



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

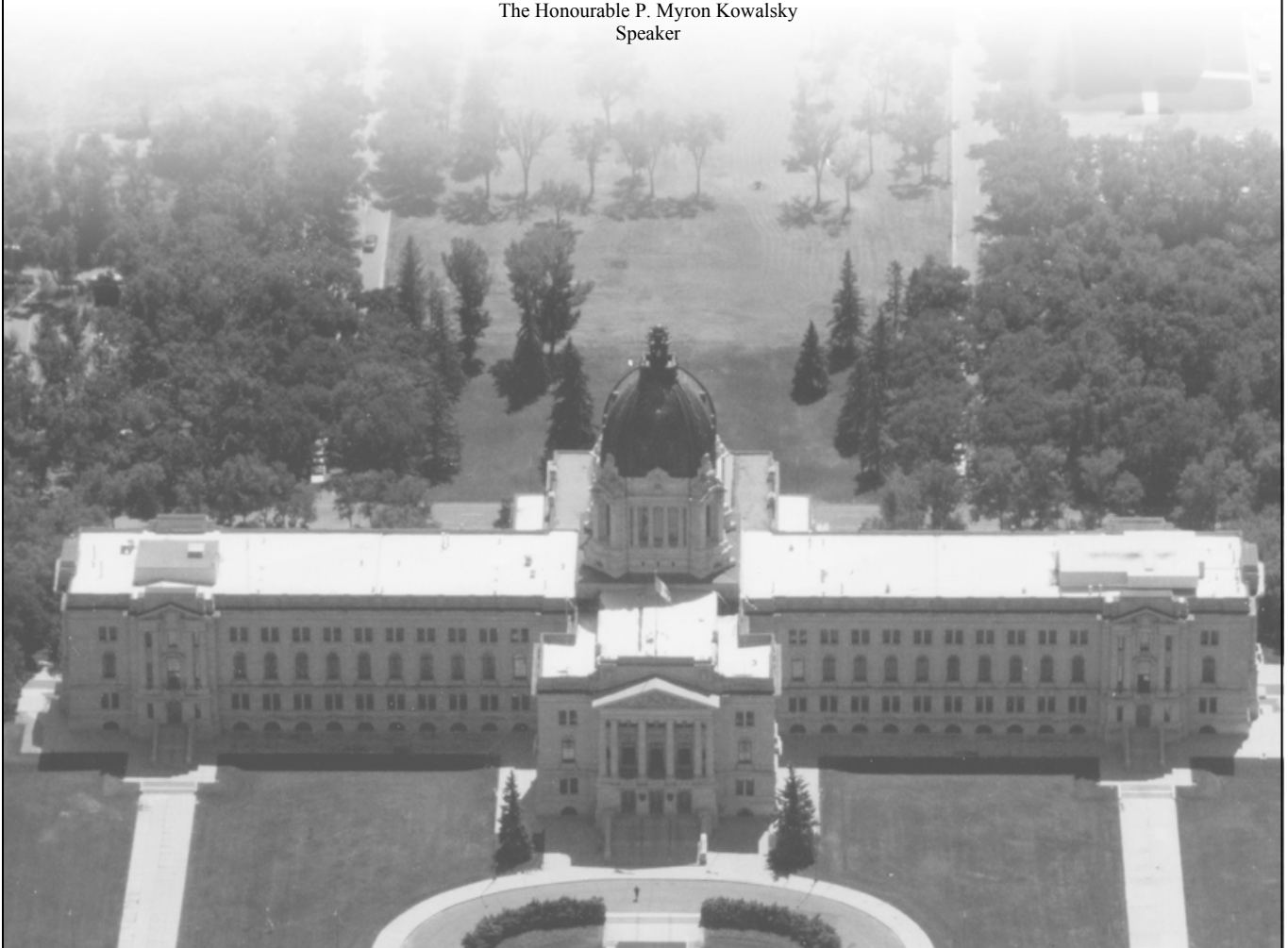
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

The Assembly met at 13:30.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise on one more opportunity to present a petition on behalf of my constituents as it regards forced school board 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.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by constituents from the communities of Leader, Eastend, Climax, Dollard, Shaunavon, and Gull Lake. I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted to rise today on behalf of people from my constituency who are concerned about underfunding in the CAIS (Canadian agricultural income stabilization) program:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this 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.

The people who have signed this petition are from Rose Valley and Regina.

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to do with funding for 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 the provincial government contributes funds to the latest BSE assistance package released by the federal government.

These signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Strasbourg, Southey, Craven, and Bulyea.

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise on behalf of the residents of Saskatchewan concerned with the SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company) scandal. The prayer of their 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 hold an independent judicial inquiry into the SPUDCO scandal.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are from the communities of Lipton, Meadow Lake, McLean, and Carrot River. I so present.

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy, who are very concerned about the deplorable state of Highway 35 south of Weyburn. 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 hundreds of people from all over 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 in my constituency who are very 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.

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

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

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens opposed to reduction of services at Davidson,

Imperial health centres:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Simpson and Imperial. 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 Grandora, Asquith, and Vanscoy. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise again in the Assembly and present a petition on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan concerned with the loss of health care. 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 Eatonia ambulance services are not discontinued.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by the good citizens of Eatonia and Leader, Saskatchewan; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; and as well as Calgary and Medicine Hat, Alberta. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order a certain petition regarding the government's position on the mandatory amalgamation of public school divisions presented November, 19 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 pursuant to rule 14(7) they are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 637, 638, 639, and 640.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 70 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority: what scientific basis does TransGas have that the Grandora-Dunfermline-Vanscoy TransGas natural gas storage project will not affect the local groundwater quality and quantity?

Also while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I give notice I shall on day 70 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy: has an environmental impact study been completed on the Vanscoy-Grandora-Dunfermline TransGas natural gas storage project, and if so, what are the findings?

And also one more question, Mr. Speaker:

To the Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority: how many wells have been affected by the Grandora-Dunfermline-Vanscoy TransGas natural gas storage project, and where are these affected wells located?

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have several questions this afternoon. I give notice that I shall on day no. 70 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SGI: what discounts do SGI employees, executives, and retirees receive on their SGI bills?

I have a similar question to the Minister Responsible for SaskPower pertaining to similar discounts on SaskPower bills to those employees, executives, and retirees.

A similar question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy: what discounts do SaskEnergy employees, executives, and retirees receive on their SaskEnergy bills?

I give notice that I shall on day no. 70 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for STC: what discounts do STC employees, executives, and retirees receive on their STC services?

And possibly the most important question, Mr. Speaker. I shall give notice that on day no. 70 I will ask the government the

following question:

To the minister responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority: what discounts do SLGA employees, executives, and retirees receive on their SLGA purchases?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have some, as all members are aware, some very special guests today in your gallery, Mr. Speaker — the two very talented young women who represented our province as two of the top ten finalists in the *Canadian Idol* contest. And as I've said just moments ago out in the gallery to a few gathered here, our province represents 3 per cent of the Canadian population but at *Canadian Idol*, we represented 20 per cent of the *Canadian Idol*.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And those, Mr. Speaker, those two very talented young women are with us today. I would like first to introduce to all members, Manoah Hartmann. Manoah is joined today by her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. John Lorenzen; her parents, Ann and Harold Lorenzen; and her brother and sister, Nick and Keira. Welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And of course, Mr. Speaker, our other Canadian idol, Theresa Sokyryka.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And, Mr. Speaker, Theresa is joined by her parents, Sonya and Harold Sokyryka.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, in a short time, members and others in the building will have an opportunity to meet and greet our two Canadian idols in a short tea after we have a recess.

And before I take my place, Mr. Speaker, I want to also introduce in your gallery today, my two Canadian idols, Betty and Stephanie Calvert.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the members of the official opposition, I want to join with the Premier in welcoming Manoah and Theresa here to their Legislative Assembly, and also a welcome to their families, who I'm sure are still just bursting with pride for the achievements of these two young Saskatchewan women. It was a pleasure to participate in the program today and we truly are very, very proud of you.

I would say this as well, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of members on this side of the House that are interested in finding out directly from Theresa and Manoah how it is they were able to attract that many votes here in the province of Saskatchewan.

I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them here today to their Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, personal friends and guests of Manoah Hartmann, but also students within the constituency of Regina Wascana Plains.

I've always received a warm welcome at W.S. Hawrylak School, be it a dunk tank to raise funds or a community parade. So I'm very proud to introduce them today. Seated in the west gallery are 31 grade 8 students from W.S. Hawrylak School, accompanied by their teacher, Kelly Couse, and the chaperone, Margaret Ruthnum. I'd ask all members to join with me in giving a warm welcome to the students and friends of Manoah.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — While I'm on my feet, I was able to, in the rotunda, become acquainted with Pastor Peter Worby and his wife Patricia, who are seated in the east gallery. In speaking with them, they've been also very close personal friends of Manoah's and pastor to Manoah through all of the excitement and the tumultuous times of her summer. So I would give them, and ask all members to give them, a warm welcome as well.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Addley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great privilege and honour to introduce to you and to the House, a number of students from Holy Family School in Saskatoon Sutherland — 28 grade 7 and 8 students, in fact. And they're joined by a number of chaperones and teachers: Mr. Bodnarchuk — Mr. B — Mr. and Mrs. Kachkowski, Mrs. Drager, Mrs. Kaminski, and Mr. Maskal. They are accompanying this group today.

(13:45)

And this school was here at the request of Theresa Sokyryka — I practised this already — Theresa Sokyryka. My wife's going to kill me for getting that name wrong. And after hearing Theresa's comments and incredible performance today, it's obvious that the teachers of Holy Family School are doing a very excellent job educating the future generation of our students, and the teachers must be very proud.

So I would ask all hon. members to join me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina South, the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too am very pleased to introduce to members of the Assembly today, a group of students who have joined us in your gallery. They're journalism students from the University of Regina. They are here today to participate in the Journalists' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy that is hosted by yourself, the press gallery, and the University of Regina School of Journalism.

These students are here taking an opportunity to observe our proceedings, to discuss a number of issues with their colleagues in the press gallery, including how to make sure there's a more realistic portrayal of parliamentary democracy within the media, and a number of other issues that I understand they're discussing with both sides of the House.

There are a number of them here today. This is the first of a two-phase visit. The second group come, of course, in the spring. And I would ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with my hon. friend, the Minister of Learning, in welcoming the students from the University of Regina School of Journalism to the Journalists' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy. I spent some time with them this morning. I'm glad to see that most of them have recovered from the coma that my 45-minute lecture on the role of the opposition induced on nearly all of us.

With that said, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members once again join in welcoming these students to their Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and to members of the Assembly, two special guests seated in your gallery. First of all, Jon Schubert, who is the newly appointed president and CEO (chief executive officer) of SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance).

Jon sings the praises of SGI, not nearly as melodiously as our special guests, but he does a wonderful job in his short time he's been there already. Jon, if you'd just stand please, just so we can see who you are. Jon, this is his first time he's ever attended the proceedings at the legislature.

Prior to his appointment as SGI president, Jon had been engaged as a consultant specializing in the insurance health care and rehabilitation industry. He was employed with SGI for 23 years and worked in a variety of senior management positions including claims, underwriting, salvage, motor vehicle rate setting, reinsurance, and accounting — which is what his formal training is in.

Jon is also vice-president of the United Nations bone and joint decade 2000-2010 task force on neck pain and its associated disorders, and World Health Organization task force on mild traumatic brain injury.

Also with Jon is Betty Weigel, manager of government and corporate affairs at SGI. Betty was born in Wynyard in — oh, it doesn't say, Betty, what year — Saskatchewan, and in Wynyard, Saskatchewan and raised in Saskatoon. Betty joined SGI in May 1997. Prior to working with SGI, Betty also worked at CIC (Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan) and STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company).

Please join me in welcoming these two special guests.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Saskatchewan Well Represented in *Canadian Idol* Competition

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was a competition that started out with thousands of singing hopefuls across Canada and ended up with a very strong Saskatchewan connection.

Many of us watched each week as the competitors in *Canadian Idol* would sing out their hearts in hopes of making it to the next stage of the event. Each week the numbers were narrowed down and each week the Saskatchewan connection remained. It became the talk of the town as everyone on coffee row would discuss how the Saskatchewan entrants would fare. I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that many of those watching were almost as nervous as those competing, hoping that our talented singers from this province would make it to the next stage. Mr. Speaker, the eventual *Canadian Idol* winner, Kalan Porter, was from Medicine Hat, Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, someone who we are all very proud of, the runner-up, Theresa Sokyryka, is from Saskatoon and, according to her bio on the *Canadian Idol* Web site, she wrote her first musical composition at the age of four. She's come a long way since then and we're very, very proud of her accomplishments.

And as a side, Mr. Speaker, my in-laws who watched her every week, through and through, when they saw her biography, pointed out that they used to live in the house that she now occupies.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say a special hello to Manoah Hartmann from Regina. Mr. Speaker, Manoah also made it quite far in *Canadian Idol* and it should be said that Ms. Hartmann made us all very proud as well. Manoah is a University of Regina graduate and it says on the *Canadian Idol* Web site that she started her singing career singing and dancing for her grandparents when she was just a very young girl. She also had dinner with myself and the Minister of Learning at the Regina Iron Chef competition, and it was lovely to make her acquaintance there.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in congratulating our Canadian idols, the true winners for Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

University of Saskatchewan Huskies Off to Vanier Cup

Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan football season isn't over just yet. It's my great pleasure to stand in the Assembly today to congratulate the University of Saskatchewan Huskies football team on their victory over the St. Mary's Huskies in this weekend's Mitchell Bowl.

Mr. Speaker, the victory means that Saskatchewan will advance to play at Laval in the next weekend's Vanier Cup, the ultimate prize in Canadian university football. This will be their second appearance in the Vanier Cup in the last three years.

It was a close fought game, Mr. Speaker. St. Mary's actually had a three-point lead early in the third quarter before the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) team started pulling away, putting together back-to-back fourth quarter touchdown drives to put the game away.

Mr. Speaker, clearly football is a team game and everyone involved with the U of S Huskies deserves a lot credit, but I think Saskatchewan quarterback Steve Bilan deserves special mention. Bilan played despite a painful rib injury that kept him sidelined for the past three weeks. He got great protection from the offensive line and completed 20 of 34 passes for 254 yards and four touchdowns.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating the University of Saskatchewan Huskies team and coaches on a very well-deserved win this weekend, and wishing them every success in the upcoming Vanier Cup. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was a beautiful sunny November afternoon this past Saturday as over 5,000 people packed Griffiths Stadium on the U of S campus to watch the battle of the Huskies. The visiting St. Mary's Huskies from Halifax battled the hometown favourites University of Saskatchewan Huskies football team.

Adding to the drama was the fact that the U of S quarterback, Steve Bilan, was playing his first football game in a month as he struggled with strained abdominal muscles. In the face of adversity, Bilan threw four touchdown passes to lead the University of Saskatchewan to a 31-16 Mitchell Bowl win over St. Mary's. Two of those passes were to fullback Jeff Piercy, who is a constituent and a good friend of mine.

The U of S Huskies will now travel to Hamilton's Ivor Wynne Stadium to battle the defending national champion Laval Rouge

et Or in this Saturday's Vanier Cup. Hundreds of fans, family, and friends will make the trip to Hamilton to support the green and white, and the new physical activity centre on the U of S campus will be featuring the game live on the biggest indoor screen in Western Canada.

The only controversy during the game was when one fan stripped down to a thong and proceeded to run through the stadium wrapped only in a Saskatchewan flag. Thong boy, as he became affectionately known by the crowd, bore a striking resemblance to talk show host John Gormley. I personally thought it looked more like Murray Mandryk. One thing was for sure, he made true the old adage that 90 per cent of the people look better with their clothes on.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members to extend best wishes to Coach Brian Towriss, the entire coaching staff, and the entire U of S Huskie football team. I am confident they will once again bring back the Vanier Cup to Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

2004 Canadian Western Agribition

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to say a few words about the Western Canadian Agribition which starts today in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, it's not surprising that one of the largest and best known agricultural exhibitions and marketplaces in all of North America takes place right here in Saskatchewan. The people of this province have been holding agricultural fairs since the 1880s. Agribition in many ways isn't much different than any of those events. It just happens to be, though, like so much that has happened in agriculture over the past 120 years or so, on a much larger scale.

Mr. Speaker, Agribition is about hospitality and entertainment, and most of all it's about showcasing and marketing Canadian agricultural products and expertise to the world.

Mr. Speaker, I think it says a lot about the determination and the resilience of our agricultural community that even in the midst of the ongoing BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) crisis and the really significant challenges that producers have faced over the last years because of frost and drought, that Agribition this year promises to be better than ever.

Over the next six days, 145,000 people from nine Canadian provinces, 20 American states, and 40 countries from around the world will be coming to Regina to take part in the fun.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the efforts of all those who contribute to making Agribition the world-class event that it is, and I urge everyone who has the opportunity this week to take part in this very unique and excellent Saskatchewan experience. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I also rise for Agribition.

This is the first day of the 2004 Canadian Western Agribition. Agribition runs from this Monday to Saturday. Mr. Speaker, this is the 34th annual Agribition. Last year Agribition attracted 140,000 visitors including, Mr. Speaker, 48 visitor countries.

Agribition is about the marketing of livestock and livestock products, and those you will find in abundance. Last year there were over 4,000 head of livestock at Agribition despite the ongoing BSE crisis.

Agribition boasts 21 acres of show space and more than 600 exhibits. Agribition is the premier agricultural exhibition in Canada and is among the largest in the world.

I would ask all members to spend some time down at the barns at Agribition and maybe even get some farmers' gold on your boots. The people you will meet are the heart of this province and are a real pleasure to visit with. While you are down at the barns, get your tickets to the evening rodeo. It is one of the best rodeos you'll find in Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would once again ask all members to recognize the importance of Agribition and urge them to join with the people from all over the world in attending the showcase of Saskatchewan agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Sean Frisky and Ground Effects Honoured

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the Assembly today to say a few words about one of Saskatchewan's fine young citizens, one of our best and brightest.

Mr. Speaker, not so long ago Nipawin native, Sean Frisky, came up with a an idea for a new system of cleaning contaminated land. His notion was to use vacuum pressure systems to remove hydrocarbons and other contaminants from the soil to replace the old method, known as dump and dig, which consisted of excavating contaminated soil and hauling it away. This proved to be a great idea, Mr. Speaker. The new system was not only more efficient and environmentally friendly than dump and dig but in the long run, it was also less expensive.

Mr. Speaker, Sean Frisky's extremely successful, Regina-based company, Ground Effects, has now been in business for six years. It employs 24 people and has annual revenues of almost three and a half million dollars. It has recently received awards from both the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters and the National Research Council, and was the winner in the TIA (technology in action) new Saskatchewan product category at

the ABEX (Achievement in Business Excellence) awards last month.

Lately, Mr. Speaker, Ground Effects has been doing more and more work outside Saskatchewan, but Mr. Frisky has no intention of leaving. As he says, "Our overhead is lower. Our taxes are lower. We have a great staff, with a good work ethic." That says a lot, Mr. Speaker.

I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Sean Frisky on his accomplishments to date, and in wishing him every success in his future endeavours. Thank you.

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

Breast Cancer Fundraiser in Foam Lake

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, on Saturday night I was delighted to attend the Breast of Friends fundraiser in Foam Lake for the Prairie Women on Snowmobiles. Tara Robinson from CTV (Canadian Television Network Limited) was a guest speaker. Everyone had a wonderful time. The food was fantastic. And it was a testosterone-free evening; no men were allowed. This group of women were able to present their friend, Linda Helgason, a snowmobile rider in the Prairie Women on Snowmobiles, a cheque for \$10,000.

Mr. Speaker, much of this money was raised by producing and selling a book that hit the best sellers' list in three months. The cookbook called *For the Breast of Friends*, was written and produced in Foam Lake, Saskatchewan. It was an endeavour to raise money for battling breast cancer and it sold over 12,000 copies.

The Breast of Friends are a group of women who had friends, families or colleagues affected by breast cancer. Linda Helgason who decided to ride with the Prairie Women on Snowmobiles needed to raise \$3,000. Ten friends — Charlene Rokochoy, Darlene Cooper, Nat Dunlop, Jeannie Johnson, Anne Reynolds, Jacquie Klebeck, Linda Helgason, Cecile Halyk, Val Helgason, and Patti Hack — decided to support Linda by holding a community supper.

(14:00)

From this endeavour they took the next step and created a cookbook. They formed their own publishing company and prepared the pages of the cookbook camera-ready and prepared the photos.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this Assembly to join with me in congratulating and thanking these women for their passionate commitment to the eradication of breast cancer. Women all over the world are beneficiaries of the Breast of Friends contributions. With their help, all of us can dream of the day when breast cancer will just be part of history.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

**Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company
Litigation**

Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Well, Mr. Speaker, another day, another potential lawsuit for the NDP (New Democratic Party) arising from the SPUDCO scandal.

Mr. Speaker, we learned over the weekend that the NDP may now be sued for defamation of character of both the producers, the plaintiffs involved in the SPUDCO case, and amazingly, Mr. Speaker, potentially a lawsuit from the professional accountants that the producers hired for that case.

The NDP have alleged that the plaintiffs and their accounts had circulated false and misleading financial information, Mr. Speaker, and that they had negligently and wilfully misrepresented the economic potential of the potato venture. Those are the NDP accusations and allegations against the producers and the accountants that the producers hired.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday we asked the minister responsible what evidence he had of any of this, Mr. Speaker, and would he table it. He refused to do that. He refused to provide to the people of the province any evidence for these outrageous claims of these allegations.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is this: will he now table any evidence he has of the allegations that the NDP lawyers made of the producers hurt by the SPUDCO scandal and their accountants?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me say first that I will be pleased to table the relevant evidence. In doing so, Mr. Speaker, and the reason that I wanted to take the weekend to consider this, is that I want to be very careful on behalf of taxpayers and on behalf of this government not to revive any of the allegations that were made during the counterclaim because very clearly, Mr. Speaker, both parties — both the plaintiffs and the defendants — in this case have agreed to set aside their differences to settle their claims, including the counterclaim, Mr. Speaker.

And I might indicate in the case of Mr. Langefeld that he has expressly requested that matters associated with the counterclaim be considered as settled.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate . . . In that context, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the Leader of the Opposition that we will in fact be tabling evidence which indicates what our case was on the matter that he raises. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the simple question to the minister is this: what is the basis for the evidence that he is about to

table? Why is he delaying, Mr. Speaker, tabling this important information, and what's the basis for it? Is it the government's accountants that have provided some . . . that attempted to provide some case for this, because we know the claim was thrown out, Mr. Speaker. What is the nature of the evidence, and when will it be tabled in this Assembly?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for SaskWater.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Speaker, let me indicate that I'm prepared to table it right now, first of all, and will do so, Mr. Speaker. So I'm tabling two documents. The first, Mr. Speaker, is the notice of expert witnesses, and in this case I just want to indicate to members of the Assembly, that the expert witness was Derek Malcolm, who is a partner in the accounting firm of Grant Thornton.

So I'll be tabling this notice of expert witnesses, and I'll also be tabling, Mr. Speaker, the expert's report. And this is a detailed report, some 58 pages, which lays out among other things the concerns that the expert witness had about the business plan of the Lake Diefenbaker Potato Corporation and about the accounting practices that were being used. And I want to emphasize, Mr. Speaker, that in tabling these documents I'm providing information to the House. I'm also providing a document that was already public, Mr. Speaker, filed with the courts. And finally, in no way does this revive the allegations that were in dispute. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the minister makes a very interesting point, 2,700 documents filed in court over the NDP SPUDCO scandal, 38,000 questions asked of the plaintiffs by the NDP lawyers in all of this — including, Mr. Speaker, including this counterclaim, Mr. Speaker, that the minister is now referring to, the threats against producers and their accountants.

The minister makes a good point. This argument was made in court already, and it was thrown out, Mr. Speaker, by a judge. It was thrown out. It was deemed to be without validity.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what it speaks to then is something else afoot here with the NDP related to SPUDCO. It speaks to the fact that they want to bully these plaintiffs away from their lawsuit. They wanted to bully this group of professional chartered accountants. Whatever the documents, whatever the information the minister has, it's true that these producers are owed an apology by the Premier of this province for the allegations that were made in this regard and so too are the accountants. And that's the question for the Premier today. Will he make that apology for his allegations to the producers involved in SPUDCO and to the accountants they hired?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, let me say first that the documents will speak for themselves. And the members of this Assembly, the members of the media, and the members of the public can examine these documents and see that they're . . . what the basis for the government's concerns were.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I want to re-emphasize that both the plaintiffs and the defendants in this dispute have agreed to settle their differences and that all claims and counterclaims have been settled, Mr. Speaker. And I want to emphasize that.

And third, I want to just correct the Leader of the Opposition on one pertinent point, and that was that with respect to the claim, the claim of negligent misrepresentation was allowed to proceed against the plaintiff, Judith River. So the Leader of the Opposition should be mindful of that. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Justice Ball threw out the case against Kenway Mack, Mr. Speaker. Here's how the judge referred to the NDP's lawyer's case. He called it frivolous and vexatious, Mr. Speaker. That's what the minister ought to be mindful of in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

And the Premier of this province ought to take this opportunity to stand up and apologize to the producers and to their accountants for frivolous and vexatious actions on their part that was more about bullying producers, Mr. Speaker. It was more about obfuscating the true reality behind SPUDCO, preventing it from going public. Meanwhile millions in taxpayers' dollars are being spent, not only in the losses for SPUDCO, but to the NDP lawyers.

Again to the Premier, will he do the right thing, Mr. Speaker? Will he apologize to those whose claims that he made, that his government made, were considered frivolous and vexatious by a judge? Will he apologize to those professionals, those accountants who helped the plaintiffs in this regard?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for SaskWater.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I invite the Leader of the Opposition and the members opposite to read the documents that I've tabled. I invite members of the media to read the documents that I've tabled. I accept the decision from the judge. We accept the decision from the judge; that's why we decided not to appeal the counterclaim decision, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, let me correct the Leader of the Opposition on one other important issue that he's raised because he's somehow suggesting that the counterclaim was about delaying the legal proceedings. And members opposite laugh but, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to members of the opposition that it was not until August 2003 that the plaintiffs in this case finalized, Mr. Speaker, their statement of claim. There were many amendments to the statement of claim.

And I invite the members opposite to look at the record, and they'll find that until August 2003, the plaintiffs' statement of claim was not finalized, Mr. Speaker. That's one of the reasons there was a delay in this case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Somebody in the NDP approved this counterclaim. To be sure, it was actually made by the NDP lawyers — the firm, Mr. Speaker, that's who actually carried out the counterclaim. But someone had to approve it, someone in the cabinet, maybe the Premier himself, someone in the Premier's office. And that's a question for this Assembly, for the Premier to answer: did he approve the counterclaim?

And if he did approve this counterclaim against producers and accountants, does he believe what's in the counterclaim? Because there's only really two options here — the Premier either thinks these allegations against farmers and these accountants are true or he doesn't.

Mr. Speaker, if he doesn't believe that, he ought to stand up and apologize. If he does believe that these allegations are true, the ones made against farmers and accountants, will he step outside this Legislative Assembly where he doesn't have any protection from libel, and will he repeat those statements, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for SaskWater.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I intend to say the same things inside this Assembly as I say outside the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the case that was made by government and was based, Mr. Speaker, on the advice of Grant Thornton accountants, a very reputable accounting company, Mr. Speaker, and it was based on the advice of legal counsel.

We accept Justice Ball's decision, Mr. Speaker. We accept Justice Ball's decision. That's why we didn't appeal the counterclaim, Mr. Speaker. And in the view of government, Mr. Speaker, and I thought, Mr. Speaker, in the view of the plaintiffs, this matter had been settled by . . . on the basis of the settlement that was arrived at last month, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's been a resolution to the claim and the counterclaim, and both parties have agreed to set aside their claims. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Sale of Genetically Modified Potatoes

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday I asked the Minister for SaskWater a number of questions about the NDP sale of genetically modified potatoes. And the minister said that there was no need for a ministerial exemption on these

sales because the company was selling a duly registered product. Mr. Speaker, that has nothing to do with why a ministerial exemption is required. A ministerial exemption is required for any shipment of bulk potatoes leaving the province for fresh consumption or for processing. Mr. Speaker. That means at the very least all the shipments to Bassano would have required a ministerial exemption.

Will the minister — he has been tabling documents — will the minister do as I ask the other day and table those ministerial exemptions so that we can see that these GMO (genetically modified organisms) potatoes were properly identified?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for SaskWater.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all I think we need some clarity on the matter of where ministerial exemptions are granted because it's my understanding that ministerial exemptions generally, Mr. Speaker, apply to the buyer. And I would not have thought, Mr. Speaker, that the issue of ministerial exemptions would be a significant issue with respect to who SPUDCO was selling to — SPUDCO being the seller rather than the buyer, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, members of the opposition last week clearly suggested, Mr. Speaker, that we were . . . that SPUDCO was involved in selling seed that had been decertified, Mr. Speaker. And I would just point out to the members opposite that there has been a very clear statement in Saturday's *Star Phoenix*, Mr. Speaker, where the representative of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in Saskatoon clearly said, Mr. Speaker, that the seed in question had not been decertified by the federal government, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that the minister, and we know that the NDP are often confused about interprovincial trade laws. It was with interest this morning that I heard that the Premier now has to waltz on his bet with Premier Campbell because we're not allowed to move bison meat from Saskatchewan to British Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, it's a pretty simple question, and the minister has had a lot of time to work on this. Did the NDP properly identify the genetically modified potatoes it was selling for human consumption outside the province, inside the province, or was the NDP hiding the fact that it was selling GMO potatoes for human consumption?

(14:15)

The minister can answer that question very easily. We've asked him on several occasions to do so. Would he simply table the ministerial exemptions that were involved in this transaction so that we can see for ourselves what information the seller provided to the buyer of the potatoes?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for SaskWater.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Well, Mr. Speaker, to the best of my knowledge — and I'm not an expert in this area — but to the very best of my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, there was no need for a ministerial exemption.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear — and I'll do that by tabling this document — that there . . . first of all, the seed growers who were purchasing these seed potatoes, Mr. Speaker, clearly knew that they were NewLeaf, clearly knew that they were genetically modified. And I will table the invoice, Mr. Speaker, that was provided to one of these producers to make it clear to all members of the House that this is the case.

And thirdly, I want to say to the member opposite that with respect to table potatoes, Mr. Speaker, he knows full well that at the time, Mr. Speaker, there was no requirement for labelling these potatoes, Mr. Speaker, and that it was a regular practice in North America to blend potatoes that were not genetically modified and potatoes that were genetically modified. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, just by little dribs and drabs we're starting to get a few details from the minister. It's hard to pry them out, but it is becoming more and more apparent that the consumers and the buyers of these potatoes did not know that they were genetically modified potatoes, that they did not know that the market was about to fall out on these potatoes even though SPUDCO was aware that these potatoes were about to become worthless and was desperately trying to get rid of them.

Mr. Speaker, we understand a large portion of these potatoes went to the Bassano Growers. This is important for two reasons. First of all, it means that these potatoes would have been sold for human consumption, including human consumption right here in Saskatchewan and secondly because shipments of these potatoes would have required a ministerial exemption. I asked the minister to check that out. It's needed.

Mr. Speaker, the minister says he's willing to answer all the questions about SPUDCO, and we get them little by little. What quantity of genetically modified potatoes did SPUDCO sell to Bassano for human consumption, and will the minister table the ministerial exemptions required for that sale?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for SaskWater.

Hon. Mr. Prebble: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, for tomorrow, the member will have the information on precisely the exact amount of potatoes that was sold to Bassano. I'm sorry I don't have that with me right now, but I'll have it for him for tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to just look at the broader debate that's taken place in the House over the last few days, Mr. Speaker. First of all members opposite accused the government of having made investments without lawful authority, Mr. Speaker. But what has the Provincial Auditor concluded, Mr. Speaker? That we did have lawful authority.

Mr. Speaker, last week members opposite were accusing us of selling potatoes that were not properly certified. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency says they were properly certified, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, last week members opposite were accusing us of not properly managing the funds, Mr. Speaker, related to Ducks Unlimited on this matter. It's become clear, Mr. Speaker, that the government has fulfilled all their legal obligations in that regard, Mr. Speaker. Clearly members . . .

The Speaker: — Member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Economic Effects of Smoking Ban

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Talking about not well-founded — it took the previous minister six years to correct his statements that he made to the public, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, this government is practising a double standard when it comes to dealing with the economic effects of the smoking ban. This government is more than happy to protect its own pocket losses and cover anticipated losses from VLT (video lottery terminal) and liquor sales from the smoking ban. In fact the government is giving itself an early Christmas present of \$75 million to do just that. Meanwhile this very same government is telling the hotel and restaurant owners that will suffer losses as well to suck it up.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Finance: why the double standard?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, this House voted overwhelmingly in favour of banning smoking in public places last year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — We believe, Mr. Speaker, along with the vast majority of members opposite who voted for the smoking ban, that society is saying through this legislature that toxic substances in public air space is not acceptable. It's not acceptable, Mr. Speaker. That is a matter of public policy. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, this public policy is here to stay.

And I believe and I believe the public believes that the taxpayers expect, Mr. Speaker, that the Government of Saskatchewan will say how we are going to fund health care and education with their money, Mr. Speaker. The taxpayers of this province, I believe, Mr. Speaker, do not believe we should be using their money to subsidize private businesses, and we do not propose to do so, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, both sides of the House voted in favour of the smoking ban, but the government members are . . . the government is protecting their own coffers while denying seemingly that there is any loss being suffered by the hotels and restaurants across this province.

The government is sending out mixed messages. In August the Deputy Premier met with the hoteliers to discuss ways of reducing the economic hurt caused by the smoking ban. And yet last week the Minister of Finance flat out refused to discuss any options, saying so businesses have to adapt to it. And then today the Deputy Premier again said he's open to suggestions. So which one is it, Mr. Speaker?

My question again to the Minister of Finance: who speaks for this government on this issue of losses by businesses because of government actions?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Economic Development.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, society is moving on. Society is moving on to banning smoking in public places. And we do not believe, Mr. Speaker, that as society moves on, that we should be using taxpayers' money to compensate people for doing what they should be doing, which is having smoke-free public places, Mr. Speaker.

But I would say to the opposition this: if it is the position of the opposition that society and the taxpayers should be subsidizing hoteliers, then I ask them, should the taxpayers subsidize the brew pubs? Should they be subsidizing the nightclubs? Should they be subsidizing the legions? Should they be subsidizing the casinos, the restaurants, and the bingo halls? Should they, Mr. Speaker, be retroactively subsidizing businesses in the municipalities in this province that banned smoking as of July 1 this year?

If that is their position, Mr. Speaker, let them state their position, and we will have the debate. But in our view, Mr. Speaker, society is promoting healthy public policy. So are we. And the taxpayers will not be subsidizing businesses that are affected with it along with the rest of society, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government covers the losses of it in its own pockets, and it's looking after itself to the tune of \$75 million while it throws the businesses to the wolves. If the government is expecting less revenue because of the smoking ban, surely it can understand that businesses are not immune to that, despite what the Minister of Health and the Minister of Finance say. This is not fair, to me, Mr. Speaker, and I don't believe it's fair to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, to the Finance minister: what research has been done to support the bizarre conclusion that government will be hard hit from the smoking ban but businesses will not?

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the member opposite and the members opposite would understand that it is the responsibility of government to pay for the health care system, the education system, and the roads. That is the responsibility of government, Mr. Speaker.

It is not the responsibility of government where people are affected by healthy public policy that has come in, to start using taxpayers' money to subsidize private business. And I say to the members opposite if that is their position, they can explain to the House and explain to the public how much and for how long we should be paying hoteliers, lounge owners, brew pubs, casinos, bingos, and any other business that's affected, and we'll have the debate.

But, Mr. Speaker, we say that the policy is healthy public policy. We know that it will affect the way people do business. We know that people will have to adapt their businesses and find other ways to generate revenue in a healthy way. That is healthy public policy; that public policy will be supported by this government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While society is moving on on the smoking issue and prepared to admit that it's not always appropriate, government has taken it upon themselves, not this legislature, but government has taken it upon themselves to protect their own sources of income, Mr. Speaker. If there's no losses going to be suffered on a long term that need to be protected from government, why don't they take the \$75 million and simply pay down the debt, rather than artificially supporting the income levels of liquor and gaming?

Will the ministers admit that there will be a loss suffered by businesses across this province as a result of the smoking ban, and that if the government needs to artificially inflate its own income from liquor and gaming that the businesses also need some alternatives to help protect their sources of income?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well of course, Mr. Speaker, in typical right-wing fashion, the opposition supposes that government money somehow belongs to people in government and not to the people. One lesson that we have learned from the 1980s, Mr. Speaker, is that government money belongs to the people. It does not belong to people within the government who may want to benefit from it, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, please. Order. Order. I recognize the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — And I say to the members opposite, through you, Mr. Speaker, that it is time they realize that it is government's job to use the money of the taxpayers for health care, education, highways, and the other things government does. It is not the job of government to use some money from some taxpayers to give it to a certain select, few taxpayers, Mr. Speaker, and we will not be doing so.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask for leave to move a motion with respect to a recess.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave to move a motion with respect to a recess. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I recognize the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

Assembly Recess

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That this Assembly do now recess for one hour to pay tribute to our two Saskatchewan idols, and that this Assembly reconvene at the call of the Speaker.

Moved by myself, seconded by the member for Melfort, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader, the member for Regina Douglas Park, seconded by the Opposition House Leader, the member for Melfort:

That this Assembly do now recess for one hour to pay tribute to our two Saskatchewan idols, and that this Assembly reconvene at the call of the Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. The House stands recessed and will be reconvened at the call of the Speaker.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly recessed for a period of time.

The Speaker: — Order. The session will resume with orders of the day, written questions.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to stand on behalf of a very open and accountable government to table responses to all the questions, 512 through 553 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 512 through to 553 inclusive have been submitted.

(15:30)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 75 — The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 75, an Act respecting the Continued Public Ownership of Crown Corporations. This Act will be known as The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's publicly owned Crown corporations play an important public role in our province's communities, in our province's economy, and in the lives of Saskatchewan citizens. Crowns have played an important public role since Saskatchewan's earliest days as a province and even before our incorporation in 1905.

As we end our first century as a province and look forward to celebrating our centennial in 2005, we want to ensure that our Crown corporations are preserved and that they thrive in Saskatchewan's second century.

Mr. Speaker, Crown corporations were established to provide reliable, high-quality public services to all Saskatchewan people at affordable costs. From the early 1900s to the 21st century, Saskatchewan governments of a variety of political stripes — CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) and Liberal — have had Crown corporations to provide services to Saskatchewan people in all corners of our province.

From the installation of the first telephones at the turn of the century, to providing the most modern cellular telephone and high-speed Internet service in the world, our Crowns have

ensured people of Saskatchewan are provided with access to services no matter where they live.

Rural electrification, affordable public auto insurance, and one of North America's most expansive natural gas distribution systems are all proud legacies of public ownership in our province. Crowns have also had an excellent record of providing reliable and high quality services. And you need only ask people in Alberta and in the United States who've experienced electricity brownouts and the chaos of deregulation. Thanks to Saskatchewan Power, a publicly owned Crown utility, most Saskatchewan people don't even know what a brownout is.

Our Crowns have continued to provide these universal, reliable, high quality services at affordable costs over the years. In fact we can now say that they provide these services at the lowest costs in our country.

On November 17 I was pleased, along with the Premier, to announce that our government has kept its commitment to having the lowest cost bundle of basic utility rates in Canada for 2004. We made that commitment, Mr. Speaker, more than one year ago and, Mr. Speaker, we kept that commitment. By providing Saskatchewan families with a utility rebate of \$137 we had the lowest overall costs for a bundle of basic utilities that includes residential electricity and natural gas, basic phone service, and car insurance. And we're able to enjoy the benefit of the lowest utility rates because we do own our public utilities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — There is no other province in Canada that is in our enviable position. Saskatchewan is in the unique position that our utilities are publicly owned. We are envied by many in other jurisdictions that see Saskatchewan as a model for how public ownership can succeed.

Our Crowns, Mr. Speaker, are not static. They are evolving to meet the needs and desires of our citizens. Saskatchewan people expect our Crowns to play a role in economic development in our province, be good corporate citizens by contributing funds and volunteer time to community events and charities, providing quality jobs all across the province, supporting local businesses through the purchase of goods and services. And they expect, Mr. Speaker, our Crowns be run in a responsible and businesslike manner. It's not an easy balancing job but our Crowns have done all of these things over the years and they've done them very well.

Their economic contributions are significant. Saskatchewan publicly owned Crown corporations employ more than 9,500 citizens all across Saskatchewan. They support more than 12,000 locally owned Saskatchewan businesses every year through local purchasing policies. They spend about \$2 billion a year on local purchasing and system improvements. And, Mr. Speaker, they donate more than \$5 million a year to local charities and events. And, Mr. Speaker, they partner with more than 700 local dealers to provide phone, insurance, and natural gas service. And they support our citizens.

Since 1995 our Crown corporations have paid more than \$1.8

billion in dividends or revenue to the province's General Revenue Fund. This money is used for programs — important public programs — and important public services such as health care, education, and highways, which benefit all of our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, for all of these reasons we are introducing this Bill to protect and preserve public ownership of our Crown corporations to benefit future generations of Saskatchewan people. The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act is an investment in our future.

The wishes of our citizens were clear. They want strong publicly owned Crown corporations that continue to enhance their quality of lives and continue to serve future generations. Mr. Speaker, our government has heard our citizens' message and we are acting on their wishes. By enacting this Bill, we are formalizing our commitment to Saskatchewan citizens and to the Crown corporations that they collectively own.

Mr. Speaker, The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act outlines a list of Crown corporations that cannot be privatized until the people of our province have had a say in the matter. These include our major commercial Crown corporations and any other Crown we may wish to add in the future.

We needed to introduce this legislation because there are those not presently sitting on the government benches who may wish to privatize them. This Act establishes the procedures that would have to be followed in the event a future government proposes a privatization. It introduces a transparent process, and it ensures the wishes of the public will be heard and followed.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation requires that a thorough study of the pros and cons of a proposed privatization be conducted. The results would need to be — would have to be — reported in full to this Legislative Assembly, which represents the people of our province. This would be followed by a committee established by this Legislative Assembly, the people's Legislative Assembly, examining the proposed privatization, ensuring that Saskatchewan citizens would be fully, fully informed of the implications of any proposal.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, and most importantly, Mr. Speaker, before any privatization could be concluded the citizens, the people — the people of our province — in a general election would have the final say.

Mr. Speaker, these measures will ensure that any proposed privatization of a Crown corporation is reviewed rigorously and debated in public, not behind closed doors. Mr. Speaker, we are fundamentally and philosophically opposed to any move to privatize our Crown corporations. That's what we stand for, Mr. Speaker, and we believe that our Crown corporations will continue to serve us well. The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act is an investment in our province's future.

As we finish Saskatchewan's first century as a province and move with great optimism into the next, I am proud to move that Bill 75, a Bill that is so reflective of the history and the culture of our people, The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act, be now read a second time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of the Crown Management Board that Bill. No. 75, The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few brief comments on The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act. For the record, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party supports this Bill. The Saskatchewan Party supports the continued public ownership of the major Crowns.

In the last election the NDP grossly misrepresented the Saskatchewan Party position on the Crowns, and we've learned from that experience that we must be absolutely clear in stating our position on Crown ownership.

The Saskatchewan Party, like the majority of Saskatchewan people, believe the major Crowns should stay in public hands. We believe that the major Crowns and their employees do an excellent job of providing services to the people of Saskatchewan. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we have no problem supporting this Bill.

The only remaining question is this: did the NDP learn anything from the last election? Did the NDP hear the public cries for common sense and accountable government? Mr. Speaker, I think not. While the Saskatchewan people want the major Crowns to remain publicly owned, they also want their government to stop squandering millions of taxpayers' dollars on bad Crown investments, both here at home and in other countries.

Saskatchewan people want to see an end to the NDP's long and growing list of business failures. Let me outline some of those failures, Mr. Speaker: \$35 million on SPUDCO, the worst loss of taxpayers' money on a government investment in the history of Saskatchewan; \$25.1 million and growing on Navigata, a money-losing Vancouver-based communications company, that could be an even worse business disaster than SPUDCO by the end of this year; \$24 million, Mr. Speaker, on Retx.com, a money-losing operation based in Atlanta, Georgia; \$16.1 million on Coachman Insurance in Ontario; \$6.4 million lost on Persona, a money-losing cable company in Newfoundland; \$8.9 million on agdealer, another money-losing Internet site, this time for farm equipment sales; \$7.9 million lost on mega bingo, the NDP's money-losing satellite bingo scheme; \$2.4 million lost on tappedinto.com, another one of those famous dot-coms, this time based in Nashville, Tennessee; \$1.9 million on Clickabid, the NDP's ill-fated attempt to compete with eBay; \$7 million, Mr. Speaker, lost on Minds Eye Entertainment, the NDP's money-losing movie company; and \$2 million with Broe Industries, the NDP's failed plan to own an ethanol plant at Belle Plaine.

Mr. Speaker, that's just a partial list of NDP failures and it totals almost \$137 million of taxpayers' money lost in areas where the NDP should never have been in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party believes it is the role of government to provide essential services like power, like gas, like insurance, like telecommunications services, but they need to be directed to the people of Saskatchewan at the lowest

possible cost.

It is not the role of government to grow potatoes or to set up dot-coms in Nashville or Atlanta.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party supports The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act and commits to the people of Saskatchewan that a Saskatchewan Party government will keep the major Crowns publicly owned while focusing on providing the best possible service to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, all the while at the lowest possible cost. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister for the Crown Management Board that Bill No. 75, The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act be now read a second time. Is the Assembly read for the question? Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried. Call for a standing vote.

The division bells rang from 15:45 until 15:59.

The Speaker: — Order. The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister for the Crown Management Board that Bill No. 75, The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act, be now read a second time.

Those in favour of the motion, please rise.

Order, please. Order, please.

Yeas — 57

Calvert	Addley	Lautermilch
Hagel	Van Mulligen	Serby
Atkinson	Cline	Sonntag
Crofford	Prebble	Forbes
Wartman	Belanger	Higgins
Thomson	Nilson	Beatty
Hamilton	Junor	Harper
Iwanchuk	McCall	Quennell
Trew	Yates	Taylor
Morin	Borgerson	Wall
Toth	Elhard	Heppner
D'Autremont	Krawetz	Draude
Hermanson	Bjornerud	

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order, please.

Stewart

The Speaker: — Order. I would ask that there be no interference during the voting process.

Wakefield	Morgan	McMorris
Eagles	Gantfoer	Harpauer
Bakken	Cheveldayoff	Huyghebaert
Allchurch	Brkich	Weekes
Kerpan	Merriman	Chisholm

Dearborn

Hart

Kirsch

The Speaker: — Those who oppose the motion, please rise.

Nays — nil

The Speaker: — I declare the motion carried unanimously.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Minister for Crown Management Board.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — I think we should pass it right now, but I am going to move that Bill No. 75, The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for the Crown Management Board that Bill No. 75 be now referred to the Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Bill No. 83 — The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2004. The reason this amendment is being brought forward, Mr. Speaker, is because the College of Physicians and Surgeons have requested these amendments.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask leave to introduce a guest in the gallery.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Dr. David Ahmed, who is with us today in the Speaker's gallery. Dr. Ahmed is not only the past president of the Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, but he is currently

the vice-president, medical services for the Regina Qu'Appelle Regional Health Authority.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 83 — The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2004 (continued)

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, while developing this legislation, the government consulted closely with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan as well as the Saskatchewan Medical Association. During these discussions, the college asked for a number of changes. Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to respond to their request and request the Act be amended to allow flexibility for the number of electoral divisions, the boundaries, and procedures for elections; to amend the Act to allow for the appointment of one or more deputy registrars who can carry out the duties and exercise the powers of the registrar if the office is vacant or if the registrar is unable to act; to provide bylaw-making authority for the college to establish requirements for continuing education and maintaining membership in the college; and to allow medical graduates who are undergoing assessment regarding suitability for licensure to be placed on the education registry.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments respond to the college's request and are consistent with other health professions' legislations. As part of our government's ongoing commitment to providing quality, accessible, and sustainable health services for the people of Saskatchewan, we believe it is important to bring these amendments to the House today. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2004. Thank you.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 83, The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise this afternoon and speak very briefly on Bill 83, An Act to amend the Medical Profession Act. And in doing so I would like to join with the minister in welcoming the guests who are observing the passage or progress of this Bill into the House this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, it is always an encouragement to see when the process of how legislation is prepared works well. In our consultation with the College of Physicians and Surgeons we certainly were told that they had highlighted a need to the Department of Health to change the way their current structure . . . electoral structure was as a result of the changes to the regional health authorities. And the government responded in a timely way to propose draft legislation that would allow this to be facilitated.

And, Mr. Speaker, we certainly were pleased to see that happen, and we're also very pleased to hear from the college that they felt the consultation process was timely, was effective, and that it was something that they requested of the government. And we certainly would agree that, at their request, that we will very much support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that we have to adapt to the changing realities of the configuration of health care in this province. And in order for that to happen the colleges have to adapt to the changing needs that they have for electoral change as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, we think this is timely legislation, that it is important to the college and its functioning as an independent governing body for the doctors and family physicians and specialists of this province, and we are in support of this legislation, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 83, The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 83, The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 83 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

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

Bill No. 84 — The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, 2004 (No. 2)/Loi n° 2 de 2004 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les services de l'état civil

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Vital Statistics Amendment Act (No. 2), 2004.

The Vital Statistics Act governs the registering of births, marriages, and deaths that occur in Saskatchewan. The Act also governs access to and the release of information associated with these registrations. What the Act does not currently allow, Mr. Speaker, is the publishing of genealogical indexes pertaining to these births, marriages, and deaths.

Mr. Speaker, the creation of genealogical indexes represents a new direction for the health registration and vital statistics branch of Saskatchewan Health. To date, access to registration

information has, for the most part, been limited to immediate family members or other individuals who require that information for legal purposes such as the administration of an estate. With The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, we are making these registration records more accessible to the public.

Mr. Speaker, currently Saskatchewan is one of only a few Canadian provinces or territories that does not make birth, marriage, and death records accessible to the public. We want to change that, Mr. Speaker. We want to make these records more accessible to the people of our province, and we will do this by the publishing of genealogical indexes.

As well, Mr. Speaker, this step will make it easier for anyone researching their Saskatchewan roots. Saskatchewan people are proud of their heritage and interested in genealogy, and with next year being Saskatchewan's centennial year, we are pleased to be able to provide this timely step to help people explore and celebrate the lives of ancestors who have built our great province.

Mr. Speaker, the registration years that will be included on these indexes will be determined when the regulations pursuant to this Act are developed. Typically the points in time following the occurrence of an event that are used by other provinces that publish indexes are 95 to 120 years for births, 20 to 70 years for deaths, and 50 to 80 years for marriages. It is anticipated that Saskatchewan indexes will be within these ranges.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we may require the assistance and experience of knowledgeable partners, for example, the Saskatchewan Genealogical Society, to accomplish our goals. That is why, Mr. Speaker, the Act will create the authority for vital statistics to enter into agreements with private agencies and vendors to help develop these indexes.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the amendments we are proposing in the House today will do two things. First, create the authority for vital statistics to publish genealogical indexes of births, marriages, and deaths so that people researching their Saskatchewan heritage can have easy access to the information they need. And, second, create the authority for vital statistics to enter into agreements with private agencies and vendors in order to develop these indexes.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of this province, and we are excited about being 100 years old. This Act will touch everyone in Saskatchewan. It will allow us to celebrate our past in a real and meaningful way.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to move second reading of The Vital Statistics Amendment Act (No. 2), 2004.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 84, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, 2004 (No. 2) be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon as well to discuss Bill No. 84, the amendments to The Vital Statistics Act.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister outlined, this Act will allow for the easier access by appropriate people for certain vital statistics in regard to certificates of birth, certificates of death and marriage, things of that nature. Mr. Speaker, I think it's very timely that we have second reading of this Bill today, November 22, because today is the birthday of the member from Estevan.

And as surprised as you may seem, Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult to find out exactly the date of birth that's going to show up on her birth certificate. And so I am anticipating that this legislation is going to be helpful. And I'm absolutely quite confident that it's going to show that her date of birth was November 22, 1965, Mr. Speaker. If there are any other members want to take exemption of that, I invite them to do that at considerable risk to their own person.

Mr. Speaker, all kidding aside, I know all members would like to join me in wishing the member from Estevan happy birthday and many returns.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefoer: — I wish that the Premier had his piano here because maybe he could lead us in song as he did with the Canadian idols this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, all kidding aside, I think that this is an important bit of legislation that puts Saskatchewan's legislation in sync with other jurisdictions. And it's particularly timely that this happened as a prelude to our centennial celebration, because I know there is many homecoming committees and groups across the province that indeed have been working for some time in doing some research into the family trees and things of that nature in preparation for Saskatchewan's homecoming.

(16:15)

Mr. Speaker, I know in our community there has been a great deal of work that has traced a lot of the history of the rural schools in the area. And a part of that . . . There always seemed to be a bit of an impediment in terms of the ease of accessing vital statistics from some of the information of the founders of these school districts and things of this nature. And I think it is a very healthy and valuable time that this is being made available.

Mr. Speaker, there is only one . . . a very small concern, and it's more one out of a lack of knowing all of the innuendos about privacy that may be involved with this. And I am hopeful when this legislation gets referred to committee — that the standing committee, I'm expecting is where it'll be referred — I hope the committee does call the Privacy Commissioner to make comment on if there are any potential privacy issues surrounding this legislation so that if we're going to make some of these statistics available we make sure we do it in a way that safeguards anybody's concerns about the privacy and appropriateness of this information.

Mr. Speaker, with that comment and the firm belief that the Privacy Commissioner will indeed be able to comment on this legislation in committee, we certainly see no objection to having it passed at this time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 84, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Is the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill referred? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 84, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, 2004 (No. 2) be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 84, The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

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

Bill No. 77 — The Public Works and Services Act

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to move second reading of The Public Works and Services Act. Under this legislation we will set the stage to transition Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation from a Treasury Board Crown to a department of executive government.

Mr. Speaker, SPMC's (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation) mandate is to support public agency program delivery by providing the best value for client needs in property management, purchasing, and other government support services. When SPMC became a Treasury Board Crown in 1986, it was to give the corporation the flexibility to finance capital projects as well as to offer various support services and recoup the costs by charging for the services provided.

With recent changes to The Financial Administration Act, departments have more financial flexibility to offer services and to recoup the costs by charging for the services used. In addition, departments are now able to amortize capital expenditures, which means the cost of acquiring or upgrading an asset is spread over the span of its useful life. As a result, SPMC no longer needs Treasury Board Crown designation and is returning to a department of executive government on April

1, 2005 as the Department of Property Management.

As a department, Saskatchewan Property Management will continue to provide the same programs and services that it has in the past. This includes providing accommodations for government departments and agencies, property maintenance and construction services, and support services like transportation, mail, purchasing, and disposal services.

As the Department of Property Management, the organization will also have access to the benefits of government-wide initiatives, including the new MIDAS (Multi-Informational Database Application System) financial system and human resources system rather than having to develop and operate its own systems.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of this legislation to transfer SPMC into a department of executive government. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation that Bill No. 77, The Public Works and Services Act, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to get up to talk about a few points on this Bill.

We've talked . . . I've talked to a few people. And surprising, I did have a couple of calls from workers in Regina that would have liked to have seen it stay under a Crown, even though the only reason I guess they talked about it, just like when there's any change and this isn't, I guess, a change where there's going to be a change in jobs . . . (inaudible) . . . that. But there's always a little bit of fear, I guess, people have that it may affect their job or what will happen with it. And I know I made some calls and it seems like it's just more of moving out of a Crown into . . . back into what we call a line department, which I don't think anybody else has raised a huge concern about that.

There are some questions we may ask in committee. I know on the budget that was . . . mini budget that was brought out, I think SPMC has \$400,000 roughly added to it. And I was wondering if that might have something to do with it. But those are questions that I will ask in committee on it.

But this particular Bill, I can't see where there is going to be any changes in the way the department operates. There won't be any changes I don't think to the people that are working in it. And there probably won't be any changes in the services that are being provided by it.

So at this particular time we don't have any objections to this particular Bill.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion moved by the Minister for Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation that Bill No. 77, The Public Works and Services Act, be read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — I move that Bill No. 77, The Public Works and Services Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for the Sask Property Management Corporation that Bill No. 77 be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. The Bill stands referred.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, The Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation Repeal Act is a piece of companion legislation that goes with The Public Works and Services Act that we just moved to committee. It will help to set the stage to transition Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation from a Treasury Board Crown to a department of executive government.

And, Mr. Speaker, I move the second reading of this legislation.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation that Bill No. 78, The Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation Repeal Act, be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure . . . is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister had indicated these Bills are working in conjunction with each other, and we didn't have any problem with that one. And same as this Bill, we don't have any particular problem with it.

There are some questions I will ask in committee with that. And moving it out of the Crown and back into what it was at the treasury department is probably the, you know, a good thing. Like this government already has 80-plus Crowns, and I think

they could always operate very well under the line department end of it.

And I don't think there will be . . . I think any of the workers, even though there was, like I mentioned, a few calls, that they were . . . you know when there's always a little bit of a change, like I say, they're always worried that something will change in their department, Mr. Speaker. And then who knows, maybe . . . Who knows what the minister has plans, maybe there will be changes. But I know I made some calls and I think she's indicated that there will no changes to the management, to the managers, to the workers that are going to be affected by this particular move.

There's some questions that we will . . . I think that can be asked in committee, but it sounds like that it's a very smooth transition. I know that I've been hearing rumours that SPMC is moving buildings; I'm not sure if that has anything to do with this particular moving into a treasury, into a treasury Crown, but those are questions I will address in committee.

With that I think SPMC has over the years did a very good job of managing property equipment here, the building here. Any contacts I've had with them, with my office getting equipment, and anything that I had to do with the managers of SPMC have been very good and very helpful at supplying us with our office equipment, like it does all the constituency association offices. And I believe that will continue in the future.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, with both Bills, is the ones we already moved into committee, I have no objection to this Bill following it also into committee. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister for the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, that Bill No. 78, The Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation Repeal Act, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — I move that Bill No. 78, The Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation Repeal Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation that Bill 78 be referred the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This Bill stands referred.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, after my remarks I'll be moving second reading of The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, it's been over a century since plough met Saskatchewan's prairie. Over the past 150 years, the majority of native prairie in North America has disappeared. In Saskatchewan, it's estimated that almost 80 per cent of the prairie has been lost.

And, Mr. Speaker, the changes don't stop with the Prairies. Since European settlement began, 73 per cent of the boreal transition zone in Saskatchewan has been converted to farm land. At first the transition from prairie to farm land was slow, but after World War II farmers cultivated more land and grew more crops. Often, marginal land was cleared, ploughed, and used to grow grains and oilseeds.

Southern Saskatchewan now has one of the most modified landscapes in the world. Over the past century, we have seen more than 75 per cent of our natural area in the agricultural region be used for farms and other developments such as roads, towns, and cities.

Over the years the farm land has given us bountiful crops, and agriculture is still an important mainstay of the provincial economy. The producers who lease The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act land have proven to be good stewards of the land and wildlife is benefiting. This land has become home to wildlife populations which often weren't previously found in the province, such as white-tailed deer, racoon, red fox, and many small birds. The habitat protected by The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act provides food, water, shelter to more than 400 species of wildlife.

Much of the best remaining wildlife habitat is on Crown land. These natural areas are very important for maintaining existing wildlife populations. The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act protects 1.4 million hectares of natural upland and natural wetland in the agricultural areas, while continuing to support some agricultural uses, oil and natural gas activities.

I want to emphasize that The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act designation has no effect on the lessee's rights to continue leasing the land. The philosophy of The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act is to conserve wildlife habitat, while allowing traditional uses. As a matter of fact, much of the land under The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act is leased to cattle producers who use it for grazing or haying. Cattle as grazers play much the similar role as bison used to.

Under The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act, oil and gas companies may explore and drill, but they must do so minimizing their impact to the surface. They are also limited in the number of well pads permitted on these lands.

The amendments to the wildlife protection Act which we are speaking to today, recommends taking 1,786 hectares out of The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act. The largest area recommended for withdrawal relates to an interest by the northern village of Green Lake to annex, pursuant to The Northern Municipalities Act, approximately 1,300 hectares. This would assist the village in making its plans for future community expansion and development.

The remaining 486 hectares of land identified for removal from The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act is required to enable Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization to conclude the sale of land to the current land lessees in several areas of the province, and to pursue a commercial leasing and development project in the RM (rural municipality) of Torch River. The removal of the land included in the amendment is mitigated by actions taken last August which protected approximately 33,176 hectares of ecologically important Crown land.

(16:30)

The amendment being considered today also corrects 20 land descriptions within the schedule of The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act that were originally described incorrectly. This is a good move that will continue to meet the needs of the producers and community interests involved. These actions demonstrate that we are continuing to work to preserve habitat for our birds, fish, and animals.

We have also used the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund to protect 84,000 hectares of prime wildlife habitat through both purchase and conservation easements. Hunters, trappers, and anglers support the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund through a portion of their licence fees. This fund receives 30 per cent of the revenue generated from all fur, angling, and hunting licences sold in this province. This money is used to secure, monitor, and improve both fish and wildlife habitat throughout Saskatchewan.

The representative area network is also part of the province's effort to conserve habitat. Today 5.9 million hectares of important lands and waters are included in the representative areas network. That is 9 per cent of the province's area. When we have completed the representative areas network, there will be 7.8 million hectares of protected lands and waters. That is 12 per cent of our province's land.

Actions the province has taken under RAN (representative area network), the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund, and The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act have put Saskatchewan at the forefront of national and international habitat in ecosystem conservation. We are showing that the wise use of public land can curb habitat loss while accommodating the interests of agriculture, wildlife, and the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I now move the second reading of The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act, 2004.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Environment that Bill No. 79, The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, indeed habitat protection is very important in our society, and it stretches from our southern border with the US (United States) to the northern border with Northwest Territories, and from east to west.

Mr. Speaker, though, when we look at this particular Bill, we see a number of changes. And quickly looking through it, you find that most of the changes involved are errors that have been created in the establishment of these areas in their descriptions of the titles. And so you see that the northwest quarter of section 36 has all of a sudden now been designated the southeast quarter of 36.

And so it makes you wonder what is happening. Is this actual transfer a land transfer in the sense that the northwest quarter was protected and now it's no longer going to be protected and the southeast quarter is being protected? Or did the land title system, ISC (Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan) make the mistake in inputting the information? We spent \$107 million or better on that organization, and it has had a lot of problems getting the titles correct.

So is that the problem that's happening here? That the government . . . one government agency has screwed up the numbers for another department, and now they have to come back and make the changes to try and straighten it out. The minister hasn't explained why those errors took place, if they were indeed errors and not just simply changing the locations where the habitat protection is being applied.

We see some land being put into habitat protection, and we see land coming out of habitat protection. I think most people in society believe that if a piece of land has value in being protected, that it has value not only at the time when that protection was put in place, but protection into the future as well. And so the government has to have a very good reason why they would change that designation, and not that it's simply they now want to turn it into agricultural land or they want to turn it into land where mineral exploration can take place or for whatever other reason. Maybe they want to make it TLE (treaty land entitlement) lands or in the case that the minister mentioned, they want to turn it over to the northern municipality of Green Lake so that they may grow their municipality.

And that may be a very good reason to do so, but the minister didn't give any more reasons other than they wanted to do that, to make it a good cause to change that designation from protected lands to non-protected lands. The minister just said, well Green Lake wants to annex the land around there to carry on their municipal functions. Now that may be appropriate, but the minister gave no reason why that is appropriate. He gave no explanation as to why that would be a good thing to remove the

habitat designation from those lands and to transfer it into a non-protected area.

So I think the minister, it's incumbent on the minister to come up with better reasons for taking 3,000-plus acres out of protection and putting it into a non-protected area. I think the minister has failed on that particular count.

I was very pleased to hear that the minister recognized that agricultural grazing has value on habitat lands because it seems that, in the past, his department has done everything it could to oppose that kind of occurrence upon government lands.

Down on the Alameda project, grazing lands that have been grazed for thousands of years both by agriculture producers, but by the very bison that he mentioned, all of a sudden were ineligible for grazing because they were habitat protected lands. They were lands designated for protection, and you couldn't have livestock on those lands, or if you could have livestock on those, it changed to allow them to have livestock on those lands. But on a quarter section of land, I believe it was, you were allowed to have ten animals once every three years which is very, very few animals. And so how do you get that hoof action that the minister was talking about once every three years.

When the bison came through, it wasn't ten animals once every three years. It was 20,000 animals all at one time, and they churned the land up. It allowed for repopulation of the seeds in the area, and it ensured that you were not developing a monoculture, which is what happens in these habitat lands when you do not have grazing or when you do not have fire that goes through because you end up, Mr. Speaker, with one dominant flora, generally a grass, that chokes out everything else.

And you need to have hoof action or some other disturbance of that area so that you have a variety of flora in the area, so that you have the white-tailed deer and you also have the birds, but that you don't just have one animal or one bird in that area.

You need the variety, and that is what habitat land should provide. And by putting animals in there that provide that hoof action, you need a considerable number of animals. Maybe for a short period of time only, but you still need the numbers to generate that disturbance of the soil. And putting only a few animals in there once every three years is not sufficient, Mr. Speaker.

And so I'm glad to see that the minister is recognizing that the bison played an important role in the Plains and that action of their hooves needs to take place on habitat lands. And so I'm sure that he will now discuss this issue with his department to allow further hoof action to take place on the habitat lands that his department administers, Mr. Speaker. I think that would be a very important thing for him to do.

I was also interested to note that the minister mentioned the wildlife, Fish and Wildlife Development Fund. And I do believe that's the fund that the government stripped a few years ago to try and bail SPUDCO out and that those monies have still not yet all been returned to that fund after six years. And I believe that the minister responsible for SPUDCO the other day said that the monies would be returned by 2018 — 14 years from now. So if wildlife habitat protection is so critical to this

minister, why is it going to take another 18 years to finally get all the money back that this government stripped out of that fund? Even at a 1 per cent interest rate, it would be more money than that, Mr. Speaker, over the 18 years.

So while the minister talks a good talk, Mr. Speaker, he doesn't walk the walk in protecting the habitat. Because if he did, he would be after the Finance minister to return that money to the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund now, and he would ensure that his government doesn't get their paws on that money again for some other purpose than providing fish and wildlife development, Mr. Speaker, because clearly his predecessor in that role did not protect those funds.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think this minister has a long way to go in protecting the habitat that he speaks so proudly of in his role as the Minister for the Environment, Mr. Speaker. I think he has some standards of his own words to live up to, that his colleagues have failed to do so, so far.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that there are more of my colleagues who wish to address this particular issue because it does affect lands in their areas that people have raised concerns about, so I would move that we adjourn 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. 79 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.

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 Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well it's a pleasure to speak to this Bill No. 19. ISC has certainly been a hot topic for a number of years now, and the way the government has managed the whole issue. Going back a few years, naturally various jurisdictions were going to computerize their land titles. And this government set out to do that, but of course like everything else this government does, they felt that they had to do it. They had to reinvent the wheel. They had to set their people working on this. And as we see now, Mr. Speaker, the ISC and the land titles is . . . well was and is in terrible shape.

First of all, the original cost was only supposed to be a very few millions of dollars, \$20 million. And as we see now, Mr.

Speaker, the total cost of setting up the Information Services Corporation and the land titles is \$107 million, Mr. Speaker. And not only the cost, tremendous cost overruns, that money could've gone to shorten the waiting lists in health care or reducing property tax to the people of Saskatchewan. But they just threw this money away.

And, Mr. Speaker, just like to go through some of where the losses of this went. The net loss in 2000 was just over \$10 million. This is operating and GRF (General Revenue Fund) payments. 2001 were a \$15 million loss; 2002, over \$21 million; and 2003, nearly \$6 million. And at the end of the day, the net — it says on this financial statement — the net benefit or cost to taxpayer was a whopping \$43.865 million. Now, Mr. Speaker, then, when you add in the short-term debt and the long-term debt, that's another \$62 million.

An Hon. Member: — How much?

Mr. Weekes: — \$62 million, Mr. Speaker. When you add up the 62 million and the \$43 million and change, it's nearly \$107 million frittered away when it was only supposed to cost a very minimal amount.

And at the time, Mr. Speaker, many people said why doesn't the government go out and go to another jurisdictions that have gone through all this and purchase another program that would do this and make the changes that are relevant to Saskatchewan and for a fraction of the cost. But the government, in its madness, decided to reinvent the wheel and go about doing it itself.

And not only the problems, not only the cost overruns, but the problems with this system is just outrageous, Mr. Speaker. They've gone through years of changes and changeovers in the office as well, with people coming and going. And talking to some of the people that used to work in ISC when it first was set up and running, many of them were quite frankly very upset how they were treated in the office, and many of them left and moved on. And so the government and the minister really has put the blame on some of the employees that worked there for the misdeeds of the government. The government never had a plan. They weren't prepared to do things in a reasonable and responsible way.

(16:45)

One of the . . . Just as a . . . Couple of letters. I have a letter from my colleague from Humboldt, and this letter is from the RM of Humboldt, and I'd just like to read it:

We are writing to you today in regards to the new program and fee schedules of ISC . . .

The Rural Municipality of Humboldt has been dealing with ISC on a number of issues in the past several months and is finding the cost of ISC to be completely unreasonable, and the training not appropriate. A road abandonment in the old system could be done in a few hours by the Administrator with virtually no cost. In the new system today, we have been waiting for 10 months, costs incurred (of) \$1,800 and no education to the municipality to be able to do it ourselves. To transfer two

titles of property in a small hamlet, estimated at \$25.00 each costs the municipality \$800.00 now.

We are frustrated and fed up with the new program costs and lack of education available to the general public.

Well that's a very common complaint that we've heard from RMs and people around the province. And it really speaks to the inadequacy of the system and how the government went about handling this whole system.

I'd like to read into the debate another letter from Biggar, and it concerns notice to lapse caveats:

I have come across a situation which seems to be more in the way of policy rather than fee mitigation. However I was . . . (trying to the) fee mitigation which I did and was refused.

The situation was that a Caveat was registered against several Titles in the old system (The) caveat was to protect a right of first refusal and the holders were seven family members. When the Titles were converted, (and) the Caveat was given one interest registration number and one interest number for each Title.

As one of the Caveat Holders has since passed away and the balance of the Caveat Holders wishes to have the Caveat discharged, we started the Notice . . . (This is from a lawyer in Biggar). We started the Notice — Lapse Procedure Commenced as regards 4 Titles. (The) . . . registration against each of 4 Titles at \$50.00 per title comes to \$200.00 in fees. Imagine my shock when the sum of \$1,400.00 was charged and deducted from our office account.

\$50.00 was charged for each of the seven Caveat Holders on each of the 4 Titles. This does not seem appropriate, as there is only one Caveat with one interest number on each Title, not 7 different caveats.

The letter goes on:

We have been advised that the individual Caveat Holders cannot separately discharge their interest so this further emphasizes the fact that it is one interest and should be treated as such in all respects.

The Schedule of Fees states that the fee for registering an interest (other than a mortgage) is \$50.00 per Title, abstract, interest or shared affected. It seems that your policy could just as easily (have been) . . . that the change shall be per "Title" or "interest" rather than "share" affected, as it was your policy decision that put all the Caveat Holders as separate in the first place.

And it goes on:

I would (like) . . . would appreciate if you could look at the situation and (be advised) . . .

Now I assume did send a letter back, but just want to read into a bit of what the response was. It says:

On occasion the fee model, when operating in conjunction with subsection 197(2) may result in fees that are perceived to be inequitable. However, ISC is required to provide with legislation regulations, a fee schedule that govern their industry . The fees were actively charged in your situation under current rules.

Now it goes on to say, Mr. Speaker:

ISC is reviewing the general policy in relation to the lapse procedure that will include the issue that you have identified in the review.

And it's go on to thank for their attention. Well, Mr. Speaker, I on two occasions now have asked for the conclusion of the lapse review and haven't got an answer.

Now it seems, Mr. Speaker, that these are lawyers that are dealing with and have dealt with the old system and were dealing with this new system, and they feel that there is an injustice here — a tremendous cost overrun in these certain circumstances. And the government, well, may or may not be able to charge these at the end of the day until the review is over. So it certainly would appreciate the review to be completed, and many of these stakeholders would like to have some conclusion to their problems.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we know, I've spoke about the, really, the black hole that the NDP has thrown millions of dollars away into. And it's . . . really speaks of not only the loss of the money, the inefficiency and the problems around ISC, but Mr. Speaker, when people or business look to Saskatchewan to invest in the province, well there's a number of things they look at, and taxes and fees are obviously one that businesses look at. And this is another example where the government is overcharging, in my estimate. And it's just like the two letters that I have read where there are RMs and lawyers in the province believe that they're being overcharged to do business in Saskatchewan.

And this is not the way to attract investment, not the way to attract businesses into the province because it's just another expensive cost that people have to look at in the province to do business. And really, Mr. Speaker, people are very frustrated by . . . well, and disappointed by the way the new land titles registry works and costs, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 19, it basically talks about housekeeping duties and minor clarifications or fine tuning. Some of the points in it conform to the Torrens principles of reliance on title, and there is no need to look behind the title following conversion of interest on titles to an electronic form. In talking to lawyers around the province, I believe that's a good thing to have made the changes to.

It also goes on to clarify the priority of converted instruments and interests based on transactions known as revolving lines of credit. And in my discussions with people, one of the things the government hasn't really addressed is concerning time-shares and there seems to be a problem in the land registry in dealing with time-shares and that whole issue around time-shares. And it's done in many other jurisdictions around the world and it seems to be something that the government needs to take a

serious look at to make sure that that is included in the system that the province provides.

And also, Mr. Speaker, it confirms that a transfer to an individual is not a change of ownership for certain purposes including The Crown Minerals Act. And also it further details powers and authorities of courts in matters of involving land and the land title registry.

And another area, Mr. Speaker, that I believe it seems to clarify is concerning the rights of other jurisdictions out of province and that revolves around permits — other provinces and territories and their governments could be named as title owners. And also, Mr. Speaker, validates current customer practices for registration of certain interests, confirms authorization and information required and acceptable for certain registrations or other requests of the Registrar, and provides circumstances where an affidavit of value isn't required in the permits and customers to request withdrawal of an application prior to registration. So some of these areas are basically housekeeping and tinkering with the system. But the overall public perception and the reality I believe, Mr. Speaker, is that there still is a major problem with the land titles system.

And Mr. Speaker, as we look at . . . Well we only need to look at what former Economic Development minister, Janice MacKinnon . . . she warned the Crown's expansion and cost overruns in a memo leaked to the government a number of years ago now. And she wrote:

This apparent expansion is of concern as there are no concrete opportunities for significant new revenue from sources beyond the market of the land and geometrics.

And that's what we see now, Mr. Speaker, in the tremendous increases in fee schedule. The government has lost a tremendous amount of money and now they are trying to recoup that money on the backs of Saskatchewan businesses and people. And that certainly is not fair and as I said before, Mr. Speaker, it certain is not the way to attract investment and business into the province.

And Ms. MacKinnon went on to further express her concerns about ISC's competing with SaskTel and the private sector companies in the e-commerce sector. And some of the other items . . . It's interesting to note that she made public concerns of ISC's executives jet-setting on taxpayer dollars to find buyers for the land titles system. Well as we know, Mr. Speaker, there were no buyers for this system. Who would want to buy a system that had such tremendous over-costs, overruns in it's production, Mr. Speaker, and quite frankly a system that is well, debatable whether is working properly even at this stage of the game. And also some of the other concerns of lengthy delays in title transfers.

And when you look at the titles being transferred, in the old system it was done by hand, it was done in a matter of a few days, and done for a considerably less cost than it is now. So we've gone through all this trouble, spent all this money and we have a system that is really in many ways not as efficient and economical as the old system was.

Now Mr. Speaker, as we see . . . Former Justice minister, Chris

Axworthy, told members in the legislature in 2001 that the land titles fees would not increase. And as we see, Mr. Speaker, all those promises were broken and the government continues to increase fees as we go along and without improving the system that we have today.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to note that the government was planning on selling this system to other jurisdictions, but until the government and ISC gets its ship in order, I don't think there's that possibility. I've been told by a number of experts in the field, there's a possibility that ISC could be turned into something of value. It could develop a base map of the province, and really this base map could be charged at a minimal rate, or, quite frankly, made public to all sectors.

This base map could include SaskTel lines, natural gas lines, things like that, that customers have to go to now and ask each individual Crown where these lines are and get them staked. Where this base map could have all that information on it.

They could also work with the PFRA (Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration) and work on a . . . be a part of a, really, a national base map, and ISC could do its part in Saskatchewan concerning a national map.

And it's very important, Mr. Speaker, to have this information where other industries — mining, the oil industry — could overlay their information, and keep it private, quite frankly, and use the base map as the basis for further development in the province. And quite frankly, talking to the oil industry and the mining industry, that's something that they want.

Right now the system isn't adequate to do that, and it would be, certainly, an economic driver to have that base map and really make at a minimal charge to the mining sector and to the oil/gas sector to do this, Mr. Speaker. So there's some ideas that have come forward from the stakeholders in this province to improve this system.

And quite frankly, if it becomes a better system, it may be something that could be sold to other jurisdictions. But as we know now the government has tried to sell this system and they are unable to find any takers to sell their land titles system. Where they had the opportunity in the past to buy one from another jurisdiction and really make it conform to its needs, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know that other members are going to want to speak to this Bill in the future because it's a very contentious Bill. And at this time, Mr. Speaker, 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. 19 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.

(17:00)

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to have the chance to talk about The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act. And we've had a number of occasions to speak on this Bill and there's a number of questions that we had and will have in committee.

We realize that this assessment deals with . . . relates to school property taxes and distribution of the foundation operating grant, that the function of assessment is what that relies on. We also realize that this Bill deals with the monies coming from Education department to SAMA (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency); the \$750,000 this year and \$875,000 in each of the two next years.

Mr. Speaker, the minister said the funding by the education sector will ensure Saskatchewan's assessment systems yield accurate, predictable, and consistent results. And we would hope that to be so because we all realize that, in the past, in a number of the past assessments, that there's been a great deal of problems with the way things have done and the values that have come out in some areas and have had many questions on that in the past, Mr. Speaker.

Another concern that we do have though, Mr. Speaker, is the number of board members are increasing by two from the government side. And there's always red flags go up when the government increases the number of people that they have appointed to these boards and we'll be questioning that in committee, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, at this time, I think most of the questions that we have left can be answered in committee and I would let this Bill pass to committee at this time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 68, The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill 68, The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 68 be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. This Bill stands referred.

Motion agreed to, the Bill read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Infrastructure.

Bill No. 67

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this Bill. I've had the opportunity to read and review this Bill and I have some issues with this Bill that I would like to raise before the Bill goes to committee.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill deals with gambling, the impacts of gambling, and the various issues surrounding our casinos in this province. One of the significant things in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is the provision that allows individuals to be banned from casinos. It allows for them to be banned for varying lengths of time and to require notices to be given to other casinos and back to the department.

Mr. Speaker, I have some issue with that type of an approach. It certainly limits people's right to freedom of association and limits their potential rights under the . . . And, Mr. Speaker, it's been suggested I should move adjournment of debate.

The Speaker: — Moved by the member for Saskatoon Southeast that debate on Bill No. 67 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion's carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 57

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wartman that **Bill No. 57 — The Irrigation Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding of much of what is in this Bill is suggestions of amendments that were put forward by the stakeholders involved in the irrigated areas of the province and, you know, organizations that are involved in provincial water issues.

As much as the Minister of Agriculture spent some time speaking glowingly of the government's support of encouraging irrigation in this province, Mr. Speaker, the government's record speaks volumes of their neglect and their denial that irrigation and water management can play an enormous role as an economic driver for our province. The NDP have been so concerned about the management and the control of the water — and I'm not suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that we shouldn't be very, very cautious and responsible with such an important resource — but they've been so focused on that that they failed to have a broader vision on the economic opportunity that we have with water in our province. The NDP's lack of vision has allowed opportunities to slide by time and time again and this is but another example of how they're doing that.

Mr. Speaker, there's a number of publications that gives facts and figures as to the value of the water source that we have in our province. For example on December of 2002, Kevin Hursh wrote an article which stated that:

Saskatchewan has about 220,000 acres of intensive irrigation, plus about another 100,000 acres of backflood irrigation that gets water once a year in the spring.

And about 900,000 acres are in the Lake Diefenbaker irrigation district, Mr. Speaker. Compare this, you know, to give you some prospective of how we've neglected this important economic driver for our province, if we compare this to southern Alberta, there are 1.3 million acres of intensive irrigation in Alberta.

Another article put out by Agrivision in 2003 states that:

Saskatchewan currently utilizes less than 3 per cent of its water resources for agriculture, business, urban uses and recreation and (that is about 3.5, pardon me, Mr. Speaker) about 3.5 per cent is lost to evaporation as the balance flows to Manitoba.

So that we're losing less of our water resource than what's evaporating into the air; which is appalling, Mr. Speaker. And so we can hardly say, the government can hardly stand up and say that they support value-added industries in their endeavour to try to develop the irrigation potential for our province.

Mr. Speaker, the Agrivision, to their credit, have worked tirelessly to develop a 50-year master plan for water development for Saskatchewan. And they held a conference not all that long ago entitled, Drought Proofing the Economy, and I

commend them for the work that they've done because it was very good work and it has a great vision for our province.

They accomplished in a few short years — and a fairly small team working on this front — to develop a strategy and a vision which is something that the NDP government hasn't been able to accomplish now in over a decade of saying that they care about this issue and they're helping it develop. They're giving lip service to it, and nothing more.

The Agrivision Corporation has stated that Saskatchewan can increase irrigated acreage from 332,000 acres to 1.3 million acres by 2015, and 3.8 million by 2030. But the provincial government, Mr. Speaker, had better get on board, meet with the stakeholders, and discover what it is that they need to do in order to make this happen, or we're going to let yet another opportunity slide by.

Before I close, Mr. Speaker, I want to read into the record an article that was written in 2003, "Farmers want to keep irrigation dream alive" by Sean Pratt. And it states:

Farmers in the Lake Diefenbaker area want to splash water in the face of the Saskatchewan government. They say the province needs to wake up and continue working on an economic development dream it started 35 years ago.

Six rural municipalities in the area have formed a steering committee to kick start irrigation projects on the largely untapped west side of the giant water reservoir.

The article goes on at quite some length, explaining the potential, the opportunity, and the fact that the government has been a barrier not a facilitator in helping this to happen.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Humboldt that debate on Bill No. 57, The Irrigation 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: — Members of the Assembly, it now being past the hour of 5 o'clock, this House . . . Why is the Minister of Agriculture on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — . . . on this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Could you repeat that? I couldn't hear.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — With leave to complete the action on this Bill, Mr. Speaker, and move it to committee . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, it's adjourned. Oh, okay, sorry.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move we now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

The Assembly adjourned at 17:12.

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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

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