



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

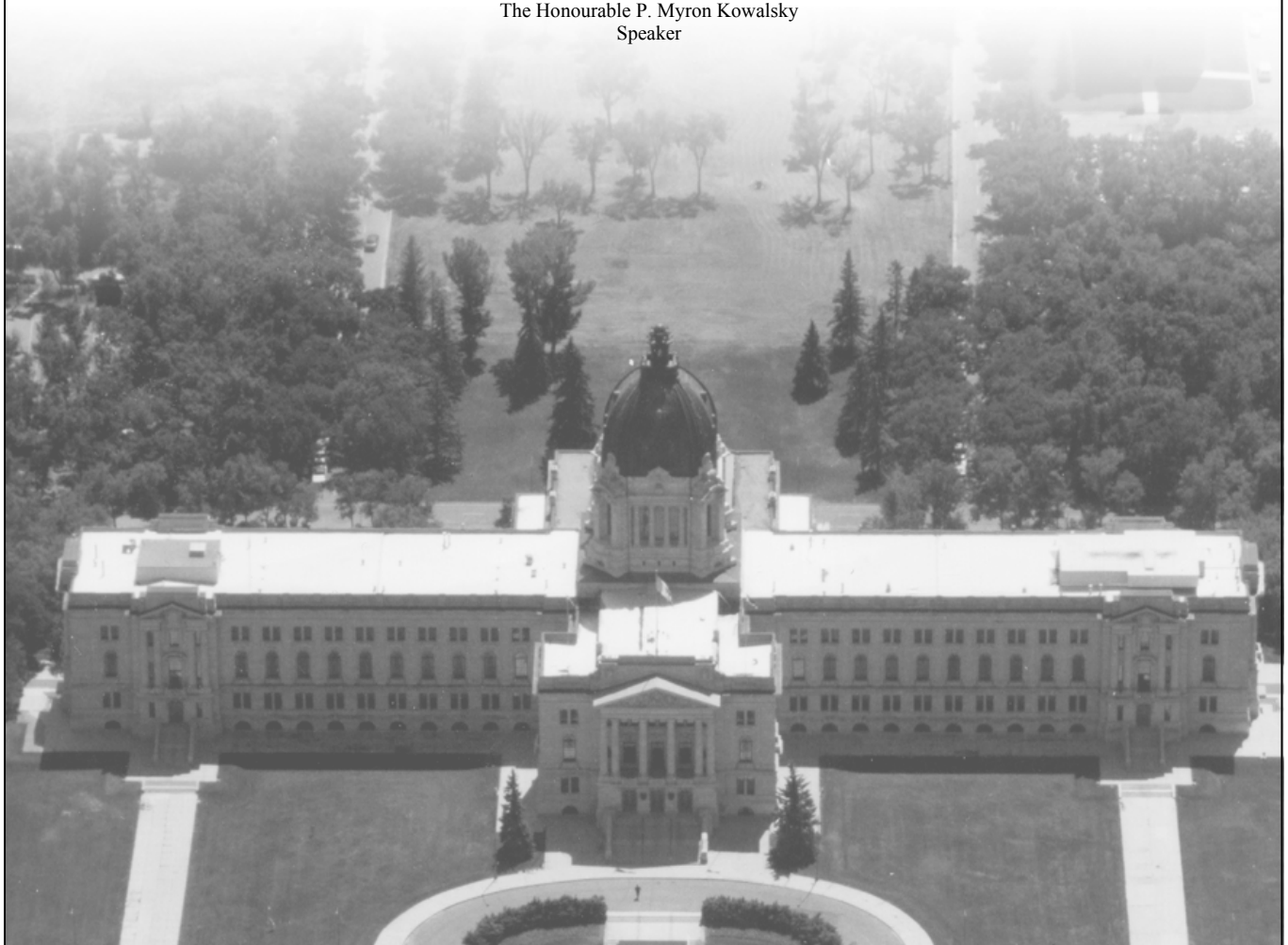
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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: — The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to stand and present a petition on behalf of four school amalgamations. And I'd like to read the prayer. It says:

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.

I so present. The petitioners on this petition that come from the community of Arcola.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The people of southwest Saskatchewan are very unhappy with forced amalgamation. They've presented a petition for me to present to the House today. The prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by a substantial number of residents from the community of Frontier. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition on forced school amalgamations. The 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 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.

This petition, Mr. Speaker, comes from the excellent communities of Arcola and Kisbey. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise on behalf of constituents of mine who are concerned about the deficiency in residential support offered to people with long-term disabilities in my home community of Swift Current. 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 steps to provide the funding required for additional residential spaces for Swift Current residents with lifelong disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today are all from the city of Swift Current. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition that points out that the provincial government has chosen to ignore the Boughen Commission report and nitpick its recommendations apart. The prayer of the 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.

There are a number of pages of signatures here, Mr. Speaker, and they come from the communities of Wiseton, Dinsmore, Outlook, and Lucky Lake. And I'm pleased to present these petitions on their behalf.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to present. 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 signatures, Mr. Speakers, are from the communities of Grayson, Melville, and Broadview.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I as well rise to present a petition signed by citizens concerned with forced amalgamation of school divisions. And 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.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Aylesbury, Craik; Provost, Alberta; and Kindersley, Saskatchewan. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Mr. Chisholm: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition in opposition of the forced amalgamation of school divisions. And it goes as follows:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatures are from the areas of Cochin and Meota. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have a petition. It seems like the groundswell against this forced amalgamation is growing, because this is against forced amalgamation as well. 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.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people from Weyburn, Francis, Cedoux, and Osage. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition to present on behalf of people from my constituency very concerned about the forced amalgamation of school divisions. And 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.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by folks from Oungre, Tribune, Bromhead, Lake Alma, Torquay, Estevan, and Midale. I so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the coming weeks I'll be presenting a number of petitions from parents in my constituency of Saskatoon Silver Springs regarding a much needed elementary school in the Arbour Creek area of Saskatoon. The prayer of the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement an allocation of financial resources to build an elementary school in Arbour Creek.

The petitioners today live on Kenderdine Road, Berini Drive, and Cowley Road in northeast Saskatoon. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here with citizens concerned about 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, continue reorganization of school divisions on a strictly voluntary basis.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Davidson, Saskatoon, and Leader. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the coming weeks I will continue to present petitions to revisit the effects of the TransGas Asquith natural gas storage project. The prayer reads:

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

long-term effects on these areas, and consider alternative sources of water for the project.

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

Signed by the citizens of Vanscoy, Pike Lake, and Saskatoon. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Carrot River Valley.

Mr. Kerpan: — Mr. Speaker, I too rise today on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned with the TransGas Asquith natural gas storage project and the effects that it may and will have upon their source and quality and quantity of water. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

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

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

Signed by the good citizens of Grandora, Saskatoon, and RR [rural route] no. 2, Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kindersley.

Mr. Dearborn: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens of west central Saskatchewan concerned with halting the forced amalgamation of school divisions. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by the very neighbourly individuals from Eatonia, Saskatchewan. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too have a petition to present on behalf of citizens who are very concerned about the forced 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.

Signators to this petition come from a number of communities including Grayson, Killaly, Southey, Neudorf, and I'm particularly pleased to be able to present this petition on behalf of citizens who have signed it from the community of Meadow Lake. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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 concerning residential spaces for Swift Current residents with lifelong disabilities, as sessional paper no. 715.

And addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 637 and 640.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 78 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskPower: what reasonings may be provided for rural customers paying a municipal fee? How are these municipal fees assessed? What amount of revenue does SaskPower collect from municipal fees? Do city customers pay this fee?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that I shall on day no. 78 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Highways: is Highway 35 south of Weyburn to the US border part of the 2005 spring construction project for the Department of Highways and Transportation? When will the construction be started? What section of Highway 35 will be included in the project? What type of work will the project include? And what is the cost of the project?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Moose Jaw North.

Mr. Hagel: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr.

Speaker, it's my great pleasure to introduce to you a large number of guests who are seated in the gallery, almost all in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

Earlier this day a group of very involved Saskatchewan citizens assembled together for a bit of a report on centennial planning, but also to exchange information about their own activities. And we're very, very pleased today to have a good number of those who are involved all across the province, from communities across Saskatchewan and organizations who are engaged in the planning and preparation for centennial celebrations.

Mr. Speaker, this summer the province is going to be literally abuzz with activity. And much of that will be happening because of the good work of people who are in the gallery here today and colleagues like them all across the province of Saskatchewan. They're too numerous to introduce individually.

These are folks who are used to being leaders and cheering on others in their own communities, but I think it would be most befitting if those of us today, Mr. Speaker, joined in expressing our appreciation for their work all across the province of Saskatchewan in preparing centennial celebrations. I'd ask them to stand and to receive our appreciation.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to join the centennial Chair, the member for Moose Jaw North, in welcoming the centennial committee Chairs here today. I know that they will be kept very busy fulfilling their duties as we celebrate our province's centennial.

It's a very exciting time in our province, and I want to thank all those responsible for their contributions into making our celebrations a success. And so I just ask all members to join me in welcoming them here today and I hope their afternoon is an enjoyable one. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Massey Place.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this week has been declared the Saskatchewan Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs Week. And in your gallery today are some executive members of the Regina chapter of the Saskatchewan Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs, and I'd like to introduce them to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to other members of the Assembly. And I'll ask them to stand as I read their name.

With us today is their president, Ted Gross. Ted is employed with Points West Consulting in Regina as a consulting associate and he is responsible for the planning of events such as news

conferences, special event planning, and providing media relations in both the private and public sectors.

Also Bruce Piasta. Bruce is the owner of Edge Automotive Industries, a manufacturing company in Regina specializing in jeep parts. Due to his success, Mr. Speaker, Bruce won three Paragon Awards, including young entrepreneur, export achievement, and new business venture in 2004.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Also, Mr. Speaker, we have Paul McGregor, who is the membership director for the young entrepreneurs and professionals of Saskatchewan. Paul has been working with the University of Regina since September 2003 as an internship seminar facilitator and a faculty adviser for interns in the Faculty of Education. And I believe Paul is being awarded a master's degree this week as well, Mr. Speaker.

And finally we have Mr. Aaron Hackel. He is the events director for the Saskatchewan Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs. Aaron is an advertising consultant to the *Leader-Post* and in addition he also owns and operates his own company, Sask Screens.

So I'd like all members, Mr. Speaker, to join with me in acknowledging and recognizing entrepreneurship as a very good option for young people, thanking these young people for pursuing their enterprises in Saskatchewan, and join also in celebrating Saskatchewan Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs Week. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Saskatchewan's Centennial

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today and join the centennial Chair in celebrating Saskatchewan's centennial.

This moment in our province's history provides us with an opportunity to celebrate the past and look forward in anticipation to the promise of the future. The story of Saskatchewan over the first 100 years has been one of hard-working individuals whose determination in the face of adversity and faith in God built strong communities and a strong province.

It is also a story of many peoples coming together to build a rich cultural heritage. The strength of our First Nations culture and the multicultural heritage of our citizens provides our province with a unique history and an important place in the world.

Throughout the cities and towns of this great province, from my home community of Estevan in the Southeast to La Ronge in the North, there is much to celebrate in this centennial and much to look forward to in the century ahead. We know that we have only begun to scratch the surface of our potential and that

a province rich in people and natural resources has tremendous promise which has yet to be realized.

Please join me in celebrating Saskatchewan's past and of the promise of the future. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Saskatchewan Celebrating 100 Years of Heart

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is our centennial session. All across the province the people of Saskatchewan are celebrating 100 years of heart. Our centennial is truly an opportunity to look back over our first 100 years with a sense of pride and to pay tribute to all those whose hard work and creativity and courage gave us all that we have today.

Saskatchewan's list of firsts is long and impressive. Among many other things, we have led the way in public health care. We enacted the first general human rights legislation and the first comprehensive occupational health and safety legislation in North America. And we are first in the nation when it comes to volunteerism.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are home to the Saskatchewan Arts Board, the first of its kind on this continent. The arts will be at the centre of centennial celebrations here in the legislative rotunda this afternoon and throughout the province this year.

Mr. Speaker, here in this Assembly, on this common ground, we join to celebrate this province and the diversity of people who define who we are. We need look no further than Saskatchewan's motto, "from many peoples, strength," to know what this province is all about.

From many peoples, Mr. Speaker, and from our traditions of courage, innovation, caring, and co-operation will come the strength to meet the challenges and embrace the opportunities of our next 100 years. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Biggar.

New Creation Community Players of Biggar

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 3, 4, 5, and 6 the New Creation Community Players of Biggar presented *A Family Affair*. *A Family Affair* is a musical comedy set in Chicago in the early 1960s that tells the story of a family wedding, from the engagement to the big day and all that goes into it. We saw all the parties involved, especially the families, as they prepare for that special day after the young couple, Gerry and Sally, decide to get married. It touches off a family feud between the Seigel and Nathan families as caterers, dressmakers, rabbis, florists, photographers, and a domineering wedding planner all join in to cause turmoil of unbelievable amounts.

As President Richard Powley of the New Creation Community

Players said:

First you are sitting in a facility that is the envy of towns much larger than Biggar. You have rebuilt, renovated, and now maintained it superbly. It provides your community with a venue for movies, music, theatre, dance, public speaking, and conferences.

Second, you have a pool of talent in Biggar and area that is deep and wide. Musicians, actors, dancers, and teachers that have been and are being nurtured and given the opportunity to excel in their chosen field because of your support and encouragement.

Thank you needs to go out to many, and I will just mention a few: co-directors, Richard Powley and Daryl Hasein; producer, Urla Tyler; music director, Peggy L'Hoir; choral director, Joy McFarlane-Burton. The cast: Terry Epp, as uncle of bride; Kristen Sehn, as bride; Sean Redlich, groom; Wilma Kurulak, mother of groom; Art Beadle, father of groom.

Congratulations to the New Creation Community Players of Biggar on another wonderful production.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Scott Collegiate Wins Junior Boys Basketball Championship

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to share with this Assembly today that Scott Collegiate, in my constituency of Regina Elphinstone-Centre and my home neighbourhood of north central Regina, Scott Collegiate has won the Regina Intercollegiate Basketball League's Junior Boys [Small Schools] Championship.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, Scott Collegiate is located in the heart of the city in an area that tends to get attention for the negative rather than the positive. But the truth of the matter is that there are a lot of good things happening in north central and the resurgence of Scott Collegiate, one of the city's oldest high schools, is indicative of the positive changes taking place.

In the last few years, enrolment at Scott has increased to about 350 students. The school has established a dance team — which by the way performed at the half-time show of the final game — and an improvisational theatre group. And, Mr. Speaker, last year's graduating class was one of the largest in the school's recent history.

But on the basketball front there had been no official team at Scott Collegiate for 15 years until head coach, Corey Matthews, got the program going again in the fall of 2003. At the championship game last Thursday night, Mr. Speaker, Gabe Quewezance led the Scott team with game-high 25 points; Thomas Kay, 17 points; and Matthew Redlich, 12. And all of this took place and in front of a very large and boisterous crowd dominated by fans of the Scott Blues, a crowd which included

busloads of students from elementary schools like Albert, Herchmer, and Kitchener, all of whom were thrilled by the victory. And I can vouch for this personally because my voice was hoarse for the next three days, Mr. Speaker.

Join me in congratulating all those associated with the Scott Junior Boys Basketball Team on the big win. In particular a special congratulations to coach Corey Matthews for taking the Scott boys basketball program from non-existence to excellence in just three short years and in so doing giving Scott Collegiate and north central something to be very proud about. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mrs. Rosalie McIntosh Celebrates Saskatchewan Centennial at 103

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we head into the centennial year I believe it is only fitting that we recognize the huge contribution of our citizens who have or have exceeded 100 years in 2005. The Saskatchewan Centennial Medal is intended to do just that, to indeed honour the Saskatchewan people whose lives have followed the birth of our province since 1905. These residents fully witnessed the growth of our great land from virgin prairie to proud family farm, from vital rural communities to bustling cities.

One such resident is a constituent of mine from Watrous, Mrs. Rosalie McIntosh, born on May 24, 1902. Mrs. McIntosh was brought up in the way that all prairie folks were at that time and since — hard-working, honest, generous, and kind. Her husband worked for the railroad while she worked hard raising her family and doing countless hours of dressmaking to supplement the family income. Mrs. McIntosh truly represents the very best of our Saskatchewan heritage. On March 10 I had the honour of presenting Mrs. McIntosh a gold medallion signifying her great commitment to our life as a province over the past century.

Her son, Orin McIntosh, expressed his appreciation on behalf of five generations in the McIntosh family. Indeed, Mr. McIntosh himself will be making a large contribution to the Watrous Homecoming 2005 by displaying his quarter-sized scale model railroad at the Watrous Civic Centre.

I would ask that all members join me in thanking Mrs. Rosalie McIntosh and her family for their great contribution to Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

Saskatchewan Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs Week

Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, March 14 to 18 is Saskatchewan Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs Week in the province.

Saskatchewan Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs, also known as SYPE, is a group of young individuals committed to increasing the development of youth business and retaining young professionals in Saskatchewan. This week will recognize and celebrate young people who own businesses or are professionals dedicated to enriching the provincial economy. As part of Saskatchewan Young Professionals and Entrepreneurs Week the Saskatoon chapter of SYPE held a luncheon yesterday to honour the winners of the Venture Forward Entrepreneurship Competition.

The luncheon also opened the call for nominations for the second annual Silver Spade Awards which will showcase the Young Entrepreneur and Young Professional 2005.

Mr. Speaker, the SYPE executive in Regina will host its monthly luncheon on Wednesday with a discussion from Pat Dell. Pat Dell is a mortgage specialist from Crown Mortgage Services and will discuss how important it is to know your credit rating when applying for a mortgage.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all members will join me in congratulating these enterprising young people in starting this organization and I look forward to hearing more about SYPE's accomplishments in the near future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

Rocanville Wildlife Federation Celebrates 25th Anniversary

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, across the province we have many local wildlife federation associations. And the constituency of Moosomin is no different with associations in Grenfell, Broadview, Wapella, and Rocanville.

Through the years, local wildlife associations have done an excellent job in preserving wildlife habitat, promoting safe hunting and fishing practices, as well as providing safe hunting courses across the province. Our wildlife associations have promoted tourism as well by promoting the many excellent hunting and fishing opportunities we have in our beautiful province.

Mr. Speaker, these wildlife associations would not survive without the many volunteers who give of their time and resources to promote their local associations. Over the years, my wife and I have had the pleasure of attending many of the local fundraising banquets in our area. We truly find these banquets to be evenings of fun and camaraderie and a great place to meet constituents.

This year, the Rocanville Wildlife Federation are celebrating their 25th anniversary. It was an honour to join young and old alike at their annual awards dinner as they celebrated their 25th anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, I extend congratulation to the many volunteers and leaders in the Rocanville area who, over the past number of years, have worked so diligently to promote their association,

enabling them to reach this milestone. Congratulations as well to their incoming new president, Mr. Chris Wild.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Food Allowance

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the official opposition presented 100 ideas for Saskatchewan's future. What did the government do, Mr. Speaker?

The government was very, very negative, Mr. Speaker. I think the people in the province are getting tired of a government, all they can do is complain, Mr. Speaker. All they can do is poke holes in the ideas of others. When will they come up with some ideas of their own, Mr. Speaker? When will they stop being so negative about this province and its potential?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, though they may be out of ideas, the opposition is not. In fact, number 3 of those 100 ideas is a pretty common sense one and a pretty serious one that they hope that they will react to very quickly. It's pretty specific. It calls on this government to increase the food allowance, Mr. Speaker. It calls on this government to do the right thing by the food allowance which has not seen an increase for more than 20 years.

[14:00]

The question to the Premier is this: will he announce today that his government is prepared to accept that idea, to increase the food allowance after two decades?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to start off today by observing and congratulating the Leader of the Opposition on his first anniversary as the unelected Leader of the Opposition. And I want to wish him another decade, at least, in that role as Leader of the Opposition.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And I'm aware that yesterday the Leader of the Opposition released a little flyer with a potpourri of ideas. Many of them, many of them, Mr. Speaker, have now been undertaken by this government; some of the ideas perhaps worth looking at and some of them I wouldn't touch with a 10-foot pole.

But let me just say this, Mr. Speaker, while that group of men and women have been in opposition, while for the last number of years they've talked about work for welfare; they've talked about cutting \$50 million out of the budget of social services . . . What has this government been doing, Mr. Speaker? This government has been building independence, taking families

from social assistance and dependence and moving them to independence, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, please. I would just ask all members in the gallery to restrain themselves from participating in the lively debate we have here, in any manner. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, what this government has been doing is ignoring food banks and ignoring anti-poverty organizations in Saskatchewan. We have called for an increase to the food allowance. It hasn't even been indexed for inflation for two decades. That's what's been happening over the last number of years.

The question to the Premier is very simple: will he announce today that he is prepared to do the right thing — adopt number 3 of our 100 ideas for Saskatchewan's future and increase the food allowance in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier of Saskatchewan.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Damascus road conversion that the Sask Party seems to have undergone now in concern for the least of our neighbours and the least among us. I appreciate the concern, this conversion they've had.

But, Mr. Speaker, here are the facts. We have been working in this province to bring dignity to people who live on very low incomes. We have moved significant number of peoples from dependence on social services to independence. We've pioneered in this province the child action plan which, Mr. Speaker, has evolved into a national program, the National Child Benefit, Mr. Speaker. We have been providing new housing initiatives and new benefits to the least among us.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and all his colleagues I know are very anxious for the budget to be delivered in this Chamber. It will be. The Minister of Finance will deliver the budget in a matter of days, and at that time they will see. They will see the activity of this government on behalf of all of the people of the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, if we do see some action from this government on the issue of the food allowance, the people that are on the front lines of this issue right now, including the manager of the Saskatoon Food Bank, a former NDP [New Democratic Party] colleague of the Premier, has said if there is an increase in the food allowance, it will be because of the Saskatchewan Party raising the issue, not because of this government's will to do the right thing. It's a matter of priorities.

This morning we learned from the media that the government has \$11,000 to help the new president of SaskEnergy make his office smaller. It has \$560 to spend on a hand-rubbed finish on

the new desk at SaskEnergy. We know it has millions of dollars to blow in dot-coms around the world. The question is simple. We shouldn't have to wait for the budget. Will the Premier commit today that his government will increase the food allowance in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the minister for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan].

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, what I would say to the members opposite, is that there were renovations that have been undertaken at the four Crown corporations. In particular, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] for example has a new vice-president, and there was some renovations made to the executive floor to accommodate the new vice-president. In the case of SaskEnergy, the new president of SaskEnergy wanted to ensure that a boardroom that was attached to his office could be entered from another area, and he wanted to expand the space for his administrative staff, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell the members that all of the renovations were done to improve either occupational health and safety or the business environment at those companies.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Minister, I wonder what safety issues there are that would require a hand-rubbed finished desk, Mr. Speaker. The question was actually on the issue of food allowance. If the Minister Responsible for Crown Management Board wants to answer, fine, the question's to the Premier. Someone just stand up over on the other side and say they're going to do the right thing; they'll adopt idea number 3 of the 100 new ideas for Saskatchewan's future, and increase the food allowance.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the minister for the CIC.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the case of the renovation at the office in Saskatoon, as we know that we are in a new environment where video conferencing is taking place and telecommunications. And this prevents people from having to travel and incur meals, travel expenses, and hotel rooms. This is a new technology, and in the case of SaskTel they put this new technology in Saskatoon in order to save costs in the long run, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I can say that there have been a lot of machinations and gyrations coming from the members opposite, we really haven't seen a total renovation job yet, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Organized Crime and Youth Gangs

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, today we've heard the Premier talk about what he's done for impoverished people. During that same time period that the Premier was talking about, we now realize that Saskatchewan has the shameful distinction of leading the nation in per capita participation by our young people in gangs. Criminal Intelligence Service Saskatchewan is an organization making an urgent call for a comprehensive plan. This would be the same group that presented to the Justice minister a proposal with just such a plan a couple of years ago.

Mr. Speaker, to the Justice minister: what was done with the original proposal some two years ago from CISS [Criminal Intelligence Service Saskatchewan] that requested funding for a comprehensive plan to deal with organized crime and youth gangs?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I can talk about the actions the government is taking. We work closely with the police services. I meet often with members of the Criminal Intelligence Service including Chief Cal Johnston who is the current leader of that service. I met with him very recently to discuss just these issues and the problems with organized crime in Saskatchewan.

Chief Johnston is quoted recently as saying that the introduction of The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act legislation in this House last year, now the program is up and running, will in his opinion decrease crimes against the person in 2005. We share his confidence, Mr. Speaker. This is one of the tools that we have worked to give to the police. We are working with them to give them more tools and more resources. Mr. Speaker, I think they'll all become clear before we rise this summer.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about consultation with police chiefs. We're more interested in action.

In August 2003, the NDP government accepted a report from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. That was August of 2003. That report spoke of the urgent need for the province to support youth initiatives aimed at curbing gang activity. Now two years later we lead the nation in gang participation. Two years later this NDP government is still talking about bringing forward legislation to deal with the specific problems identified. While that is good to hear, Mr. Speaker, where has that NDP government been? What are they doing? What has it been doing for the last few years while this problem has continued to intensify?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Over the last years we have funded police officers. We have particularly funded police officers in targeted activities such as dealing with serious, habitual offenders. We have worked with Corrections and Public Safety.

We have worked with police services on particular crime reduction programs. We've seen the success. We've seen the success in Regina in reducing auto theft because of a focused, concerted program that involves not only police but probation officers and prosecutors.

We have seen a similar success since launching a program on break and enter strategy in Saskatoon — a 13 per cent increase since we launched that strategy, Mr. Speaker. Yes, on this side of the House we are concerned about actions. We're taking actions. They're having an effect, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatoon Southeast.

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite called for statistics and called for numbers. I'll give you some numbers, Mr. Speaker. Right now, all incidents per 100,000 population of . . . [inaudible] . . . in Saskatchewan — 17,208.9 per 100,000. National average, 8,800. Almost double the national average. You go down item by item. It has not gotten better, Mr. Speaker. It's gotten worse.

This issue is much like that of crystal meth in Saskatchewan. All the experts, all the desperate parents, all the law enforcement officers in specific communities, including the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations], identify a serious problem. However this NDP government does nothing until it's dragged kicking and screaming by the people and by the opposition concerned about what is happening in this province. They take no action until it's in the headlines.

Mr. Speaker, why did the minister wait until today to decide he was taking some specific actions by recommending various agencies two or three years ago, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — I appreciate the question because I misspoke myself. What there has been in Saskatoon is a 13 per cent decrease in break and enter since we . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — . . . since we implemented the strategy.

What there has been in Saskatoon and throughout the province is an increase in the number of police officers on the street because of funding provided by this government, by the provincial government, to the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], to municipalities, which the members opposite voted against, Mr. Speaker, in every budget that's been done. Last budget, Mr. Speaker, nine new officers, and we will be providing more tools to deal with organized crime. In this session, we will be dealing with more resources to police in this session, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have some follow-up questions to the Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, no. 23 of the Saskatchewan Party's 100 ideas talks about establishing a provincial youth justice board to address youth crime, rehabilitation, and restitution measures. We know that in 2003 Saskatchewan had the highest youth crime rate in the country with violent crime up by 20 per cent and property crimes up by 14 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that in order to safeguard our citizens we need to ensure that a long-term solution is implemented that addresses social and addiction issues — the very issues at the root of gangs and the reason people join them. What we need, Mr. Speaker, is a provincial strategy that identifies best practices in the prevention of youth crime and the rehabilitation of young offenders.

My question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister is, what provincial strategy is this government coming up with to identify best practices in the prevention of youth crime and the rehabilitation of young offenders?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, the member previously asking the question wanted us to stop — stop consultations and implement action. This member wants us to stop actions and carry on consultations. Fortunately they're not mutually exclusive, Mr. Speaker, and we can do both.

The 100 ideas is a very interesting pamphlet, as the Premier has stated. What I would like to see is the code book that allows you to translate it. These people campaigned for boot camps for young people, Mr. Speaker. That was their campaign. What does best practices really mean? I suspect it's code for boot camp. I suspect that's what's said behind closed doors at Saskatchewan Party conventions, and I'm not fooled by it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Moosomin.

Commitment to Policing

Mr. Toth: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No wonder we're having problems in this province addressing youth crime and youth criminal activity when this minister and this government has a hard time listening to people and responding to the questions.

I have another question to the minister. Mr. Speaker, policing will also play an important role in such a strategy. In 1999, Mr. Speaker, what did this government promise the people of Saskatchewan? Two hundred new police officers. Presumably, Mr. Speaker, some of these officers could help in the effort to curb the growth of gangs in the province of Saskatchewan. But,

Mr. Speaker, according to the Saskatchewan Federation of Police Officers, the net increase in police officers since 1999 has been 81 officers.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: when will the Minister of Justice begin to start making good on that promise of new police officers so they can tackle the problem of young people being drawn into gangs in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I was in the House last year, last budget, when we brought forward nine new police officers. The opposition spoke against it and voted against that budget.

Mr. Speaker, when we provide new resources to the police in this budget and in subsequent budgets, I expect the opposition will vote against those budgets as well, Mr. Speaker. But we are committed to providing new tools, new creative tools to the police, and new resources to the police to address these problems, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member from Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, 200 police officers promised last year, 9 officers delivered. Mr. Speaker, according to Statistics Canada Saskatoon has the highest crime rate in Canada, Regina has the second-highest crime rate. Saskatchewan has experienced both double digit increases in both violent and property crimes.

And, Mr. Speaker, the NDP has failed to promise its . . . to hire more police officers. And now Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, leads the nation in per capita involvement in young people in gangs.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Justice: what is this NDP government going to do about this shameful record?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, what this government is doing is providing tools to the police and tools to the public, for example, with the safer communities neighbourhoods legislation which empowers members of the public to remove gang houses from their neighbourhoods. And we have funded that program; we have provided investigators to that program. We will continue to provide tools like that, that attack organized crime at its roots and we'll provide the resources for those tools. And I hope the members opposite vote for both.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Waiting List for Magnetic Resonance Imaging

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Brenda Goulet who is in your gallery today comes from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. Last year Mrs. Goulet was suffering from muscle spasms and numbness in both her legs which was progressing up her right side. Mrs. Goulet was told that she needed an MRI [magnetic resonance imaging]. After discussion with her doctor about the 18- to 24-month wait in this province for an MRI, Mr. Speaker, she made the decision to go to Alberta. She made the decision because the numbness was getting worse week by week.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister truly believe that putting people through an 18- to 24-month wait in our province for an MRI is satisfactory health care?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the budget that the members opposite voted against last year provided funding for another MRI in this province and more as we move forward. Mr. Speaker, we've been working very carefully with the professionals to make sure we get the right numbers of diagnostic services in the province. This is always a challenge to do that, and we're continuing to work on that. But, Mr. Speaker, we are very concerned about each and every individual in our health care system, and we're working to provide the best care possible.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we could put another four MRIs in this province but until you have the people to run those MRIs they do absolutely no good, Mr. Speaker. People will still continue to be forced out of our province.

MRIs are a diagnostic tool. Since it is difficult to determine the severity of a patient's condition, does the NDP truly believe that it is reasonable for people to wait up to 24 months to access this diagnostic treatment, Mr. Speaker? Luckily, Mrs. Goulet went to Alberta. Her MRI determined that her condition required urgent surgery. She had a disc that was pressing against her spinal column. So severe was her condition her surgery needed to be done right away or there is a chance of her becoming a quadriplegic. Fortunately the condition was fixed, was picked up by the MRI in Alberta, and when Mrs. Goulet returned home to Saskatchewan she had her surgery within a month.

Mr. Speaker, once again, is 24 months satisfactory health care regardless of the number of MRIs we have in the province? When are you going to put people in place to deal with the backlog of people waiting for MRIs in this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, in this budget year — which is just about at an end and we'll be coming forward with a new

budget — we increased the number of MRIs by about 4,000 on a base of 12,000. I think that's substantial improvement. We're going to continue to work with that. When individuals have specific concerns, they need to make sure that they work with their doctors and with the other people who are in their professional care team.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we had a leader who stood forward and kind of squinted his eyes and looked at a vision of the future and he got these 100 things coming his way. Mr. Speaker, he's concentrating on that squinty-eyed vision because he's afraid of the nightmares sitting around him.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone. Once again, the Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mrs. Goulet's husband's health plan covered part of the cost of the MRI. She then decided to call Sask Health to see if they would reimburse her for the balance of the cost of the MRI in Alberta and if so, how to go about it. Mrs. Goulet understands that normally out-of-province MRIs are not covered, but believe that because of the diagnostic that revealed that surgery was urgent, that perhaps Sask Health might reconsider this offer.

So Mrs. Goulet called the manager of medical support for Sask Health, Mr. Jim O'Carroll. Now according to Mrs. Goulet, Mr. O'Carroll was condescending and rude and asked a number of questions of Mrs. Goulet that had absolutely nothing to do with her condition. Mr. Speaker, to the minister, is this normal practice, to intimidate people that are looking to simply get information about the health care system?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, all people who require health care in our province deserve respect, as do the workers who provide that care. And there are some times that there are some challenges.

Mr. Speaker, when a person like Mrs. Goulet — and I have a lot of sympathy and concern about her particular situation — do go out of the province for care like that, there is a process whereby there can be prior approval for some of this care. And those are the kinds of questions I know that the staff ask to ascertain whether that has been obtained.

But, Mr. Speaker, I recommend to the new critic for the Health opposite that he follow the lead of his predecessor in making sure that cases like this are brought forward to my office in appropriate time, and we can work with them to resolve some of those. I think that practically there are many positive ways that we can solve these things.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mrs. Goulet said

that she felt intimidated by what she called rude and unprofessional behaviour by Dr. O'Carroll. According to Mrs. Goulet, she was told that the department does not usually cover the procedures after the fact, but that if she sent the information along with a few tears, perhaps they would look at it. Mr. Speaker, that is not proper conduct by anybody dealing with people in these type of situations.

Mrs. Goulet also said she felt that Dr. O'Carroll's questions implied that she was somehow at fault for needing back surgery, Mr. Speaker, that she was to feel guilty for the fact that she was suffering the way she had been.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister investigate this situation and report back because conduct by anyone in the civil service, and especially in the health care civil service, that intimidates patients just trying to get information is simply unacceptable. Will he report back on this situation?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I think that member knows and the other members opposite know that I will find out information about specific cases when they raise those cases, whether they raise it here, in this kind of a situation or in the more appropriate way prior to the session or in other places.

Mr. Speaker, every citizen of Saskatchewan deserves to have respect in the care that there is provided, as well as the fact that all of the people who provide the care deserve respect from the patients. Mr. Speaker, there are many times that there are very difficult situations. Unfortunately some of the information that the members opposite have provided to me over the years has not been entirely accurate, and so I want to look into this.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes 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 written questions 888 through 895 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 888 through 895 inclusive have been submitted.

I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask leave to move a motion regarding Saskatchewan centennial.

The Speaker: — The Premier has requested leave to move a motion with respect to Saskatchewan centennial. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes

the Premier.

MOTION

Saskatchewan Centennial

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. At the conclusion of my remarks, I will make the official motion that I anticipate will be seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, the member from Swift Current.

And before beginning my remarks, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge that present in the gallery and present later in the gallery will be a number of those who have joined us this afternoon at the legislature to celebrate this centennial day at the legislature. I want to particularly welcome the Waldeck School who is in the galleries behind me, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Calvert: — And we anticipate this afternoon that we're going to be thrilled by the performances of other Saskatchewan artists, including the world champion Terrence Littleton, who is a hoop dancer. Mr. Speaker, our youth ambassador, Theresa Sokyrka, will be here this afternoon; our poet laureate, Louise Halfe will be here this afternoon. And we're also looking forward to having Ron Goetz among us, Ron who's involved with the Lieutenant-Governor's Celebration of the Arts. And to highlight and conclude our afternoon, we anticipate Brad Johner being here and performing our centennial song. And so I want to thank those who have joined us and will join us later in the afternoon for this centennial celebration at the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I'm often of the view that we commit the sin of thinking that everything begins with us, when the fact of the matter is we all end up drinking from wells that we did not dig, and we eat from fields that we did not plough. Mr. Speaker, in this regard I think today it's important that we recognize that we live in a land that was not first occupied by many of our ancestors, but the human history of this great province began centuries and centuries ago with the First Nations people. We did not begin life in Saskatchewan. We have inherited this great land from generations and generations who have preceded us here.

But 100 years ago, Mr. Speaker, the generation of First Nations men and women, Métis men and women, and the immigrant peoples who had come from across North America, from across Europe and Asia, 100 years ago that group of men and women came together and forged the province we call Saskatchewan. This year, this 100 years later in 2005, we celebrate that 100 years of our history. We celebrate that 100 years of heart in the people and the province of Saskatchewan.

If ever a place, Mr. Speaker, was built on dreams, it is Saskatchewan. And if ever the dreams of hardy and determined people have been tested by adversity and yet proven indomitable, it is here in Saskatchewan. And if ever, Mr. Speaker, a society was forged out of the unlikely combination of fierce independence and yet an equally fierce co-operative spirit, it is here in Saskatchewan.

[14:30]

As was recognized in members' statements today, our provincial motto, "from many peoples, strength," has been a living reality throughout the history of this great province — a history, as I said, centuries in the making with our First Nations and Métis people; a history made of the pioneers who travelled to this province from all over North America. And how well I recall the stories of my grandmother who came as a 17- or 18-year-old young woman to teach school at Aylesbury, Saskatchewan. And she came off the train and she sat on a rock and there wasn't a tree to be seen. And she came from St. Paul, Minnesota, and I'm not sure grandma ever forgave this province for its lack of trees. And she raised children and grandchildren who were disciplined about planting trees and never cutting down a tree.

They came as young people from across North America. They came, Mr. Speaker, as you know and as all members know, they came from across Europe and across Asia. They crossed oceans to make this province their home and we can all tell the stories of our own ancestors. We can tell the stories . . . I could tell the story of my wife's grandparents who came from the Ukraine and dug, Mr. Speaker, dug a hole in the side of the hill and spent the first winter of their life in Saskatchewan in a hole in the side of the hill before even the sod shack, before the log house; and how they broke that land, and how they worked with the First Nations people and picked the rock and built the cords of rock.

I could talk about my own grandparents who came from England, my own grandfathers, one from just outside of London and one from the north of England, the industrial areas, and how they brought their children and had more children here.

We are a people, Mr. Speaker, who have come from across the globe. And it is the honoured history of our province to tell of those brave young men and women who in times of conflict have left this safe and secure place to restore and preserve peace in the farthest corners of the globe.

And our history that we celebrate this year is a history of compassion and caring, dedicated women and men who have worked their lives to make this province and this nation and this world a more caring and compassionate society and place. This is our great legacy in Saskatchewan. This is our history. And it is the history that strengthens us and gives us courage and gives us instruction in all that we should do.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we drink from wells that we did not dig and we eat from fields that we did not plough. We have done so much. The accomplishments of Saskatchewan people and our gifts to Canada and the world are many and they're varied. As again was indicated in the members' statements earlier, Saskatchewan takes credit for many important firsts, not only in Canada but in the world. In the social arena, history would suggest that if it's going to happen in Canada or if it's even going to happen in North America, it's likely to happen in Saskatchewan first.

The first comprehensive human rights Act in North America.
The first occupational health and safety Act in North America.
The first publicly funded arts board in North America. The first

universal medicare program in North America. Innovation is our strength. The first child action plan in Canada. The first to build the National Child Benefit, the first province in Canada, Mr. Speaker. When all provinces in the 1980s were suffering with deficits, the first province in Canada to balance its budget.

The innovative agenda, I believe, of Saskatchewan began with buffalo jumps. If you visit the Wanuskewin heritage centre, you will see the innovation. It transformed into the building of farm implements in barns. It's been an agenda of pioneering, pioneering varieties of wheat. We've gone from pioneering farm implements to cobalt cancer treatment, to fibre optics, to upgrading, to enhanced oil recovery. I mean, for goodness' sakes, Mr. Speaker, as you well know, we invented the automated teller in Saskatchewan. And by the way, we invented the Girl Guide cookie in Saskatchewan.

We've got 100 years of impressive firsts, and I invite the general public — I invite all members — to tour the centennial website. And you will see on the website itself an impressive list of Saskatchewan's firsts. It is both illustrative and encouraging to check that website out.

We are a generation of people who took a somewhat foreboding landscape and turned it into what we used to call the breadbasket of the world. We came through a period in our history we've called the Great Depression. And we transformed the grim struggles of that Great Depression, the struggles of individuals and families, we transformed that into the most socially progressive jurisdiction in North America.

We took what was a very bitter — many will recall it — a very bitter debate and an emotional debate around medicare in the 1960s, and we turned that emotional and bitter debate into a national program now seen as Canada's most cherished social program, and if I may say, the greatest gift this province ever gave to the people of Canada.

We've transformed challenges into opportunities and opportunities into success. We have sometimes transformed division into common cause and transformed that common cause into meaningful change. And we have transformed change into national leadership. And, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we will continue to do as we embark on our second century.

Mr. Speaker, you know that we launched the centennial celebrations here at the legislature on New Year's Day; great turnout of people, great deal of enthusiasm. We went from here to Her Honour's celebration at Government House. Again, record levels of attendance and record enthusiasm as we launched the centennial year.

And then how well I recall, Mr. Speaker, that what was the first thing that happened in Saskatchewan's centennial year — a big blizzard. And we launched this centennial year by going out as we always do assisting our neighbour, shovelling walks, pulling people out of the ditch, helping where it was needed in that blizzard here at home. And yet at that same time this province united — united around the suffering of the people a half a world away whose lives had been destroyed by that tsunami.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is the tradition and the soul of

Saskatchewan. We are a people with heart, whether it's helping a neighbour at home or a neighbour halfway around the globe. That is who we are; that is the people of Saskatchewan. And we saw it as we opened our centennial year.

And I mean it was illustrated again just days ago with the, again, tremendous success of the 29th annual Kinsmen Telemiracle, this year raising \$3.4 million. And it's that Telemiracle, Mr. Speaker, that gets us around that *Guinness Book of World Records*, and the kind of community support for neighbours in need that characterizes this province. That's the spirit of Saskatchewan and it's been the spirit of the 100 years that we celebrate and if I may say, the centuries of human history on this prairie and in this forest. We have so much this year to celebrate, so much to celebrate.

Mr. Speaker, we have in this province a forest that is larger than the nation of Germany. We have in this province farm and pasture land that represents virtually half of all the arable land in Canada. We have as we proudly display on our licence plate, horizons on all sides and a vista of living skies. And we've built, we've built in this province recently Canada's largest scientific project with the innovation of the synchrotron in Saskatoon. We're now home to the groundbreaking First Nations University of Canada here in Regina. We have more support for our football team than any other people in Canada.

We note, particularly today with Theresa Sokyrka's role as our youth ambassador, with Manoah Hartmann here from Regina, we note that we're 3 per cent of Canada's population but last year we were 20 per cent of Canada's idols.

We've created the funniest fictional town in all of Canada — Dog River — and in the arts and in sports and in public life, Saskatchewan people have made us proud on the national and international stage for decades.

Artists from the Regina Five to Allen Sapp and Joe Fafard have shared Saskatchewan with the world on canvas and in sculpture.

The two greatest hockey players — Mr. Hockey, Gordie Howe, and Ms. Hockey, Hayley Wickenheiser — both from Saskatchewan. And on ice we're not bad on every venue, you know. The fastest woman on ice, Catriona Le May Doan, is from Saskatchewan. And we've dominated on the curling ice from the Richardsons to the Schmirler rink, and this week we celebrate Kyle George. The lists go on and on and on.

In public and political life, from our legendary Chief Poundmaker to this province's first premier, Walter Scott, to Western Canada's first homegrown prime minister, John Diefenbaker, to the greatest Canadian of all, Tommy Douglas, leadership has been a Saskatchewan strength.

We've given to the world our music, musicians, and songwriters, like Joni Mitchell and Buffy Sainte-Marie and Colin James and Brad Johner and tenor, Ben Heppner, and a host of emerging talent that we see around us today.

We've given to the nation and we've given to the world, writers and poets — W.O. Mitchell, Sinclair Ross, Guy Vanderhaeghe, Lorna Crozier, Sharon Butala, and our Poet Laureate who's here today, Louise Halfe — they've told our stories and they've

helped us to celebrate.

The list goes on and on. But so many of our people may not have their names in the headlines. They may not have won significant awards but we know they are the best people you will meet anywhere you ever go.

We've been saddened, and yesterday we recognized that sadness in a tribute to the four young RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officers who were recently killed. And we take great pride, Mr. Speaker, great pride in this province in being home to the RCMP and home to every young man and woman who wears that red serge wherever they go in Canada, wherever they go in the world.

Peter Gzowski, the icon of Canadian broadcasting, once said of our province, having experienced life in our province, Peter Gzowski once said Saskatchewan is the "most Canadian of all the provinces."

We are fiercely Saskatchewan, fiercely, fiercely born of the prairie and this forest. But equally, Mr. Speaker, we are fiercely Canadian. And we believe in this great, great nation.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we stand on the threshold of a new century. Today as we enter this new century we enjoy a greater economic momentum than we have known in decades. Today we are not just living the dreams of those who are going . . . who have gone before us. We are building dreams for our children and their children.

Our centennial year is a celebration of our past, but it is equally a celebration of our very, very bright future because, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of tomorrow in this great province. There's a lot of tomorrow in our First Nations and Métis communities. There's a lot of tomorrow in the new Canadians who are coming to Saskatchewan. There's a lot of tomorrow in people who are immigrating to our province from around the world these days. And there is a lot of tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, in this province's communities, in its prairie, in its forests, in its villages and towns, in city, in our parklands, in our lakes.

This centennial, Mr. Speaker, is a celebration of our proud past and an exciting future of vibrant communities in a very vibrant province. Mr. Speaker, today we are here because others have gone before us and we drink from the wells that they dug. In our time and in our place, Mr. Speaker, it is my view, it is our challenge and our responsibility to be building for those who will come after us that perhaps some day in this great Chamber, 100 years from now they will look back and say of our generation, we too built for those who will come after us.

In celebration of our centennial, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be joined by the Leader of the Opposition in moving and seconding the following motion:

That this Legislative Assembly mark the first sitting in our centennial year by honouring Saskatchewan — our rich history of traditions and diverse cultural fabric that have helped shape our identity; our innovative thinking and inventiveness that built the province and helped to define Canada over the past 100 years; our community spirit and collective pride; our past accomplishments and future

opportunities; and all of our people, places, and perspectives that will provide the foundation to build a bright and prosperous future for Saskatchewan.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:45]

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Premier of Saskatchewan, the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, and seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Swift Current:

That this Legislative Assembly mark the first sitting in our centennial year by honouring Saskatchewan — our rich history of traditions and diverse cultural fabric that have helped to shape our identity; our innovative thinking and inventiveness that built the province and helped to define Canada over the past 100 years; our community spirit and collective pride; our past accomplishments and future opportunities; and all of our people, places, and perspectives that will provide the foundation to build a bright and prosperous future for Saskatchewan.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

I recognize the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Swift Current.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Soon we will be ready for the question.

Just before I begin my remarks I want to welcome, on behalf of the official opposition, the students from Waldeck School — which is very close to home for me — and the parents that have joined them, the teachers. I'd like to join with the Premier in welcoming them here to their Legislative Assembly and thanking them for the role they're going to play in this afternoon's event here at the Legislative Assembly.

I'd also like to draw to the attention of members if I may, Mr. Speaker, that joining us in the Assembly in your gallery is Theresa Sokyryka and her fiancé, Jeremy Widell — and I hope that I pronounced that right, Jeremy — close? Welcome here.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — Oh, and also at the end of the row is Brad Johner, and we would also want to welcome Brad here. Hi, Brad.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Wall: — And, in addition to that, I'd like to join with the Premier and others who've thanked those who are chairing and volunteering on centennial festivities around the province. The opposition appreciates it, obviously the government does, the people of Saskatchewan appreciate your willingness to do that.

After I'm done, Mr. Speaker, the party starts, so I feel a little bit like the, you know, the class before summer holidays. So my gift to all of us, my centennial gift, will be to keep my remarks

short. But I do have some words to express on behalf of the opposition and in support of the motion. I certainly want to echo the sentiments of the Premier in his remarks.

You don't have to take a very long, hard look actually at the history of this province to understand a little bit about what the Premier was talking about. We have benefited mightily in this province from amazing leadership and amazing vision over the decades. Sometimes it has come from politicians. Sometimes it's come from our federal politicians or provincial politicians, sometimes it has come from the municipal level, but more often than not that leadership that has shaped these first 100 years in Saskatchewan has come from the people. It has come from the people who were here first frankly, from their leadership.

Our First Nations I think first demonstrated the kind of leadership and vision that has resulted in this wonderful place that we all can call home. In the face of inevitable and cathartic change that came with European settlement and against considerable odds frankly, Mr. Speaker, First Nations leaders saw what was coming and they agreed to share the land — emphasis on the word share the land — but move boldly to protect their future generations within Saskatchewan and within Canada through treaties, through promises that they believed would be kept nation to nation. And it's obviously a commitment that all of us in Canada and certainly in Saskatchewan need to remember especially on an occasion such as this.

And what about those settlers that the Premier referred to? What about our pioneers? What about the leadership and the vision that they showed in those early decades of the history of this province and frankly in the years that predate the beginning of Saskatchewan, its entrance into Confederation?

Well imagine, imagine what they faced, those pioneers, loading up all that they owned, all of their possessions and their families and their dreams in a cart or on a train and coming to a completely strange land, not completely but largely devoid of trees, as the Premier has pointed out. And not entirely that welcoming in terms of its climate at times and in terms of its geography certainly then before any settlement had occurred. And they came anyway, Mr. Speaker. Knowing the challenges that lie ahead of them, they came anyway. And where most others would have seen dirt and rock and bush, they saw churches and schools and community. They had the vision to see things as they could be, not necessarily as they were.

Consider that only a few decades before no less an authority than the Royal Geographical Society told the world that nobody should try to live here. They sent Captain John Palliser on an expedition and he came to Western Canada and he spent a particularly long period of time, I would suggest in terms of his expedition, right here in Saskatchewan. And after looking at the Saskatchewan prairie, he came to some conclusions. He said it was too dry here, it was too cold here, it was too harsh here for agriculture. It was quote, "Ill-suited for civilization."

And no doubt his report went around Canada. No doubt the pioneers who loaded those dreams and possessions into carts and trains heard the report and they came anyway. And they shaped the province, as the Premier has highlighted, in ways that are really difficult to fathom today, when we think of all

that we begin with and we think of all that we've got going for us. It's hard to fathom just exactly how they achieved and what they achieved here in the province of Saskatchewan.

And here's the best part of the story. More than succeeding where Palliser said they could not succeed, in this huge triangle that covers most of the province and a bit of Manitoba and some Alberta, more than just succeeding, they started naming stuff after the man who said we shouldn't live here. In my hometown there's the Palliser Pavilion and there's Palliser Park, and the great irony of all of course is that there are agribusinesses in Saskatchewan that have taken the name of the man that said we couldn't grow things in the province of Saskatchewan. And that speaks to our heritage, that speaks to the leadership and the vision that we have enjoyed.

What about our first premier? The Premier has highlighted him. Here's what he had to say long ago and we've heard this quote often in the Assembly, but it's a good one and it's worth reading again. He said quote, "Just as sure as the sun shines there will be within the Province alone some day a population running into the tens of millions." He saw things as they could be, not necessarily as they were.

Premier Scott was not limited by any current reality. He had a grade 8 education and yet he established the University of Saskatchewan. He had been raised in a strong Presbyterian home, yet he was a staunch defender of Roman Catholic rights. He was the premier of a fledgling province with virtually no infrastructure, and yet he oversaw an unprecedented period of growth in the history of Saskatchewan.

In those early decades, this was where people were coming to. Even by 1941 we had more population than that other province we sometimes talk about to the west, after the Great Depression. We have benefited mightily from leadership and from vision in this province, and it is mete and right that we would take this opportunity and many other opportunities throughout the year to reflect on that, because it should inform what we do for the future, Mr. Speaker. The Premier is right — we should be concerned about what people will read of us in 100 years. We should care about what they say about the people that sit here today, and others in different roles and leadership roles across the province, what is said of them. It does matter; it does matter.

For me, you know my history goes not quite so far back as say the member for Canora-Pelly or maybe the member for Lloydminster. And so when I think of history, I think of you know really the old . . . the old logos on the Saskatchewan Roughrider uniforms and Ron Lancaster. That's a long way back for me. But I also have as my example my grandparents, who don't stretch . . . whose birth date don't all go back to either the beginnings of the province or before that. But their character and their example they set for me and my family really underscores what this time should be about in our marking of the centennial and our planning for the future.

My grandpa on my mom's side, his name was Jacob Schmidt. He farmed all of his life, never owned an inch of land, never owned a square inch of it. Unheard of today, that you would successfully farm and raise a family of five and not own any of the land. He rented it. He worked very hard and they had some

dairy cows and they raised pigs and chickens, and as I said in my maiden speech, they had a garden of biblical proportion, and they made it work and they raised a very healthy, successful family. That's the example I have on my mom's side.

On my dad's side, I have the example of my Grandpa Wall, my grandma and my grandpa on that side. He also started out . . . he had a very, very small farm south of Swift Current in a community called Rheinland. His name was Peter Wall and his wife's name was Elizabeth Wall. He was also a preacher; he was a Sommefelter preacher. And I had told this story during my maiden speech, I'll tell it again because it too for me informs how we should be marking this time and the examples that we should take going forward based on our history. It was a story I didn't find out about until he had passed away. Unfortunately it's too often the case that that happens.

I remember at his funeral hearing from someone I didn't know too well, frankly, that my grandpa in his retiring years, he was always quite a carpenter. He had gone downtown to purchase some supplies for the work he was doing in the shop; he was doing some carpentry. And he, you know, he parked on the street, he plugged the meter, and then he went into the store and he picked up the things he needed. He came back and noticed that his meter had expired. So he got in his car and he drove to city hall and he stood in line at the cashier's wicket. And when it was his turn he said, you know I violated the parking laws of Swift Current and I'd like to pay my ticket. And the lady at the cashier wicket apparently said, well do you have . . . can we see your ticket, sir? He said, oh, I didn't get a ticket; I didn't get a ticket. I would just like to square with the city because I broke the law.

You know, that is the kind of character that shaped our province. That's the kind of honesty that built Saskatchewan. And I think it's appropriate that we would take this time to remember individual stories like that — and we all have them in our families — that we would also remember leaders and visionaries who have shaped our province so that we will understand that we can continue to do that. We can build on their legacy. Because perhaps most important today is not just the look back, but it is a look to the future. And I'm happy to see in the motion that the Premier has moved that there is a strong reference to the future. That's what we should be talking about today. Because the Premier's right, there's just too much opportunity here in Saskatchewan for us not to be talking about Saskatchewan 100 years from now or 10 years from now.

This is home to the second most amount . . . the second greatest amount of oil in the country, third largest amount of natural gas, third of the world's supply of potash, third of the world's supply of uranium, more arable acres than anywhere else in the Dominion, as the Premier has mentioned, the underpinnings for the information-based economy. I'm describing Saskatchewan in 2005. And we should use as our example the vision and the leadership of these first 100 years as we plan out, as we plan for the next 100.

And so, Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join with the Premier and second this motion today. It's a pleasure for the opposition to mark these first 100 years, always with an eye to the future, always with an eye to what we do here that improves this

province and the lives of the people in this province for decades to come.

And as we celebrate this day, let us make as our simple goal here in this legislature and maybe across the province, simply that we leave things better than we found them. That's a good goal to have for the centennial — that we leave things at the end of the day better than we found them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be moving to adjourn debate today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Swift Current, that debate on the motion be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I move the House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved this House do now adjourn.

Before I put the question, I would like to remind all guests that celebrations will start shortly after the House has adjourned. And I would like to take this opportunity also to invite all guests to join us for tea and a taste of Saskatchewan in room 218, and that will take place during and following the celebrations in the main foyer.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion by the Government House Leader that this House do now adjourn?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:00.]

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Premier

Hon. P. Atkinson
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