder and worry at what stage will Alberta demand that they keep the water that we're not using here in Saskatchewan for their own use, because they have a growing economy. And naturally the answer is to have a growing economy in Saskatchewan and use the water for industry for growth, for population, for recreation for the families of Saskatchewan. But to date, as we see, this government does have not have the foresight or the wisdom to grow the economy. We see a declining population, and so it's a real concern concerning the agreements within Canada and what's happening with the water supply around the world.

(14:45)

As we know, the Agrivision have brought out their study, a 50-year drought-proofing plan, and they have a lot of very, very interesting items in there that we in this province should take a serious look at. And it's all around conservation and utilizing our water to the best advantage for Saskatchewan and naturally growing the economy and using the water for our needs in Saskatchewan. As I mentioned before, if we just continue to pass the water on and never use it, it's really a lost generator of economic growth, a lost initiative.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, there's many other issues around the utilization of water in irrigation, and it's just not strictly irrigation, as we know. The effects of TransGas concerning their Asquith natural gas storage project come to mind in my constituency.

I'll be going to a public meeting on Wednesday concerning what TransGas is doing in that area far as developing storage projects underground. And they're using good water, pumping good water from the Tyner aquifer and pumping into the aquifer, dissolving the salt and then pumping the salt water to a lower aquifer, which is disposed of it at that point.

But the problem that we're seeing there is again the balance between the need for the gas storage facilities, which are important, but also the right of the residents in that area to have adequate water. Now it's not to no fault of their own that they live in the area where TransGas decided to produce these caverns to store natural gas.

And it's become a very serious issue in that area because many wells have gone dry. They've dropped in . . . the water level has dropped and also the water has really gone down in quality — everything from sludge coming up into the houses blocking various appliances and also the smell of gas in the water which is, well, not only inconvenient but possibly unhealthy. So there's a lot of concerns around there when we look at water and irrigation and Bills concerning the use of water in the economy of Saskatchewan.

The government speaks of by 2025 of having a \$15 billion production and \$16 billion processing industry in Saskatchewan. Well I mean, it just makes you shake your head to think that this government has the ability to ever reach that goal under their policies and how they manipulate the economy for their own political ends.

And a couple of items in the Bill, Mr. Speaker, the talk of the irrigators having the ability to borrow money. And on the face of that, that seems to be a good idea. It will move the government somewhat away from that area. And as we know, private businesses, private individuals have the best . . . the ability in mind to be able to develop the industry and their businesses. And one of them, naturally, is to borrow money and be able to utilize that money to grow the economy and grow their businesses.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will certainly look at this Bill in more detail. We'll talk to the stakeholders. Our critic for . . . Agriculture critic has already met with the irrigators and we will continue to meet with them and discuss this Bill in more depth and see if this meets their criteria and their concerns around the amendment of this Act.

So, Mr. Speaker, at this time I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Biggar that debate on second reading of Bill No. 57, The Irrigation Amendment Act, be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 58 — The Cities Amendment Act, 2004

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill 58, The Cities Amendment Act, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, The Cities Act provides a modern legislative framework through which Saskatchewan cities exercise their powers and provide services. Hon. members will recall that our government passed The Cities Act in the spring of 2002 and the Act came into force on January 1, 2003.

Mr. Speaker, all Saskatchewan cities — with the exception of Lloydminster, which operates under a separate charter — all Saskatchewan cities passed resolutions to come under jurisdiction of the new Act on January 1, 2003.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of The Cities Amendment Act, 2004. These amendments are the result of ongoing consultation with the cities as The Cities Act has been implemented. They will serve to strengthen the legislation.

Before I get into the substance of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, I want to mention how pleased I am that provincial and city officials have been able to continue to work co-operatively to refine the provisions of The Cities Act. Jointly we've been able to not only forge a process for stronger relations with the cities but also to lay the legislative foundation necessary to increase the autonomy of municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, our government remains very much committed to increasing municipal autonomy and reducing provincial involvement in the governance of the cities where there is no overriding provincial interest. We recognize that Saskatchewan city governments are in the best position to make local decisions for the benefits of their residents.

The Cities Act is proof positive of this commitment. Mr. Speaker, the Act modernizes the relationship between the provinces and the cities; enables city governments to encourage initiative and creativity; and provides citizens with better, more accountable local government. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Act introduced the principles of, quote, "natural person powers" and, quote, "areas of jurisdiction" — introduced these principles into the municipal legislative landscape. At the same time it incorporated important elements of Saskatchewan's traditional municipal legislation.

It is very important to all members to remember that the amendments in the Bill have been requested and agreed to by the cities. The Bill seeks to address some issues that the cities have encountered as they have implemented the Act. In essence, Mr. Speaker, the amendments will help to ensure similar matters are dealt with in similar and consistent ways amongst the various municipal Acts, as well as correcting specific errors and omissions. The proposed amendments clarify rather than significantly broaden powers and authorities. They support the intention of the legislation to grant cities broad powers, with more flexibility and decision-making capacity to deal with

matters that are of a local nature.

Mr. Speaker, I will now take a few moments to highlight the more significant changes that the Bill proposes.

First, this Bill will clarify that it is permissible for a city to exercise its natural person powers outside its limits when exercising those powers for a municipal purpose. For example, Mr. Speaker, it is entirely appropriate for the city to own property outside its own boundaries. However the current wording of the provision could be interpreted to prevent a city from owning such land.

Mr. Speaker, one of the many tasks a city must undertake is the collection of property taxes, and unfortunately this sometimes involves implementing tax enforcement procedures when those taxes are not paid. This of course, Mr. Speaker, is a legal process that needs to be undertaken by a lawyer, and it inevitably results in costs being incurred by the city. However, Mr. Speaker, the Act contains a restriction that prevents cities from recovering the costs of remuneration paid to civic employees for tax enforcement proceedings from other taxing authorities. The city is entitled to recover the costs if they utilize the services of an outside law firm. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, the cities saw this as unfair.

We have consulted with the Saskatchewan School Boards Association and Saskatchewan Learning on this amendment, Mr. Speaker. Both the SSBA and Learning concur that it is an appropriate amendment to make; therefore, Mr. Speaker, this Bill removes that restriction.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier that one of the things this Bill does is help to ensure that similar matters are dealt with in similar ways amongst the various pieces of municipal legislation. This Bill will restore a provision from the urban municipalities Act, 1984, to make it clear that special taxes can be applied to any property that benefits from the service for which a special tax is levied regardless of where that property might be located in the city.

From a practical perspective, Mr. Speaker, this provision will ensure that special services that have been provided under the old urban Act and were converted to special taxes under The Cities Act will be levied in a fair and consistent manner. As an example, Mr. Speaker, the city of Regina uses these provisions to allow for lane and back alley maintenance and the changes introduced today will enable the levy to be applied to properties in the same manner as it was under the old urban municipality Act, 1984.

Mr. Speaker, a good number of the amendments in this Bill are intended to correct wording errors or make improvements to some of the processes that are set out in the Act. For example, Mr. Speaker, the Bill clarifies the process for obtaining a warrant to enter private property and improves the wording and the provisions to allow a city to delegate authority not only to employees, agents, or committees, but also to other bodies that council may establish.

The next amendment I want to mention will update one of the property tax exemption provisions in the Act. The provision I'm referring to, Mr. Speaker, dates from 1928 and was put in place

to provide a property tax exemption for land and building owned by the Young Women's Christian Association, the YWCA, and also for property owned by any organization doing work for young women similar to the work done by the YWCA.

In those days, Mr. Speaker, the primary work of the YWCA was in providing safe housing for young women. Mr. Speaker, the YWCA's mandate has evolved and changed considerably over the years to such an extent that the original legislative intent of the exemption can no longer be met. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, this Bill will preserve the existing exemption for any property that currently receives it, including property owned by the YWCA, but will narrow the applicability of the exemption in the future in keeping with the original intent of the legislature.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, this Bill provides some minor amendments relating to assessment issues. These are all intended to clarify the intent of the legislation and/or improve the wording or practical application of the various provisions.

Mr. Speaker, as part of working in partnership with our stakeholders, my officials have continued to work with the cities since the legislation was initially passed to both identify the provisions that needed amending and to develop suitable alternatives. As well, Mr. Speaker, other consultations have been undertaken as necessary, including with the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, Saskatchewan Justice, and other relevant groups such as the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency.

The direct consultations have proven to be a good basis for establishing consensus on policy direction and the wording of amendments. Our cities have much to offer in terms of social, cultural, and economic development for Saskatchewan. We have listened to the city officials' requests to modernize the legislation they are governed by, and accordingly I move second reading of Bill No. 58, The Cities Amendment Act, 2004.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 58, The Cities Amendment Act, 2004, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise this afternoon and speak to Bill number 8, the cities Act, 2004. Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that over the past number of years cities across this province have seen remarkable changes in their structure, their makeup. And in many cases as the city limits have expanded, construction, whether it's business or just local development or individual properties, and as a result our cities I think have been facing many interesting challenges.

And as the minister indicated, The Urban Municipality Act, as we knew it back in 1970 and totally revised in 1984, certainly I think addressed and met the needs of cities that period of time to now and indeed through to 2002, at which time The Cities Act was brought forward. Passage was given in June of 2002 which came into effect of January 1, '03, as the minister

indicated.

However, I think we all acknowledge that through our ever-evolving time period, just the changes that take place in relationships that cities have and city managers have and city councils in regards to their ratepayers and to the ratepayers and to the business structure in those communities that over a period of time changes need to be brought forward in regards to The Cities Act to deal with a number of questions that continue to arise as cities look at providing services to the men and women and to the families who call each individual city their home or to the businesses who provide services. And we all recognize that there is a need for change and that at times we need to look at the Acts that are currently in place to see whether or not those Acts are addressing the ongoing changes that are continually faced by our city administrators.

(15:00)

And as the minister indicated, over the past two years since The Cities Act was introduced and passed in 2002, it's been brought to the government's attention that there are a few areas that need to be revised, that need to be brought up to date to address some of the concerns.

Now one of the issues that was . . . I took particular note of was the power of search. And I looked very carefully because as soon . . . when I saw the headline I was quite concerned as to how the government would have addressed this issue. I'm pleased with the fact that the government has looked at, has recognized that when a city — maybe it's a tax enforcement notice that has to be followed up on, or whatever the circumstances, and the search of personal property — that the city, its planners or whoever follows through cannot just walk onto a property. But if they feel they need to do some further research to ensure that they've got the proper information they need, they have to follow through and get a warrant. And I think that's certainly appropriate.

I would endeavour to say that SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) and its representatives would have suggested we need to bring forward property authority so that we are seen as following due procedure in enforcing our tax bylaws. And so I'm pleased to see that this proper — what it would seem to me as proper — procedure has been brought forward.

Also, the minister talked about being very consistent with the making sure this Act addresses all the concerns fairly so that property owners aren't at risk, and yet city planners and city councils have due authority when they are following through on the many responsibilities that are placed on their desks or brought to their attention and indeed, as they administer the ongoing bylaws of cities or councils in the province of Saskatchewan.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill, as the minister indicated, is more of a piece of legislation that is bringing things up to date with the current changes and that's the reason we have our cities' planners coming forward with ideas. And also we see, Mr. Speaker, that even in the past when legislation has been implemented no doubt wording, what was proper and appropriate wording yesterday may not quite fit the purposes of

today, and therefore we always need to look at how . . . at our legislation to ensure that wording is kept up to date. And I think those are some of the areas, as the minister indicated, that are going to be addressed or the intent of this piece of legislation.

However at this time, Mr. Speaker, we would like to look a little more in depth at what seems to be fairly simple and straightforward legislation and ensure that all the aspects that the minister has talked about have been addressed fairly. Therefore I move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Member for Moosomin, that the debate on the second reading of Bill No. 58, The Cities Amendment Act be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 62 — The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2004. This Act makes several very minor amendments to 37 existing statutes. It corrects inaccurate references, typographical errors and other minor mistakes in statutes. It also corrects errors made in previous consequential amendments or makes consequential amendments that were previously missed. These amendments ensure that the minor technical errors in legislation are removed. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Statute Law.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 62, The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's with pleasure that I rise today to speak to Bill No. 62 of 2004, An Act to amend The Statute Law. Many of my constituents I'm sure have been waiting for me to speak to this Bill. The short title of this Bill being the Act may be cited as The Statute Law Amendment Act of 2004. This is in general, Mr. Speaker, a housekeeping Act as the minister outlines, changing typos and keeping other Acts to date with this particular Act.

Mr. Speaker, I fear that, not to take away from the next Bill which I have to speak with, No. 63, also having to do with the statute law, I should probably go through this in a somewhat clause by clause manner so that nothing is missed.

We can begin to see this in following the short title on point 1. Point 2:

The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Act is amended in the manner set forth in . . . (the) section.

And clause (2), 5(1)(b):

... is amended by striking out “Minister of Social Services” and substituting “Minister of Community Resources and Employment”.

Point 3:

Clause 7(1)(c) is amended by striking out “Minister of Social Services” and substituting “Minister of Community Resources and Employment”.

As you can see for most of these clauses which are striking and changing the names from minister of Social Services to Minister of Community Resources and Employment, this is pretty standard all the way down to point 7 where we get into subsection 67(3). And in that one, Mr. Speaker, we have the change where it's amended:

... by striking out “public trustee” and substituting “public guardian and trustee”.

That is a significant change from sections 2, 3, and 4 where it was just the minister of Social Services changed to the Minister of Community Resources and Employment. We are glad that the Minister has noted this.

Mr. Speaker, this is quite lengthy actually here as I go through it to get to page 4 and 5 of similar such statements. But with that being said, I will move that we now adjourn the debate on Bill No. 62 of 2004, an Act to amend the Statute Law, as there are many things on Bill No. 63 that I need to speak to the House about. Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Kindersley that debate on Bill No. 62, The Statute Law Amendment Act be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Debate adjourned.

**Bill No. 63 — The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2004
(No. 2)/Loi de modification législative de 2004 (n° 2)**

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2004 (No. 2). This Act provides for technical amendments to numerous existing Saskatchewan bilingual legislation. The Bill will correct reference errors, typographical errors, update references to statutes, and correct other minor technical errors in seven Acts.

It also corrects errors made in previous consequential amendments or makes consequential amendments that were previously missed. These amendments ensure that minor technical errors in bilingual legislation are removed.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of an Act to amend the Statute Law.

The Speaker: — Moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 63, The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2004 (No. 2) be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that I have the chance today to rise to Bill No. 63, An Act to amend the Statute Law (No. 2). As the minister indicated, this Bill also is very much in line with a housekeeping Bill, very similar to the previous Bill which we just debated on, Bill No. 62.

To make sure we're clear on the distinction between Bill No. 62 and Bill No. 63, I will have to go forth and read from Bill No. 63 so that no confusion exists for the Assembly and the members at large.

The short title of this Act may be cited as The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2004 (No. 2). Section 2 here, The Change of Name Act, 1995 is amended in the manner set forth in the section.

There are, in the reading of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, a number of letters and numbers, S.S. 1995, c.C-6.1 amended. And I'm glad to see that attention to detail. Failure to catch that before could have misled this Bill, and I'm glad that the clerical staff have been so precise with this coverage.

On section 2:

The definition of “legal custodian” in subsection 2(1) is amended:

(a) by striking out “Minister of Social Services” and substituting “Minister of Community Resources and Employment”; and

(b) by striking out “The Adoption Act” and substituting “The Adoption Act, 1998”.

We see a similarity here, Mr. Speaker, again back to Bill No. 62 in the change of the minister of Social Services and the Minister of Community Resources and Employment. I'm glad to see that such Acts are being kept up to date.

(3) Subsection 4(2) is amended:

(a) in clause (a) of the French version only, by striking out “loi intitulée *The Vital Statistics Act, 1995*” and substituting “*Loi de 1995 sur les services de l'état civil*”; and

(b) by repealing clause (c) and substituting the following:

“(c) pursuant to section 18 of *The Adoption Act, ... (1919)*”.

I'm glad to see that the semantics around the French language were — though butchered by myself — carefully observed so that this law would be equally relevant to all our Francophone citizens in their reading of *sur les services de l'état civil*. It's good that the minister and his staff have not let such details slide as obviously they are of some importance.

3(1) *The Children's Law Act, 1997* is amended in the manner set forth in this section.

(2) Subsection 40(1) is amended by striking out “section 18 of *The Adoption Act*” and substituting “section 17 of *The Adoption Act, 1998*”.

(3) Substitution 43(1) is amended by striking out “*The Adoption Act*” and substituting “*The Adoption Act, 1998*”.

Again, Mr. Speaker, in the reading from the Bill, this Bill being of course Bill No. 63, we get another statement here of the:

S.S.2000, c.C-42.1, section 19 amended

4 Subsection 19(8) of *The Court of Appeal Act, 2000* is amended by striking out “*Young Offenders Act*” and substituting “*Youth Criminal Justice Act*”.

The next page in the middle as I have it printed, Mr. Speaker, is en Français. And I will save the legislature the pain of trying to go through that on a line-by-line basis, as I can tell by the participation in the House that this is possibly not a painless event in and of itself.

5(1) *The Family Maintenance Act, 1997* is amended in the manner set forth in this section.

(2) Subsection 7(2) is amended by striking out “Department of Social Services” and substituting “Department of Community Resources and Employment”.

And under:

(3) . . . (subsection) 10(4)(a) is amended:

(a) in subclause (i) by striking out “clause 23.2(2)(a) of *The Queen's Bench Act*” and substituting “clause 109(1)(n) of *The Queen's Bench Act, 1998*”; and

(b) in subclause (ii) by striking out “clause 23.2(2)(b) of *The Queen's Bench Act*” and substituting “clause 109(1)(o) of *The Queen's Bench Act, 1998*”.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that for *Hansard's* sake I have got the brackets consistent with the way that it is printed here so that when the members come forth to vote on said Bill No. 63 there will be no confusion in allowing this important piece of legislation to move forward.

. . . Subsection 12(3) is amended:

. . . by striking out “Minister of Social Services” wherever it appears and in each case substituting “Minister of Community Resources and Employment” . . .

As I've been going through this Bill No. 63, and previously in the Bill No. 62, it seems that possibly the usage of this line beforehand could have shortened this speech somewhat if they had just said wherever it appears in the Bill. However that hasn't been the case, and hence here we are. In section (b), this is of course of Subsection 12(3) being amended:

by striking out “Department of Social Services” and substituting “Department of Community Resources and Employment”.

(5) Subsection 27(2) is amended by striking out “Minister of Social Services” and substituting “Minister of Community Resources and Employment”.

(15:15)

And, Mr. Speaker, my apologies there. I do believe I repeated myself.

S.S. 1995, c.M-4.1, section 25 amended

6 Subsection 25(5) . . . (in *The Marriage Act, 1995*, is amended by striking out “Minister of Social Services” and substituting “Minister of Community Resources and Employment”.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as we're making reference to page 4 on The Statute Law (No. 2) — and this will be affecting The Marriage Act of 1995 — it is with great pleasure that this Act is actually being brought before the House because there has been a recent court decision concerning The Marriage Act where legislators in the House have not been able to discuss this.

I'm glad to see that it is of import to the government of the day, that statute law with regards to The Marriage Act of 1995 is worth discussing and in turn having a vote on. But the nature and definition of marriage and the actual constitution of what defines a marriage is not of value or import to the present government to bring The Marriage Act forth and have discussion and vote on in this House of what that definition is. But for the shortfallings of the government, I am glad to see, Mr. Speaker, that in Section 6 on page 4, subsection 25(5) of The Marriage Act, 1995 is to be amended by striking out Minister of Social Services and substituting Minister of Community Resources and Employment.

I suspect that as I travel through my constituency and they ask me about The Marriage Act that a number of individuals there will take great comfort in the fact that I can tell them that I was able to speak to The Marriage Act, Subsection 25(5) regarding who the minister in charge and how they were titled was spoken to, and I was allowed to do this through Statute Law (No. 2).

S.S. 1998, c.Q-1.01 amended

7(1) *The Queen's Bench Act, 1998* is amended in the manner set forth in this section.

(2) Clause (b) of the definition of “family law proceeding” in section 2 is repealed and the following substituted:

“(b) *The Adoption Act, 1998.*”

(3) . . . definition of “party” in subsection 44.1 (1) is amended by striking out “Minister of Social Services . . . (and) Public Trustee” and substituting “Minister of Community Resources and Employment, the Public Guardian . . . Trustee of Saskatchewan”.

On the final page, en anglais (in English), page 6 we have:

8(1) *The Vital Statistics Act* . . . is amended in the manner set forth in this section.

. . . “striking out (the) “Department of Social Services” and substituting “Department of Community Resources and Employment”:

Section 14, the same would be true in *The Adoption Act*; section 5 in *The Adoption Act* again.

Final thing, Mr. Speaker, is, “This Act comes into force on assent.”

It would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, having reviewed this statute law no. 2 quite thoroughly, it may make sense for the Legislative Assembly to look at passing legislature that automatically changes the names when a minister’s department chooses for a name change, and perhaps the work of this House could be put to more prudent use. With that, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 63 of 2004, An Act to amend the Statute Law (No. 2).

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Kindersley that debate on second reading of Bill No. 63, *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2004* (No. 2) be now adjourned.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 72 — The Traffic Safety Act

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of *The Traffic Safety Act, 2004*. The Traffic Safety Act, administered by Saskatchewan Government Insurance, is a new Act that consolidates *The Vehicle Administration Act*, *The Highway Traffic Act*, and *The Motor Carrier Act*. Combining these Acts is clearly a more efficient way to administer the rules and regulations involving road safety, driver and vehicle licensing, and motor carrier compliance issues in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, consolidating these Acts will make administration of these rules and regulations much easier — easier for SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), the Highway Traffic Board, and Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation who deal with this legislation on a daily basis. It will also help many key stakeholders who deal with traffic safety, especially law enforcement, in our province. By consolidating the road safety legislation, relevant departments and stakeholders need only look to one Act where all the necessary information is centralized. This is a more efficient approach for those who must enforce this legislation. In addition to being more efficient, making the legislation more condensed and accessible

will only enhance the promotion of road safety here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is a leader in road safety. This is clear from looking at many of the laws that would be included in the newly established traffic safety Act. For example, we were the first province to lift the medical exemption for seat belt use when the medical community told us it wasn’t necessary.

And I can’t talk about Saskatchewan’s road safety leadership, Mr. Speaker, without bringing up the continued efforts to combat drinking and driving. Saskatchewan was the first province to have an administrative suspension associated with a low blood alcohol content or BAC. In our province, drinking drivers were taken off the road for 24 hours if they were caught with a BAC of .04 or more. In fact, Mr. Speaker, at .04, Saskatchewan has the lowest BAC for administrative suspensions.

We’re very serious about keeping drinking drivers off our roads, Mr. Speaker. And I’m happy to say that this commitment to safety has been recognized by another leader in the fight against drinking and driving — mothers against drunk driving, better known as MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) Canada.

In a report released by MADD in June 2003 entitled *Rating The Provinces: The 2003 Report Card*, MADD gave Saskatchewan high praise. Here’s a quote, Mr. Speaker, from the report:

The province’s licence suspension programs . . . (are) rated among the best in Canada.

That’s high praise, Mr. Speaker. And now Saskatchewan is going even further by increasing the time period taken into consideration for past drinking and driving offences. Presently the length of an administrative suspension for multiple convictions of drinking and driving and other related offences is based on the number of convictions within a five-year period. SGI has increased that time period to 10 years, in line with the recommendation of the national strategy to reduce impaired driving. This will help serve as a warning to drinking drivers that poor decisions can haunt you for many years to come.

SGI is also strengthening the suspension program by taking away Safe Driver Recognition points from motorists who receive a 24-hour suspension. Mr. Speaker, these drivers will lose four points from their safety rating. This could mean a 4 per cent reduction in their auto insurance discount, or they could lose their discount entirely and be subject to a financial penalty.

Mr. Speaker, *The Traffic Safety Act* consolidates important legislation that saves lives, making it simpler for road safety stakeholders to understand and use in their important work of making Saskatchewan communities safer places to live and work.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to establish *The Traffic Safety Act*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of

Highways and Transportation that Bill No. 72, The Traffic Safety Act be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a privilege to respond to the second reading of Bill No. 72, An Act respecting the traffic safety, vehicle and driver owners, and vehicle operators Act.

This Act is really quite a substantial Act. As the minister said, it's an Act that covers three different Acts, consolidating three different Acts: The Highway Traffic Act, The Vehicle Administration Act, and the motor carrier's Act, and the highway transportation Act — so I guess that's four — into one Bill which is about 160 pages long. So it's quite a substantial change moving all those Acts into one. And I can certainly see the point, making it that much easier for people that are enforcing the Act to go to one, and have everything kind of under one roof, or under one folder, I guess, regarding the traffic laws pertaining to Saskatchewan.

Any time we talk about traffic safety in the province it certainly perks my ears, I guess, because of the years that I spent in traffic safety and dealing with a lot of these issues. And there's been certainly, I guess . . . and I don't know whether it's myself, but certainly have heard some collisions that have happened in the province recently that have made me consider and think about traffic collisions and traffic accidents that have taken place.

And, you know, it was only a couple months ago that there was a terrible accident just right here in Regina, just on the Ring Road, where there was a youth driving a vehicle, and there was four people killed. I think of the collision that happened at Cochin just again a few months ago where there were two fatalities involved in that collision. We've had some horrific collisions in our province. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that anything that we can do to promote traffic safety and try and reduce the number of injuries and fatalities in the province are significant and important.

The minister talks of a couple of changes that take place in this Act. I have gone through it and pretty much all the explanatory notes. It says that there is no change from the original Act. There are a couple of areas though that I do believe have changed. I don't think it's word for word, some of the other Acts. Some of the things have changed. The minister spoke on the 10-year issue with drinking and driving, if you're charged with a drinking and driving charge. And I think it used to fall off your record after five years or seven years. Now it's up to 10 years. So in other words a second offence within that 10 years, it can be checked back. And that is a very major change, I guess, especially for anybody that's been involved in a drinking and driving charge.

When you look at how we've done in drinking and driving in our province . . . And the minister talks about MADD and how they reported on our province being a very good province because of some of the legislation that we have dealing with impaired driving. But anytime you start talking about the amount of drinking and driving done in our province compared to others, we don't normally stack up that terribly well. We

have an awful lot of drinking and driving done in our province. So legislation is only one small part of having a safe road system.

Enforcement is definitely another part. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember the government not too many years ago promising during an election campaign that they were going to increase the number of police officers that we would see on the roads because enforcement . . . You can have all the legislation you want, but without enforcement and the deterrent to drink and drive . . . because you know there is enforcement out there. It doesn't really have the effect — the legislation. And so the government in 1999, I remember promised that they were going to increase the amount of police officers on the roads by 200.

I think they restated that promise in the last provincial election. But like many of the promises in both provincial elections, they were great promises during the time to get votes, but they have had very little . . . they haven't followed through with them. And, you know, a promise, I guess, to this government can be said during an election and not followed through.

But when you look at people literally dying on our streets and highways because, I think, at times there just isn't enough enforcement out there . . . is a concern I think to every motorist and every pedestrian, every person that use our road system. So, Mr. Speaker, although the legislation that's covered in this Act and some of the changes in the legislation we would support, we would ask the government to at least honour some of the promises that it's made over the last two general elections, and one of them is the number of police officers on the streets of this province.

There's a couple of other changes as I was going through this quite long Bill, and I just want to refer to them. I wasn't sure . . . The one here it talks about, it makes it an offence to have a radar warning device. And the second part it goes on, it enables police officers to search a vehicle and seize a radar warning device. I don't believe that has been in our Act before. I believe that, and I stand corrected here, but I believe there was legislation passed that made it illegal for commercial vehicle operators to have radar detectors in their vehicle.

This, according to the way I read it, states that it's illegal for anybody now to have a radar detector in their vehicle, which I don't think we would have any problem with. I do know a number of friends, however, that have had radar detectors and, you know, they feel that it helps them I guess when they're out on the highways to be . . . to slow down and make sure they know where the police are, whether they're around or not.

(15:30)

But I know again, going back to a life before politics, we had a resolution in, many, many years in a row, asking SGI to follow through with this. A number of provinces have made it illegal for the use of radar detectors, and I guess I'd be interested to follow through this and see if this is new to the legislation or it was in legislation before. As I said, I think it was commercial legislation; it was legislation that dealt with commercial vehicles, not all vehicles — making it an offence to have a radar warning device — and there's some questions that will come out of that, if this is new legislation.

The other area that I'm interested in, and the minister spoke about it in his second reading, was the issue around seat belts and that some of the legislation that has been changed regarding seat belts. I know for a number of years it was very frustrating; there were certain doctors in the province that would give an exemption for seat belt use for people, and I think the medical association said there was never any good excuse to have an exemption.

But when I look at some of the statistics over the last couple of years and especially 2003, and I've got some numbers through SGI and their traffic accident investigation system regarding the usage of seat belts in our province and really what a, what a poor record we have in that area. This is one statement that comes from SGI regarding concerns with the number of fatalities on our highways. And it's regarding the lack of seat belts. It states here that:

Also a concern is the lack of seat belt usage in rural and First Nation communities. Fifty-eight per cent of deaths on rural roads involve unbelted occupants. Of all the fatalities reported on First Nation roads, they all involved unbelted passengers or drivers.

That is huge, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I remember we were talking in the province that we were at a 92 or 95 per cent seat belt usage. But it's significant when you think that of all the fatalities that happen on First Nations . . . on First Nations roadways in 2003, they were all fatalities of people that were unbelted in those vehicles.

So, Mr. Speaker, it brings me back to really, I guess, a little bit of the enforcement. There's engineering to try and prevent collisions or there's education. And I guess my question would be to the government, what are we doing — and SGI — what are we doing to promote seat belt usage, not only in rural areas but in particularly on First Nations roadways. When you see that 100 per cent of the fatalities that happen on those roadways were people that were unrestrained, unbelted, that is a huge red flag to me, and I would hope it would be a red flag to anybody that's dealing with traffic safety, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So as I said, any time there's a major change in the traffic Act — and this is not necessarily so much changes but consolidation; although as I said, as I went through it I did find a number, two or three areas that looked to be some changes — if it does promote the reduction in traffic accidents in the province, I would say that's a good thing. Because I remember back in the early '80s we were up as high as 230, 250 fatalities; last year we were at 148 in 2003; and 2004, looks like it's going to drop down some more. And so I guess often with traffic safety, unless you're involved in a collision or have somebody close to you that's been involved in a fatal collision, we tend not to think too much of it.

I have a case file in my office right now that I've been dealing with of a family that is devastated over the loss of their son about four months ago, just outside of Regina. Their son was driving into the city on No. 1 Highway on a motorcycle when an 82-year-old crossed the highway; was at a stop sign, didn't see the motorcycle, I guess, crossed, and this 23-year-old came into collision with the vehicle and was killed instantly. And you know, until you sit down with parents across your desk and

have them tell the story of losing their only son in a traffic collision, we take it for granted.

We take it for granted every day we get in the vehicle. We drive from point A to B and think nothing is going to happen. But you know, when you have 148 fatalities in the province in a year, that's one every two days. When you have over 7,000 people injured in our province every year, that's usually — I used to know the numbers — but one about every half hour injured in a traffic accident. It happens far too often. So any time we can put legislation in place that will hopefully reduce that, will bring awareness to that, those issues, we would say is a good idea.

You know the issue . . . I just have to go back to this fatal collision that happened just outside of Regina; it was a constituent of mine killed in a motorcycle-vehicle collision involving an 82-year-old. And these people are coming into my office saying, what can be done to reduce the number of collisions with elderly drivers? And you know, they're really pushing that we should have mandatory testing for anybody over whatever age you want to set it, whether it's 65 or 75 or 80. And I've done some work in looking at what other provinces have done and we are not certainly leading in this area. In fact, we could probably make some changes in that area.

But one thing I think that is sorely lacking is education of the general public of what avenues we do have to get people off the road that we think, because of medical conditions, may not be able to drive safely, you know. And there are processes in place. Unfortunately I don't think there's enough people out there that think about it because they haven't been involved or they haven't had somebody close to them involved in a traffic accident for a number of years or perhaps ever.

So, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'll move adjournment of this Bill for now, until we check out some of the issues that I highlighted, as to whether they are changes or not in this Act. And so I move to adjourn debate on this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Indian Head-Milestone has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 73 — The Traffic Safety Consequential Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 sur les modifications corrélatives découlant de la loi intitulée The Traffic Safety Act

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Traffic Safety Consequential Amendment Act, 2004. I have

fairly lengthy remarks, Mr. Speaker, on this intensely interesting Act, Mr. Speaker.

The Traffic Safety Consequential Amendment Act is housekeeping in nature and is directly connected to The Traffic Safety Act, for which I just moved second reading. This Act simply changes reference to The Vehicle Administration Act, The Highway Traffic Act, and The Motor Carrier Act to the new traffic safety Act where appropriate.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move second reading of The Traffic Safety Consequential Amendment Act.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion put by the minister that Bill No. 73, The Traffic Safety Consequential Amendment Act, be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure . . . Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure again to stand and speak to the consequential amendment Act regarding the Act that I had just finished speaking on, Bill No. 72. And as I said, Mr. Speaker, traffic safety is an issue that we need to all take seriously. Any changes that can be made to make our streets and highways safer, we would be in favour of. So, Mr. Speaker, I would move adjournment of debate on this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Indian Head-Milestone has moved this debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 19

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 19 — The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

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

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure again to rise in the Assembly today to address Bill No. 19, The Land Titles Amendment Act. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in essence this Act provides improvements to the operation of ISC (Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan), Information Services Corporation.

Now as we will recall with ISC over the last number of years this is a boondoggle. It's a . . . This is a Crown corporation set on taking land titles from a written form into a digital form. This is something that could've been purchased from another jurisdiction, for example, from the jurisdiction of Alberta, for a

total of about \$20 million but instead we've spent over \$109 million to date and this legislation is somewhat proof of this, that the operations within it are still not up to par.

I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that from the Kindersley area, where we have aside from the best farms in the country, we also have a large oil and gas contingency, and the play there for new drilling in natural gas and in oil causes a great deal of work to be done by surveyors for a number of reasons — to find the minerals first and foremost, but also the pipelines involved at getting the storage tanks and whatnot. And they have a large interaction with the ISC corporation, and it has been nothing short of a nightmare for them, impeding their businesses, trying to work through a bureaucratic mess that just simply doesn't function well.

This particular Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the amendments in the Bill will confirm the Torrens principle of reliance on the title and that there's no need to look behind the title following conversion of interest on titles into electric form. I think there's been a lot of worry in the community, legal community, and in the community which owns property, around the mistakes made by ISC around titles.

For instance two years ago, or not quite that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I raised a concern of a couple from Coleville that had caveats placed against their land by ISC and it was a wrong name from the other side of the province. These individuals never had any interest, had never moved their land, had never done anything; they had caveats placed against them because ISC could not distinguish between two persons with the same name from different parts of Saskatchewan.

What was even more troublesome, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was that this minister refused to pick up their legal costs; they refused to acknowledge the fact that a wrong had been done. Two innocent bystanders, residents of Coleville, had the situation where it cost them over \$700 to clean up the government's screw-up. And this is one of the ongoing problems with ISC in general, is that on and on it's a system that hasn't worked well, continues to underperform, and the government seems to feel that the answer is throwing good money after bad. We're in it for \$109 million; it doesn't work; let's just keep going with it; maybe it'll work one day.

Mr. Speaker, I don't have a lot more to add on this. This ISC boondoggle has plagued the province for quite some time. This particular Act is something that may lessen the pain. If that is the case, we would probably be in support of that. It would've been nice had the correct thing been done in the first time.

But with that being said, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 19, The Land Titles Amendment Act.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Kindersley that debate be now adjourned on Bill No. 19. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 59

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Nilson that **Bill No. 59 — The Ambulance Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to make comments about the proposed changes and amendments to The Ambulance Act. And what this Bill actually should be talking about and purports to talk about are issues of continuity, stability, sustainability, and accountability within this industry. In reality, Mr. Speaker, what this Bill is about is nationalizing and taking over the ambulance system that now exists in this province. Mr. Speaker, I think . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we should make no doubt and be under no illusions about what this Bill's real motive is.

The current system we have in this province, Mr. Speaker, is working rather well. Our ambulance operators have a huge investment in vehicles, buildings, equipment, and in training and educating of their staff. Mr. Speaker, I can advise you that an ambulance, a new ambulance, costs approximately \$150,000.

During the last year I've had the opportunity of doing a tour and a ride along with one of the ambulance operators in Saskatoon. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was most impressed with the highly efficient and well-trained staff that work there. Their ambulances are equipped with a GPS (Global Positioning System) system that works province wide and is shared across the province.

The ambulance operators, the dispatchers, are able to see where the ambulances are on a screen and are able to look at a map and understand the closest and the quickest one. Or if an ambulance has gone astray or gone off route, they're able to identify that and deal with that immediately. Perhaps, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you'll be aware of the recent incident where an ambulance was stolen in Saskatoon. So this type of thing is highly beneficial and highly beneficial to the public who has come to rely on and accept and develop a great deal of trust and confidence in our ambulance system.

(15:45)

I'd like to urge all MLAs to avail themselves of an opportunity to do a ride along and to do a tour with an ambulance operator. There's no better way to understand how the service is delivered. There's no better way to see the demands on the system. And there's no better way to understand the challenges that are facing this industry by listening to and spending time with the people that work in the system. If you're with the system, you understand how the dispatch system works, what the issues are, where they're travelling, what the travelling times are, and you get a sense of how much the cost is and what the capital investment is in this industry.

This investment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the continuity of this

industry is dependent on a large commitment from the operator. Our current system gives the operators and their lenders confidence in their continued ability to remain viable. Lenders would be very reluctant to lend money to an ambulance operator on the basis of a short-term contract or a contract that could be withdrawn or not renewed with a . . . (inaudible) . . . process.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to use an analogy of a commercial lease. If, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you had a commercial lease that came up for renewal, say every 10 days, what lender would grant mortgage financing knowing that the lease might not be removed . . . might not be renewed? We expect that a commercial lease would have a renewal period somewhat similar to the lease term and then a mortgage commitment that would tie to that. We expect this if we're going to have a large amount of expenditure and a large amount of long-term financial multi-year commitment.

And if these people are performing adequately, Mr. Speaker, we should be willing to make long-term similar commitments to those people. And it will be my expectation that the people in this legislature would want to make that type of commitment to ensure competent, competitive service.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members opposite are using the notion that they want to be more competitive and in ordinary circumstances, I would be supportive of a highly competitive, wide open market, as I am for most type of business enterprises. However, there are some businesses where some form of limited monopoly or some form of control is appropriate. This might include things like utility Crowns, roads, and other essential types of services. Ambulance service is clearly within that category. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want an ambulance Act that will promote a strong, viable, and sustainable service in this province.

If I am going to be transported as a patient, I don't want to be halfway to the hospital and have a flat tire or the ambulance get lost because the radios are inadequate or because the equipment is inadequate. I want to know that I will be serviced by a competent, trained professional that will get me to the hospital as soon as possible.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I grew up in Saskatoon and I can remember the days before this ambulance Act came into existence in 1986. We had several competing ambulance companies and I remember some of the horror stories, as will some of the members opposite. The running shoe principle existed, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What prevailed was whoever got there first was able to pick up the patient and of course, got the fee for it. *The StarPhoenix* had regular stories about ambulances going to one end of the city — where there'd be two or three ambulances racing to one end of the city — to pick up a patient from an accident or some kind of misfortune; an occurrence would happen at the other end of the city but all the ambulances were across town. Those stories existed on a regular basis.

And I remember one particular story about the ambulances racing down 22nd Street to get to an . . . and they were racing with each other. They crashed. There was . . . One of the

ambulances ended up straddling the median and there was a huge issue whether it was as a result of the fact that they were trying to run each other off the road or whether it was a legitimate accident.

I don't want to return to those kind of days because of what this government is proposing to do. It was a hideous time for the ambulance industry. It wasn't sustainable. It wasn't viable, and I don't want this government to try and visit its methodology on to this industry. I do not wish to return to that type of service.

Perhaps, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members of Saskatoon Nutana or Saskatoon Massey Place can remember that type of thing. They're long-term Saskatoon residents and I would hope that they would be supportive in trying to address some of those type of concerns.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the NDP puts this Act forward under the pretext of wanting greater accountability. Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of us want to have an accountable, transparent service. It's a laudable goal. But this Bill does not achieve that.

There are other ways that are better and more appropriate to bring back accountability, transparency, and the necessary things. They could have the Provincial Auditor deal with ambulance operators. They could conduct a value-for-money audit. They could go on some kind of performance-based contracts. They could have consultations with the industry to develop appropriate and reasonable measures to assess and reward performance and identify what the appropriate performance indicator should be. That has not yet happened and the ambulance industry, I understand, is very supportive of doing that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my real concern is what I believe to be the actual agenda of this ambulance Act and I believe it is to take over ambulance services in this province. This frightens me greatly. One of the areas of our health care system that currently works reasonably well is the ambulance system. The NDP have destroyed or damaged most of Tommy Douglas's health care legacy in this province and I don't want to see them do it to the ambulance service. My constituents do not want them to do to ambulances what they've done to waiting lists and emergency service within hospitals.

If I phone 911 and if one of my constituents phones 911, I want to know that an ambulance is going to be there in a timely and prompt manner. If this minister runs The Ambulance Act the way he runs the rest of health care, I want to know — will I be put on a waiting list? Will there be an IT system brought in to determine who gets ambulance priority? Will I have to phone my MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) to determine whether somebody can bring it up in the legislature? Perhaps I might phone a private ambulance operator who would give me a ride to the legislature so I can sit in the Speaker's gallery and determine whether this government is ready to give me ambulance service.

Mr. Speaker, that is not an appropriate way to deal with this type of service. This government has lots of other challenges in health care without mucking about in the ambulance service.

Now I wonder, if they do take this over, I am wondering what

kind of service the NDP might provide and I'm wondering what they might call it. I'm sure they would want to have a glitzy Crown corporation and I'm thinking, what might the NDP want to call that Crown corporation that they develop under The Ambulance Act? So I was thinking they would probably want to call it the Saskatchewan Patient Unified Delivery Company or, using an acronym, SPUDCO.

Now I know that name's available now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so it would be available for them to use it. And I'm sure they would want to look for a private sector partner who wouldn't put in any money and I'm sure they would want to have a fancy opening of this new SPUDCO ambulance company. I'm sure they would want it just before an election and I'm sure that the Premier would want to go out and wear a white ambulance hat. Now we could save a little bit of money by not having him wear a white ambulance hat by letting him wear his white hard hat because I think he still has a white hard hat that was bought in another one of his ventures.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that under this new ambulance Act and as a result of the things that would flow from it, we could lose another \$35 million and have yet another scandal and I'll be over here yet another year calling for yet another judicial inquiry into another money-losing in . . . venture. And I hope that's what actually comes to pass, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that we're on there investigating the folly that they created on this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't trust this government to monkey around with ambulance service in this province. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like them to leave it alone. Don't damage what's left of our health system any further than it is already. Try and fix the other messes that have been created first. We can't afford to have them playing about in this. Mr. Speaker. This is something that is just too important for the residents of this province to allow them to be playing around on this.

Mr. Speaker, I would move adjournment of debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon Southeast that debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 68

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 68 — The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's certainly a pleasure to enter into the debate on Bill No. 68, an Act that amends The Assessment Management Agency Act.

This Act amends the legislation that enables the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency to function, and the way it will function, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It adds two more seats to its board of directors, which will see more presence from the education sector and the School Boards Association, but it also does some other things, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I think perhaps what I would like to do is perhaps review the role and the function that SAMA (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency) performs in the whole taxation area, particularly property taxes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

SAMA is the agency that is charged with the responsibility of laying out assessment policy and it also . . . another function that it is charged with is to lay out the mechanism whereby properties are assessed to ensure that we have a fair assessment across the province whether it be urban dwellings, commercial property, agricultural land. So that a parcel of property in one area of the province, if mill rates are equal, will pay the same level of tax, property tax, as a similar property in another area of the province.

And it's a very important function, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a function that ensures equity to property owners. To have a sound assessment system that assesses properties in a fair and equitable manner is a signal to people outside our province who are looking at investing in our province to be . . . so that they can be assured that they're treated equally and fairly in that area of property tax, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So this is not an area that should be taken lightly. It's important that SAMA has the tools and the funds to perform their function in a proper and timely manner. It's as I said, they must develop the system to ensure that properties are of equal value and are taxed in a similar fashion so that they reflect their value for taxation purposes. Then it's up to the municipal governments, local governments, and school boards to set the mill rates that are appropriate for their areas.

But if you have that sound base of equal, of fair and equal assessment, it sends a strong message not only to property owners in our province, but as I'd said, to other people who are business people and investors who are looking at . . . and are residents or people who are looking at taking up residence in our province, to have confidence in our system.

Now I looked at the remarks that the minister made on second reading of the Bill, and he outlined some of the things that I had mentioned. And I found some of particular interest, some of the changes to the board of directors. It's being expanded from the current level of nine members to eleven members. The two additional seats at the board will be taken up by government-appointed members. And the minister uses the reasoning that it will bring a broader range of experience to the board. Well that may perhaps be true. On the other hand it also has . . . the government will have greater influence on that board. And I find that somewhat troubling, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There will also be an additional seat for a representative from the education sector. That member will take the place of the representative on the board from the assessors and their group. They are being removed from the board for perceived potential

conflict of interest. That may or may not be a legitimate reason but I think there is some credibility to that statement, provided that the expertise that a member from the assessment community would bring to the board is still there. There is certainly technical information and knowledge that such an individual could bring to a board and I think if that knowledge and access to information is lost, I think that would be to the detriment of this new board as it will be set up upon passage of this legislation.

(16:00)

And I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that members are finding this discussion on SAMA very interesting, and I will continue to discuss the issue for a bit longer, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I did look at some news releases that dealt with SAMA in the past, and I looked at it briefly, thinking that they're fairly new news releases. They dealt with funding shortages, and this has been a recurring theme that we hear from SAMA, is that they have chronically been underfunded, and that by and large is due to the lack of government funding.

In the past, and I believe that will continue into the future, I see nothing in this Bill that will change that. Funding to SAMA comes from two sources, from the government and from those municipal entities that use SAMA's assessment function to perform the assessments in their jurisdiction. And the lack of funding certainly isn't because of the shortage of funds coming from the local government. In fact, local governments have seen their SAMA requisitions rise significantly over the past few years. So the lack of funding comes from, is due to the underfunding of the government portion.

I could give you an example of what some local governments are . . . their annual fee if you want to put it in those terms, are. There's an RM (rural municipality) in my community that last year paid approximately \$9,000 to SAMA to fund its operation. An average size town in my community, constituency, paid \$7,600. I'm told other rural municipalities who perhaps have a more complex basket of properties within their jurisdiction could pay as high as 15 to \$16,000 in annual requisition fees to SAMA.

So you could see that the local governments are certainly carrying their share of the load. It's the provincial funding that I think is lacking. And as I said, I looked at a news release and was reading the news release, and it was dealing with funding and the concern by SAMA officials that if sufficient funding isn't put in place they won't be able to meet their 2009 target date, where they want to transform or move to a valuation system which they feel will be more accurate and more equitable and fair across the province, which is important for the reasons I mentioned earlier.

But this individual from SAMA was very . . . and along with a board member in this news release, were very concerned that they won't be able to meet those targets and they will, that Saskatchewan will once again fall further behind other jurisdictions. And this is something that we certainly don't, we don't need to present that picture. We certainly have presented that picture of being behind and trailing the pack rather than leading the pack in many other areas, and this is once again another area that we . . . if we don't . . . If this government

doesn't step up to the plate, we certainly will be in that position once again.

So as I said, I briefly read the article and just glanced at the date and thinking it's a fairly new article. Well it's well over a year old. And so then I turned to the budget document to see if in fact perhaps the government had allocated additional funding to SAMA in this current budget.

Well if you look at the budget estimates for this current fiscal year that we're in — '04-05 — the funding to the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency is exactly the same as it was in the previous year. Now I didn't take time to go back into previous budget documents, but I'm suspecting that the funding hasn't changed a whole lot.

But what I did note in the minister's address, there was a reoccurring theme that somehow we've got to fix the way we assess property because it's important for the distribution of the foundation operating grant that's paid to school boards. And it's somewhat interesting to note the date of the minister's comments in the House. The date was June 1. This was two weeks approximately after the Minister of Learning had his little media show out in Balgonie, where he gave the response — his government's response — to the way we fund the K to 12 (kindergarten to grade 12) system, and put out this smokescreen of forced amalgamation but didn't address any of the underlying fundamental issues of how we fund the system.

Everything the minister has said from that day forward still doesn't address the way we fund the K to 12 system. And the minister and his government have been sitting on their hands. They're saying that, well we've got to amalgamate the school divisions because they're very inefficient; they waste a lot of money in administration. And nothing could be further from the truth. It's all a smokescreen. And they're speaking to a group of their constituents that haven't had the opportunity to see how boards operate and particularly boards in other parts of the province rather than our major centres. And again like, as I said, it does . . . But still they haven't said anything as to how they're going to fund this system.

But the minister that presented this Bill, the Minister of Government Relations, the member from The Battlefords, had this reoccurring theme in his second reading speech where he said, you know, he was implying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we've got a problem with our assessment system.

Well I don't know if we've got such a problem in our assessment system, but what SAMA needs is a few more dollars so they can upgrade their computers so that they can put the personnel in place to use the most modern system that we have to assess properties. But what I think was happening, and I'm sure this was a plan that was led by the Minister of Learning, where they're going to build this huge case of . . . we're going to identify perceived problems — whether it's in assessment or whatever, school board administration — and they're going to justify this forced amalgamation, I believe that's all that this whole . . . the minister's comments pertain to in this second reading speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I think what, in light of what the minister said and what is happening with the forced amalgamation of school boards and

the role that they will play, I think we certainly need to confer further with stakeholders in this whole issue and consult and get feedback and more of their input. And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this time I would move adjournment of debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member that debate be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 67

The Assembly resumed adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cline that **Bill No. 67 - The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard** be now read a second time.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the hon. member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we have before us today is an amendment to the Bill dealing with the alcohol and gaming regulations Act. Now this is a very encompassing piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, as it deals with the operations of the casinos mainly and the VLTs (video lottery terminal) across this province, Mr. Speaker. And as we know, this is one of the government's main sources of income that it is generating in today's economy.

Although, it's interesting to note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in the past the Premier was very, very much opposed to this kind of operation in the province of Saskatchewan. In fact, if I recollect correctly, he was one of the people who led the parade down Main Street in Moose Jaw in the 1980s in opposition to the very idea of having a casino in this province.

And yet, and yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, today it is that very Premier — currently the member from Regina Riversdale, previously the member from Moose Jaw South — that has expanded gaming in this province to such a huge degree. It's just a complete flip-flop, Mr. Speaker. In the 1980s, he is leading the parade against the evils of gambling in this province, and today he's the main supporter and proponent of gambling in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And fact is, his concern in the 1980s was that people would become addicted to gambling, that there would be all of those illicit activities that one normally associates with the shady side of illegal gambling, Mr. Speaker. There'd be drinking. There'd be smoking, Mr. Speaker. There'd be carousing. And yet, Mr. Speaker, this is the person that is the main proponent of gambling in this province today — a United Church minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who led the parades in Moose Jaw, the temperance parades against gambling and he sits in his chair

today, Mr. Speaker, as the main proponent and supporter of gambling in this province.

You know, he was concerned at that time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the possibilities of people becoming addicted to gambling, that they would be denying their families, denying their families the income that they had earned to support their gambling habit.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the main entity that is addicted to gambling today in this province sits across from us — the NDP Government of Saskatchewan. They are the ones that have become the most addicted, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But the Premier, in the 1980s, had a valid concern that there was going to be a social impact of gaming in this province, of open gambling across this province. And, Mr. Speaker, what has the government done about that problem that they, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have developed in this province, they have grown in this province?

There were very few casinos, Mr. Speaker. There were no Las Vegas style casinos in this province prior to this government. And now we have a number of them across this province and it continues to grow. But what have they done to aid the people that they have sucked in to the casinos, that are losing their weekly rent cheques, that are making the decisions that the member from Saskatoon Nutana used to complain about — that they had to choose between drugs, prescription drugs, and food? Now they're making the choice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they're choosing gambling over supporting their families. What is the government doing about that?

Well there was a study done by Mr. Wynn in 2001 that recommended to this government that they not expand casino gambling in this province until a socio-economic study was done. And what did the Premier that led the parades against gambling do? He completely ignored those studies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and has gone ahead and expanded gambling time and time and time again. No regard to the studies that his own government paid for and certainly no regard to the words he was saying in the mid-1980s in his opposition to gambling, Mr. Deputy Speaker. None whatsoever. Completely turned around, completely ignored the very words he was saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker; that's what was happening.

This Premier says one thing when he's in opposition — and the rest of his members as well — and do something completely different when they become government. They completely ignore everything they said before. They completely ignore those things they say prior to elections and do something completely different after the elections, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because they believe that the people of Saskatchewan will forget. They'll forget the words that they said earlier and be bought off by the promises of tomorrow, Mr. Deputy Speaker; that the voters will succumb to the lure of election promises with their own money, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So the Premier of this province has become the most addicted entity in this province when it comes to gambling. They provide very, very little support to those families whose lives are being ruined by people who are addicted to gambling. There is some support, but it's very, very limited in comparison to the amount of money that the government is collecting.

(16:15)

Other jurisdictions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have followed along the same as this government has done so with gambling. It's certainly not an exclusive flaw in the NDP. Most governments across Canada have followed the same traits. But what most other governments have done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is they have turned some of that money back to those communities that have lost because of the application of casino gambling and of VLTs across this province.

I remember when Carol Teichrob was the minister responsible. She promised the first year that there would be 10 per cent of the revenues would be returned to the communities, Mr. Speaker, for programs within those communities. Well the next year that promise was out the window. So she came forward with a new promise. She promised that there would be \$10 million distributed throughout urban and rural municipalities to support programs. Well a year went by and there was no money, Mr. Speaker.

So then, so then because the government was taking some heat over this, they came up with, well we're going to fund the 911 program to help the communities with the money that we were going to give you from the gambling revenues. Well they said that and then they turned around and added on a 911 charge on everyone's telephone bill. So again, another broken promise by the NDP, by the Premier who marched down the street against gambling and then implemented it.

An Hon. Member: — Shocking.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, it is shocking that he would do so. While he wasn't the premier that implemented it, he sat at the cabinet table while it happened, and now he supports it, Mr. Speaker. Yes . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . oh, it's not true that he supports it? Well that's interesting. It'd be interesting to have him stand in his place and say that he doesn't support it as the members opposite are claiming. Well I think he has the opportunity and has had the opportunity to stand in his place and say he doesn't support it, and he has never done so. He has stood in his place and supported gambling, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well maybe there wasn't a marching band, but they were probably singing union revival songs as they were marching down the street.

Mr. Speaker, this particular Bill as I said deals with gaming. It deals with the regulations about gaming, and it deals with definitions of gaming. It deals with the ability to restrict people's access to gaming. Up until now, individual casinos have banned individuals from their establishments, but now they're going to make it more universal. It's going to be more broadly based. If an individual was banned from casino A, there's going to be notification to all of the other gaming establishments that this person is banned.

Well I guess the question comes into place, under what criteria is an individual banned from a gaming establishment? Is it because the management of that one particular establishment doesn't like your look? Is it because they have been cheating, which would be a valid reason for denying them access to any

of the casinos. But if they're cheating, I'm sure some place in the Criminal Code, there must be a law against that. So that's one way to deal with that issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Or is it perhaps that the individual is winning. Is that a reason to ban someone from being in a casino? You know some people, they talk about people who come in as a group and work together to manipulate the system to gain advantage. Well if they're working together doing something illegal, then that should be dealt with through the Criminal Code. And once that has been established that they are guilty, then perhaps a ban is proper.

But if it's simply a case where an individual is using their mental capacities to understand how the game works, to understand how they can maximize their own opportunities, to utilize the odds in their favours, why should that be a reason to ban the person from a casino? And you might say, well it doesn't happen. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do believe it does happen, that there are people that casinos simply ban because they have the ability to understand the games being involved and to utilize those odds in their favour.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my opinion, if you have that ability, there's nothing wrong with it. If the government had that ability they would certainly be utilizing it, and they do in many cases. They utilize their abilities to manipulate situations to their advantage. So why should the individual be banned from a public casino because they have the ability — internally, not through external means — but because they have the mental capabilities to understand the game and to utilize that ability to their own benefit?

That's what we all do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in our walks of lives. We take our natural abilities and utilize them to our benefit. We utilize them to our own benefit. We utilize them to the benefit of society, and we should not be denied the opportunities simply because we have that ability. And that is what I am afraid this legislation allows to happen, that the government is providing an opportunity for the casino operators to deny people access to their casinos simply because they have the ability to win.

They certainly don't deny anybody access to their casinos because they have the ability to lose. In fact is, they do everything they can to encourage you to come into their casinos so you do exactly that, that you come in and lose.

Casinos like to say well we do a . . . We provide back oh, a 90 per cent return or a 95 per cent return, but what they're counting is not the fact that you walked in the door with \$20 in your pocket and they took the \$20. What they're counting is the fact that you put the \$20 in the slot machine or on the card tables or wherever the case may be, and you won a little bit of money back and you put it back in again, and at the end of the day you walked out without your \$20. You may have won 10 in the meantime, but you turned around and lost it all. So they did pay out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but at the end of the day very few people walk out of casinos further ahead than when they walked in.

And if they kept track of it over a period of time, they would all be losers. And that's why the government gains because they're

taking the money from people that have walked in the doors. The people who walk in the door don't walk out with more money at the end of the day. If they did, then the government wouldn't be in this business, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

One of the areas that this Bill deals with is gaming regulators, and that's a question I would like to ask the minister. What does being a gaming regulator entail? What does it mean?

Now an exhibition casino operator, I think people understand what that is. That's the old agricultural societies, the exhibitions operating a casino, and there are still two or three of them operating around the province. First Nations gaming licensing authority, again I think we all know and understand what that means. That's SIGA (Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority) and its entities.

But what is the meaning of the word gaming regulator? According to the Bill here, it says it means:

. . . any person or class of persons prescribed in . . . regulations as a gaming regulator . . .

Well that's pretty broad. It doesn't tell you a thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as to what a gaming regulator is or does. But as you read through here, a gaming regulator has a considerable amount of authority, Mr. Speaker. And yet it doesn't describe to you what a gaming regulator is, who a gaming regulator is, and what a gaming regulator does or how they come to be, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I think that's one of the areas that we need to have clarified by the minister when it comes time to doing the Committee of the Whole.

Another area, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think is very interesting, and that deals with grants in lieu of any taxes owed to any municipality. Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess, you know, on the surface it looks like if the municipal tax rate is 20 mills and the property is assessed at X, well then 20 mills times X . . . and that's what the casino owes, would normally have owed in property taxes, and that a grant would be made in lieu of the taxes of that amount. But then it goes on to say:

. . . on any terms . . . (or) conditions that the authority considers appropriate".

So the authority gets to make the determination as to what would be the appropriate taxation level, therefore the grant in lieu that would be paid to a municipality. And it may or may not be related to what the taxes would normally have been charged on that particular piece of property.

You know, you only have to look at what happened in SPUDCO. The potato bins that were owned by the government in the municipality had taxes levied against them. The company paid taxes one year and said, that's it; we're not paying any more. The taxes were old, but they were never paid. Or I think there was a very, very small portion of them paid, Mr. Deputy . . . Mr. Speaker. So again, we have an example of the government's style of operation when it comes to paying taxes, and that's to not do it.

And so what comfort is there for a municipality that the taxes going to be provided in grants in lieu are going to be the

appropriate taxes that the municipality has levied on everyone else within their jurisdiction? Again it leaves it, Mr. Deputy . . . Mr. Speaker, too broad. It needs to be tightened up such that the grant in lieu is commensurate to the appropriate taxes levied by that municipality, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, part of this Bill deals with registration of people who work within the casino industry. And how that registration works, what it entails, what it encompasses, is very interesting, Mr. Speaker. And it applies not just to people working in the industry, but it also applies to people who are providing services to that industry. So if you're a food supplier supplying services to a casino, then you need to be registered as well. If you're perhaps someone supplying the VLTs, you need to be registered as well. And it talks about the qualifications, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . or Mr. Speaker — I keep demoting you — that the qualifications seem to be very broad, that a person needs to be of good character. Again that sounds very good. But I guess the question is, what's the definition of a good character? Good in whose terms? Good in whose judgment? This is very, very broad, Mr. Speaker, with no definitions in place as to what the term good stands for.

So who makes that determination? Well according to this, it's the authority. Well that's the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority. But again what is the definition of the term good?

Now when the Premier was marching down the street with the parade in Moose Jaw back in the 1980s, I suspect that the people marching in that parade would use the term good to mean anyone who did not support gaming, because that's what the parade was about, was to stop a casino. Would those same people use the term good for someone working in the gaming industry, someone that was promoting the gaming industry, doing the advertising, supplying the advertising services, doing the bus driving, you know, transporting people to the casinos? Would those same people use the word good to describe someone who is trying to entice people into the casino, taking people to the casino, taking the money from the people who are going to the casino? I don't know. And that's why the definition for a person to be registered as a gaming employee is of good character, is very, very subjective, Mr. Speaker. And certainly is open to abuse if there was a want to do so.

(16:30)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the second requirement is that that person have suitable training or experience. Again, what training is needed? Do you need to know how to shuffle cards? Do you need to know how to count? Do you need to know how to roll dice? Do you need to know how to make sandwiches to supply food to a casino as a supplier? What are the requirements? Are they the same for everyone, or are they different for each individual person?

The second part of this requirement is training or experience. So if you're an experienced sandwich maker, does that mean you're qualified then to be registered as a gaming employee? I don't know. Again, it's left too broad, Mr. Speaker, to make a determination.

And these are the kind of answers that the minister is going to need to provide us before we can make an appropriate

determination on whether or not this piece of legislation is too broad to be meaningful. Because to simply say a person has to be of good character, to be trained or have experience, you need to have more information, Mr. Speaker, before you can make a determination on these kind of pieces of legislation on whether or not that individual is right and proper to be working in a casino.

Further to that, the authority has been given to SLGA (Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority) to vary, repeal, or substitute any terms imposed pursuant to the registrations or impose new terms after a certificate of registration is granted or renewed. Well it doesn't talk anywheres in here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of giving notice of those changes, of giving a time frame for people to meet the new qualifications that may be in place. So does that mean all of a sudden the authority can change or vary the terms of a certificate, and everyone who does not meet that qualification is now decertified? It doesn't say.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of loopholes in this particular piece of legislation that need to be tightened up and explained, so that the operations, whether you like them or not, Mr. Speaker, operate properly. And the government in my opinion on this particular piece is failing in that area in delivering what needs to be delivered to operate the casinos that we have here, Mr. Speaker. I suspect they're not going away, and so we need to operate them properly.

In supplying a certificate of registration for a supplier they also have a number of qualifications slightly different than those for an employee, although some of them are the same, and that is that the supplier is to be of good character. Again we come down to the definition, what is good? Also to have a demonstrated financial responsibility, a demonstrated financial responsibility. So the member opposite says, no one from the Grant Devine era. Well the Grant Devine era ran deficits. I guess that would disqualify the current Premier because he's been running deficits now for the last three years. So all of the government members opposite were part of that. They, Mr. Speaker, have been running deficits.

The members opposite are the ones who lost the \$35 million in SPUDCO. I would hardly call that financial responsibility or at least we can use the term that was used earlier, good financial responsibility, you know. So we have also the Finance minister and the previous Finance ministers keep utilizing something they call the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and they keep telling us there's money there. There is no money there. Even the Provincial Auditor says there's no money there.

In fact is the previous Finance minister admitted it in the House that there was no money there, but that they'd have to borrow money to put money into the Fiscal Stabilization Fund so that they can take money out of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and put it into the Consolidated Fund so that they can magically balance the books, Mr. Speaker. But there is no debt there. I don't know where it is, but it's . . . but we owe money.

And the Finance minister says, wait till tomorrow. Well he's had a windfall, there's no doubt about it. Part of that is gambling, part of that is through no efforts of his own — through the oil industry that is benefiting the province. But

when you talk to every driver going around Saskatchewan, they're a little concerned about the windfall profits because those windfall profits are coming out of their pockets, Mr. Speaker, not going in.

But again on this Bill it's called for a demonstrated financial responsibility. Now it doesn't say . . . It says you have to be of good character. But it says you have to have a demonstrated financial responsibility. Is that a good or bad responsibility? You know, we all have financial responsibilities. Some are just not quite as good as others. And again it doesn't say, Mr. Speaker. It allows it pretty broad.

You know, there are people that have been involved in the casino industry in this province. There's people who have been involved in SPUDCO in this province. They have demonstrated fiscal responsibility but it's been bad fiscal responsibility, Mr. Speaker. And yet it doesn't explain that in this particular piece of legislation, and this is supposed to be about the regulations. So I think the government needs to come clean on that particular area, Mr. Speaker, and explaining again what their standards are and what they mean on this particular piece.

The casino has the right to ban people, as I mentioned earlier, and you have to wonder what the qualifications are for banning a person. The fact is under section 147.2(1), you know, it leaves it pretty open. It says an operator of a casino has . . . if an operator of a casino has reason to believe that the presence of a person in the casino is undesirable . . . They make the determination whether or not a person's presence in the casino is desirable or not. Based on what criteria?

If the person is inebriated and obnoxious, is bothering the other patrons, well that's possibly a reason. If the person is using some means to cheat the system, well that's probably a pretty good reason too. But if you don't like the colour of their eyes, you may think they're undesirable but that's certainly no reason to ban them from the casino. Because this allows them to ban the casino for a day, more than one day, or even up to 14 days. So there's a fair amount of latitude in there encompassed under the word undesirable. So I think again the government needs to clarify what they mean by these kind of terminologies. Undesirable doesn't describe anything other than a personal impression. So they need to clarify what is meant.

So the government . . . or the casinos ban people from any of the . . . from a casino and have it spread across all the casinos in this province.

There's also the opportunity for an individual to ban themselves, you might say, to ask that I be refused access to the casinos. If a person recognizes they have an addiction problem with gambling, they have the ability to go to the casino, to the authority and say, I wish to be banned. I do not wish to be allowed into a casino. And that's a good thing.

The problem that arises though, potentially, is, how does a person get their name off of that list if they so desire? I didn't see anything in here that dealt with that situation. If a person, because they voluntarily ask to be banned, how do they then voluntarily request to be allowed to have that ban removed and to be allowed back in? It doesn't explain that. Nor does it explain, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Speaker, how a banned

person — for some other reason whose name is removed from that banned list — how is that going to be distributed to the other casinos so that once that ban has been lifted they do have access if they wish to go.

Is that going to be disseminated in a manner similar to which the ban was disseminated, so that if a ban is put in place, everybody in the casino industry knows that Mr. X has been banned? Are they going to be given equal weight when that ban is removed? Again, we don't know that. And the government certainly hasn't put anything in this piece of legislation that would deal with that.

So those are some of the other issues that need to be dealt with, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of issues that deal with this particular piece of legislation. It does touch on, a little bit, on alcohol, on beer; and yet it just seems to be more or less just a passing comment that changes . . . doesn't make any real substantial changes to the operations, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Speaker.

So I think there is a need for the government to give some thought to the comments that I have presented, to the questions that I have raised. I know some of my colleagues also want to deal with this, so at this time I would move adjournment of debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Cannington that debate on second reading of Bill No. 67, The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2004, be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Debate adjourned.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Deputy House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I would move the House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government Deputy 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: — Motion is carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 16:42.

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