



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

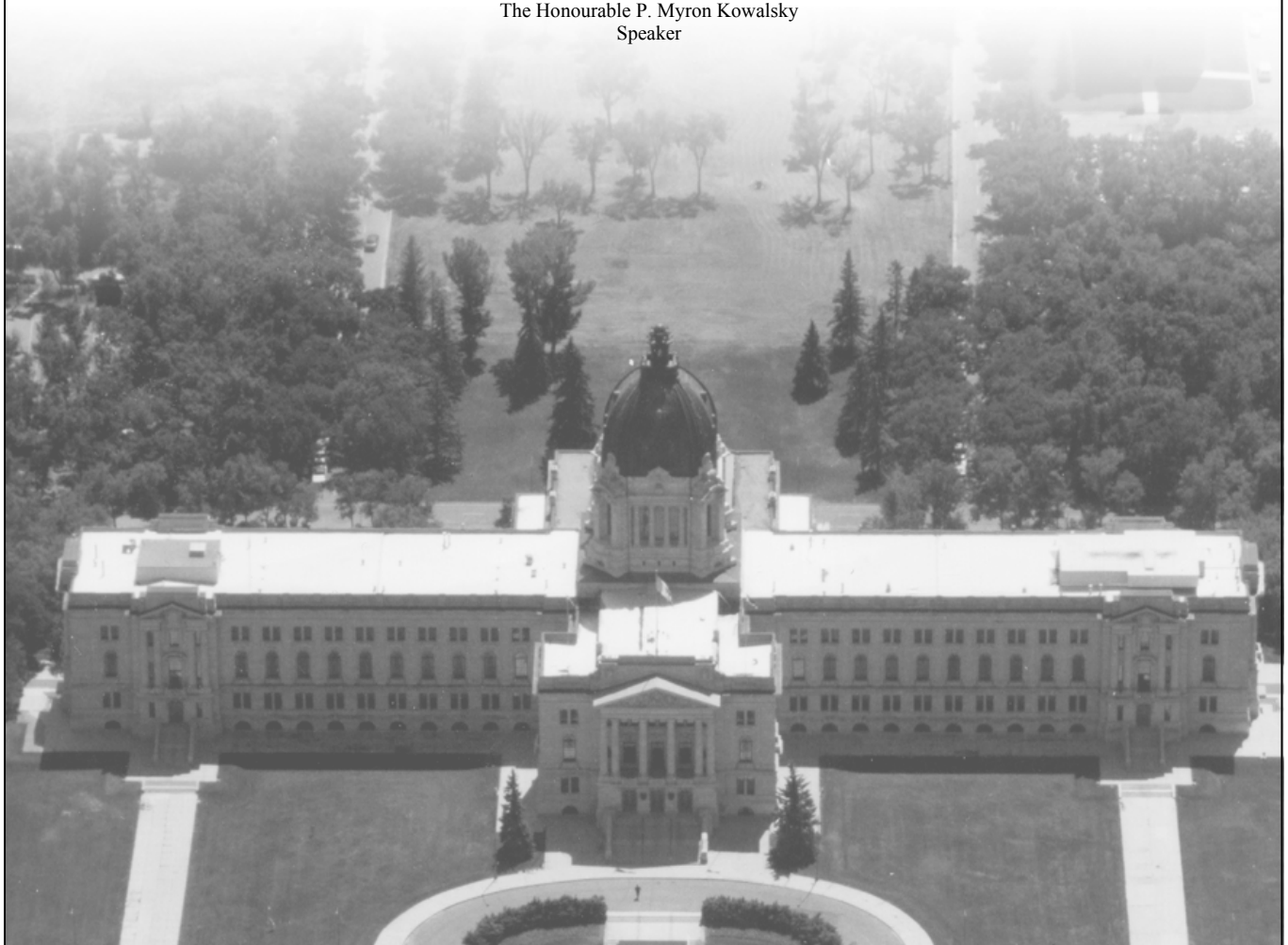
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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 Swift Current.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again on behalf of citizens concerned with the ongoing SPUDCO (Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company) scandal in Saskatchewan. 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 city of Swift Current and the town of Herbert. I so present.

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

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition signed by a number of Saskatchewan residents. They are concerned that the government has chosen to ignore the Boughen report and are picking and choosing what they would follow. The prayer of this petition reads:

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.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of signatures on the petition from the Rosetown-Elrose constituency, including the communities of Rosetown, Sovereign, and Fiske. And I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf.

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to do with the forced amalgamation of school divisions. The prayer reads:

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.

The signature, Mr. Speaker, are from the communities of Killaly, Melville, and Grayson.

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

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with the underfunding of the CAIS (Canadian agricultural income stabilization) program by this provincial government and the prayer reads:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Gull Lake and Abbey. I so present.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a busload of petitions that just came in that I'd like to read. It's on school board amalgamation, Mr. Speaker. 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 amalgamation on school divisions in Saskatchewan and to continue reorganization of school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, there's too many communities to name on all of these petitions, but I will point out that a number of them are from the Meadow Lake-Goodsoil area. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I rise to present a petition on behalf of constituents of mine who are very concerned about the centralization of laundry services in the Sun Country Health Region. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to ensure that public consultations are done prior to changes to the health care services in Sun Country.

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

And this is signed by the good folks from Estevan and Bienfait. I so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition from constituents who want to oppose the SAMA (Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency)

requisitions for 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 take all necessary action to reverse charges recently made that require the education sector to contribute to the cost of SAMA as this added burden for school boards will ultimately lead to higher property taxes for Saskatchewan residents.

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

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Young, Viscount, Humboldt, Meecham, and Plunkett. I so present.

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present several petitions 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 the petitions are signed by citizens all across Canada and the United States. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here to reverse forced school division amalgamation:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the 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, petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by good citizens from Davidson and Bladworth.

Also I would like to present the same petition from a number of people from Meadow Lake that asked me to present on their behalf. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar.

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again in the Assembly today to present a petition on behalf of producers in Saskatchewan concerned with the funding to the CAIS program. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by the very good producers from the communities of Kerrobert, Kindersley, Netherhill, Wilkie, Eston, Smiley, Dodsland, and Brock, Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to present petitions on behalf of citizens from across the province who are concerned with this government's plan to force the amalgamation of school divisions. 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.

Signatures to this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from a number of communities across Saskatchewan including Meadow Lake, Melville, Fenwood, Yorkton, Grayson, and quite a number of signatures come from the community of Meadow Lake. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions to present today. The prayer reads:

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.

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the Lebret area, Gladmar, Minton, Ceylon, Lake Alma, Elrose, Harris, Rosetown, Mr. Speaker, Dinsmore, Conquest, McCord, Outlook, Milden. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14(7) are hereby read and received:

A petition calling for the reversal of recent changes for the contributions to the cost of SAMA by the educational sector;

A petition concerning job security, contracting out of services provided by public sector employees.

And addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 96, 107, 637, 638, 647, and 667.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — Members of the Assembly, it's my pleasure today to welcome some special guests who are here today for a special day, and I would ask these people to rise when I mention their names.

First of all, Mr. Jean Ouellet, who is scheduled to be appointed as Chief Electoral Officer later this afternoon by resolution of the Assembly. With him is his partner, Viktor Kaczkowski, who is a former clerk assistant with the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly, and their special friend, Agnes Almar.

Also in the Speaker's gallery is the Acting Provincial Ombudsman, Mr. Kevin Fenwick. He is scheduled to be confirmed as the Provincial Ombudsman later today as well, and with him is Mrs. Sheri Fenwick and their son, Arron.

Both of these positions are independent officers. They are appointed by the Legislative Assembly and they report directly to the Legislative Assembly.

I would also like to welcome all of their friends, family, and colleagues of these two special guests here today to the Assembly. And would all members please join me in congratulating Mr. Ouellet and Mr. Fenwick and welcoming their guests here to the legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I would also want to add

our greetings to Mr. Jean Ouellet and Mr. Kevin Fenwick and I expect the Leader of the Opposition may want to do the same.

Both individuals bring their personal experience and education to these very, very significant tasks within the process of governance in our province and equally within the process of the life of the people of Saskatchewan. So we welcome them both and we wish them success in their future endeavours.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed I do want to join with the Premier and yourself and all members of the Assembly in welcoming Mr. Fenwick and Mr. Ouellet here, and thanking them in advance for their dedication and hard work on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan in their respective roles. We also want to welcome the friends and the families of those two gentlemen here today as well, and welcome back Viktor to this Legislative Assembly. It's nice to see him here.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet if I may, in addition to those introductions it's a pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, a number of First Nations leaders who have joined us in two different galleries, yours and the opposition gallery as well. Mr. Speaker, we have with us today the Vice-chief with the P.A. (Prince Albert) Grand Council from the Montreal Lake Cree Nation. She's the Vice-chief there, Shirley Henderson. She is the Chair of the Prince Albert Grand Council Women's Commission.

Also joining us in your gallery, and I see that they're standing; I'd invite them all to stand, Mr. Speaker. Also joining us today, Grand Chief Gary Merasty is here as well, Vice-chief Edward Henderson, Alice Lavalley, Sandi Morin, Corrine Fiddler, Leona Sorenson, Donna Merasty, Betsy Keewatin, Melinda Naytowhow, Donna Kingfisher, Velma Buffalo, Gloria McKenzie. They're joining us.

And in the opposition gallery today, Mr. Speaker, is the Chair of the Women's Commission, Chief Marie-Anne Day Walker-Pelletier, the longest serving First Nations woman chief in all of the country. I think she's served 11 consecutive terms. And she's joined by her assistant, also committed to improving the lives of all women — First Nations, Métis, and non-First Nations women — Erica Bowden.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to join with me and I'd ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in welcoming these key leaders to their Assembly here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(13:45)

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, I would also like to welcome all the visitors here this morning. We had a chance to meet with a few of them this morning from the P.A. Grand Council Women's Commission. They've been named, along with two

... I guess my grand chiefs are here as well. They're my chiefs — Gary Merasty and Vice-chief Edward Henderson.

Maynard Sonntag, the Minister Responsible for First Nations and Métis Relations, and I had a chance to meet with them a little bit this morning. And I understand they also had lunch with June Draude of the Sask Party.

Later on I will be proclaiming 2005 the Year of First Nations and Métis Women in Saskatchewan.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

I hope you have a safe trip home. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the House, I also would like to welcome all First Nations leaders in the House, in the Assembly today. But I'd like to especially mention Brenda Merasty, wife of Grand Chief Merasty. She's with us today and we've had an opportunity to speak with her on many issues. Her and I share a real passion for the issue of fetal alcohol syndrome and we've had an opportunity to meet many times on the issue.

So welcome to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Crofford: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm hoping that hidden where I can't see in the gallery here is Ms. Estuko Anderson. Are you back ... Oh there you are. Okay. I couldn't pick you out of all the faces up there.

Ms. Estuko Anderson is a counsellor representing the Barbados High Commission. We had the great pleasure to be seated together at a dinner this weekend celebrating the anniversary of the independence of Barbados.

Now as you know, Barbados is a parliamentary democracy and part of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I know that she was here as well meeting on health matters.

A lot of misfortune has visited the Caribbean in the form of the recent storms. The Barbados fortunately was spared much of that. And she reported that their economy is growing and tourism is growing very well there, but that she is looking for economic partnerships as well as the political leaders there, including agriculture.

So would you join me in welcoming Estuko Anderson to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislature 25 grade 10 students from the Melville Comprehensive High School. A large majority are from the Melville-Saltcoats constituency but a few are from Last Mountain-Touchwood. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming these students and Mr. Ostapowich to their legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Assembly, an individual seated in the western gallery. I'd like to introduce Brenda Mercer. Brenda and her husband, Chris, they reside in my home community of North Central where they operate a small business as well.

And Brenda is one of those individuals that puts the good neighbour into good neighbourhood. She's very active with the North Central Community Association, she was one of the initial people involved in the Inner City Community Partnership, and she continues to play a really vital role with the bylaw standards enforcement team. And she's a great friend and gives me good counsel in the neighbourhood.

So I'd please invite all members to welcome Brenda to her Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the member from Melville-Saltcoats in welcoming the grade 10 students. They're seated in the east gallery, as the member said. There are some of the students that live in Last Mountain-Touchwood and I would certainly welcome them here today.

Also, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, it seems some days ... there are many days we don't have anyone to introduce. Today though I have a number of people I'd like to introduce. I'd like to also extend a welcome to Chief Day Walker-Pelletier of the Okanese Band, who is seated in the east gallery. Welcome, Chief.

And also in the west gallery are two local business people from the community of Kelliher — if they would stand — Mayor Cliff Larson and Rob Heggie. These two individuals are very involved in a commercial venture that they are trying to get going in their community, and I would ask all members to welcome to their legislature.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

I'd like you and all members to join me in welcoming Mr. Robert Watson and his wife, Brenda, to the Legislative Assembly. They are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, if I could just get them to rise.

Mr. Watson, as most of you will know, is the new president and CEO (chief executive officer) of SaskTel, replacing outgoing president Don Ching who has accepted a position, again as most of you are probably aware now, with COGEMA Resources.

Mr. Watson, who joins us from Ontario, has a wealth of experience in telecommunications. Over the last nine years, he's held several senior executive positions with Shaw Communications, including president of Shaw FiberLink, president of Shaw Mobilecomm, and president of WIC Connexus. Mr. Watson has also been the president and CEO of ACC Telenterprises Ltd., and executive vice-president of Cable and Wireless. He's a graduate in electronic technologies from Ryerson Polytechnical University in Toronto. And I would ask again all members to please join me in welcoming our new president of SaskTel, Robert Watson, and his wife, Brenda, to Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you, seated in your gallery, my wife of 35 years, Marie Merriman — truly a saint. It's good to see both sides agree, Mr. Speaker. I ask all members to join me in welcoming Marie to her Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.)

And just for the Assembly to know, Mr. Speaker, I said it in the west side Cree dialect because between the member from Cumberland and the member from Athabasca, we have different dialects — ours has a mixture of French in it — so I wanted to make sure that they had both dialects in terms of welcoming our First Nations ladies and the First Nations leadership as well.

Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery we have another visitor I want to recognize. This gentleman's all the way from Green Lake. His name is Ric Richardson. Ric of course is married to Rose. And Ric is here for a meeting with us on a tourism opportunity in reference to ecotourism. And I can understand why the member from Green Lake doesn't want to . . . (inaudible) . . . up and recognize them too fast because this is the guy, along with Rose, went into Meadow Lake and took their train station and moved it into Green Lake, and now it's called Keewatin Junction, I believe. So there's a little plug in for his business.

I'd like all members of the Assembly to stop by in Green Lake one of these days and visit their fine establishment and to also take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Richardson here today.

Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I just want to take a moment also to acknowledge the presence of a third independent officer seated in the Speaker's gallery today, and that's Dr. Deborah Parker-Loewen, Children's Advocate. Welcome to the legislature.

And we also have some special guests of one of our Pages, Page Donovan Ackerman. With us today are his parents, Don and Dolores Ackerman; his sister, Darla, and her husband, Kevin Leach; and Donovan's special friend, Charity Landgraf, is here as well. Welcome to the legislature. And I'd ask you just to welcome them here.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle.

Gavin Semple, Inductee to Sales Hall of Fame

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring congratulations to one of my constituents, Mr. Gavin Semple of Brandt Industries, who was recently inducted into the Sales Hall of Fame by the Canadian Professional Sales Association.

Mr. Speaker, this is just the latest in a long series of awards and accolades achieved by Mr. Semple and Brandt Industries. He started out as a door-to-door salesman in rural Saskatchewan selling everything from vacuum cleaners to duck decoys. He became a sales rep for Brandt Industries in 1972. A year later, he became sales manager, and by 1976 he was company president and general manager.

In 1993, Brandt Industries won the Saskatchewan Business of the Year Award, and a year later he was named Entrepreneur of the Year for Western Canada. Mr. Speaker, he has years of progressive leadership in business. He has worked very hard with his team and with others to help develop innovative equipment. He worked with the Department of Highways and Transportation to help put together the road-railer for which they recently purchased the patent rights, and Brandt Industries continues to sell this remarkable piece of equipment.

Mr. Speaker, I think Mr. Semple has shown leadership and certainly shown that he can develop sales and help build this province. We thank him for that and I ask all colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Semple on his latest award and for his ongoing contributions to Saskatchewan business.

Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Vanier Cup

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, in football they say offence wins games and defence wins championships, and that's what happened at the Vanier Cup in Hamilton this past Saturday. A crowd of nearly 15,000 people filled Ivor Wynne Stadium and watched the lowest scoring game in Vanier Cup history and the first cup contest without a touchdown.

The Laval Rouge et Or defeated the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) Huskies 7 to 1. The loss ends a season that saw Saskatchewan finish with nine wins and three losses, while battling seven torn knee ligaments and the abdominal injury that hampered quarterback Steve Bilan.

The season marked the seventh trip to the Vanier Cup for U of S Coach Brian Towriss and his superb coaching team, a remarkable achievement in itself. Several terrific university athletic careers are now coming to an end.

Congratulations to linebackers Darryl Balzer, Tyson Craigg, and Ryan Michalchuk; receivers Graeme Bell, Drew Kendel, Lindsay Strachun, Chad Rempel; tailback Chad Nunweiler; and punter Brad Ollen. You have made Saskatchewan proud.

The 2006-2007 Vanier Cup championships are scheduled to be played at Griffith Stadium to mark the 100th anniversary of the city of Saskatoon and the U of S. Mr. Speaker, the next battle the U of S and the Huskies football team will face will not be on the field. It will be with the governments at the city, provincial, and federal level as the U of S tries to secure funding to upgrade Griffith Stadium to national standards. Let's hope all elected officials understand the benefits of hosting the Vanier Cup would bring to our province. And again, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the 2004 edition of the U of S Husky football team.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order please. Our members are great and they love applause, but I would ask the members . . . the people that are visitors in the gallery to refrain from involving themselves in the debate in any way. I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone.

Saskatchewan Book Awards

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Book Awards were held here in Regina over the weekend. Over 500 people attended and I'm pleased to say that both myself and the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation had the privilege to be among them. Saskatchewan has a rich literary heritage and Saturday's event demonstrated that our writing and publishing community is as healthy and vibrant and ever.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatoon author Candace Savage won both the Book of the Year Award and the Non-fiction Award for *Prairie: A Natural History*. The Regina Book Award went to Byrna Barclay for *The Room with Five Walls* and Robert Calder won the Saskatoon Book Award for *Beware the British Serpent*.

Bonnie Dunlop of Swift Current won the First Book Award for

The Beauty Box; the Fiction Award went to Larry Gasper for *Princes in Waiting*; Gerald Hill took home the Poetry Award for *Getting to Know You*; and Beth Goobie won the Children's Literature category for the young adult novel, *Flux*.

David Baudemont won the Prix du livre francais for *Les beaux jours* written with French students in Saskatoon. Coteau Books won the First Peoples Publishing Award for the *Gift of the Hawk* by Randy Lundy. The Publishing Award went to the Canadian Plains Research Centre for *Water and Wetland Plants of the Prairie Provinces* by Heinjo Lahring, and the Publishing in Education Award went to Catherine Littlejohn and Ron Rivard for *The History of the Métis of Willow Bunch*.

Mr. Speaker, I extend my thanks to the many supporters and sponsors of the Saskatchewan Book Awards and I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating all of this year's winners, and to extend a special congratulations to outgoing executive director, Joyce Wells, who has done so much over the years to make the awards such a great success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Birthday Congratulations for Macoun Resident

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday I had the privilege of attending the 85th birthday party for a constituent, friend, and neighbour, Beatrice Veroba. Beatrice has lived in the Macoun area all her life and is very involved in the community. Beatrice lives in her own home in Macoun, still drives her own car, and can often be seen driving other senior ladies to different events.

I was honoured to join Beatrice, her sons, Darwin from Ontario, and Ken and his wife Eleine from Broadview, as well as a host of friends and relatives for the celebration. While reminiscing at the party it was said that during her youth Beatrice was the prettiest girl in the Macoun area. And, Mr. Speaker, mother nature has certainly been very kind to Beatrice, but I think her healthy lifestyle has contributed to this as well.

Beatrice is an incredible lady a true lady; and her pleasant personality and positive attitude make her a joy to be around. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Hon. Assembly to join me in extending best wishes to Beatrice Veroba. May you have many more years of good health and happiness. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:00)

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

International Volunteer Day

Ms. Hamilton: — Mr. Speaker, December 5 is International Volunteer Day. A day set aside by United Nations to celebrate and honour the contributions made by volunteers the world over.

I know that I'm a few days early, but as the Chair of the Saskatchewan voluntary sector initiative, I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the incredible generosity and giving spirit of Saskatchewan's volunteers.

According to the national survey of giving, volunteering and participating, some 323,000 Saskatchewan residents each volunteer an average of 154 hours annually. I'm proud to say that it is the highest in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan has more than 12,000 non-profit organizations and 5,000 incorporated charities, all of which are driven by our vibrant volunteer community. It is the energy and commitment of our volunteers that enables thousands of community-based organizations to provide service and support to Saskatchewan people every day.

The efforts of these generous and caring people continue to make a difference, enriching the lives of Saskatchewan individuals, children, families, and communities across the province. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has a lot of things to be proud of. Our habit of looking out for the needs for each other is the least of them.

In anticipation of International Volunteer Day, I ask all my colleagues who will join me in thanking the volunteers of Saskatchewan and in recognizing the significant contribution volunteers make to the life of our province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, December 6 commemorates the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. This day was proclaimed in 1991 by the Canadian parliament in remembrance of the 14 young women who were killed on December 6, 1989 at L'École Polytechnique in Montreal.

Mr. Speaker, as a society we need to continue to take steps to eradicate violence of any form against women. Unfortunately the reality is the violence against women still exists in many communities across Canada. It happens in cities, small towns, farms, and isolated communities. It happens to women of all races, religious, and social classes. Minority women and women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable. Our children are hurt when they witness violence and they often learn the cycle of abuse.

Mr. Speaker, it's time that governments do more than just talk about the issue. A few years ago, an all party committee was formed to prevent the abuse and exploitation of children through the sex trade. This committee found that children who have lived with abuse, or who have been abused, often become victims of the sex trade.

Mr. Speaker, 49 recommendations were tabled in this House on June 27, 2001. There are still over 40 of the recommendations

to be dealt with, nearly four years later. Mr. Speaker, if this government truly believes that violence against women must stop, then as a start I urge the members opposite to implement the existing recommendations as soon as possible.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Dwayne Derocher Receives First Nations Award for Journalism

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure to stand in the Assembly today and say a few words about a constituent of mine who was recently honoured at a ceremony here in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, Dwayne Derocher, popularly known as Babes, is the station manager at CFDM 105.7 FM, a community radio station on the Flying Dust First Nation near Meadow Lake. He has worked at the radio station for seven years, the last two as manager. Mr. Speaker, Babes Derocher focuses on people and good communication, both with his fellow workers and with the listening public. And under his direction CFDM has become a truly community-oriented station for people living in the area.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of his contributions to the Flying Dust First Nation, Babes Derocher has received the 2004 Women of the Dawn First Nations Award for Journalism. Mr. Speaker, while Mr. Derocher is proud to be honoured, he is also quick to acknowledge the role that his fellow employees play in the overall success of the station. He also credits former manager Ben LaChance who, as he says, taught me people come first. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, it was a lesson that Mr. Derocher learned very well.

I want to thank Dwayne "Babes" Derocher for his contributions to the Flying Dust First Nation. And I invite all my colleagues to join me in congratulating him on receiving the Women of the Dawn First Nations Award for Journalism. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Waiting Times and Resources for Surgery

Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, Wade Roberts is 18 years old. He attends high school here at Bishop Leboldus high school in Regina and has his whole life ahead of him. But, Mr. Speaker, Wade's quality of life has been deteriorating since 2001 when he started experiencing extreme pain and limited mobility in his right leg.

He waited a year to see a specialist who told him he would need a hip replacement. And then Wade was referred to another specialist and waited another full year. And he's not finished waiting yet. He's now told it could be another year and a half before he gets his surgery. Mr. Speaker, if the minister is targeting hip replacement surgeries, why is Wade Roberts going

to have to wait another year and a half?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the hip surgeries and the joint replacement surgeries that are part of our system are an area where we know we have some of the biggest challenges. We now have very detailed information about that. What that has allowed us to do is focus the dollars that we have from the accord in September, the premiers' and the Prime Minister's accord, to dealing with some of the backlogs in some of the day surgeries. In the spring we put some specific money to deal with the joint surgeries. We're continuing to do that, Mr. Speaker, and we will break this whole log-jam that we have. And we'll continue to work.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister says that he is targeting and shorting waiting times that are more than 18 months for surgery. Wade's family was told in 2002 that he needed hip replacement, and now Wade might wait until 2006.

Mr. Speaker, Wade's hip has already deteriorated significantly, and as his parents outlined in a recent letter that Wade is, quote:

... unable to enjoy the basic life style that a student in school would be able to participate in. Simple things like riding a bike ... (participating) in sports are not only limited but also very painful when attempted.

Wade used to participate in industrial arts, but he can't now because of his hip. Wade's doctor is afraid he might even end up in a wheelchair because the surgery is taking so long.

Mr. Speaker, Wade's parents and Wade are here today to ask their Minister of Health, quote:

... what can be done to end the 4 years of pain, waiting and suffering ... (their) son has had to endure waiting on the Saskatchewan Medical (care) System (wait lists).

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as the member knows and all people know, they work together with the professionals around how to make sure that they get the most appropriate treatment. And so I will leave the specific case to the professionals who are working on this.

But, Mr. Speaker, we in this year put extra money into dealing with surgery. We added more money in September this year to deal with this. The other thing that we have done is now have the actual information around how our system works. And what that overall plan is, is to help people just like this young person because that's what we've been concerned about.

Mr. Speaker, this is a challenge right across the country. Here in Saskatchewan we have been using our resources in a very focused way to deal with the particular problem, and we're going to deal with it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, the minister puts a great deal of faith in studies and reports and waiting lists and all of the rest of the statistics that he has in place. But money alone will not fast-track these surgeries. We need specialists in place to do the consults and perform the surgeries in a timely fashion, Mr. Speaker.

According to the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority, there's need for at least 10 orthopedic surgeons in this region, and the region is currently short over four specialists. The Canadian Institute of Health Information reports Saskatchewan has a severe shortage of specialists. In Saskatchewan there are 58 specialists for 100,000 people; the national average is 91 specialists per 100,000 people.

Mr. Speaker, this shortage impacts in a negative way on Wade Roberts's life. He waited a total of two years to see two different specialists as his condition deteriorated and got more painful.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government focusing its attention on lists and statistics instead of the human resources that are needed in this province to do the necessary procedures when they're timely and not going to be so disruptive for this young man's life?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, exactly what we have been doing is focusing on the professionals and all of the people that are needed in the ... In this House, Mr. Speaker, it's that member opposite who referred to many of the support staff within the hospital as not being health workers. Mr. Speaker, when you try to improve and work at increasing the number of surgeries, you have to make sure that you have everybody, from the cleaning staff right up to the surgeons.

Mr. Speaker, we're continuing to work very diligently at making sure that we have the resources, the equipment, and also the staff to deal with these particular problems. It clearly is a challenge. We have it outlined and we're working with all of the people involved, but especially the professionals, to make sure that the job gets done.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Resources for Orthopedic Surgery in Yorkton

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Health minister. Saskatchewan's shortest of ... shortage of specialists is particularly serious in the city of Yorkton, which is the Sunrise Health District. Yorkton used to have two orthopedic surgeons, the very specialists that are needed to help hundreds of people just like Wade Roberts.

Dr. Van Sittert was one of them, was known provincially wide. He was so good, Mr. Speaker, and because of lack of operating time he left the province. Mr. Speaker, there are no orthopedic surgeons left in Yorkton. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, we learned from the NDP (New Democratic Party) government through a written question last week that the health region isn't even looking for new ones.

Mr. Speaker, where does the Health minister think that people waiting for orthopedic procedures in the Yorkton area will go? We've got no orthopedic surgeons in Yorkton, a shortage in Regina, long waiting lists in Regina. Where are these people supposed to go for treatment?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, as I had to do last week, I have to ask for a correction. I think Dr. Van Sittert didn't leave because of a shortage of operating room time, but he left for some other opportunities.

But, Mr. Speaker, what is clear is that in the Yorkton area we have a regional hospital which has provided good service across that area. They had some challenges in the numbers of specialist that were available. They now have been able to recruit general surgeons, pathologists, and other specialists to provide care across that particular area. We have a challenge around orthopedics in southern Saskatchewan; we're looking at addressing that. But, Mr. Speaker we're dealing with it with the professionals and with the regional health authorities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, Dr. Van Sittert would still be here if he had enough operating time. He was down to less than half time. He was too good of a specialist to do just that little bit of operating. And I find it amazing, Mr. Speaker, that the minister in his previous answer said that we need equipment for these surgeons to have. In the Yorkton Sunrise Health District, they're selling the equipment for the orthopedic surgeons. So that tells me they're not even looking for new surgeons for that orthopedic waiting list that's in Yorkton.

How is that going to help the waiting lists in Regina? How is that going to help the waiting lists in Saskatoon? Yorkton is a large regional centre; we had two orthopedic surgeons. This Health minister, that NDP government, decided we don't need either of them and chased them both out of the province.

Back up your big words, Mr. Minister. Mr. Speaker, that minister says he has the funds now, extra funds to put into it. How about replacing those two orthopedic surgeons in Yorkton and addressing the problem in that corner of the province?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, in our action plan in December 2001 we set out the types of services that we would have across the province. We had some particular challenges on the east side of the province and I would like to report here, Mr. Speaker, that the Sunrise Health Authority has been doing a very good job of making sure that they have the broad array of services that are required. And that includes a complement of general surgeons, includes the pathologists, and includes other particular specialists. They will continue to work at making sure that they provide a broad array for the people in that particular area, and we will continue to work with them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Recognition of First Nations and Métis Women

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, at a recent general assembly the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations passed a resolution. The resolution declares 2005 to be the year of the First Nations Women. I will soon be introducing a private member's Bill calling on the province to make a similar declaration. Mr. Speaker, these women make sure their cultures survive. They pass wisdom from one generation to another. Everyone in Saskatchewan benefits from their knowledge and perspective.

(14:15)

My question to the minister of Aboriginal Affairs is: will the government be supporting my Bill? Or if they have any suggestions to strengthen the intent of the Bill, would they make the amendments and allow the Assembly to send a clear message of the importance of Aboriginal women in Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to also publicly thank the member opposite who's done a lot of work in this regard and raise the profile of this important issue as well.

The member will probably be aware, and members opposite will be aware, that the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation will be in moments making a statement proclaiming 2005 as the year recognizing women, First Nations and Métis women, Mr. Speaker. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that from the Premier's redesignation of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to a stand-alone Department of First Nations and Métis Relations that this government does recognize the importance of First Nations and Métis people in the province. Many of us, not myself at this particular time, but many of our government were in attendance at the assembly. Clearly, this is a very, very important issue that the member opposite raises, and we are in absolute agreement with what she says, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Changes to Labour Legislation

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the time in Saskatchewan's history when we most need a government with a long-term view for a thriving and growing economy here in Saskatchewan, a plan to maintain our status as a have province, Mr. Speaker, we have a government that would rather introduce investment- and job-killing measures like government-directed hours, Mr. Speaker. We now know the Minister of Labour is saying she wants these regulations for government-directed hours, where they would control how private sector employers do their shifting. She wants these regulations written by the end of the year, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't make any sense.

If extra hours can go only to the most senior in any particular workplace, how do the unemployed get any initial job experience, Mr. Speaker? What about students and those who need summer jobs? What about single parents who need part-time work available to them? Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: we'd be the only jurisdiction on the continent to go in this direction. We ask him again, will he scrap his plans for government-directed hours?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation has been unproclaimed and on the books for almost 10 years. Now there are comments that are made about it — some that haven't given it a lot of thought that we've heard today. And, Mr. Speaker, I would say that when we look at the work situations today, it's changed drastically from what it was 10 years ago or 20 years ago. We're dealing with many different situations. And, Mr. Speaker, I spent a lot of time over the weekend doing reading on this and one fact that actually stuck in my head from some new Statistics Canada information is that there's 39,400 people in the province of Saskatchewan that are working more than one part-time job, Mr. Speaker. And that's unacceptable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of thought that went into this Bill in 1994 by the then administration, and they rejected it, Mr. Speaker. That was Mr. Romanow, Ms. MacKinnon, Mr. Lingenfelter. They rejected this, Mr. Speaker, and for good reason. They understood, at least they understood this much, that this would hurt our economy, that this would hurt our ability to create jobs.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business sent a letter to the Premier today. Do you know what they called their proposal, Mr. Speaker? Complex, time consuming, and inflexible. That sounds like something that will kill investment and kill jobs.

Here's what the CFIB (Canadian Federation of Independent Business) said to the minister, that the Minister of Labour told

them last summer — here's what she told them — quote, "There are currently no plans to proclaim this section." That's what she told Saskatchewan men and women who create jobs in the province, this summer.

Now she's talking about writing regulations by the end of the year. Why did she not, why was she not square with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business on her intention for government-directed hours?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, I will say to the member opposite, we had a political forum with the Chamber of Commerce not that long ago in the fall, and there was a member that stood up and said at those meetings that you can't keep doing things the same and expecting different results. So, Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about young people staying in the province, when we are talking about good jobs, I believe that we need to look at solutions that will accomplish the things that we need and good jobs in this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are difficult questions around this piece. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm the first one to admit that. There's some areas where decisions need to be made, where more research has to do done. And, Mr. Speaker, that's why I directed the Department of Labour to develop regulations that we could look at by the end of this year.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, it's amazing. The government says it is going to get involved in the day-to-day affairs of Saskatchewan businesses to create full-time jobs in Saskatchewan; that's the government's position.

You know, the Saskatchewan Party and the people of the province believe we need a government with a plan to create those new full-time jobs in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, through the right policies — through fixing the fundamentals in terms of regulation and legislation and making sure our tax regime is competitive. Let's create full-time jobs; not through government direction or legislation try to achieve something that should be the subject of collective bargaining, Mr. Speaker.

This is going to hurt our ability to create part-time jobs as well for those who need it — single parents; those who may be physically challenged, Mr. Speaker; students; those who want their first job experience. Mr. Speaker, this policy doesn't make any sense. It's why nowhere else in the continent is there a government that's even coming close to looking at it.

Will the Premier send the right signal that he understands this is wrong for the economy, wrong for Saskatchewan's future? Will he scrap this notion completely?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, from the member opposite who feels the best way to deal with difficult situations when you have no ideas of your own is to hand them out to someone else outside of government, by his, his Saskatchewan enterprise wallpaper.

Mr. Speaker, this government is determined that we will look at this issue and we will make a decision surrounding it. And I will say again, Mr. Speaker, there are difficult questions around this: where the cut-off is; what size of business that this will pertain to and others that it will stay away from.

Mr. Speaker, there are difficult decisions to make and this government will continue to do the work on those.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Employment of Former Member of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. This government seems very anxious to impose new labour standards laws on private businesses throughout Saskatchewan. Does the minister believe that it is important for all employers, including government employers, to follow the provisions of The Labour Standards Act?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that every time we look at making improvements in the working conditions for people within this province, the opposition complains, using the same old arguments, and attacks any progress that is made.

Mr. Speaker, I will say to you that labour standards is basic standards that affects every workplace across the province; and they are minimum standards.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Department of Labour recently investigated a complaint by a former member of this government, Jack Hillson. And I would like to quote from their findings, and I quote:

I have concluded that on expiration of your leave of absence to serve as a member of the provincial legislature, the Legal Aid Commission did not allow you to continue your employment contrary to the requirements of section 80 of *The Labour Standards Act*.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice broke the law. They contravened section 80 of The Labour Standards Act and unlawfully denied employment to a Saskatchewan resident. Mr. Speaker, why is the Department of Justice allowing the Legal Aid Commission to break its own laws?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Again, Mr. Speaker, and we had questions surrounding the issue of Mr. Hillson in the spring session. And as I pointed out to the member at that time — which I hardly thought was necessary since he had once been both Chair and chief executive officer of that commission — that commission is independent of the Justice department. Mr. Hillson was never an employee of the Justice department.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the Justice department received communications from the Department of Labour indicating that they were recommending, or words to the effect that they were recommending the possibility of a prosecution. His department turned that down. They deliberately interfered with that process.

Mr. Speaker, it's another NDP double standard. The NDP is bringing in new provisions to The Labour Standards Act. Everyone else has to follow The Labour Standards Act, but not the government. Why does everyone else have to follow the NDP's labour laws, but not this government, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, first of all, I don't believe there was a recommendation from anyone to prosecutions to prosecute. Secondly, there is no double standard. The Labour Standards Act is enforced equally whether it's government or not government.

In any case, in any case, Mr. Hillson was never an employee of the government. He was the employee of what my friend and the member from Saskatoon Southeast knows is an independent agency and independent of the government. And the Justice department has no ability or willingness or intent at interfering with the Legal Aid Commission, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice appoints nearly all of the members of the Legal Aid Commission. Mr. Speaker, this member has an obligation to ensure that the Legal Aid Commission complies fully with the labour standards. It is a body that is fully funded by the taxpayers of this province.

Mr. Speaker, will this minister refer the matter to an outside agency, and outside of the province, to determine whether the Legal Aid Commission complied with the law and to determine whether a prosecution should flow as a result of the breach of The Labour Standards Act?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I might ask the member opposite if he accepted political direction from the minister of Justice when he was Chair of the Legal Aid Commission. I don't believe the current Chair would accept such direction if I was inclined to give it — which I am not, Mr. Speaker.

We are very concerned about enforcement of labour standards, we are very concerned about enforcement of occupational health and safety; and that's why we have added a prosecutor who is now in place, who specifically only prosecutes occupational health and safety and labour standards legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite refers to the time during which I was the Chair of the Legal Aid Commission. Mr. Speaker, I would not have tolerated anybody in that department, or in that agency, not complying fully with the provisions of The Labour Standards Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Morgan: — It's fundamentally wrong. The member opposite knows it, and he has an obligation to ensure compliance with the law of all different government agencies — in particular one that he funds and one that he appoints the members to. Mr. Speaker, it's ludicrous for us to have a situation where we have one set of laws for private employers and a different set of laws for the government.

Mr. Speaker, will this member refer this matter to an outside prosecutor and an outside investigator for a proper, complete, and full review of this matter?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I am often — as a citizen, not just as Minister of Justice — frustrated by decisions that judges make that I think are mistaken decisions. I may be sometimes frustrated by decisions commissioners make that I think are mistaken decisions. That's no excuse for me to start trying to interfere in those judicial, quasi-judicial decisions, Mr. Speaker.

I believe the current Chair, I believe the current Chair of the Legal Aid Commission believes that the Legal Aid Commission has contravened not The Labour Standards Act or any other legislation. And there are other members, as the member states, to this commission not appointed by the government, appointed by the Law Society of Saskatchewan. When one of them complains to me about this, Mr. Speaker, I'll look at the matter again.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:30)

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Justice is not inclined to deal with this matter, if the Minister of Justice wants to hide behind this — which he should not — my question now is for the Minister of Labour. Will she stand up and will she direct an investigation and will she ask for somebody external to review and deal with this matter? Will she do something so that we do not have one set of laws for government and one set of laws for private employers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, it is my responsibility, as Attorney General and Minister of Justice, to ensure the independence of the Legal Aid Commission and the independence of commissions like the Legal Aid Commission from political interference just because it might be popular or it might suit somebody's agenda, Mr. Speaker. That's my responsibility and that's going to be the responsibility that I'm going to maintain.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Oh, why is the member from Saskatchewan Rivers on his feet?

Mr. Borgerson: — Leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatchewan Rivers has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I invite the member to make his introductions.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce two guests who just arrived in the west gallery.

But before I do that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge and welcome as well the members of the Prince Albert Grand Council Women's Commission for being here. In particular, I would like to welcome two of my constituents: Velma Buffalo, from Wahpeton First Nation; and Donna Kingfisher, a long-time acquaintance and friend from Sturgeon Lake First Nation. So I'd like to extend that welcome.

I'd like to introduce two guests in the west gallery. The first is Beverly Velásquez, from Waterhen First Nation originally. She presently works with the Department of Community Resources and Employment — and she just gave a little bit of a wave. And beside her, to the right, is Maureen Belanger, who also works for the Department of Community Resources and Employment in Saskatoon.

But Maureen is also a long-time friend. I don't want to embarrass her, but I taught Maureen when she was in grade 7 in Ile-a-la-Crosse. And for the past 27 years we've worked

together in various kinds of theatre projects with Upisaskik Theatre and with the Batoche Theatre Company.

She has brought great laughter, lots of tears, and great pride to many, many people in this province over the last 27 years. I know she finds it unusual to be seated in the audience today. I want to assure her that the theatre that she sees on this floor isn't nearly as good as what she's given the people of this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, yes she is related to the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) from Athabasca, but not his wife he wants me to assure the House. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member for Saskatoon Centre on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — To make a minister's statement.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister.

Modernization of Province's Firefighting Fleet

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased this afternoon to provide a statement regarding the government's \$42.4 million commitment to modernize the province's firefighting fleet. This commitment is possible through the one-time surplus of funds available to government in this fiscal year.

This investment is a first phase of a comprehensive 10-year fleet renewal strategy that will significantly upgrade both our firefighting aircraft and northern air support infrastructure. In the first four years, the land-based portion of our aerial firefighting fleet will be renewed. In the latter six years of the plan, our amphibious aircraft will be renewed.

Over the 10 years of the plan, we will also undertake the renewal of the aerial fleet supporting infrastructure; including hangars, runways, tanker-based fuel, and retardant systems. This phase is expected to generate opportunities for local companies and local employment.

The government recognizes that continued development of the North will play a key role in our province's future social and economic development. Ensuring sustainable development in the North will be a cornerstone of our green and prosperous economy.

Forests cover over 50 per cent of our province and our aerial firefighting fleet plays a vital role in protecting the lives, communities, and economic activity generated in this vast area — forestry, mining, exploration, outfitting, ecotourism, commercial fishing, hunting to name a few.

With the replacement of the land-based aerial fleet, we will be able to station these aircrafts in three locations; Meadow Lake, Prince Albert, and Hudson Bay and improve our coverage of the commercial forest zones.

This renewal will both expand the fleet's capacity and improve its operational capabilities, helping to ensure the health and safety of people and to safeguard property and valuable commercial timber resources.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to completing the renewal of the province's air tanker fleet, and ensuring this essential wildfire management tool meets the province's wildfire management needs today and into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the minister first got up, I thought maybe he was going to introduce another wiener roast tax, but then I had a look the message and it actually related to aircraft purchases. And, Mr. Speaker, I actually have a number of questions that the minister has not answered, and I think it's fair questions that the people of Saskatchewan and the people of the North should actually ask the minister at some point in the future.

With the purchase or proposed purchase of these aircraft, is this really the best way to go? Has the minister actually sat down and discussed the options with other people in the province or other jurisdictions. For an example, what about the deal with Australia? And I understand the minister was very loose and very vague on even knowing what the deal with Australia or the proposed deal with Australia was. And so I'm wondering if the minister had an opportunity to look at something such as that.

How about the co-operation with other provinces? I wonder if the minister has ever heard of the SEAT (single engine air tanker) program. And the SEAT program is a single engine air tanker program and I'm wondering if he even considered that or if he even knows about the single engine air tanker or the SEAT program. So there's a number of other questions that I think really need to be asked.

And, Mr. Speaker, with direct reference to the minister's speech, he talks about the \$42.4 million, and this is a commitment through a one-time surplus. And we know the windfall that this government received — about \$900 million — so they're going out and spending it. Every time they get in trouble, they want to announce a new program. But the announcement talked about four years.

Now my question to the minister, is he hoping that oil prices stay up at 50 or \$50-plus a barrel? What's going to happen to the follow on six years of this ten-year program? Is this going to be spent just in the first four years and then let's hope, let's hope we can have money for the rest of the 10-year renewal strategy?

Mr. Speaker, another question that comes to mind for myself and I think for people of the North, we know that the resources were cut in firefighting in parts of Saskatchewan in the last budget. We know that this government has a let it burn policy or whatever they call the policy, as we will monitor. Well if

you're monitoring it, Mr. Speaker, you're letting it burn. How is this new proposal going to affect communities in the North?

And I've received numerous calls from people in the North that are very worried about firefighting protection and their community protection. How is this new program going to help communities that express their concerns about this government's policy of a 20 kilometre . . . let it burn to within 20 kilometres and, yes, we'll be there to save you. Well I wonder if the minister knows how fast a forest fire actually burns?

This was very, very top item in communities in the North about this 20-kilometre range of letting the fire burn and then we'll jump in there and help you out. That's not very comforting to the people of the North that live in the forested lands.

Mr. Speaker, we hear this rhetoric on a day-by-day, if not a weekly, basis. Now we have an announcement that we're going to buy new aircraft because it's a cornerstone of a green and prosperous economy. Well I would like the minister — who couldn't even answer what a green and prosperous economy was — define a green and prosperous economy. And he was unable to do that in estimates, and now buying aircraft that's going help a green and prosperous economy. Please tell me how this could happen?

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's a very key question in this announcement also and I would like to requote it:

(The) . . . renewal will both expand the fleet's capacity and improve its operational capabilities.

Now that in itself is a little bit scary because . . . expand, does that mean that we're not getting rid of the other resources? Are we actually buying new aircraft to — as the minister explains — expand the fleet? And in one phrase we hear that the fleet is getting old, and we need to replace it, and yet he's going to expand it. And how is it going to improve operational capabilities? Mr. Speaker, the announcement has . . . leaves far more questions to answer from the minister than it does explain anything. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

2005 — The Year of First Nations and Métis Women in Saskatchewan

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and pleasure to stand in the legislature today and announce that 2005, the year of our centennial, will also be the year of First Nations and Métis women in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — As I stand and make this announcement, I want to recognize the work that has been done by others to make this happen today. The Prince Albert Grand Council Women's Commission brought a resolution forward to the FSIN (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) legislative

assembly this past October. The assembly passed resolution making 2005 the year of the First Nations Woman.

I would also like to recognize the work of the member from Kelvington-Wadena. It is so important that we stand united in this legislature on issues as important as the strength and security and recognition of all women in our society.

Mr. Speaker, the government is aware of how disproportionately First Nations and Métis women are affected by violence in our society. The findings of the Commission on First Nations and Métis People and Justice Reform have been a wake-up call to governments. We intend to act on the information provided in these reports. We are developing and implementing policies and investing resources and initiatives that will result in Aboriginal women and children living more secure and healthy lives.

Mr. Speaker, there's also work being done at the federal-provincial level. Ministers responsible for the status of women are working on the issue of violence against First Nations and Métis women. They will work with Aboriginal women's organizations focusing on areas such as human rights, housing, health, and education.

Mr. Speaker, one of the small things we can do as a government is draw attention to First Nations and Métis women through recognition of both their struggles and their strength. Proclaiming 2005 the Year of First Nations and Métis Women is a small step forward in recognition.

Mr. Speaker, First Nations and Métis women bear the burden of the poverty that affects their children. First Nations and Métis women are the backbone of their families and their communities.

Mr. Speaker, these mothers, sisters, and grandmothers work hard to see their sons and daughters grow up to live safe, happy lives. These women deserve recognition and support from all Saskatchewan people, for we stand stronger when we stand together. Egosi. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for sending a copy of the ministerial statement over. The proclamation made by the minister this afternoon sends a message that many people in Saskatchewan will be proud to hear and to support.

The work done by many individuals behind the scene made today's proclamation possible. The Prince Albert Grand Council passed a motion that went to the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations assembly and then on to the women's commission. And again there was input from the PAGC (Prince Albert Grand Council) and the FSIN women's commission.

And, Mr. Speaker, all the women I spoke to regarding this Bill believe passionately that the only way we can address the many

issues that negatively affect women is to admit and acknowledge the problem. First Nations and Métis women deal with all the issues that non-Aboriginal women deal with on a daily basis, but they deal with more. Too many First Nations and Métis women watch their sons and daughters deal with the issues of poor health, poverty, and unacceptable housing.

As a mother and grandmother, I ache when I hear the tortured life many children of Aboriginal families are forced to live. And as an elected member I believe that we all have the responsibility to improve the life of all people in Saskatchewan. But there is an added urgency to address the needs of Aboriginal young people.

We will be relying on the wisdom, the guidance, and the perseverance of our Aboriginal women to make this happen. I'm honoured to support this proclamation. I would've been honoured to have a Bill passed that would add strength and depth to the commitment. But at the end of the day, supporting women is the first step. For as the minister said, we stand stronger when we stand together.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(14:45)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 204 — The Recognition of First Nations Women Act, 2005

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

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 204, An Act to recognize First Nations women be now introduced and read the first time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Kelvington-Wadena that Bill No. 204, The Recognition of First Nations Women Act, 2005 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time? I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

Bill No. 88 — The Health Labour Relations Reorganization Amendment Act, 2004

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 88, The Health Labour Relations Reorganization Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Labour that Bill No. 88, The Health Labour Relations Reorganization Amendment Act, 2004 be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

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

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, members, I would . . . I wish to table from the Office of the Provincial Auditor the business and financial plan for the year ended March 31, the year 2006, and the annual report from the Saskatchewan Legislative Library for the period ending March 31, 2004.

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 the government and table responses to questions 858 through 884 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Questions 858, 884 have been responded to.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Appointment of Ombudsman

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured and pleased to move, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Southeast:

That a humble address be presented to Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, recommending that the Lieutenant Governor in Council appoint Kevin Fenwick, of Lorlie district, Ombudsman for the province of Saskatchewan

pursuant to section 3, The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and member for Saskatoon Meewasin, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Southeast:

That a humble address be presented to Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, recommending that the Lieutenant Governor in Council appoint Kevin Fenwick, of the Lorlie district, Ombudsman for the province of Saskatchewan pursuant to section 3 of The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, if I could have leave to make a short comment on this.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has requested leave to make a statement regarding this Bill. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues in the House.

About 30 years ago when I first met Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Speaker, I could not have imagined that one day I would be rising here in the legislature to move a motion that he be appointed an officer of this legislature. I should have been able to imagine that, Mr. Speaker, because, of course, at that time he would have struck me as an intelligent — although younger — student and a person who radiates and seems infused with integrity. And I cannot imagine an individual more suited to the position to which this legislature is about to appoint him.

I did have occasion to appear before him in his position as Chair of the Farm Tenure Arbitration Board, and everything that I would have thought of him when I first met him as a young man, of course, has borne true when he was serving in that capacity — a quasi-judicial, independent capacity, Mr. Speaker, that I think well suits him for his position as it's now coming to fruit and coming to bear.

I think he will serve the province well. He will serve the people of the province well. This is a job for an intelligent and compassionate and humane individual, and in Mr. Fenwick we will have that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to second the minister's motion. I'd like to welcome Mr. Fenwick to this position. We were in law school at the same time but not in the same graduating class. And I don't think I've seen him since law school, but when I see him in the gallery, I'm pleased to see that he as well as myself are aging very gracefully and we can

now both be regarded as attractive, distinguished elder statesmen of the legal community.

Mr. Speaker, it's a measure of a democracy's success in its willingness to challenge and question itself, and the role of the Ombudsman is a significant part of this legislature's checks and balances. Saskatchewan was a leader in establishing an Ombudsman's office.

Mr. Fenwick has strong and distinguished predecessors and I'm sure will do an admirable job. It's an understatement to say that he has some very large boots to fill, most notably his recent predecessor, Barbara Tomkins.

On behalf of all members, I'd like to welcome Mr. Fenwick and look forward to working with him and wish him every success in the challenges that lie ahead. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the one moved by the member for Saskatoon Meewasin, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Southeast:

That a humble address be presented to Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, recommending that the Lieutenant Governor in Council appoint Kevin Fenwick, of the Lorlie district, Ombudsman for the province of Saskatchewan pursuant to section 3 of The Ombudsman and Children's Advocate Act.

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.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Appointment of Chief Electoral Officer

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured and pleased to move, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Southeast:

That this Assembly hereby appoint Jean Ouellet, of the city of Regina in the province of Saskatchewan, Chief Electoral Officer, pursuant to section 4 of The Election Act, 1996.

Mr. Speaker, if I could say in respect to Mr. Ouellet, that he brings to this position a wealth of experience, both in Saskatchewan and in jurisdictions foreign to us including Ottawa, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mali, Guinea, Australia, Senegal, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, and Namibia where he has served either as an election observer, in the case of Australia, as the . . . in the office of the chief election officer to the Australian

Electoral Commission, and in the case of Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, an election clerk in Ontario.

So he has a wealth of experience and many years working with elections. This is very important work to a well-developed democracy like Saskatchewan, as it is to developing democracies, where he has provided international assistance in typical Canadian fashion, Mr. Speaker. So we have now serving in this important role a citizen of Saskatchewan and a citizen of the world.

So I now move, seconded by the member from Saskatoon Southeast:

That this Assembly hereby appoint Jean Ouellet, of the city of Regina in the province of Saskatchewan, Chief Electoral Officer pursuant to section 4 of The Election Act, 1996.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice, the member for Saskatoon Meewasin, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Southeast:

That this Assembly hereby appoint Jean Ouellet, of the city of Regina in the province of Saskatchewan, Chief Electoral Officer pursuant to section 4 of The Election Act, 1996.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to second the minister's motion and to welcome Mr. Ouellet to this position. Mr. Ouellet is going to face many challenging tasks in dealing with his role. He will have to deal with election returns. He will deal with complaints from cranky MLAs looking for their refunds — from both sides, Mr. Speaker. During the writ period he will have many calls from chief officers and from campaign managers, and I'm sure that he will be able to return all of those calls within five to ten minutes. And I'm sure as well, Mr. Speaker, that he will be able to have the refunds and rebates paid within five days after the election. And I suspect as well, Mr. Speaker, that he will be able to do a redistribution that will convince both sides of this House that they are getting something to their great advantage.

Seriously though, Mr. Speaker, this is a position that is extremely important to our democracy. We have in the last few years seen problems with flawed democratic processes in other places, and most recently in the Ukraine. In Saskatchewan and in the rest of Canada, we recognize that our electoral process is part of the foundations and underpinnings of our democracy, and we look forward to Mr. Ouellet protecting and doing a good job in his job. We're welcoming the opportunity to work with him. And welcome to this legislature. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the member for Saskatoon Meewasin, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Southeast:

That this Assembly hereby appoint Jean Ouellet, of the city of Regina in the province of Saskatchewan, Chief Electoral Officer pursuant to section 4 of The Election Act, 1996.

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.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — Why is the member from The Battlefords on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask leave to move a motion subject to rule no. 49, a matter of urgent and pressing necessity concerning matters relating to trade, prior to the Premier's leaving for the meeting in Ottawa tomorrow with the Prime Minister and the President of the United States.

The Speaker: — Would the member just state the nature of the motion he wishes to move.

MOTION UNDER RULE 49

Bilateral Trade with the United States

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. Actually I'm prepared to put the motion, seconded by the member from Rosetown-Elrose. And with leave, I would have a few remarks to make, Mr. Speaker. The motion specifically reads:

That this Assembly recognize the mutual importance to Canada and the United States of a new commitment by Prime Minister Paul Martin and President George Bush to improve our bilateral relationship by expediting the resolution of the current disputes affecting bilateral trade in live cattle and swine, wheat, and softwood lumber.

Mr. Speaker, I would move that motion with leave of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to move a motion and has explained the nature of the motion. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I invite the minister . . .

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It does give me great pleasure today to move this motion and equal pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to know that it will be seconded by the member from Rosetown-Elrose, who will also have a few words to say.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States will be meeting with Canadians tomorrow. The Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Paul Martin, and premiers from across Canada will be in Ottawa for this meeting. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it is appropriate for this Assembly to send its support for a number of very important issues with our Premier as he goes into this meeting.

Mr. Speaker, in particular I think it is important to put on the record Canada and the United States have created the largest bilateral trading relationship in the world. Today and every day our two-way trade now amounts to about, in Canadian dollars, \$1.8 billion. The US (United States) is by far Canada's most important export market, and 39 US states now have Canada as their most important export market.

Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, as one of the most export-oriented provinces in Canada also has the United States as our most important international export market. For example, in 2003, 64 per cent, or in Canadian dollars, 6.5 billion of the province's total international goods exports went to the United States. That's an equivalent, Mr. Speaker, of about 25 per cent of our provincial GDP (gross domestic product).

(15:00)

Saskatchewan's economic relationship with the United States is also clearly beneficial stateside. For example, in 2003, some 90 per cent, or again in Canadian dollars, 4 billion of our international goods imports came from the United States, and the US remains by far the largest source of foreign investment in this province. For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is particularly sensitive to the disruptions in our trading relationship with the US.

For example, we estimate that the four bilateral trade disputes affecting our exports have cost us more than \$600 million — Canadian dollars, Mr. Speaker — in lost exports over the past three years. And that's not including any of the indirect costs involved in such slowdowns. That loss amounts to a full 10 per cent drop in Saskatchewan's exports to the US.

Because of the types of products that are in the dispute, we in this province are shouldering a heavy burden arising from these strains in the Canada-US trading relationship. That's why, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan expects Canada to accord the resolution of these disputes the highest priority during the upcoming meeting with President Bush.

More specifically, Mr. Speaker, on the BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) trade dispute, Saskatchewan is pleased that the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) has now forwarded its proposed new rule on live cattle import from Canada to the Office of Management and Budget, the OMB, within the president's executive office for review and approval. Saskatchewan expects Canada to push President Bush to see that the OMB process is completed as quickly as proper regulatory review allows.

Saskatchewan's view is that the BSE cases detected in Canada and the US are isolated and indigenous to North America. As such, they require an indigenous North American solution based on sound science and not on the politics of trade protectionism.

The US and Canada can and must demonstrate leadership in dealing more effectively with isolated cases. They can do so by developing and adopting more effective continental standards for animal health and safety and by working together to advocate them internationally.

On the important issue of softwood lumber, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's preferred option remains the negotiation of a long-term, policy-based solution to this dispute.

However no deal is better than a bad deal. Faced with a bad deal, Canada must be prepared to walk away and rely on the outcomes of the current litigation in the World Trade Organization and NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). For Saskatchewan a minimally acceptable deal must provide provinces with a clear and reliable path to free trade, following implementation of the prescribed forest policy reforms. And it must not — must not — impose a disproportionate burden on Saskatchewan firms as the price for settling this dispute.

Canada must also strongly encourage the president to press congress not to pass the new Bill tabled by Montana senator, Max Baucus, which aims to seize the over — in US dollars, Mr. Speaker — \$3 billion in Canadian duty deposits collected so far and distribute it to the US lumber industry. In any case, Canada should ask Mr. Bush to veto any such Bill, even if Congress passes it, since the WTO (World Trade Organization) has already found the practice to be illegal.

And on wheat, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan views the virtually continuously . . . the virtually continuous and unsuccessful attack on the Canadian Wheat Board over the past 15 years to be essentially political, even ideologically, motivated. This is especially the case given the wide disparity in government income support for wheat producers. The US, Mr. Speaker, as you are aware is almost double Canada's. To be sure improvements in how bilateral grain trade is conducted are both possible and necessary, as the WTO has recently suggested. But given the integrated nature of this trade on a cross-border basis, these improvements can and should be achieved in more constructive ways than resorting to punitive and disruptive trade actions.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, on live swine trade and the dispute there, Saskatchewan is pleased to see that the US government's own preliminary findings support our contention that Canadian hog producers are not being subsidized. We also think that in a highly integrated North American market place, the current US anti-dumping is particularly problematic given in agricultural sectors like live swine where there are highly cyclical prices.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan government has been very active over the past year in terms of dealing with the Americans in a bilateral way. Our relationships, Mr. Speaker, have improved greatly through a number of meetings and organizational activities that have taken place. For example, Mr. Speaker, my office and other ministers for the Government of Saskatchewan recently met with US Ambassador to Canada, Mr. Paul Cellucci. All of these issues were discussed with him in a very positive, forward-looking way, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan has also entered into a trade accord with the state

of Montana. We recently hosted Lieutenant Governor Ohs here in the province of Saskatchewan, had a very good meeting with the Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Speaker, and represented a number of our issues to his office.

Just a few weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, the government and opposition members hosted a North Dakota delegation, Mr. Speaker, including the new Speaker of the North Dakota state Assembly. Mr. Speaker, again we dealt with quite a number of these, all of these issues, Mr. Speaker, and sent back a message with the North Dakota people that we want to continue to improve these issues on a bilateral way.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Midwest Legislative Conference, Mr. Speaker, a recent meeting this summer in Des Moines, Iowa had the representatives from Saskatchewan, opposition members and government members, talking with the representatives of the midwest states. A resolution put forward from the Saskatchewan delegation, Mr. Speaker, about opening borders was passed by the Midwest Legislative Conference delegates, Mr. Speaker — a good show of support, thanks to the efforts of all who were there.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, we have supported, through my office, the federal government setting up of a federal-provincial secretariat in Washington, Mr. Speaker, an opportunity for provinces and the federal government to work on a bilateral basis with the US federal government. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan government is moving forward in a very pragmatic way to improve our relationship with our US colleagues. We want nothing less than for the federal government to be doing much the same thing.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, it is my pleasure to move:

That this Assembly recognize the mutual importance to Canada and the US of a new commitment by Prime Minister Paul Martin and President George Bush to improve our bilateral relationship by expediting the resolution of the current disputes affecting bilateral trade in live cattle and swine, wheat, and softwood lumber.

I move, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for The Battlefords and seconded by the member for Rosetown-Elrose:

That this Assembly recognize the mutual importance to Canada and the US of a new commitment by Prime Minister Paul Martin and President George Bush to improve our bilateral relationship by expediting the resolution of the current disputes affecting bilateral trade in live cattle and swine, wheat, and softwood lumber.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

I recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure to rise in this Assembly and second the motion that

was just tabled by the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs. It's a motion, I think, that's very appropriate given the . . . we're on the eve of a historic meeting between the newly elected Prime Minister of Canada and the newly re-elected President of the United States, Mr. Martin, Mr. Bush.

Mr. Speaker, there are some relations that need to be cemented and firmed up. We've had some difficult times over the last few months and years. Relations between our two countries have deteriorated and it's always good to see any kind of an effort, a motion, a speech, an action that would firm up what had traditionally been a good relationship that Canadians have had with Americans.

As the minister correctly pointed out, we have unparalleled trade between our two countries. In fact, most of us in Saskatchewan are dependent for our standard of living on the fact that we trade with the Americans. Most of our industries, whether it be agriculture, whether it be oil, whether it be minerals, potash, uranium, see significant economic benefit from the trade that we have with the large nation to the south of us, United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, we ship our goods to the United States including durum, cattle, hogs, softwood, pulp and paper, manufactured goods, and if there is a disruption in the shipment of our goods — as we've seen recently with the BSE situation and with softwood lumber and potentially with hogs — it causes a great deal of distress and concern. And it's in cases like these that we need to be able to speak openly and frankly and respectfully with our trading partner to the south to iron things out and get the trade back on the rails.

Mr. Speaker, we've had good neighbourly relations too with the United States. Many of them come and visit our province. They love our lakes. They spend a great deal of money in our province. They have been the reason why we have a tourism industry and they've expanded it and strengthened that industry, and we reciprocate.

And I'm glad to say I've been able to take my family down to see Disneyland and I've been to the Black Hills with my family and to Yellowstone Park and seen Old Faithful, and I think it's wonderful that we're able to freely visit one another's countries. And I've been very warmly received by Americans when I've been . . . had the pleasure to be in their country and I know that for the most part they feel very warmly received by Canadians when they come up to see the wonders of our beautiful country.

But, Mr. Speaker, the history recently has been strained. It's almost back to the point that we were at in our early history, the war of 1812. There were strained relations between our first prime minister, John A. Macdonald, and their president, Ulysses S. Grant. We worked through those problems. We strengthened our relationship with the United States and both countries benefited as a result.

And the events that followed were more positive. We worked together in two world global conflicts to defend democratic process, to defend freedoms that we all love and cherish. More recently we've been involved with world relief, helping countries that are poorer than ourselves, that are needy. And both the Americans and Canadians have been active in helping

third world countries to stand on their feet and meet some of the needs that, because we have been blessed, we are able to share our goods and our blessings with others.

Even more recently, Mr. Speaker, we were able to put together an historic trade agreement with the United States. It was called the Canada-US trade agreement. It's simply . . . It's more lately become the NAFTA agreement and it's included Mexico. And it's been a model for countries all around the world to cobble together trade agreements to help the economies of all the countries that have been involved with those agreements.

Very recently — and, Mr. Speaker, you will know this — many of us had the opportunity to go to Des Moines, Iowa as the Midwest Legislative Council met. And we know that, you know, how warmly welcomed Saskatchewan people were and Canadians were to the conference.

And it was also a time when the issue of the BSE problem that we faced was raised by Canadians. And we found that the Americans listened to our concerns. And in fact my colleague, the member for Cypress Hills — who by the way we're thinking of a great deal as he is struggling with some health concerns, and we wish him well and we pray for a speedy recovery — but the member worked tirelessly on behalf of the livestock industry in Saskatchewan. We've watched . . . He talked to every delegate from every state in the United States trying to move forward a resolution to the BSE crisis. And that's the good things that can happen when we work constructively with our neighbours to the south.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there have been tensions in the past and as the minister was speaking some of my colleagues were remembering some of those tensions. And in fact my colleague, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, was often in the party that was creating a lot of the tension that we experienced with the United States, leading the way in some anti-American activities and sentiments.

Mr. Speaker, I remember not too long ago a document that was generated by an NDP staffer. And for some reason they hit the wrong button on the fax machine and that release, that memo went out to the media instead of the internal distribution that it was supposed to receive, and it was mocking the President of the United States, President George Bush. It called him president shrub.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there was a problem on the other side. Now fortunately for the NDP, fortunately for the NDP, the memo was sent out by a mere staffer instead of an MLA, so they were actually able to relieve that person of his responsibilities. Had it been an MLA that sent that memo out, I don't know what they would have done. Because they just cannot find it within the realm of decency to ever fire one of their MLAs for doing something wrong. So fortunately for the NDP, it was a staffer that sent out this demeaning memo and he was, he was dealt with.

(15:15)

But, Mr. Speaker, I remember Svend Robinson, NDP MP (Member of Parliament), heckling, heckling Ronald Reagan, heckling Ronald Reagan, the president of the United States,

when he addressed parliament, when he addressed the House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker, I've been told that the current MLA for Regina Qu'Appelle, before he was elected, spoke at a Remembrance Day service in Alameda in southern Saskatchewan, where he went on an anti-American tirade in front of a bunch of US army veterans — war veterans. Now, Mr. Speaker, those are the kind of actions that are almost unforgivable. Why the member would give an anti-American address at a Remembrance Day ceremony in Alameda, Saskatchewan, I cannot understand. Mr. Speaker, it happened, and activities like that have built up some real concern.

Mr. Speaker, I went to the NDP Web site, went to the NDP Web site, and they had a number of links. So I hit one of the links and I got a CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) news release on the NDP Web site. And it says:

No to Bush! Rallies, marches and vigils Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 in Ottawa and across the country.

So how does the Intergovernmental Affairs minister hope to smooth things over with the United States when on his own Web site they are promoting links that are calling on Canadians to go out and protest and demonstrate against the President of the United States when he comes to Canada? I thought, well, you know, at least it's just a link. It isn't the NDP; it's somebody the NDP are linked to.

But then I found a news story. This news story was from the last election, and it says:

NDP to attack relationship with U.S.

This is a CP (Canadian Press) article by Murray Brewster. The story occurred in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan — right here in Saskatchewan. It said:

New Democrats are planning a series of television ads, deliberately timed to coincide with the G-8 summit, to warn Canadians about the perceived dangers of being too cosy with the United States.

So here, Mr. Speaker, we have a beleaguered NDP Party in trouble in a federal election. And to try to get themselves some attention, they try to embarrass, they try to embarrass the Prime Minister of Canada when he meets with his colleagues at the G-8 summit by stirring up anti-American sentiments. How much class is that, Mr. Speaker? How much class does the NDP have?

Mr. Speaker, they said . . . they go on to say, that:

The political optics of Martin standing next to U.S. President George W. Bush, whom some Canadians regard with suspicion, were just too good to pass up . . .

In other words, Mr. Speaker, politics took first place. Being good Canadian citizens wasn't even on the radar screen, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hermanson: — Mr. Speaker, not only, not only do they speak anti-American sentiments, but they actually talk about meddling in American politics. The story goes on to say:

At one point, early in the campaign, Layton (that's the federal leader, Mr. Speaker, Layton) talked about forging alliances with Bush opponents in order to help bring about his defeat in this year's presidential election.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has a real problem here. I don't think that the Premier of Saskatchewan, in his wildest dreams, expected he was going to be invited to meet with the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States.

Oh my gosh, now what good news do I have to take when I meet with Mr. Bush? What might Mr. Bush want to know? Well the President of the United States might say, good to meet you, Mr. Premier of Saskatchewan. What party are you with? NDP. What party was that, Mr. Premier? NDP. Well, what party? Oh, New Democratic Party. Oh, I've heard about the New Democratic Party. They're the ones that organized all the protests. They're the ones that are against global trade even though Canada benefits more from global trade than any other country, I think, in the entire world.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has a problem. So what did the Premier decide to do? He decided to get his Intergovernmental Affairs minister to introduce this cute little motion in the House and get the opposition to second it, which we're happy to do because it is a good motion. It talks about strengthening and improving bilateral relations and solving some of our trade problems.

So the Premier, after he said he was from the NDP, he could pull out this resolution and say, lookit, I got this unanimously passed in the Saskatchewan legislature. Isn't this wonderful? Look at how we're supporting bilateral discussions. We want to improve our relationship with you. Just forget about the million things we've said and done in the past.

Just forget about Mr. Layton. Just forget about our relationship with all of these people who have been demonstrating and burning effigies of you and all of that sort of thing. Just pretend that didn't happen, at least for today. And then when I go back to Saskatchewan we'll see where things go from there.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess fortunately for Canada and fortunately for the people of Saskatchewan the NDP have never formed a national government and I believe they never will. Their party was shut out in the province of Saskatchewan in the last federal election. I guess that sends a little message about their anti-American campaign and Mr. Layton being in Saskatoon and talking about campaigning against Mr. Bush.

And, Mr. Speaker, obviously countries from time to time will have disagreements; they won't always see eye to eye. And that's fair. I remember being a Member of Parliament — I think the Intergovernmental Affairs minister was an MP at the same time — and the current president of the United States came and addressed parliament, Mr. Clinton.

And Mr. Clinton gave a wonderful speech. I admired him, I was one of the people that rose in my place to applaud the president

of the United States, first of all for coming and speaking to us, and secondly for delivering a wonderful speech. And there was no heckling. There was proper respect shown. I don't agree with everything Mr. Clinton did but he was a good president of the United States. He represented his country well. He came as a statesman. He was received with respect and dignity by Canadians, including the Intergovernmental Affairs minister.

You know, just because you don't always agree 100 per cent with somebody, or with some political party or with some world leader, doesn't mean you don't show them the proper respect when they come as a visitor to your country. And, Mr. Speaker, it's always better to have done the right thing in the past so that you don't have to be embarrassed and bring forward this cute little resolution to the Saskatchewan legislature to try to get yourself out of a jam.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to second the motion. And I just would ask members opposite to learn from the mistakes of the past. We're not asking them to agree with everything the Americans do, but we are asking them to show proper respect, recognize that free trade was good for Canada, that free trade was good for Saskatchewan; recognize that the United States overall has been a good neighbour to Canada, has been a responsible citizen of the world's nations. And that we as a country are fortunate to be able to have an undefended border with this country, to be able to cross freely, to share many rights and freedoms and many good relations over the past number of decades that we have been a country doing business and visiting the country to the south.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to second:

That this Assembly recognize the mutual importance to Canada and the US of a new commitment by Prime Minister Paul Martin and President George Bush to improve our bilateral relationship by expediting a resolution of the current disputes affecting bilateral trade in live cattle and swine, wheat, and softwood lumber.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the member for The Battlefords, seconded by the member for Rosetown-Elrose. Will members take it as just read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — 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.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

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: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Industry and Resources that Bill No. 19, The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. 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: — When shall this Bill be heard in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the minister . . . Government Deputy House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. I move that Bill No. 19, The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government Deputy House Leader that Bill No. 19 be now 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. 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. 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: — The motion before the Assembly is the one proposed by the Minister of Agriculture that Bill No. 57, The Irrigation Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. 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 Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 57, The Irrigation Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture that Bill No. 57 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. 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 Economy.

Bill No. 76

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wartman that **Bill No. 76 — The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is that Bill No. 85, The Film Employment Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time, as moved by the Minister for Culture, Youth and Recreation. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

I would just withdraw my remarks with respect to Bill 85. The question before the Assembly is that Bill No. 76, The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute 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: — The 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 Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 76, The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture that Bill 76 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. 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 the Economy.

Bill No. 72

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Sonntag that **Bill No. 72 — The Traffic Safety Act** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Transportation that Bill No. 72, the traffic safety amendment Act 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: — The 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 Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 72, the traffic safety amendment Act be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill 72 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: — The motion is carried.

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

Bill No. 73

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Sonntag that **Bill No. 73 — The Traffic Safety Consequential Amendment Act, 2004/Loi de 2004 sur les modifications corrélatives découlant de la loi intitulée The Traffic Safety Act** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Transportation that Bill 73, The Traffic Safety Consequential 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: — The 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 Highways and Transportation.

Hon. Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 73, The Traffic Safety Consequential Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Highways and Transportation that Bill No. 73 would 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.

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

(15:30)

Bill No. 85

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Beatty that **Bill No. 85 — The Film Employment Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Recreation that Bill No. 85, The Film Employment Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2004 be now read a second time. 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?

Hon. Ms. Beatty: — I move that Bill No. 85, The Film Employment Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister for Culture, Youth and Recreation that Bill No. 85 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. 79

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Forbes that **Bill No. 79 — The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

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 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 for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Forbes: — I move that Bill 79, The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2004 be referred to the Standing Committee on Economy.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Environment that Bill No. 79 be referred to the standing committee on the environment. 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 Economy.

Bill No. 81

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 81 — The Municipalities Act** be now read a second time.

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

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to take part in the debate on Bill No. 81, The Municipalities Act. Mr. Speaker, I first off want to clarify and put on record some of the things that have happened with this Bill coming before the legislature.

I've had a number of opportunities to speak with members of elected councils, to members of the SUMA (Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association) executive, members of the SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) executive, and I want to put on record the pattern and the timeline by which this Act is now before us.

The first thing I want to indicate to the public, Mr. Speaker, if I might, those who read *Hansard* or those who follow the debate

live in the legislature, is that this is a document that contains 413 clauses. This is a document that was presented to the legislature and given first reading on November 19. And it was given second reading on November 23. So, Mr. Speaker, when I know that today is November 29 and the fact that we had first reading of this Bill on November 19, that's easy math to know that that's only 10 days ago that this Bill was presented to the Legislative Assembly.

Now, Mr. Speaker, another concern that I have is that the information that councillors and reeves and mayors and all their persons at various urban communities, they believe that this was a Bill that had a draft stage early in the spring and in fact was in the hands of many people, including the official opposition members, that we actually had a draft legislation in our hands. That is not true, Mr. Speaker.

I attended the SUMA regional meeting — I believe it was — the last week of October 2004. And I was at that meeting in Yorkton, and I know the member for the constituency of Yorkton was also in attendance, and we listened to a presentation from a representative of SUMA regarding the Bill and what its stages . . . at what stage the Bill was at, Mr. Speaker.

I recall the presentation where the person said that certain sections of the Bill were still within the Department of Justice, that Justice officials were looking at these sections as to how they might be, how they might be worded and strengthened. And the comment made at the end of October was that they weren't sure that this Bill in fact would be ready for presentation at this fall sitting. So obviously the people at Justice and others did their homework in that period from the end of October until November 15, and we were given a copy of this Bill in this session only 10 days ago.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the pattern that is followed in this Legislative Assembly, that I'm sure everyone in Saskatchewan understands, is there has to be a period of consultation. There has to be a period where everyone can get on board. And I know that the . . . talking with the people from SARM, from the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities — because this Bill encompasses all towns, villages, resort communities, and rural municipalities — you have to be aware, Mr. Speaker, that that is nearly 800 different councils that will be affected, both from the urban side and from the rural side.

That's a large number of individual councils that need to, first of all, have a full understanding of what is being put forward of this Bill, be able to make recommendations as to the clauses that are presented in this Bill so that they can in fact come up with a Bill that best serves the needs of all communities in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as I believe it was Barry Gunther, the vice-president, SUMA vice-president stated that the work that has been done on this Bill is very, very good. There was concern about the need for municipalities to have greater flexibility and accountability, and this Act will do that. I think Mr. Gunther is also quoted as having said in the past that the new legislation is more empowering. And we have absolutely no qualms about that, Mr. Speaker. We believe that there are a number of things that are presented in this Bill that will be good

for all of those nearly 800 councils.

But, Mr. Speaker, there are some concerns that have been expressed by not only the executive of SARM, but individual councils who said, you know, we haven't had a chance to work on this Bill. We haven't seen the Bill.

In fact there are councils, and I had the opportunity to speak with a mayor of one of the largest towns in the Canora-Pelly constituency just this afternoon, who said that in the last two council meetings, they have not had this item on their agenda. And I asked him well, what information do you have? And he said, none. They have not had the ability or the time to, in fact, discuss a very, very important Bill.

Now the SUMA representatives have indicated that SUMA has been working on this for a long time. About two to three years, they have been wanting this moved forward. SARM, who of course I believe they're about 297 rural municipalities, they've just come on board this spring.

So for all of those councils to have fully read and understood and developed a position on a number of these clauses is impossible. It's impossible, Mr. Speaker, for them to have fully done their work. The suggestion by the mayor that I spoke to said, you know, we have the opportunity. This is a Bill that proposes a new Act to come into force on January 1, 2006.

Now that's a full year and just about a month away, 13 months away. But what I think it does, Mr. Speaker, it allows those same individuals from the various councils to meet at their SUMA convention, which I understand takes place at the end of January or the first part of February. It allows them to have input on the different clauses and fully understand them.

We know that, from talking with people, there are concerns about . . . and here's just a few, Mr. Speaker: firefighting charges, road allowances, taxation dates, disclosure by council members, loans versus grants — and that question mark around them — special levies. You know, that's just a few examples of clauses that need clarification. They may be perfectly correct, but the council members that I've spoken to do not understand what implications this Act will have on them directly. So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of concern.

You know, when I look back at The Cities Act, The Cities Act was introduced in, I believe it was the early part of June 2002. There were only 12, I believe at that time, 12 city councils or maybe 13 city councils that were dealing with this topic for months and months and months. And this Legislative Assembly did not pass that Act until into the first week of July. In fact, there was a period of time for consultation even only with those 12 cities.

Now we're talking about 800 councils that will be affected by this Act; towns, villages, resort communities, rural municipal councils. They need to be fully aware of what is in this Act. They need to be able to make suggestions for improvement. They need to be able to have this Bill come into force on January 1, 2006, with all councils, all administrators fully understanding what this Bill is saying.

I think they have a plan to deal with that in the spring. I think

they have a plan that will make sure that this Bill comes forward again. The government has the ability to bring this Act forward again in the spring session and passing of this Bill could occur at that time.

In the meantime, there could be consultation with the people who have questions, who don't fully understand it. It gives the executives of both SUMA and SARM the opportunity to have regional meetings where they can do an education process with all of their council members.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is many, many reasons why this Bill should remain on the order paper until everyone has had a chance to fully understand it, to put forward the amendments that might improve this Bill. So, Mr. Speaker at this time, I would move that we adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Canora-Pelly that debate on second reading of Bill No. 81, The Municipalities Act be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 82

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Taylor that **Bill No. 82 — The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2004** be now read a second time.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to join in on debate on Bill No. 82, The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act.

As I look through the Bill and look through some of the different notes regarding this Bill, it deals with property tax and property tax policies in our province. I think if there's ever been a heightened awareness regarding property tax, it's where we sit right now in our province today, with the over reliance on property tax for education funding and the reliance on property tax to fund so many different programs in our province.

Any time a Bill comes forward dealing with property tax, it makes everybody stand up and, I think, take notice. This Bill was just introduced for second reading a week ago today. So it is not a Bill that has had a chance to be circulated widely and have had response come back. It is a fairly recent Bill and therefore, Mr. Speaker, we're still waiting on a number of people to come back with responses regarding this Bill.

What we do know though, according to the provincial government and its news release, what it does do is removes a number of taxing tools that municipalities around the province

have. It removes the municipalities' ability to phase in assessment. It removes the ability for towns, villages, resort villages, rural municipalities, and northern municipalities to phase in property taxes. Cities will continue to have that ability.

But what it does . . . And I'm not going to go through all the different aspects of the different tax tools that this Bill removes. But at a time when you talk to municipalities and they're finding it's really tight to keep the services and infrastructure that they have in place, I would think that you would find very few of these municipalities that would ask the government to take away tax tools that were in their kit already. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's what we hear far too often in this particular Bill, is municipalities really haven't had a chance to look at how this is going to impact . . . have an impact on their bottom line into the future.

There's a whole issue around condominiums and how they can adjust their taxing authority around condominiums compared to private residence. And a lot of that, those tools, are very, very useful for municipalities.

I have to mention an e-mail that I received, a fax that I received from a mayor just the other day. And it was regarding this Bill, as well as Bill No. 81 — Bill No. 81 which our member from Canora-Pelly just spoke about. And he was under the understanding that that Bill would be passed in this fall session. And I've written him back and I said to him, who in the world gave you the understanding that a Bill would be passed, of that magnitude or this magnitude, within 7 days to 12 days of introduction?

And I guaranteed him and I assured him that the guarantee that these Bills would be passed in this fall session did not come from this side of the House because our job on this side of the House is to see the legislation, is to send it out, and make sure that it is understood by all that it impacts — all the municipalities, whether it's 800 communities, urban communities, whether it's almost 300 rural communities. Mr. Speaker, these Bills impact all of those jurisdictions.

Now on some of these Bills, SUMA may have been made aware of, and some of their executive may have been made aware of what changes are in these Bills. But I would guarantee you the lion's share of municipalities both urban and rural will not have any idea of what's in this legislation.

(15:45)

So for somebody to stand in the House, not necessarily maybe even stand in the House, but imply to the municipalities, and especially to SUMA, that I don't think there will be any problem having these Bills passed in the fall session, and giving us as the official opposition seven days to do our work, is absolutely ludicrous, Mr. Speaker.

And I would say someone that guaranteed that has probably not been in this House for very long. Because a person that understands the legislative process, the steps that need to be gone through for Bills such as these to be passed, would never give the assurance that in a short seven day, twelve-day session that Bills of this magnitude would be passed, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, when these Bills are adjourned to be carried over and have more consultation — whether it's through public hearings which our committees have the ability to do, or whether it's just direct consultation between the opposition and municipalities across this province — that is what is going to be happening over the next number of months until we resume back here in the spring. Because it would be doing a disservice not only to the rural municipalities and the urban municipalities, but it would be doing a disservice to an opposition whose job is to hold these Bills up and making sure that they're properly understood before they're passed, Mr. Speaker.

So at this time, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we would adjourn debate on Bill No. 82, The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2004.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Indian Head-Milestone that debate on Bill No. 82 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Debate adjourned.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

The Assembly adjourned at 15:47.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Wall	1945
Hermanson	1945
Bjornerud	1945
Stewart	1945
McMorris	1945
Eagles	1945
Harpauer	1945
Bakken	1946
Brkich	1946
Weekes	1946
Dearborn	1946
Hart	1946
D'Autremont	1946

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk	1947
--------------------	------

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker	1947, 1949
Calvert	1947
Wall	1947
Beatty	1947
Draude	1948
Crofford	1948
Bjornerud	1948
McCall	1948
Hart	1948
Sonntag	1948
Merriman	1949
Belanger	1949
Borgerson	1956

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Gavin Semple, Inductee to Sales Hall of Fame

Wartman	1949
---------------	------

Vanier Cup

Cheveldayoff	1950
--------------------	------

Saskatchewan Book Awards

McCall	1950
--------------	------

Birthday Congratulations for Macoun Resident

Eagles	1950
--------------	------

International Volunteer Day

Hamilton	1950
----------------	------

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

Draude	1951
--------------	------

Dwayne Derocher Receives First Nations Award for Journalism

Sonntag	1951
---------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS

Waiting Times and Resources for Surgery

Gantefoer	1951
-----------------	------

Nilson	1952
--------------	------

Resources for Orthopedic Surgery in Yorkton

Bjornerud	1952
-----------------	------

Nilson	1953
--------------	------

Recognition of First Nations and Métis Women

Draude	1953
--------------	------

Sonntag	1953
---------------	------

Changes to Labour Legislation

Wall	1954
------------	------

Higgins	1954
---------------	------

Employment of Former Member of the Legislative Assembly

Morgan	1955
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Higgins	1955
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Quennell	1955
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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Modernization of Province's Firefighting Fleet

Forbes	1957
Huyghebaert	1957

2005 — The Year of First Nations and Métis Women in Saskatchewan

Beatty	1958
Draude	1958

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 204 — The Recognition of First Nations Women Act, 2005

Draude	1959
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Bill No. 88 — The Health Labour Relations Reorganization Amendment Act, 2004

Higgins	1959
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TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

The Speaker	1959
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ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Yates	1959
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The Speaker	1959
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GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Appointment of Ombudsman

Quennell	1959
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Morgan	1960
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Appointment of Chief Electoral Officer

Quennell	1960
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Morgan	1961
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MOTION UNDER RULE 49

Bilateral Trade with the United States

Taylor	1961
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Hermanson	1963
-----------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 19 — The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2004	1966
---	------

Bill No. 57 — The Irrigation Amendment Act, 2004	1966
--	------

Bill No. 76, The Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute Amendment Act, 2004	1966
---	------

Bill No. 72 — The Traffic Safety Act	1967
--	------

Bill No. 73 — The Traffic Safety Consequential Amendment Act, 2004

Loi de 2004 sur les modifications corrélatives découlant de la loi intitulée The Traffic Safety Act	1967
---	------

Bill No. 85 — The Film Employment Tax Credit Amendment Act, 2004	1967
--	------

Bill No. 79 — The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2004	1968
---	------

Bill No. 81 — The Municipalities Act

Krawetz	1968
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Bill No. 82 — The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2004

McMorris	1969
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CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. L. Calvert
Premier

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

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

Hon. B. Belanger
Minister of Northern Affairs

Hon. E. Cline
Minister of Industry and Resources

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

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

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

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

Hon. P. Prebble
Minister of Corrections and Public Safety

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Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Hon. C. Serby
Deputy Premier
Minister of Rural Revitalization

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

Hon. L. Taylor
Minister of Government Relations

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

Hon. H. Van Mulligen
Minister of Finance

Hon. M. Wartman
Minister of Agriculture and Food