



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

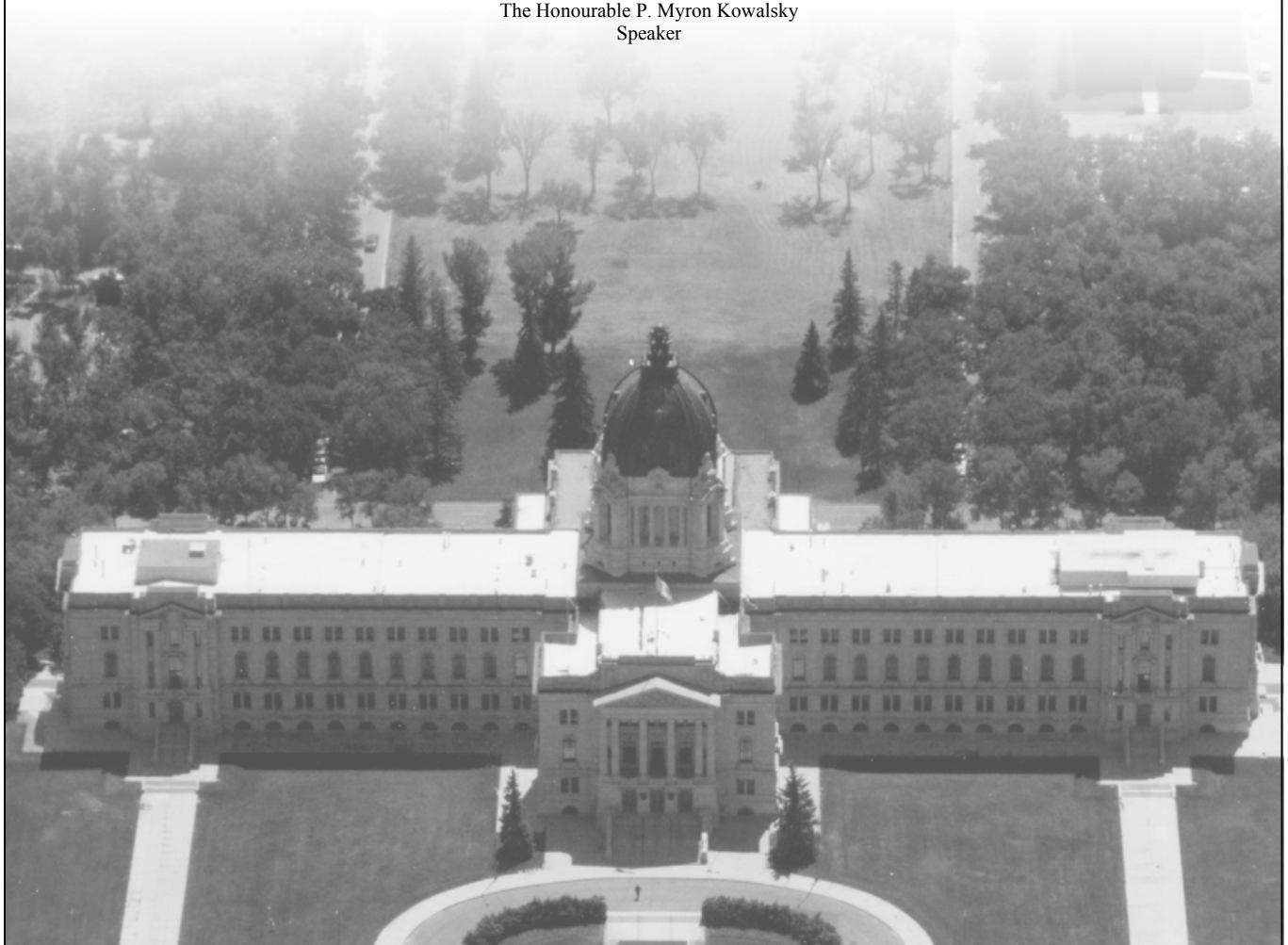
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to present to this Assembly today regarding the government's participation in the CAIS (Canadian agricultural income stabilization) program. And I read the prayer:

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 that the provincial government contributes funds to the latest BSE assistance package released by the federal government.

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

And this petition is signed by people from the communities of Grenfell and Broadview. I so present.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I present a petition on behalf of people who feel that their community will be particularly hard hit by school division amalgamation. 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 school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Again, Mr. Speaker, these four pages of petitions are filled with signatures of the people of Burstall. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I rise to present a petition on behalf of people from my constituency who have deep concerns over the CAIS program. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the 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.

And this is signed by people from Estevan, Bienfait, and Lampman. I so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present petitions on behalf of constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are very concerned about the deplorable state of Highway No. 35 south of Weyburn. Mr. Speaker, it's even more concerning now because the NDP have decided to turn the highway back to gravel. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to make the necessary repairs to Highway 35 north from the United States border in order to prevent injury or loss of life and to prevent the loss of economic opportunity in the area.

And these petitions are signed by residents all across Canada and the United States. I so present.

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again I rise with a petition from citizens who are extremely concerned about the forced amalgamation of school divisions. And 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 school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

Mr. Allchurch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to bring forth a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan that are concerned with the CAIS program. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that the 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 the citizens on this petition, Mr. Speaker, are from 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 with citizens concerned about the crop insurance premium hikes:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Hawarden and Kenaston. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition 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.

Signed by the good citizens of Vanscoy, Grandora, and Asquith. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the Assembly and present a petition on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan very concerned with the loss of autonomy through the forced school amalgamations. And 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 a strictly voluntary basis.

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

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by the good citizens of the towns of Kerrobert and Luseland, Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition of behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are concerned with the CAIS program. The prayer reads as follows:

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

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Rhein, Punnichy, Southey, and Cupar. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to do with farmers and the CAIS program. The prayer reads:

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

The signators are from the communities of Langenburg and Neudorf, Mr. Speaker.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and are hereby read and received.

A petition concerning funding and service levels at the Manitou Health Centre, that's sessional paper 641.

And addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional papers nos. 107, 180, 637, 638, 639, and no. 640.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, not surprisingly, I do have questions again today. And in the interests of parliamentary procedure, I am not using a potato gunny sack as was requested by some of my colleagues. I'm using a file folder today so . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Let's just try to get back to parliamentary procedure. The member for southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments from the members opposite, and perhaps they'll use some of that time to respond to the questions.

Mr. Speaker, take notice that I give notice that I shall on day no. 67 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for the Crown Management Board: are there any other law suits pending against the government directly or indirectly related to SPUDCO? And if so, please provide details.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 67 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for the Crown Management Board: is any Crown, department, or agency of government considering any further investment or financial support for future investment in the potato industry or a related industry? If so, provide details.

I give notice that I shall on day no. 67 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskWater: the June 25, 1998, SPUDCO review conducted by Ernst & Young recommended invoices should be prepared when potatoes are shipped to ensure that revenue, accounts receivable, and inventory amounts are accurately reflected. What specific action was taken by SaskWater as a result of this recommendation?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 67 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for the Crown Management Board: the June 25, 1998, SPUDCO review conducted by Ernst & Young recommended invoices should be prepared when potatoes are shipped to ensure that revenue, accounts receivable, and inventory are accurately reflected. What specific action was taken by Crown Investments Corporation as a result of this recommendation?

Mr. Speaker, I have a series of other similar questions directed to other government departments, and I would so table all of those, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member of Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 67 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Finance: please provide the formula or the methodology on how the Department of Finance determined how much money the Government of Saskatchewan would lose over the next three years as a result of the smoking ban due to be implemented in January 2005?

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 67 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Agriculture: presently there is a deal

pending between Saskatchewan Agriculture and the federal PFRA in regards to transfer of ownership of provincial pasture located near Nokomis and the PFRA pasture located north of Kindersley. When will the formal transfer of these pastures be completed, and how will they affect the employee status within the transfer?

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a written question. I give notice that I shall on day no. 67 ask the government the following questions:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskTel: during the calendar year 2001, January 1 through December 31, what was the total value of investment authorized by the Government of Saskatchewan through order in council for Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation or any of its subsidiaries to invest in Navigata Holdings Inc., Navigata Communications Inc., or any successor corporation of either Navigata Holdings Inc. or Navigata Communications Inc.? For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2001, what was the net profit or net loss posted by Navigata Holdings Inc.?

During the calendar year 2002, January 1 to December 31, what was the total value of investment authorized by the Government of Saskatchewan through order in council for Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation or any of its subsidiaries to invest in Navigata Holdings Inc., Navigata Communications Inc., or any successor corporation of either Navigata Holdings Inc. or Navigata Communications Incorporated?

I have a similar question for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2002, and for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2003.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I would serve notice that I shall give . . . I give notice that I shall on day no. 67 ask the government the following two questions:

During the period from January 1, 2004, through November 15, 2004, what was the total value of investment authorized by Government of Saskatchewan through order in council for Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation or any of its subsidiaries to invest in Navigata Holdings Inc., Navigata Communications Inc., or any successor corporation of either Navigata Holdings or Navigata Communications Incorporated?

And question no. 4, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 67 ask the following question:

For the fiscal period from January 1, 2004, to September 30, 2004, what was the net profit or net loss posted by Navigata Holding Inc.?

(13:45)

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — For introduction of guests, members, it's my

pleasure today to welcome several special guests from the United States Midwest to this Chamber. They are here participating in the legislative exchange co-hosted by the Canadian Consulate General from Minneapolis.

With us is the Speaker of the North Dakota Legislative Assembly, along with two other elected representatives. And also with them we have Canada's new Consul General in Minneapolis here, Mr. Kim Butler, along with Ms. Quinn Cheney of his staff are here to guide them and participate in additional meetings.

And for more specific introductions, now I would recognize the Minister for Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly today, Mr. Kim Perry Butler, who is Consul General of Minneapolis. He is sitting in your gallery today. Mr. Butler is the new Consul General for Canada at Minneapolis.

He is a graduate of the Government of Canada's accelerated executive development program, and he has completed the public executive program at Queen's University. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce honours degree from the University of Ottawa, and he joined the federal government in 1986. He was recently appointed the Consul General in Minneapolis, and this is his first visit to Saskatchewan in that capacity. He will be using this visit to familiarize himself with Saskatchewan's trade, investment, and advocacy interests in the US (United States) Midwest.

Mr. Speaker, we welcome Mr. Butler. We thank him for the support that he has given to our exchange with North Dakota and wish him all the best in his facts finding. Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly, Matthew Klein. Matt, as he's affectionately become known to us in the last few hours, is the newly elected Speaker of the North Dakota House of Representatives. He has served in the North Dakota House since 1993 and sits as a Republican member of that Assembly.

He's on the standing committees of Government and Veterans Affairs. Matt was previously in the air force and worked a great deal with both the air force and the army on construction projects. He's also a committee member of Industry, Business and Labor. He's also, dear to my heart, he's particularly interested in the administrative rules of the legislature as well, something that I have paid a little bit of attention to, Mr. Speaker.

So Mr. Klein has spent most of his education time in North Dakota, but in addition to that he did graduate work at the University of Southern California and the University of California in Los Angeles. He has six children and his wife, Isabell, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to ask the Assembly to make Speaker Matthew Klein welcome here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to be able to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly, the Democrat representative from North Dakota, Mr. Phil Mueller.

Phil is a farmer. He's got his Bachelor of Science in education with business and English majors, a master's degree in school administration. He spent 12 years working on school board issues. He's on local Cenex board, Draft Prairie Advisory Board, Transition Steering Committee, State Board of Research and Extension; is also a first responder, married with three children, and a very busy man — gets what time he can with his wife, Darlene — and he has been in the House since '99.

I would also like to note that we're very honoured to have North Dakota representatives here. Just in general, with exports in the order of \$350 million, North Dakota accounts for just over 3 per cent of Saskatchewan's international goods exports. Canada is North Dakota's largest export market, purchasing more than 600 million in goods. Within that context, North Dakota and Saskatchewan have a very important trading relationship, with Saskatchewan's imports from North Dakota ranging from 140 to 180 million over the last three years. Leading imports include machinery and agriculture products.

We look forward to working together to build our relationship and become even better neighbours in the years ahead. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure this afternoon to rise in the House and welcome our guest, Jon Nelson, who represents the seventh district of North Dakota, which is north central North Dakota.

We had a very lovely morning together. Jon's a farmer. He attended Minot State University and NDSU (North Dakota State University). He attends the Lutheran Church and sits on his Lutheran Church council. His wife's name is Shirley, and he has three children. He has been in the House since 1997 and sits with the Republican Party.

It's our pleasure to have him here this afternoon. We had a great discussion on growing soybeans over lunch, and I hope he enjoys his time in Saskatchewan and Canada.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and to members of the legislature,

three individuals seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. First of all, Marc Hankewich, originally from Rose Valley, is now a resident here in Regina and works at the University of Regina — a little wave, Marc. And on the far right is his sister, Melanie Hankewich, who lives in Victoria, British Columbia, joining us here today. And seated in the middle is Chris Shaw, also from Victoria, BC (British Columbia), originally from Glenbrook, Australia. And they're all here, I believe for the first time, to the legislature. So please join me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this Assembly, I'd like to introduce you to three gentlemen seated in your gallery. They are new additions to the Saskatchewan Party caucus team.

And I want to introduce you. On the left is Dustin Duncan, originally from the Weyburn area, a U of R (University of Regina) grad and doing research for us in our office. I'll go over to the far right, which actually might be quite suitable, and introduce Will Schenn, who is originally from Humboldt and a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan. Both these gentlemen have joined our research team and are already doing a fantastic job for us, and we thank them for that.

And in the middle, probably he would describe himself here as the rose between two thorns, is our director of communications, our new director of communications, Ian Hannah. Ian comes to us after about a quarter century of broadcast experience in broadcast journalism; the last 20 he has spent with CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) here in Saskatchewan.

We're very pleased that all three have joined our team. We'd ask all members to welcome them and say hello to these gentlemen here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have three distinguished visitors in the west gallery. And these ladies have come from a long ways.

I want to pay a particular homage to Claire Larocque, who travelled all the way from Camsell Portage. And, Mr. Speaker, Camsell Portage is probably about 50 miles from the Northwest Territories border. She's come a long ways to take part of the SSBA (Saskatchewan School Boards Association) convention. And she's a board member of the Northern Lights School Division. And I want to make sure that people know she travelled a long way to get here. She hopped on a canoe, went down a raging river for about 100 miles, and then caught a plane to get here.

But as well, Mr. Speaker, we have Tina Rasmussen who is a board Chair for the Northern Lights School Division. And Tina is originally from Green Lake.

And certainly, we also have, to the extreme left is Clara Sanderson. And Clara is from Beauval and is a board member of the Northern Lights School Division. And we should also know that Clara is a very close relative to myself, but even closer to Lawrence Yew.

As we all know, Mr. Yew served this House with great distinction and is a source of pride for many northern and Aboriginal people. And Clara, of course, has the fortunate bloodlines to be related to such a great man such as Lawrence Yew.

And also, as done yesterday, we also have a couple of people up further in the gallery. We have Peter and Doyle. And Mr. Vermette, of course, is also with the Northern Lights School Division, as Peter is as well.

And we should know that the mayor of the beautiful city of Regina is quite happy when Mr. Vermette visits the city because he spends a lot of money and the economy, overnight, just spikes right up.

So I'll ask all members of the Assembly to please welcome these northern visitors.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to introduce family members at any time and it's a special privilege for me to be able to introduce two people seated in the east gallery, constituents of Kelvington-Wadena. So I thank the member for Kelvington-Wadena for allowing me the opportunity to introduce these two people.

I'd like to introduce my dad and my stepmom, Peter and Sophie Krawetz. They're from the fine community of Invermay. They're here in Regina for a number of days as my dad has some medical appointments and will be looking after those things in the next couple of days.

But, Mr. Speaker, most importantly, I had the opportunity to talk to dad about agriculture and when dad left last week — I believe it was on Tuesday — the home quarter, as I refer to the land where we live on, still had oats in swath and it was given up by me as far as going to worry about it next year. But for the first time that I can recall on our farm, combines rolled on November 11, 12, and 13 and I was happy to report to dad today that the oats is in the bin. It's a little tough but, you know, it'll be dried.

And dad tells me that back in his farming career of — well we don't want to say exactly how many years, but it was a number of years — he recalls actually threshing and putting sheaves into the threshing machine in the month of December when it was 17 below.

So we haven't set a record, dad, but we got the oats off. And I'm happy that they're able to enjoy the proceedings. And I'd ask all members to welcome my dad and my stepmom.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I am very pleased to welcome today a group of people from Wadena. They actually have 19 students from Fishing Lake School, and we have the teachers, Darren McKee, Sherry Sayese, Gene Sunshine, and Fred Desjarlais. I was pleased to visit the school last year and honoured to attend the graduation.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to welcome my two constituents. I've met them a number of years ago and it's always an honour to see you again.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of this Hon. Assembly, I would like to introduce to you a gentleman seated in the west gallery. He is a constituent, a neighbour, and a friend of mine. His name is Allan Barreth. And he's a very good neighbour, I might add, too, Mr. Speaker.

So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming Allan here this afternoon and I hope you enjoy the proceedings.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — I just want to extend greetings to the students from Fishing Lake as well, and I'm very glad to see you here. And I will be meeting them a little bit later on as well, so I want to say welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And again, Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery we have two visitors today who are visiting the legislature but are no longer visitors to our province. They have very recently relocated to the province of Saskatchewan, now making their home here in Regina as recently as the month of October.

And I would like all members to greet these two new residents of our province who have come from the great province of Alberta to Saskatchewan. I'd like you to welcome to Saskatchewan and to our legislature, Aaron Peake and Katrina Mather. Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Dr. Sally Mahood Honoured by College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, earlier this year Dr. Sally Mahood from Regina Lakeview was named the 2004 Saskatchewan Family Physician of the Year. I'm also pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that Dr. Mahood has now won national recognition for her contributions to the health and well-being of her patients and her community. The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada has named her one of the country's top family doctors for 2004.

Mr. Speaker, these honours are richly deserved. Dr. Mahood has been practising medicine in Regina for almost 25 years, and like every other family physician in the province, she plays a critical role in our health care system. Her responsibilities include adult and pediatric hospital admissions, home visits, emergency care, palliative care, minor surgeries, prenatal care, and delivering babies.

(14:00)

In addition, Mr. Speaker, Dr. Mahood is the co-unit head of the department of family medicine in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region. She's also an associate professor in the department of family medicine at the University of Saskatchewan and a consultant with the Women's Health Centre and the Planned Parenthood sexual health clinic.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Sally Mahood's dedication to her patients and the principles of family medicine make her an outstanding example of the role the family physician plays in our health care system.

I ask all my colleagues to join me in thanking Dr. Mahood for 25 years of outstanding service and on receiving this well-deserved recognition, both provincially and nationally. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Saskatoon Debaters Earn Invitation to Oxford

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my members opposite and on this side of the House to recognize two exceptional students in my constituency. The students attend Walter Murray Collegiate. Kevin Hovdestad and Vinay Kumar Mysore have been actively involved in speech and debate throughout these . . . through the Saskatchewan Elocution and Debate Association since 1998. They began debating together in the year 2000. Since then Kevin and Vinay have participated in dozens of debates and tournaments at the regional, provincial, and national levels.

Most recently, Mr. Speaker, these fine students attended the national high school debate championship in St. John's, Newfoundland, and finished second. Mr. Speaker, this fall those two students and the first-place participants will be travelling to Oxford, England to participate in the world debate championships.

Mr. Speaker, I'm rising in the House actually to curry favour with these students to make sure that as they move on from high school debating to politics that they come on this side of the House, so I'm asking members to support that as well. And I would ask that members on both sides of the House congratulate them and wish them well in Oxford, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres Awareness Week

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, this is SARC Awareness Week here in Saskatchewan. SARC, or the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres, is a provincial, non-profit organization whose goal, as is simply stated in their vision statement, is to see that persons with disabilities enjoy full citizenship.

Mr. Speaker, SARC and its 73 member agencies provide services and supports to enhance the lives of people with disabilities, and play an important role in creating welcoming, accessible, and inclusive communities for everyone.

SARC members are located in every corner of the province. They have almost 2,000 staff and support over 4,000 persons with disabilities. As well, SARC, SARCAN recycling division operates over 70 depots in over 60 communities and is one of the most successful recycling programs in the country that provides employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The theme this week is: The People Matter, The Work Matters. And that is very appropriate. I think it can be safely said that SARC has been operating under the assumption that the people matter and the work matters since its inception in 1968.

Mr. Speaker, it is largely due to the efforts of SARC and its members that the people of Saskatchewan have become more aware and more knowledgeable about individuals with disabilities and that people with disabilities are more and more taking their rightful place in our communities. Their goal is to make Saskatchewan more inclusive, Mr. Speaker. We fully support that effort, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Lorie Annand Receives Award of Distinction

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members of the Assembly, I rise today to congratulate Miss Lorie Annand of Melfort. Last night at the Saskatchewan School Boards Association banquet, Lorie was the recipient of the Award of Distinction. This award is given to a current or former school board member who has demonstrated outstanding service and made a significant contribution to enhance education. I'm proud to say that Lorie Annand, the current Chair of the newly amalgamated Melfort Tiger Lily School Division, was selected

to receive this prestigious award.

I personally have witnessed her commitment to the education of our children, having served with her on the Melfort Board of Education in past years. Lorie has spent 19 years with the board of education, serving seven years as board Chair of the Melfort School Division, three years as Vice-Chair, and as of January 2004 to present, as Chair of the Melfort Tiger Lily School Division. For a number of years she's been a member of the northeast branch council and served as an executive member, including Chair and Vice-Chair.

Lorie continues to demonstrate her strong leadership support to school board members and never stops giving encouragement to administration and staff. She was a driving force in the amalgamation of the two divisions of Melfort and Tiger Lily and was actively involved in the two-phased expansion of Melfort & Unit Comprehensive Collegiate to include Cumberland Regional College, CanSask, and HRDC (Human Resources Development Canada) as one campus.

Mr. Speaker, I know that her family is very proud of her, as all of us are in the community, and I'd ask members to join me in congratulating her on this award.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Wascana Plains.

Murad Al-Katib and SaskCan Pulse Honoured

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased to rise in the House today to say a few words about one of Saskatchewan's fine young citizens, one of the best and the brightest whose business, SaskCan Pulse Traders, is located in my constituency of Regina Wascana Plains.

Mr. Speaker, a few short years ago Murad Al-Katib of Davidson sat down and wrote the words SaskCan Pulse Trading across the top of a blank sheet of paper and began a business endeavour that in the last 36 months or so has gone from being a one-person operation to becoming one of the world's leading processors and exporters of pulse crops.

The combination of Saskatchewan farmers producing more legumes than any other province and the obvious business acumen of Mr. Al-Katib has resulted in an extremely successful company. Since 2001 SaskCan Pulse has created almost 100 jobs, 50 of them in the last year alone, and currently exports products to 33 countries worldwide. At the recent Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year, Prairies region, awards, Mr. Al-Katib was named Top Emerging Entrepreneur. And, Mr. Speaker, just a few days later, SaskCan Pulse was named Saskatchewan Business of the Year for 2004 at the Achievement in Business Excellence awards and also took home the ABEX award for exports.

Mr. Speaker, we all like to see skill, hard work, and achievement rewarded. I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Al-Katib on his can-do attitude and on his success. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Camp Easter Seal Celebrates 50th Anniversary

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of the many constituency events I attended over the summer, one of the most notable was the 50th anniversary of Camp Easter Seal, held on August 22 at Manitou Beach.

Camp Easter Seal was opened near Watrous in 1954 as the first of four provincial locations. In 1955 the camp was permanently set up in its Manitou Beach location where they began camping programs designed for children and adults with physical and mental disabilities. There are five age groups, including the combination of level 4 care users. In addition there are camping programs for children with diabetes. There is a great opportunity to learn new things and to participate in a wide variety of activities.

Camp Easter Seal includes a heated pool, recreation centre, large dining hall, the main chalet complex, arts and crafts, horseback riding, boating, and hiking. All these and many more activities are fully equipped to handle handicapped persons.

Over the last 50 years, countless people of all ages have come to enjoy the camping adventures that are available to the handicapped persons. Camp Easter Seal has been supported by a wide variety of community minded individuals and groups including the Kiwanis Club, the Red Cross, Lions Club, SaskPower Dragons, Rod and Custom Car Club, and the Kinsmen, just to name a few.

I would take this opportunity to congratulate the staff of Camp Easter Seal on a remarkable 50th anniversary and offer my sincere thanks for the invitation to attend the celebration.

I would ask all members to join me in congratulating the staff at Camp Easter Seal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Yorkton.

Colleen Bailey Honoured by the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Two weeks ago the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils held their annual convention in my Yorkton constituency. For those who may not be aware, this organization plays a incredible role in the cultural life of the province. As an umbrella organization for community arts councils and schools across the province, OSAC (Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils) helps ensure that the visual and performing arts are a vibrant part of Saskatchewan's cultural landscape.

Mr. Speaker, during the course of the convention, Colleen Bailey, a long-time friend and constituent, was honoured for her significant and ongoing contributions to the arts in the province and was made a lifetime member of OSAC. Mr. Speaker, and

even more appropriate was that Colleen received this recognition right in Yorkton. Ms. Bailey was the founding member of the Yorkton Arts Council. Thirty-five years ago when OSAC held its first annual convention in Yorkton, Colleen Bailey was the founding president.

Mr. Speaker, Colleen Bailey has been a committed and an enthusiastic supporter of the arts for pretty much her entire life. Among her many other accomplishments she is the current Chair of the Saskatchewan Arts Board, a past Chair of the Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival, and has been the governor of the Dominion Drama Festival.

Mr. Speaker, the arts inform and enrich our lives in a way beyond measurement. They tell us not only who we are, but who we can be. I ask my colleagues to join in congratulating Colleen Bailey on her recent honour and in thanking her for all she has done to ensure that the arts continue to be strong and thriving in our province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Water Quality in the Vanscoy, Grandora and Asquith Areas

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Speaker, people in the Vanscoy area are having some disturbing news today. Testing has been done on their drinking water and 15 test results have come back. Some exceeded drinking water standards for uranium, nitrates, and coliform. One of the wells also exceeded the standard for arsenic, an extremely powerful poison.

Mr. Speaker, everyone in this House wants to make sure all Saskatchewan residents have safe drinking water. My question to the Minister of Environment is, what steps are being taken to assure people in the Vanscoy, Grandora, and Asquith area have safe drinking water?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course our first priority is for the health and public safety here and for all of Saskatchewan's citizens. To this end Saskatchewan Watershed Authority has been doing some testing in the Vanscoy area in the last few days. And as soon as we determined the health risks that existed in private wells, we notified the local homeowners and landowners about these risks and we advised them of the proper routes that they should take. As well to this end, Saskatchewan Watershed Authority is trying to identify the source of this contamination so we can let people know that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Speaker, there is a public meeting tonight in Vanscoy and I certainly will be there and attend that meeting to tell them the minister didn't have an answer to the question.

Mr. Speaker, this is a matter of monitoring for water quality. In light of what has happened in the past in Walkerton and North Battleford, people in Saskatchewan learned first-hand that the government must be diligent in monitoring water quality. Can the minister tell this Assembly when the last time the water in this area was tested?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there's a couple of things I would like to say. The water in this area was tested in the summer this year, and we have the results so we have a good baseline to determine what the private wells were and what they've changed over the course of the time. And as well this meeting this night, that the member opposite speaks about, is how to identify or work together with Saskatchewan Watershed Authority. We're working together with the local people so we can identify issues such as this.

So I would urge the member opposite not to inflame the situation. We have a working meeting tonight. The local people are getting together to identify a committee so they can work with Saskatchewan Watershed Authority and not be reckless or foolish about this. We have this information here, we're sharing it with the local people as soon as we get it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Speaker, at this meeting tonight the people of Vanscoy and Grandora and Asquith will want to know when the last time the water in this area was tested and the results dating back to that time. And I was wondering if the minister will accompany me tonight to that meeting in Vanscoy.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I have no problem about going to the meeting tonight; we're thinking about this. But again this meeting was set up ahead of time. The purpose of the meeting was to put together a working group of people so they could work with Watershed Authority to identify and work on the issues that they've identified over the past few months. Clearly we don't want to inflame the issue here. We've got the information. These are private wells. We've been talking to the people giving them the information about the contamination in their waters. And so we'll work to get that information out. We deal with this as best science guides us.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Funding for the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization Program

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier of the province. Yesterday we

learned that . . . through the Finance minister, that the province has some \$900 million more than it budgeted to have this year. Yet when we asked the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture as to whether they had an intention then to live up to their full commitment to fund the farm safety net CAIS program, the answer was no. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, not only that, but in the course of saying no remember what . . . here's what the Minister of Agriculture for the province of Saskatchewan said about if he were to fund, if he were to keep his commitment and fund his share of CAIS. He said it would be like throwing money away, Mr. Speaker. That is the words that he used on page 1760 of *Hansard*. He said it would be like throwing money away.

(14:15)

In one of the worst years on the farm we have seen, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) crisis, in terms of the early frost and the poor harvest conditions, when asked about more assistance for farmers, this minister says it's like throwing money away. Does the Premier accept that kind of conduct from his ministers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it would help if the member opposite listened occasionally as well as just shot it off. Mr. Speaker, we did give clear answers around this and, Mr. Speaker, very clearly what we are working on is trying to get a fair and just deal from the federal government.

This reaction from the folks opposite is something like the characters who like to circle the wagons and shoot inward. The focus needs to be out there on a federal government which has put together a program that is not just and will harm all the people of this province. We need to make sure that the program is just and that it is sustainable and that with the other resources that we have, we can do things that will help agriculture move forward, Mr. Speaker. It is not just about doing these programs to meet business risk management. It's about doing agriculture in a way that will lead us into a successful agriculture future for this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, it's amazing that that minister would be talking about where we should be shooting inwards or outwards when he is busy, in the face of a farm crisis, shooting at rural Saskatchewan and producers. Here is exactly what the minister said yesterday in *Hansard*. He said:

When we got the numbers from the federal government that spoke about the kind of dollars that would have to go into the CAIS program in this province, it did not fit with the very basic spirit of the nation of Canada.

(He says) . . . the members opposite would have us just bow to that unfairness . . . and throw the money away.

This side of the House does not believe, Mr. Speaker, that helping producers when they need help and the framework of a program that the government agreed to, we don't believe that that's throwing money away.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Apparently, apparently the Minister of Agriculture, of all people, believes that helping rural Saskatchewan is throwing money away. I want to know from this Premier, does he accept that kind of conduct? Does he agree with the view of his minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, I think it's very clear that we have been working consistently to deal with a situation in this country which is unjust, a situation that needs to be addressed . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please. I would ask the member from Kindersley to refrain from the quantitative aspect of this heckling.

Member for Regina Qu'Appelle, the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, I think it's also important to note that when we were talking about the numbers involved in CAIS, the first numbers that we were given were in the neighbourhood of 250 to \$360 million. And if the Sask Party is advocating that we should have just said yes, of course, we'll sign that blank cheque, that is akin to throwing the money away, Mr. Speaker, throwing it into the federal government coffers, Mr. Speaker.

We want to make sure that the farmers in this province are well protected — not just this year, but next year and into the future. We not only want to provide the protection of the CAIS program and the crop insurance program, we want to be able to invest in the future of agriculture in this province, in programs of research and development.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there is a great future for agriculture in Saskatchewan. We are investing in that future, Mr. Speaker, and we want the federal government to carry their rightful share. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that in the course of that answer, the member from P.A. (Prince Albert) Northcote is heckling, chirping from his seat. That's right, Mr. Speaker, old SPUDCO himself, which underscores the fact, Mr. Speaker, that the only, the only people throwing money away in rural Saskatchewan is the NDP through things like SPUDCO. And it's not their money to be thrown away, it's the taxpayers' money.

This question to the minister is direct. Yesterday he said, standing by rural Saskatchewan and farm families . . . What he said was standing behind farm families was throwing money away. We want him to stand in his place and apologize to rural Saskatchewan for those comments and we want him, Mr. Speaker, to keep the government's commitment to CAIS and support rural Saskatchewan when it's in the time of need.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, I have to say the ridiculous spin that the member opposite is putting on to this issue does nothing to enhance his image or the image of his party, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if they care about agriculture in this province, if they really care about the farmers in this province, they want to stand up and get a just deal from Saskatchewan. They have worked together with us on some programs, Mr. Speaker. It's always good when we pull together to find a solution and especially when we're dealing with the national government, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to see the members opposite, if they really care about Saskatchewan farmers, stand with us as we push for equity in our agricultural programs. If they want to see agriculture move forward and be successful, it is incumbent upon them to take those actions and to be with us as we move forward into the future.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — You know, Mr. Speaker, the answer to the minister's question is pretty simple. When he and this Premier and this party decide that it is time to stand up for and beside rural Saskatchewan, he'll just have to look ahead of himself and his party and see that the Saskatchewan Party has been there all along.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Consider the record of this minister, Mr. Speaker. Consider the record. This is the same minister, when we talked and debated about the NDP's plan to hike nursing fees, he yelled from his chair, he said it's the right thing to do. That's what he said. This minister ran around in the last election scaring seniors who had Sask Party lawn signs. He told them that if they voted for the Sask Party, they'd lose their health care. Now this minister is saying that standing by rural Saskatchewan is like throwing money away. Mr. Speaker, what does it take for this Premier, what does it take for this Premier to take that minister out to the woodshed and discipline him for those kinds of comments and actions, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, I think it really . . .

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

Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it is a sad day for the legislature when the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please, members. Order, please. I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it is a sad day for the Saskatchewan legislature when the Leader of the Opposition gets into the kind of distortions and twistings of history that he is into today. It is pathetic, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I think if . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please, members. Members on this side, members on this side, the floor belongs to the Minister of Agriculture. I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I think if we're going to look at agriculture and the history of where we have been and what we have worked at in this province, we need to look at the kind of things that have been drawn out of agriculture over the years, and the support that some of the members opposite gave to drawing those things out of the province. For example, many of them were gung-ho to get the Crow rate taken off, Mr. Speaker. At the most conservative estimates, that cost this province, that cost this province \$300 million a year. And they like to see that . . . (inaudible) . . . the corresponding dollars were never put into . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Well that lasted about 30 seconds. Now we need another 30. The Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the corresponding dollars were never put back into invest in value-add, which was the hope if that was taken out. Mr. Speaker, we recognize the importance of adding value in the agriculture sector, and the importance to rural Saskatchewan of doing that. We need the resources to be able to invest there, Mr. Speaker. We are working diligently to make sure that we get a square deal from the federal government so that we will have the resources to invest in a good future for agriculture. That's where we're headed, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what a sad day is in the province of Saskatchewan. It's a sad day when a government, when this NDP government goes to Ottawa and demands changes to a program that it knows is a 60/40 program. And then it gets those changes, Mr. Speaker, and it refuses to fund them. And then when pressed on their decision not to fund the commitments it's made to producers, it said, it would be like throwing money away. In the face of what we've seen on the farm this year, helping producers, helping rural Saskatchewan, the minister says, is like throwing money away.

That is sad, Mr. Speaker. It's sad in terms of what that might mean for many farm families who want to meet their expenses,

who want to provide for those families. It's sad for what it might mean for the countless businesses across this province that depend on those producers to have the resources that they could have and should have, if the government only kept its word. And it's sad when they have to get lectured by the Minister of Agriculture — their Minister of Agriculture — who says helping them is like throwing money away. I'll give him another chance — stand in his place, we say to him, and apologize to rural Saskatchewan and our producers.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it is very clear to anybody that has listened, who has been a part of what's going on here, that the member opposite is just engaging in wild distortions trying to make a storyline that'll get picked up. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's not going to work. Because thinking people know that what we are doing right now is trying to get a very square and just deal from the federal government so that we will continue to have the kind of resources that are necessary to invest in a prosperous future for agriculture in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, if we were to put those hundreds of millions of dollars that are drawn up in the CAIS program, and those hundreds of millions of dollars that really are a product of an inequitable system that puts Saskatchewan paying five or six times the provincial per capita average, Mr. Speaker, it would be akin to throwing those dollars away and not investing them in the future of agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, no wonder, no wonder rural Saskatchewan has no time for this Premier or that party that's represented over there. The disdain that that side of the House holds for rural Saskatchewan is alarming.

Mr. Speaker, remember what the NDP lawyers told those plaintiffs in SPUDCO? Remember that? We're going to beat you because you're just a bunch of dumb farmers. That's what their NDP lawyers said to farmers who were facing the SPUDCO scandal. Now we have a Minister of Agriculture who wants to lecture the farm families in the province of Saskatchewan; who tells them that giving support, the support that they've committed to, I would suggest — I would suggest strongly, Mr. Speaker — giving that same support to farm families is like throwing money away. You know, Mr. Speaker, I think rural Saskatchewan would like to throw something away here too. I think they'd like to throw that Minister of Agriculture away.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — I'd think they'd like to see him, Mr. Speaker, without these obligations and duties. I'm asking him again if he'll apologize for his comments to Saskatchewan farm families and to rural Saskatchewan? And I'm asking this Premier to inform this House if he accepts this kind of conduct from his ministers, Mr. Speaker? And if he does he deserves the reputation he has in rural Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Well, Mr. Speaker, if anybody owes the people of rural Saskatchewan an apology it's the member opposite. Mr. Speaker, we are trying to get the most for the people of Saskatchewan, not the least. Mr. Speaker, if we were to have gone ahead and signed that blank cheque . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. The Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if we had agreed to going with the plan that Ottawa threw on us, Mr. Speaker, we would be accepting the fact that we should just take the least for the producers in this province. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite truly does owe the farmers and the people of rural Saskatchewan an apology for the distortions that have been put forward today and in the past, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what we want is clear, reasonable thinking about how we can move into a successful future of agriculture. And, Mr. Speaker, with all the name calling and twisting that comes from that side of the House we're not going to get there. But with the work that we're doing, we will.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:30)

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

Amalgamation of School Divisions

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Learning.

Mr. Speaker, over the last four years, the school boards around this province have been through some pretty tumultuous times, but in particular over the last six months since his announcement on May 13.

Mr. Speaker, four years ago school boards were asked by the former minister to reduce by 25 per cent — a target he didn't even think they could meet and they have met it, Mr. Speaker. But that wasn't good enough. That wasn't good enough.

The minister decided to flex his powers and force amalgamation across this province, Mr. Speaker. If that isn't bad enough, last Friday in a news conference, Mr. Speaker, the minister stated, he went on answering a question by saying that "We've put millions and millions and millions of dollars into education over the last number of years and school boards have not reduced the property tax whatsoever."

Mr. Speaker, the money that the government has put in hasn't even covered the increases that are responsible of this government such as teachers' contracts and utility rates. Mr. Speaker, does the minister honestly believe that school divisions should reduce the property tax when they face a chronic, habitual underfunding of education by this NDP government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite and I think all members in this House know that this legislature has voted significant new monies to education over the years.

Last year we voted sufficient funds in order to fully fund the teachers' salary increases and that that money has been used appropriately. We certainly do also believe though that we need to do more on property tax relief. That is why the supplementary estimates tabled by the Minister of Finance provide \$55 million this year and next year for property tax relief that will go directly to property taxpayers. That was a commitment we made; that is a commitment we will keep.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, last month the Minister of Learning accused school boards of being irresponsible with the money he just said that they've given them. On October 7 the minister is stated as saying, and I quote from the *Leader-Post*. Minister Thomson is stated, and the quote goes:

We're trying to find a school system that is sustainable to make sure the resources aren't . . . (get this) squandered in board rooms . . . (Mr. Speaker).

Is that what he thinks of school boards around this province is that they squander the money that they are given by the provincial government?

Is it the same type of squandering that has gone on around the cabinet table when this government over the last four years has put \$4 million into amalgamation and as of May 13 thrown that completely out of the window because it made no difference whatsoever, Mr. Speaker?

Is it the same cabinet table that has squandered \$35 million on a SPUDCO deal that they think is a great deal?

Mr. Speaker, does this minister truly believe that school boards around this province squander money? And if he does, please inform us which boards he means.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — I want to say that the members opposite certainly deserve an A for creative writing today. They've managed to work SPUDCO into every one of their questions. SPUDCO has nothing to do with education, believe it or not. This'll be shocking to many of the members opposite, but it's true.

Let me say this with regard to the issue around spending money in boardrooms as opposed to in the classrooms. Everyone understands that we need to make sure the maximum amount of money is available to the classrooms. As I said this morning to the school board associations, I think that the trustees have done

a good job in dealing with the system they have in front of them.

But let's be very clear about this. The system that we have in place today with 81 boards, some of whom have no schools, many of whom have very few students, does not ensure that the maximum amount of money is spent in classrooms as opposed to on administrative structures. This reform that we have introduced, that we will complete, will provide better resources for classrooms, for teachers, and for the schools. And that is why we have undertaken it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, it's absolutely astonishing that the minister would stand in this House and say that losing \$35 million on a rotten potato deal has nothing to do with education. It has something to do with every citizen in this province, including the students of this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I've just been at the SSBA conference for the last three days, as I know the minister has stopped in at the odd time. And school boards around this province are saying the plan that this minister is introducing is a province wide and an inch thick, Mr. Speaker. It has no plans for future success because, Mr. Speaker, the plan simply hasn't been thought out. He is expecting these school boards to take over as of January 1, 2006. School boards around the province are saying that just is too tight of a timeline.

I'm asking the minister today, will he at least listen to some of the school boards — because he hasn't so far in any of the consultation — will he at least listen to some of the school boards and set the implementation back to at least July 1, 2006 or August 1 and give the newly elected school boards at least another six months to implement his plan which is that thick?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Well, you know, on the one hand the critic argues that the agenda is so deep and so broad that it's going to take more time to implement. On the other hand he says, oh, it's just an inch thick and there's nothing to it. Well, which is it?

I would say to the member opposite this. The school boards that I have talked to as I have travelled around the province argue that they need to get the stability put back into the system, that we should get the reforms undertaken, and we should provide that path forward. That is what we're doing. The boundaries will come into effect on January 1 of '06. Later today I will introduce legislation to allow for school board elections in '05. That's the approach we're going to move forward. That is what boards are telling me that they think is necessary in order to get the system moved forward and so we've got a sustainable, affordable education system.

That's our commitment; that's our approach; that's what we're

doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Utility Rate Rebate

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased today to announce that our government has met its commitment to provide Saskatchewan families with the lowest cost utility rate bundle in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, we made this commitment a year ago. We promised Saskatchewan families that they would enjoy the lowest costs in the country for a bundle of basic utility services that includes residential electricity and natural gas, basic phone service, and car insurance. We said we would have the lowest cost this year and every year. And, Mr. Speaker, we have achieved that goal today.

Mr. Speaker, we will be providing every Saskatchewan family with a utility rebate of \$137. By doing this, the total cost of our utility rate bundle for 2004 will be the lowest in the country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, every household will receive the same \$137 rebate. That is the fairest way to provide the rebate. We will not be providing cash rebates and the rebate is meant to help pay for utility costs so it will be provided only as a credit on utility bills.

Most people will get the rebate as a credit on their residential SaskTel phone bill in December. SaskTel charges will be subtracted from the credit until the full credit is used even if this takes a few months. If people do not normally get a SaskTel bill, they will arrange to apply the rebate as a credit to their SaskPower or SaskEnergy bill. Application forms will be available in December on CIC's (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) Web site at www.cicorp.sk.ca or by calling our toll free number at 1-866-366-6611.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people own our public utilities and they receive many benefits from that collective ownership. This utility bundle rebate is one more of those benefits. And with this rebate, our government is keeping a very important commitment to Saskatchewan families. They will, Mr. Speaker, enjoy the lowest cost utility rate bundle in Canada this year.

Mr. Speaker, our government does not take commitments lightly. When we make a commitment, Mr. Speaker, we keep that commitment.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to hear the minister having something to say about the utility rate bungle . . . I'm sorry, I meant the utility rate bundle promise. She and her colleagues have had so much to say on this issue in recent months.

In September last year, Mr. Speaker, the Premier had a type of epiphany and promised the lowest cost bundle of utility rates in Canada. Then the Minister of CIC tried to interpret the Premier's vision and did a little bungling of her own.

Mr. Speaker, initially the minister didn't know if this was going to be a one-year promise or a four-year promise. And, Mr. Speaker, here's what the minister told the media this morning. She said, and I quote:

Obviously, I was confused too. I came in with not a lot of knowledge about the commitment.

Now those aren't words that exactly instill real confidence. And here's what the Premier had to say about the rebates this morning. He said, and I quote, "It's not a perfect mechanism". Mr. Speaker, the first time in several years, I have to say that I'm in complete agreement with the Premier on his analysis.

This plan is a rush job to paper over a poorly conceived promise. The plan is not fair. The minister will get exactly the same rebate as a single mother with three children living in Cumberland House or Moosomin or any other community. This plan is inconsistent since not all of the \$54.1 million is actually going to consumers. Administration will eat up some of that amount. And this is all happening while SaskPower rates are going up substantially, with only a small portion of that rate increase coming back in the form of a rebate.

This NDP government is trying to say Merry Christmas to the people of Saskatchewan with an early Christmas gift. Well, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province won't forget that this government has too often played Scrooge instead of Santa. That's bad enough, but being bought with one's own money really is an insult. Lower utility rate increases would be a much better gift for the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Any further ministerial statements?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 76 — The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 76, The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture that Bill No. 76, The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to

adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

Bill No. 77 — The Public Works and Services Act

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 77, The Public Works and Services Act be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Labour that Bill No. 77, The Public Works and Services Act be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

Bill No. 78 — The Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation Repeal Act

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 78, The Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation Repeal Act be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation that Bill No. 78, The Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation Repeal Act be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

**Bill No. 79 — The Wildlife Habitat Protection
Amendment Act, 2004**

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 79, The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of the Environment that Bill No. 79, The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

**Bill No. 80 — The Education Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de
2004 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation**

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 80, The Education Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Learning that Bill No. 80, The Education Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

(14:45)

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, members, I wish to advise members that I am tabling the members' accountability and disclosure reports for the fiscal year ended March 31, the year 2004, and furthermore that I'm tabling the audited financial statements, auditor's opinion, and schedule of fixed assets for the government and opposition caucuses for the fiscal year ended March 31, the year 2004.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the 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 14:47.

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CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. L. Calvert
Premier

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

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

Hon. B. Belanger
Minister of Northern Affairs

Hon. E. Cline
Minister of Industry and Resources

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

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

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

Hon. J. Nilson
Minister of Health
Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. P. Prebble
Minister of Corrections and Public Safety

Hon. F. Quennell
Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Hon. C. Serby
Deputy Premier
Minister of Rural Revitalization

Hon. M. Sonntag
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister of Highways and Transportation

Hon. L. Taylor
Minister of Government Relations

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

Hon. H. Van Mulligen
Minister of Finance

Hon. M. Wartman
Minister of Agriculture and Food