



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

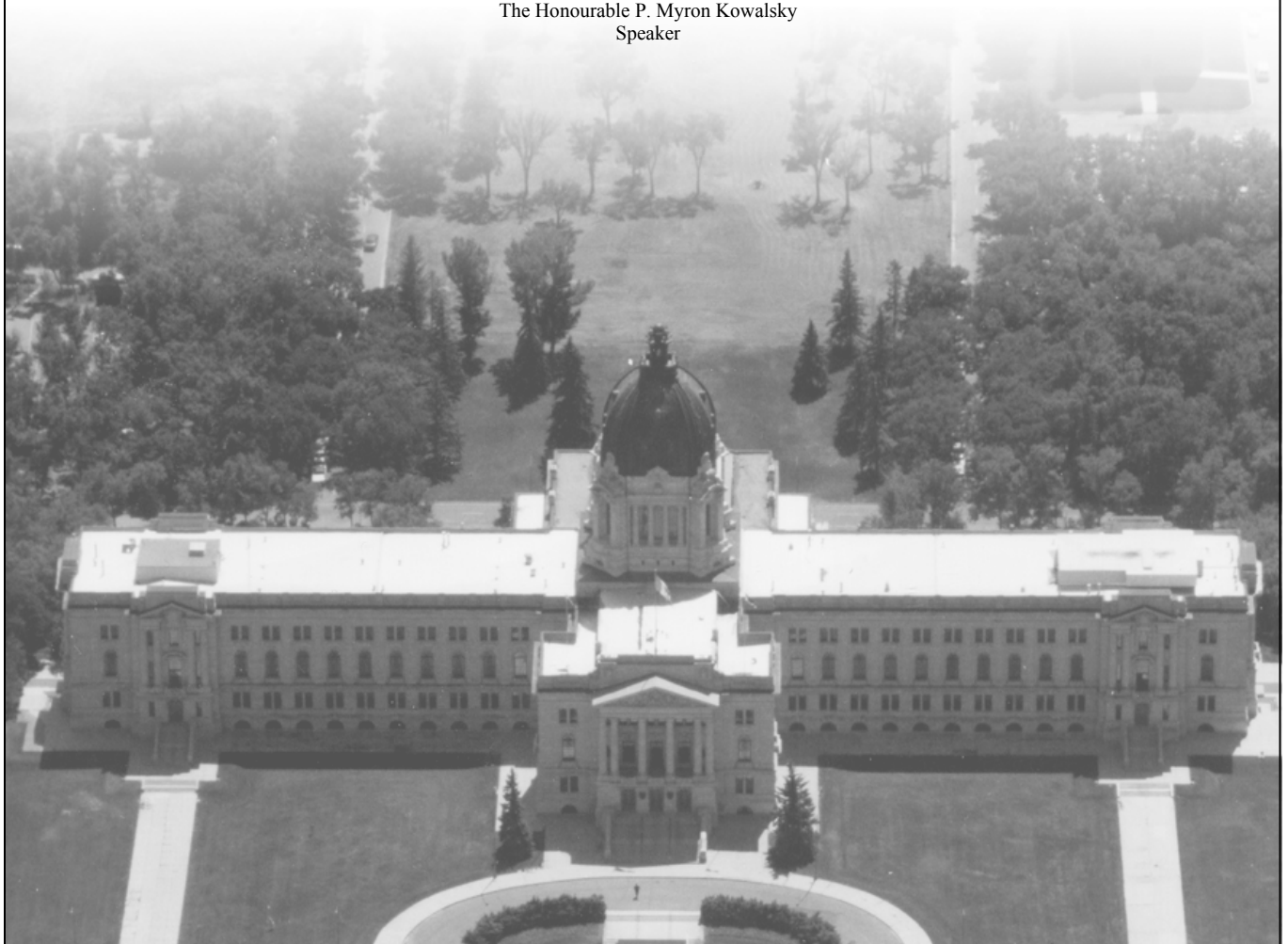
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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 Cypress Hills.

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise again on behalf of constituents from Cypress Hills concerned about the implications of forced school division amalgamation. The prayer reads as follows:

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these three pages of petitions are signed by individuals from the communities of Hazlet and Cabri. I so present.

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

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I have the pleasure of rising on behalf of constituents concerned about the lack of residential support for residents of southwest Saskatchewan who have lifelong disabilities. 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 funding required for additional residential spaces for Swift Current residents with lifelong disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions today, and the petitioners are from the communities of Swift Current, Herbert, Cabri, Gull Lake, and Simmie. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I again rise today on behalf of people who are very concerned about the horrific problems that crystal meth brings into their homes and neighbourhoods.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to take the necessary action to implement a strategy that will deal with crystal methamphetamine, the education, prevention, enforcement, and treatment.

The people that have signed this petition are all from the town of Foam Lake. I so present.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of mine 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 Midale, Halbrite, and my hometown of Macoun. I so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of constituents of Weyburn-Big Muddy who are very concerned about the CAIS [Canadian agricultural income stabilization] program and its inadequate dollars for producers in my area. And the petition 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.

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

And the petition is signed by residents of Bengough. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition here to citizens who want to improve SaskTel's cellular service in rural Saskatchewan.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to take all the necessary actions to install the technical equipment necessary to ensure that all rural areas of Saskatchewan are protected by reliable cellular phone coverage.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens from Lanigan, Saskatoon,

Wynyard, Raymore, and Jansen, I so present.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present another petition to revisit the effects of the TransGas Asquith natural gas storage project. The prayer reads:

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

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

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

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order the following petitions have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 14 are hereby read and received as addendums to previously tabled petitions being sessional paper nos. 637, 638, 639, 640, 715, 720, and 729.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 92 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister responsible for SGI: how much money would SGI have paid out to date if every person who was eligible for a safe-driver discount would have applied by renewing their licence plates prior to the regular expiration date?

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall also on day 92 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister responsible for SGI: how much money has SGI paid out to date in rebates to people who have renewed their licence plates in 2005 to take advantage of the safe-driver discount?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 92 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Highways: how many kilometres of highways have been constructed under a partnership agreement as outlined by the minister, and are the financial terms of these partnership agreements based on similar percentage of costs for construction and maintenance?

And the second question:

To the Minister of Highways: has the department determined if an additional amount will be allocated for fuel as part of the tenders let for highway construction this year?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to all of the House a group of seven grade twelve students sitting in the top row of your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

These students are from the school in Eastend. They're accompanied by teacher, Shelley Morvik, and bus driver, Curt Humphrey. I've introduced both the teacher and the bus driver previously and said a variety of things about them. We won't go into that today but safe to say that Curt and I have coffee together frequently and we discuss a lot of the ongoings of this House over coffee. I've found him to be a pretty knowledgeable coffee partner.

But the students today got a real lesson in what goes on in this place. We've already had a chance to talk together and visit and I think they're quite interested in seeing what happens here this afternoon. So, Mr. Speaker, would you and the rest of my colleagues please welcome them to the House today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members I would like to introduce Tyler Hoyt and his dad, Vern. They are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and they both live in the Regina Dewdney constituency.

And, Mr. Speaker, Tyler is the Saskatchewan provincial junior champion in 10-pin bowling for the Youth Bowling Council of Canada and he will be representing Saskatchewan at the national championships in Edmonton on April 16 and 17. And as well his sister Amanda will be representing Saskatchewan at the Saskatchewan bantam provincial championship at the same time in the national tournament in Edmonton. And Tyler is also the intermediate provincial champion for the Canadian 10-pin bowling federation and he will represent this province at the championships in Victoria, BC [British Columbia] on June 3 and 4. So Vern is a very proud dad and rightly so.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in welcoming Tyler and his dad to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce two guests in your gallery, George and Theresa Siefert are here today to hopefully enjoy the proceedings and enjoy some of the results of the proceedings, Mr. Speaker. So I'd like all members to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Saskatoon Radio Royal Day of Caring Fundraiser

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today all six radio stations in Saskatoon are working together on a 12-hour fundraising blitz called Saskatoon Radio Royal Day of Caring. C95, CJWW, 650 CKOM, Magic 98, Rock 102, and Hot 93 have been broadcasting from various locations across Saskatoon since 6 a.m.

All proceeds received today will support renovations and upgrades to the Royal University Hospital. This is the first time in Canada that every private radio station in a city has come together to create a major radio fundraiser. The need for quality medical care unites us all.

The Royal Day of Caring is part of the Royal Care campaign to enhance the basics provided by government funding in order to address today's health care crisis. The campaign information asks, how long will we accept the longest waiting lists in the country? We have facilities that don't always accommodate the newest medical technology. How long do we stand by and watch physicians and other medical professionals leave our beautiful province for greener pastures? How long before we stop asking why and start taking charge? How much would you give to spend less time in the waiting room?

The Royal Care campaign is more than fixing facilities and getting equipment. It's a campaign to care for people by investing now so that everyone can have timely access to leading health-care professionals today and into the future. Listeners can donate by calling 683-CARE, 683-2273.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you and all of my colleagues in this Assembly to congratulate Saskatoon radio stations and Royal University Hospital on their fundraising efforts today.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Yorkton Terriers Head into Hockey League Finals

Hon. Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Yorkton Terriers are ready and raring to go in the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League finals, Mr. Speaker. Last night after a tough, seven-game series the Terriers came out on top of the Estevan Bruins winning the final match, Mr. Speaker, 4 to 3. And it was a hard-fought game and a hard-fought series, Mr.

Speaker, but it seems like the Terriers were just a little bit better in keeping their sticks on the ice, Mr. Speaker. And the Bruins tried to muzzle those Terriers, but to no avail.

Mr. Speaker, these great young hockey players have done exceptionally well in the whole tournament. And prior to putting the Bruins back into hibernation, the Terriers took out the Notre Dame Hounds in four straight games, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Terriers are strong in both offence and defence and are rested and ready to take on the North Battleford North Stars, Mr. Speaker, for the Credential Cup which is the symbolic cup for the junior hockey league. And, Mr. Speaker, this will be a great series.

And I just want to say to the esteemed member from North Battleford, that while he's my colleague on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to hockey, the gloves are off, Mr. Speaker. And you're . . . and I've watched him. He's been collaborating, Mr. Speaker, with the member from Estevan. It will do no good for him to collaborate with the member from Estevan, Mr. Speaker.

The winner of the championship will be headed to the Manitoba hockey league championship for the Royal Cup. And I'll be looking forward, Mr. Speaker, in the next two weeks to stand up again and give another member statement to say that the Yorkton Terriers are headed off to represent Saskatchewan in the finals, Mr. Speaker.

Today I want to assist the member from Estevan and from North Battleford to join with me in wishing the Yorkton Terriers well in their winning of the Saskatchewan junior finals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

North Saskatoon Business Association's Business Builder Awards

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, last night I had the privilege of travelling to Saskatoon with the members from Saskatoon Silver Springs, Massey Place, and Fairview for the North Saskatoon Business Association Business Builder Awards.

This was an exciting evening with over 400 people in attendance. It was a pleasure to see the excitement and enthusiasm from both the nominees and the winners. There are eight winners, so I'll try and be as quick as possible with those, Mr. Speaker.

The award winner for the New Direction Award was Accutek Innovations. The Job Creation Award went to Wardrop Engineering. The Team Building Award went to the Quality Hotel, a fine hotel I might add, Mr. Speaker. The Management Quality Award went to Tap Communications. The Small Business Award went to Grower Direct. The Export Award went to Nu-Fab Burton.

And, Mr. Speaker, there was a Business Builder Award that was

a city-wide award that was elected by all of the members went to the Handy Group of Companies, which operates the Handyman Rental facilities through the city. And the Member of the Year Award was Louis Christ, a lawyer from MacPherson Leslie & Tyerman, who does their marketing. And I'm pleased to say that it was a lawyer that was actually winning this award. It speaks well not just of Mr. Christ, but of that profession in general.

And speaking from my personal . . . I'm pleased to congratulate all nominees, winners, and in particular, Mr. Christ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I too last night, along with the member from Southeast, and Silver Springs, and the Minister of Industry and Resources, and a large and enthusiastic audience of some 500 people attended the North Saskatoon Business Association's 8th Annual Business Builder Award banquet.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's economy is on a roll, and Saskatoon's along with it, and the members of the North Saskatoon Business Association are major contributors to the city's and the province's economic momentum. The Business Builder Awards are a celebration of business success and recognize the hard work and the commitment to excellence. All nominees are to be congratulated for their contributions to Saskatoon's economic viability and sustainability.

Mr. Speaker, here are the winners of the 2005 NSBA [North Saskatoon Business Association] Builder Awards. Job Creation Award went to Wardrop Engineering. Winner of the New Direction Award was Accutek Innovations. The Quality Hotel — the one I presented, Mr. Speaker — won the Team Building Award. The Management Quality Award went to Tap Communications. The Small Business Award winner was Grower Direct. Winner of the Export Award was Nu-Fab Burton LP. The Business Builder Award went to the Handy Group of Companies, and the Member of the Year, Mr. Speaker, was Louis Christ.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating the nominees and winners of the 2005 Business Builder Awards.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

World Health Day

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, today is World Health Day. Every year we have the opportunity to celebrate April 7 as World Health Day to commemorate the organization's creation in 1948. This year's theme is Healthy Mothers and Children. It's a theme which I know is of particular importance to the

members of this Assembly and to the people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, parents throughout Saskatchewan face many barriers in developing healthy lives for themselves and their children. We know only too well that food bank usage by families and children continue to rise in this province and that hunger continues to grow despite promises of government. We also know that many mothers and children throughout Saskatchewan are struggling to find the quality health care they need to live a healthy life. It's a particular challenge for rural families who often find themselves far removed from health care services.

First Nations families experience barriers to good health because of poverty, underemployment, and racism that affects their home life to the detriment of all society. Ensuring that mothers and children remain healthy requires us to think more than about physical health. It means providing children with stable, safe, and happy environments to grow, and enabling parents to find a balance between family and work. As legislators, it is our duty to ensure that all families enjoy happy and healthy lives.

Today on World Health Day I encourage all members of this Assembly to take the opportunity to make a contribution in their professional and their personal lives to improving the health of mothers and children in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Medallions Presented to Centenarians and Newborns

Mr. Addley: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's centennial is, above all, a celebration of Saskatchewan people. The centennial theme, 100 years of heart, was chosen because it captures so simply and completely a defining characteristic of Saskatchewan people, a characteristic that goes a long way to explaining why this province's history is a history of accomplishment and achievement, of challenges faced and challenges successfully met.

Mr. Speaker, recently I had the opportunity to meet with a group of seven individuals who have done much in the service of Saskatchewan and who, being born either in or before the year 1905, got to witness through the course of their lives the development of this province into the social and economic leader that it is in Canada today.

It was my great privilege to award Centenarian Medal to Tikla Larionak, Mary Hearonemus, Freda Mang, Anna Wilms, Phyllis E. Perkins, Myrtle L. Hopkins, and Sylvia Birnie.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of awarding Newborn Medallions to two children, Kalen Xhen-Zhi, and Mackenzie Mawson.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating these medallion recipients, both those who created Saskatchewan's tradition of heart in the first place and in the first century, and those who will carry that tradition into

the next 100 years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Bill Gomersall Celebrates 100th Birthday

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, 2005 is not only the centennial year for the province, but is also the 100th birth year for Bill Gomersall.

Bill moved to Moose Jaw with his family in 1913 and spent his formative years in the city. Bill's dad was a teamster and very expert with horses. Bill inherited his dad's skills in that regard and was not only a well-known and expert horseman, but one who had a genuine understanding of horses.

Bill gained fame all over southern Saskatchewan and northern Montana as a coyote hunter. So proficient was Bill in hunting coyotes during the long, cold winters that he built one of the most beautiful ranches in southern Saskatchewan, largely from the proceeds of selling coyote hides.

In 2002, at the young age of 97, Bill started another career, once again travelling his old stomping grounds and renewing old acquaintances. Bill retells the cowboy poetry that he learned as a child. Bill still lives on the ranch in the Galilee district south of Moose Jaw that he loves so much and is a well-respected elder statesman in the ranching and horse industries.

In this day and age when compliance with the norm seems to be the goal that so many younger people strive for, we should especially appreciate his rugged individuality and irreproachable integrity. Bill celebrated his 100th birthday March 20. Thanks, Bill, and God bless you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Treatment of Macular Degeneration

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, George Siefert is having a run of bad luck. In simple terms, the blood vessels in his eyes are starting to leak. Unless he gets treatment, he'll go blind.

Here's another piece of bad luck. It's not that the treatment isn't available and it's not that the doctor hasn't ordered that treatment. The bad luck is that Sask Health doesn't cover the treatment for this particular disease that Mr. Siefert suffers from.

To the minister: why does Sask Health not cover the treatment that George Siefert needs to maintain his vision?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have sympathy for Mr. Siefert and for many others in the province who have problems with their eyes.

Coverage for Visudyne, which is what the member is talking about, is available throughout the health regions of the province for treatment of age-related macular degeneration and for the treatment of pathological myopia in patients with predominantly classic subfoveal choroidal neovascularization or CNV. This is provided at no cost to the patient.

Currently, there is no coverage for the minimally classic or occult forms of age-related macular degeneration which may be what we're talking about here. No detailed clinical studies have been submitted to the review committees to support of Visudyne in these indications. Although there is some support from specialists for expanded coverage, it has not been approved by Health Canada or the Food and Drug Administration in the United States.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister is right. This particular disease that Mr. Siefert is suffering from is not covered by Sask Health. He has brought some bills today to show the expense of this, that he's received from the Regina Qu'Appelle Health District.

But it's not that it isn't covered in other provinces. The provinces of Manitoba, British Columbia, Ontario, and New Brunswick cover this very treatment, Mr. Speaker. If Mr. Siefert was a veteran, the federal government would cover this treatment. But not here, in Saskatchewan.

Why not in Saskatchewan, when so many other provinces and the federal government would cover this treatment if they were under their . . . if Mr. Siefert was under their jurisdiction?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, my information as of last week is that Manitoba and British Columbia have some coverage for this, but that's it for Canada. Mr. Speaker, when there are new treatments that come forward, we encourage the specialists who are involved to get the information, evidence, to the appropriate committees to make sure that we have these approvals in place. And this is what's happening across the country. People are saying, give us the evidence around this. And, Mr. Speaker, we have to be very careful because there are many suggestions made around how some things will work. But unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we do not have the evidence yet in this particular case.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, every ophthalmologist in Saskatoon says this treatment would help Mr. Siefert. Those

ophthalmologists have written the minister and told him that it would benefit Mr. Siefert and many others suffering from this unique problem. This standard treatment is accepted in Europe and in the United States. It seems like the only people that do not accept this form of treatment are people in the Department of Health here in Saskatchewan. There is lots of evidence to say that this treatment would help these people.

Why, because you live in Saskatchewan, do you have a second class, a poor class of medicine and of treatment, when it does work in other provinces? What's the difference with Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan we are very careful to make sure that we get the appropriate evidence. I have received and been involved in correspondence with the doctors that the member opposite has talked about. And I've recently written to them to say that if they have more evidence, bring it forward so that we can get it in the review process for our specialists here and across the country.

Health Canada has not yet approved this particular substance, Visudyne, for the minimally classical or the occult forms of macular degeneration. And as I repeat, no detailed clinical studies have been submitted to the Saskatchewan review committees to support the use of Visudyne in these indications. I've written to these doctors last year; I've written to them again just recently saying, bring the evidence forward so we can deal with this. And we're still waiting.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, ministers from other provinces have obviously got that evidence, because they cover this type of therapy. Ophthalmologists in this province are prescribing it on a regular basis for people who suffer from occult macular degeneration. Mr. Speaker, the evidence is in. The only people that aren't believing it is Sask Health.

This treatment is very, very expensive. Mr. Siefert has brought two bills from the Regina Qu'Appelle Health District. The treatment runs to about \$2,300 a treatment. Some people will need as many as 5 to 10 treatments to reduce the progress of this disease. If it's acceptable in other provinces and acceptable in other countries — because the evidence is in — how come we are once again lagging behind many, many parts of Canada?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, quite often in this legislature we hear the members opposite look to the west to Alberta. This is not included in the Alberta plan. They're waiting for the same information.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, this is a terrible disease — I think we'll all agree with that — but quick action is the key. You don't reverse the disease. You stop it from progressing, so time is of the essence. Families are unable to quite often afford this medication. It's virtually impossible for them to save up and be able to pay for the treatment because by that time the disease has progressed far too far, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister revisit this, change his policy, so people like Mr. Siefert don't have to see a treatment sitting there in front of them but can't access it? That is unacceptable in this province. Will he change his policy?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we in this province are very careful around what kinds of procedures are approved in our plan. We look for the evidence. We encourage the doctors involved here in Saskatchewan to provide us the evidence. We've written to them a number of times for that evidence. We are awaiting Health Canada's approval of this. We're continuing to await that, wait upon that. Mr. Speaker, we want to have effective treatments for people, not ones that will not provide the relief that the people need.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

Timing of Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Health Care Workers

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the deal the NDP [New Democratic Party] rammed through with health care unions just days before the 2003 election resulted in a 13.3 per cent increase in salaries over a number of years. I find it interesting that just days before the election the NDP was able to find significant resources for this deal.

What I also find interesting is what we heard from this NDP government in the days following the election. On November 22, 2003 the Premier told the *Leader-Post* that, and I quote:

“Inevitably, there will be more demand on the treasury than the treasury can accomplish.”

[14:00]

On November 29, 2003 the Finance minister told the *Leader-Post* that, “spending is outpacing revenues.” If the province was so broke — in fact spending more than it was taking in — where did the NDP find extra resources to bring to the negotiating table? Was it negotiating with taxpayers' dollars it didn't actually have?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, once again the member opposite shows that he doesn't understand how government budgeting works and how government contracts work. Basically what we do when we go forward and prepare budgets, we take information around what contracts are going to be and

try to put that into our two-, three-, four-year plan.

And, Mr. Speaker, what we do at the bargaining table is we give our people who are working on the mandate — in this case it was SAHO [Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations] — certain amounts of resources to work with. The union comes forward with certain responses. That's a long process and it continues. And in that . . . That's the way we deal with all of the contracts that we have.

And, Mr. Speaker, in this particular case they were apart after much . . . a lengthy discussion, and further resources were made available. And it wasn't a huge amount of money but it was enough to get a deal.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, let's look at a couple of the facts. The Minister of Health says that they needed extra money at the table. There are suggestions that the deal will have cost Saskatchewan taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. This is at the same time when the Finance minister produces a 2002-2003 document that says we are \$225 million in deficit position, Mr. Speaker.

On January 14, 2004 the Finance minister said, "You never like to raise taxes . . . our expenditures are exceeding their revenue . . ." April 1, 2004 the Finance minister in the *Leader-Post*, and I quote, "When faced with the choice of a deficit budget or cutting programs, there are no easy answers."

I'm sure the members opposite will remember the financial situation of this province was so dire that the NDP decreed a 0, 1, and 1 wage mandate for all public sector unions. Again, how could the NDP negotiate a 13.3 per cent increase on the eve of an election if the cupboards were not only bare, but in a deficit situation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — This particular contract also included the government policy around putting pay equity into the agreements, and that decision was made in 1999 before the previous election. And the parties were working on implementing it and there are still aspects of that that we're implementing now.

Mr. Speaker, what we end up having to do is making sure that the parties bargain around the various issues and that they resolve those issues at the table. If our people who are bargaining need more resources, we obtain those.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the amounts of money involved are not in the hundreds of millions as that member talks about. As it relates to this particular contract, it's in the millions of dollars — maybe 3 or \$4 million, I don't have the exact figure — and, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about what's really happening.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, the various health authorities have said that the implementation of the joint job evaluation will cost hundreds of millions of dollars. So how can the member stand in this Assembly and say it will be 3 to \$4 million, when in fact the health authorities are saying that this will be extremely expensive?

Mr. Speaker, on the eve of the election someone had to know, on that side of the House, that there was an offer on the table that included millions and millions and millions of dollars. The only person who could have known that is the Premier. He knew when he was going to call the election.

Mr. Speaker, after the election, the NDP said sorry, the cupboards are bare and 0, 1, and 1 is what the rest of you is going to get. How can this government continue to uphold its 0, 1, and 1 mandate when firstly, it settled a substantial deal with other public sector unions the day before . . . days before the last election; and secondly, it had \$1.2 billion in extra revenue last year? How is that fair?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I'll respond to this question because I think, I think, it's related to the health issue. But he is asking — if I understand him correctly — one question about a specific contract in October 2003 which was resolved over the next number of months, and then he's asking about the overall cost of pay equity.

Now I ask that member, are you in favour of pay . . . are you as a member opposite in favour of pay equity? Are the members as a group opposite in favour of pay equity? Because that was the policy decision we made in 1999, and yes, that does have some large costs. But, Mr. Speaker, we think those are important costs to make sure that the whole employment field in Saskatchewan as it relates to the public sector is fair.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Support for the Oil and Gas Industry

Ms. Bakken: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks before the budget came down, the Premier spoke about the future of energy at the Regina business leaders dinner.

The Premier said that oil is a resource that offers this province vast, untapped potential. He said that the time has come for a major withdrawal. He also talked about how often we see our young people drawn out of the province to oil wells and head offices of Alberta. The Premier said it is time to bring the oil fields to our young people.

Mr. Speaker, that is great; that is, if the Premier actually meant it. But that doesn't seem to be the case here because, on budget day, the NDP added a tax to the oil and gas industry.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: how will this tax help bring the oil fields to our young people?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, I note in today's *StarPhoenix* — and actually it's in the *Leader-Post* as well — Mr. John Styles, president of Wedona Energy, a Regina-based junior oil company, had this to say. He said, Mr. Speaker, firstly, that "Saskatchewan has seen a 100 per cent increase in oil production."

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — He goes on to say, Mr. Speaker, that while production in Saskatchewan of crude oil has risen from 200,000 barrels a day to 420,000 barrels, production of crude oil in Alberta, during the same period, has declined from 900,000 barrels of oil to 600,000 barrels.

And he then says, Mr. Speaker:

Saskatchewan put a nice fiscal regime in for horizontal drilling and . . . (the industry) responded.

And, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that oil production is increasing in Saskatchewan and for that member to suggest otherwise is ridiculous.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, if it is ridiculous, then why did the Minister of Industry and Resources forecast in the budget that we are going to have a decline in the production of oil and gas in the province in the next year?

Mr. Speaker, days before the budget, the Premier made an announcement at the University of Regina about new incentives for the oil and gas industry. In his news release, he said that we are going to wake a sleeping giant. Imagine, Mr. Speaker, after 60 years, the NDP finally realize there is a sleeping giant in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, no one was more surprised at the Premier's words than the industry themselves.

But just five days later, the NDP in the budget brought in a tax increase to the oil and gas industry, the same industry that is responsible for \$1.4 billion in extra revenue in last year's budget in the province. Mr. Speaker, every time the NDP just about gets it right, they revert to their old ways.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier explain why he would make an announcement about incentives one day and then just five days later increase taxes to the oil and gas industry?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well of course, Mr. Speaker, what the member is saying is completely inaccurate. And as I explained to the House last week, Mr. Speaker, in response to an equally nonsensical question, the story of oil in Saskatchewan is not simply about more drilling, Mr. Speaker, it's about technology. And as Mr. Styles says in the newspaper today, "The Saskatchewan oil and gas industry is a story about technology."

Because, Mr. Speaker, we can only get 15 per cent of our oil out of the ground. What we're doing through the Petroleum Technology Research Institute and our royalties, Mr. Speaker, is increasing enhanced oil recovery and increasing production which has doubled, Mr. Speaker, contrary to the inaccurate portrait of what is happening that is painted by the member over there, Mr. Speaker. Totally ridiculous.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Bakken: — . . . hiked taxes, the oil and gas sector. And the NDP doesn't call it a tax hike though; they call it a way to address a revenue leakage problem.

Each year, Mr. Speaker, this tax will take in at least \$20 million. It's no wonder the oil and gas industry has no confidence in this government. The NDP says one thing to the industry and then slips something completely different into the budget. The Premier's actions do not match his words.

Mr. Speaker, how does this government expect to increase investment and expansion in the oil and gas sector when the NDP shows a total lack of understanding of the importance of the oil and gas industry to this province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well, Mr. Speaker, if the member over there doesn't know, the change with respect to trusts has to do with providing a tax break to trust unit holders that live outside this province, and making trusts competitive with oil companies that operate and pay taxes inside Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And it may be that the Conservatives, in true Conservative fashion, Mr. Speaker, want to reward trust holders outside Saskatchewan. That is not the position of this government.

But I want to repeat, Mr. Speaker, that the Government of Saskatchewan is doing a good job building the oil patch. And the oil industry agrees, Mr. Speaker.

And I'd like to refer the House to a letter that was received from a Mr. John McClement, who's a geologist, and sent to the Leader of the Opposition last year. And I have his permission to use it.

He said, referring to the Leader of the Opposition and one of his colleagues, he says, "I'm surprised that you two have not been exposed to the geology of the west . . ." Because he says . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed. I recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, again in the Premier's business dinner speech, he quoted Todd Hirsch, who is the chief economist with Canada West Foundation, and who also spoke at the Centennial Summit.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Premier applauded Mr. Hirsch for his views. And I'd like to quote some of the things that Mr. Hirsch said when he spoke at the summit. He said, "We, in our time and generation, have no right to think small."

Mr. Hirsch continued on to say that we need to level the playing field, not by slapping on a tax hike. Here's a better solution to levelling the playing field — get rid of the corporate capital tax altogether.

Mr. Hirsch says:

It's ironic that the main industry responsible for Saskatchewan's have status is the one targeted by a tax hike.

He also said, Mr. Speaker:

Not only that the government is wasting its efforts with measures that take it nowhere, it's shooting the proverbial goose that lays the golden egg.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: will you take Mr. Hirsch seriously? Will you cancel this tax?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I just remind the member to address her remarks through the Chair. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not surprised that the member would be advocating the elimination of the corporate capital tax because I think the Finance critic from the Saskatchewan Party has advocated the elimination of every tax.

But it doesn't really matter what we have to say over here because it doesn't matter what the facts are, the fact that oil production has doubled — it's not good enough for the member from Weyburn who wants to cut taxes for unit holders outside the province.

But I'll just quote what John McClement, a geologist, says in his letter to the Leader of the Opposition, where he says:

I would agree with headline that, "Oil and gas [is] humming" and probably near the peak of its potential.

Mr. Speaker, we are on a roll. We're on a roll whether the opposition Conservatives recognize it or not. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to keep right on rolling right over the opposition.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone. Oh pardon me, Weyburn-Big Muddy.

Ms. Bakken: — . . . the NDP to hike taxes for the oil and gas industry has just served as a reminder to the industry as to why they cannot trust this government. It's a reminder why there is no confidence and why we are not experiencing an oil boom when we have \$55-a-barrel oil.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier talks about waking a sleeping giant, but has no idea how to make it happen. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier live up to his words and commitments of making Saskatchewan the energy heart of the future and will he cancel this tax?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite doesn't know that the province is experiencing an oil boom, then I would suggest that the member opposite should visit her constituency more often.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cline: — If she doesn't know that oil and gas production has doubled in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and that there is, for example, enhanced oil recovery going on in Weyburn and Midale, Mr. Speaker, she needs to get out to her constituency more often, Mr. Speaker. Because you cannot know what is going on if you don't listen to the facts and if you don't open your eyes, Mr. Speaker, and that is what the members opposite must do, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bakken: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry and Resources should read from his own budget document on page 40 which said:

Oil drilling is expected to decrease to 1,700 new wells in 2005 and 1,600 new wells in 2006.

And he continues on to say:

Just as the number of new oil wells drilled is expected to decrease, drilling of new natural gas wells is also expected to drop in the near term.

Mr. Speaker, there is a prediction in the oil industry that there will be 1,700 new gas wells drilled in Canada, and the Minister of Industry of Saskatchewan is predicting 1,600 as opposed to

... I said 1,700 — 17,000, he's predicting 1,600. That's less than 10 per cent of all the new gas wells to be drilled in Canada, he is predicting to be drilled in Saskatchewan.

And then he has the nerve to stand up and say that we should know that there's a boom. Well he should come to Weyburn-Big Muddy and see what the boom, the boom that we should be happening, is not happening. Ask people across the province. Will the Premier, Mr. Speaker, will the Premier reverse this tax?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Industry and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Cline: — Well perhaps some day when the member visits Weyburn, I'll accompany her to Weyburn when she goes there, Mr. Speaker.

But I do want to say in response to that member that the Minister of Finance is a very cautious individual and he's been cautious in his projections, Mr. Speaker. But I'm very happy to report to the member for Weyburn that according to *On Stream*, which is the official publication of the Petroleum Services Association of Canada, Mr. Speaker, they predict that drilling will go up 6 per cent in Alberta and 8 per cent in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, please.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 99 — The Canadian Information Processing Society of Saskatchewan Act

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes ... Order, please. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Learning.

Hon. Mr. Thomson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 99, The Canadian Information Processing Society of Saskatchewan Act be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Learning that Bill No. 99, The Canadian Information Processing Society of Saskatchewan Act be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 101 — The Enforcement of Foreign Judgments Act/Loi sur l'exécution des jugements étrangers

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 101, The Enforcement of Foreign Judgments Act be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 101, The Enforcement of Foreign Judgments Act be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the Minister.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 103 — The Real Estate Amendment Act, 2005

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

Hon. Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 103, The Real Estate Amendment Act, 2005 be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — Order please, members. Order, please. The Chair ... Order, please. It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 103, The Real Estate Amendment 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: — And when shall the Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the Minister of Justice.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government Whip.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely pleased again today to stand on behalf of the

government and respond to written questions 927 through 946 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses for questions 927 to 946 have been submitted.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, to facilitate the work of the Crown and Central Agencies Committee and the Economy Committee of the legislature, I move this 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 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:28.]

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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

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Minister Responsible for Disability Issues
Minister Responsible for Gaming

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Minister of Finance

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Minister of Agriculture and Food