



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

of the

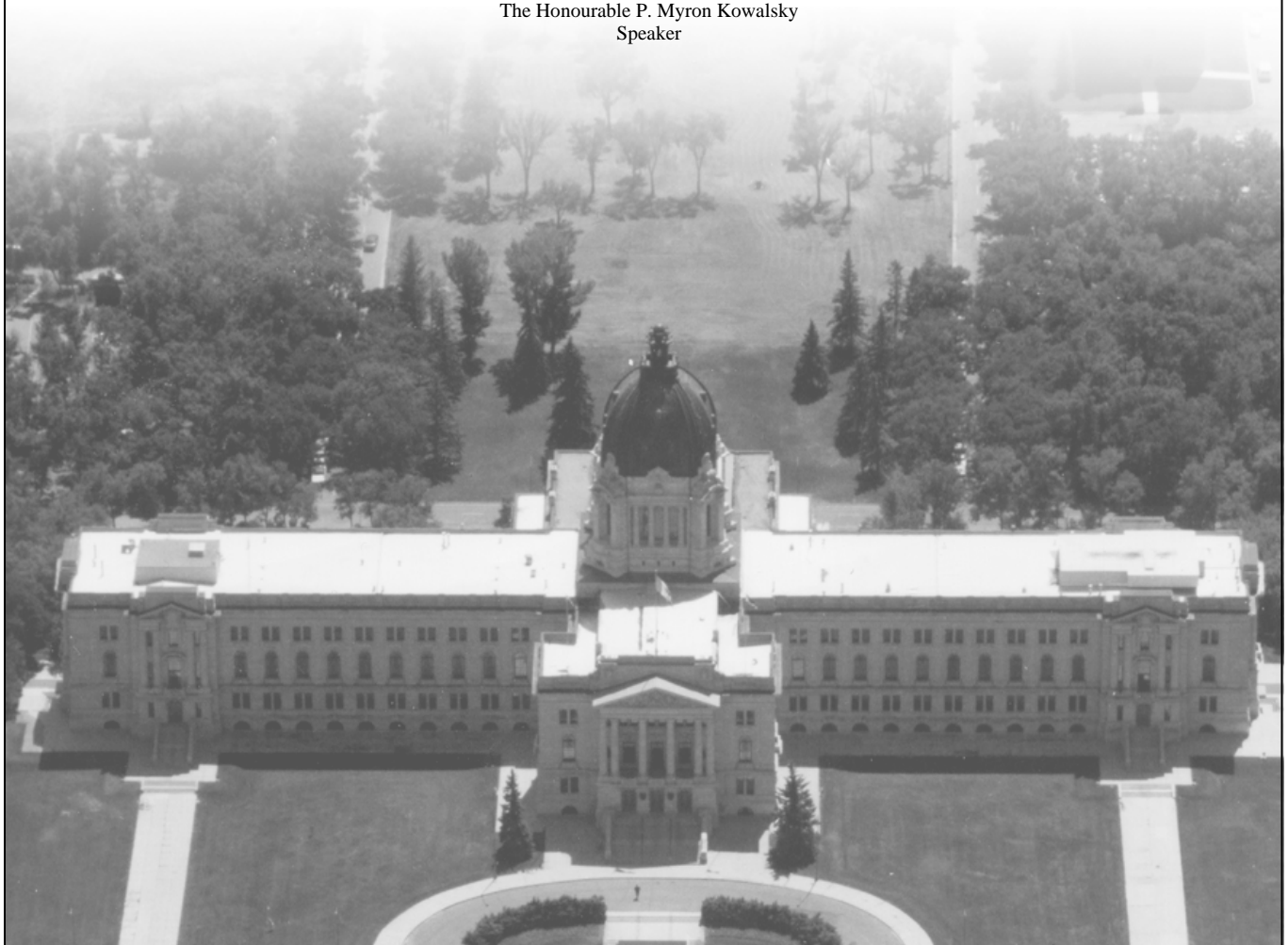
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**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, Hon. Graham	NDP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Hon. Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Beatty, Hon. Joan	NDP	Cumberland
Belanger, Hon. Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornrud, 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, Joanne	NDP	Regina Rosemont
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Dearborn, Jason	SP	Kindersley
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, Hon. David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Gantefoer, Rod	SP	Melfort
Hagel, Hon. 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
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, Hon. Eldon	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
McCall, Hon. 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, 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
Vacant		Martensville

[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, I have petitions to present today on behalf of residents from the communities of Broadview, Cowessess First Nation, and Whitewood regarding the problem of dialysis and lack thereof in the area. And I would like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to implement a strategy that will see a dialysis unit placed in Broadview Union Hospital.

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

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present a petition today on behalf of constituents of Cypress Hills concerned about the condition of Highway 18. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary actions to ensure that Highway 18 from Claydon to Robsart is repaved at the earliest possible time to ensure the safety of drivers in the area and so that economic opportunities are not lost.

As is duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, today's petition is signed by individuals from the communities of Maple Creek, Consul, and Frontier. I so present.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Swift Current, the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure again to rise on behalf of people concerned with the state of Highway 310. 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 repair Highway 310 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth and tourism in Foam Lake, Fishing Lake, Kuroki, and surrounding areas.

I drove 310, Mr. Speaker, and understand where they're coming from. The petitioners are from the communities of Kuroki,

Foam Lake, from Margo, and from the city of Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased today to rise on behalf of people who are concerned about Highway No. 49. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause this government to repair Highway 49 in order to address safety concerns and to facilitate economic growth and tourism in Kelvington, Lintlaw, Preeceville, and surrounding areas.

The people who have signed this petition are from Lintlaw, Kelvington, and Archerwill. I so present.

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a petition to do with the drug Avastin. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

The signatures, Mr. Speaker, are all from the community of Grenfell.

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to present a petition on behalf of constituents who are very upset with this government's plan of gravel highways. The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take immediate action and provide dust suppression on the gravel portion of Highway 99 between Junction 6 and Craven.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lengthy list of Saskatchewan citizens that have signed this petition. I'll name some of the communities that they come from — Craven, Lumsden, Silton, Zehner, Regina, amongst other communities, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And today I have several pages of a petition of people that are concerned of the safety of the Bruno access on the very narrow Highway No. 5. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to upgrade the Bruno access road off of Highway No. 5.

And the signatures, Mr. Speaker, are from Bruno and Carmel. I so present.

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

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again today I rise to present a petition on behalf of people from my constituency who have concerns regarding the Estevan Daycare Co-operative. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to review the decision to deny the requested spaces for the Estevan Daycare Co-operative.

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

And, Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens of Estevan. I so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to present a petition from the citizens of Biggar who are concerned about reductions of their health care services. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Biggar Hospital, long-term care home, and ambulance services maintain at the very least their current level of services.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by the good citizens of Biggar and district. I so present.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to once again rise in this House to present a petition on behalf of frustrated parents across Saskatchewan who, for the past seven years, have been lobbying this government for a dedicated children's hospital within a hospital in 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 this year to build a provincial children's hospital in Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners today live in the constituencies of Saskatoon Eastview, Saskatoon Sutherland, and Saskatoon Silver Springs. I so present.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to maintain the Department of Highways section shop in Watrous:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the Department of Highways section shop in Watrous remain open so as to ensure the safety of all motorists and Saskatchewan Highways employees who would be affected by such possible closure.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

This particular petition is signed by the good citizens from Watrous, Simpson, and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to present a petition regarding tougher sentences for sex offences against children. I will read a portion of the prayer for relief:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take all steps available to speed up the public disclosure process so that communities are alerted to the presence of a known sex offender in their community as soon as possible.

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

Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to present this on behalf of the citizens of Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present on behalf of a constituent from Carnduff. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary action to fully fund the cancer drug Avastin.

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from the communities of Carievale, Redvers, Carnduff, and all the way from Souris, Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order petitions tabled at the last sitting have been reviewed and pursuant to rule 15(7) are hereby received.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have four questions to the Minister of Corrections and Safety. I will read them.

I give notice that I shall on day no. 18 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety: how many people were evacuated from Stony Rapids during the summer of 2006 as a result of forest fires? How many days were the evacuated people away from their homes? And what was the cost of the evacuation for Stony Rapids?

Mr. Speaker, I have exactly the same questions for the minister dealing with the communities of Black Lake, Fond-du-Lac, and Uranium City.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Wood River.

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 18 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Highways and Transportation: in this fiscal year, is there money in the Department of Highways and Transportation budget to cover a financial settlement with the Notukeu flood group? If so, what is the amount earmarked for the Notukeu flood group?

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

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of written questions today. I give notice that I shall on day no. 18 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Transportation Company: how many STC agencies were closed in 2006? Which ones were they and why?

In addition:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskTel: what was the cost of the initial investment into Business Watch International, and from whom did SaskTel purchase the company?

Also:

To the Minister Responsible for SaskTel: how much money did SaskTel sell Business Watch International, and to whom was it sold?

I also:

To the Minister Responsible for the Crown SaskTel: why

was the remuneration of two members of the board of directors paid directly to CEP council in 2005?

Also, Mr. Speaker:

To the Minister Responsible for CIC: what is Skills Canada Alberta, and why did CIC pay it \$10,000 in 2005?

And lastly:

To the Minister Responsible for CIC: what is the CIC Social Club, and why did CIC pay it \$7,200 in 2005?

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on day no. 18 ask the government the following questions:

To the Minister of Community Resources: how many children have run away from the Red Willow Centre in Saskatoon, for the years 2004, 2005, and 2006?

I also give notice that I shall on day no. 18 ask the government the following question:

To the Minister of Community Resources: how long was each child gone when he or she ran away from the Red Willow Centre in Saskatoon, for the years 2004, 2005, 2006?

I also give notice that I shall on day no. 18 ask the government the following questions:

To the Minister of Community Resources: what process and procedures does the Red Willow Centre in Saskatoon follow when a child runs away from the facility?

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

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice I shall on day no. 18 ask the government the following questions:

In which residential or group homes had the 41 designated spaces for children or youth at risk of being sexually exploited?

To the Minister of Justice: how much money has the Government of Saskatchewan put into the Saskatoon safe house in the year 2005 and the year 2004 and the year 2003, 2002, 2001, 2000, in 1999?

To the Minister of Justice, I ask on day no. 18: how many homes or properties have been shut down under safer communities and neighbourhood regulations because of children's sexual exploitation?

What is the total amount of collecting fines through violations of the highway traffic Act for the fiscal year 2001-2002, for the year 2002-2003, 2003-2004, '04-05, and '05-06?

To the Minister of Justice: could you provide a copy of the proposed amendments to the Criminal Code by the provincial Minister of Justice that would create a presumption that those driving a vehicle in the area frequented by prostitutes and have a child enter their vehicle are communicating with the child for the purpose of prostitution?

I ask on day no. 18:

To the Minister of Justice: could the department provide a list of the range of victims services, including compensation, that are available to sexually exploited children?

To the Minister of Justice: how many children have received services under The Victims of Crime Regulations for the year 2002, for the year 2003, for the year 2004, for the year 2005? How many times has the Act cited as The Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act used in the year 2002, the year 2003, the year 2004, and the year 2005?

[13:45]

I will also ask, Mr. Speaker, on day no. 18:

How many youth have received a risk assessment under the responsibility of the Department of Corrections and Public Safety in the year 2002, in the year 2003, 2004, and 2005?

I also ask, Mr. Speaker:

How many offenders have attended programs under the prostitution offender intervention program in Saskatoon for 2002 to 2005?

I also ask:

When is it expected that student records will be capable of providing real-time access for greater information on the progress and location of students?

On day no. 18 I ask the Minister of Justice:

How many charges have been laid and how many convictions have been secured under section 2 of The Highway Traffic Act in 2005, 2004, 2003, 2001?

And, Mr. Speaker, my last question to the Minister of Justice:

How many instances have prosecutors requested victim surcharges in cases where children were being sexually exploited in the sex trade in the year 2006?

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I would like to introduce to all members of

the House today 25 grade 10 students from the Melville Comprehensive School, their teachers Mr. Perry Ostapowich and Kim Morrison and along with Cheryl Stecyk, chaperone and bus driver. I want to welcome them to our legislature today.

I might also add, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Ostapowich has been a faithful visitor to this Assembly bringing his classes in on a regular basis, and I think that really helps them in their future endeavours to understand how government actually works.

I might also add, Mr. Speaker, that Kim Morrison who is doing her internship is from the town of Saltcoats or a farm near the town of Saltcoats. Her dad and I played hockey just a few years ago, Mr. Speaker — well quite a few years ago — so our families are very well known to each other. And I want to wish her the best of luck in her education degree that she's going after back to university after Christmas when she finishes her internship.

So I would ask all members to welcome them here today and thank them for coming to their legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Saskatchewan Construction Association Industry Awards

Mr. Hermanson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night, along with the member for Wood River and Minister of Labour, I was fortunate to have attended the Saskatchewan Construction Association Industry Awards at the Hotel Saskatchewan. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the recipients of these awards.

Firstly the PCL Construction Management Inc., which has offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, for winning the SCA [Saskatchewan Construction Association] Industry Award. PCL also deserves congratulations for celebrating its 100th anniversary.

Also to Alliance Energy and Sun Electric, which has offices in Regina and Saskatoon, for winning SCA Community Builder Award.

Morsky Industrial Services, which is based out of Regina, managed to win two awards — both the SCA Innovation and Action Award and the Project of the Year Under \$5 Million Award. Both of these awards were for their landslide remediation project.

Graham Industrial Services Ltd., which has offices in Regina and Saskatoon, won the award for project of the year for over \$5 million for the centennial wind power project. This award must have been especially satisfying to Graham because of the setbacks they faced due to a tornado.

And finally special congratulations are due to the recipient of the SCA Person of the Year Award, Bryan Leverick of Alliance Energy.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like the Assembly to join me this afternoon in congratulating all of the 2006 Saskatchewan Construction Association Industry Award recipients.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Wakamow Place Wins Housing Award

Hon. Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, every two years since 1988 the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has housing awards that serve as a national forum to share best practices dedicated to improving quality, choice, and affordability of housing in Canada. This year the housing awards theme was Best Practices in Affordable Housing and recognized individuals and organizations for their outstanding accomplishments in creating affordable housing.

It was open to any individual or group in the public or private sector of the housing and construction industry. Sixteen winners were selected by an independent committee composed of housing experts from across Canada. And I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that Wakamow Place, a project of the Moose Jaw Non-Profit Housing Corporation, was among them.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to providing safe, supported, affordable housing for adults who experience long-term, severe mental illness, Wakamow Place has a mental health resource centre adjacent to that that offers pre-vocational, social, and recreational opportunities for tenants and others who experience long-term mental illness.

Mr. Speaker, Wakamow Place is the result of extensive community, provincial, and federal partnerships. And I want to congratulate all involved, in particular the Moose Jaw Non-Profit Housing Corporation on receiving this national CMHC Housing Award.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Melfort Fundraising Effort for Breast Cancer Research

Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of the management and staff of George Home Hardware in Melfort, Saskatchewan. In honour of Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October and in support of a long-time employee and friend, Elaine Gural, who was diagnosed with breast cancer last year, this group of caring individuals took it upon themselves to arrange a fundraising effort in support of breast cancer research.

They had a lot of fun, and finally the staff agreed — men included — that if they reached their goal to raise \$5,000 they would all get pink ribbon tattoos. As well, Mr. Speaker, two employees of the local radio station, CK750, Traci Lowe and Scott Allan, jumped aboard and agreed that if George Hardware successfully raised the \$5,000, Traci would get the pink ribbon tattoo and Scott would dye his hair pink.

Well, Mr. Speaker, pink ribbon tattoos and pink hair are now all the rage in Melfort among men and women alike. The entire community got behind this fundraising effort and the total raised was \$5,100.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Gantefer: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to ask the members of the legislature to join me in recognizing the dedicated spirits of this group of Melfort individuals.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Organics Connections Conference Held in Saskatoon

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I had the pleasure of attending the 2006 Organics Connections conference in Saskatoon. This is a national conference held every two years which brings together or connects organic producers, processors, marketers, researchers, and certifiers from across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday morning I had the honour of presenting four members of Saskatchewan's organic community with Connections Organic Pioneer Awards. Paul Hanley has been a key source of information about organic farming in the province since the 1970s, and he was honoured with the Pioneer Organic Communicator Award. Gary Smith and Wilma Groenen have also been key figures in organic agriculture in Saskatchewan. For their tireless work in giving the organic farming sector some of the tools needed to succeed, Gary Smith was recognized as Pioneer Organic Educator, and Wilma Groenen as a Pioneer Organic Publisher.

And, Mr. Speaker, Elmer Laird, whose name is synonymous with organic agriculture in this province, who is the founder and president of the Back to the Farm Research Foundation, and who at age 82 corresponds with a variety of media venues and writes a weekly column in the *Davidson Leader*, was recognized as a Pioneer Organic Visionary. Mr. Laird has also been nominated for a National Hero Award by Canadian Organic Growers.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the organizers of the conference and especially all the recipients of the 2006 Organic Pioneer Awards and thank them for their significant contributions to organic farming here in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Wynyard's Citizen of the Year

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to honour Wynyard's 2006 citizen of the year, Nona Longstaff. Nona was presented with this prestigious award at a banquet that was sponsored by the Wynyard Lioness

Club. It was through Nona's tireless volunteer work in the community that she was nominated with this award. In fact to demonstrate how dedicated a volunteer she is, Nona even showed up in the hall earlier in the day to help set up for the banquet that she was to be the guest of honour for.

The list of organizations that Nona has served on is extensive. She's been a member of the hospital auxiliary, the Lioness Club, and active in crime watch programs since their inception. She's chaired and held executive positions on all these organizations. No matter what event or fundraising is occurring in the community, you can be guaranteed that you will see Nona taking an active part, whether it be a bake sale, tea, or catering to a graduation event.

Other organizations she's a member of are CARRES [community access — respite, rehabilitation, education services], the Icelandic Club, the primary health care team, the clinic board, and the community advisory network for the health region.

In addition to her extensive volunteer work, Nona is a respected member of the community. This is apparent in the heartfelt speeches that were given by friends and acquaintances during her awards banquet. I ask that members join me in congratulating Nona Longstaff in becoming Wynyard's 2006 citizen of the year.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Rules and Ethics

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, parliamentary rules dictate that members not intentionally mislead this Assembly. Given that and the large number of — let's call them — miscommunications that have come from members sitting on the opposite side of the House, we can only conclude that there are problems afoot other than violations of House rules and the Saskatchewan Party's own code of ethics.

For example, Mr. Speaker, on November 14 the member from Kelvington-Wadena said and I quote, "I've written to the Premier and asked him if he's going to reinstate the all-party committee, and I've heard nothing." Maybe there's a breakdown in the Saskatchewan Party mail distribution system because the Premier responded to this issue with a letter dated October 12.

On November 6, the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs said, quote, "Now I've been phoning every couple of weeks to the minister's office, to the Department of Learning, and . . . [saying] where's the capital list . . . [for the] year?" But the minister's office has not received even one call from the member on this topic. Maybe he — what? — dialed the wrong number every time he thinks he phoned?

Mr. Speaker, given the parliamentary rules and their much-touted code of ethics, we have to presume that it's the Saskatchewan Party's communication system that is at fault as opposed to the Saskatchewan Party itself.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Team Saskatchewan Excels at National Seniors Athletic Competition

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that our Saskatchewan team came home from the Canadian Senior 55-Plus Games with the second highest medal count of this national competition. There were 21 events offered in Portage la Prairie from August 29 to September 2. Organizers were pleased that they were in excess of 500 more participants this year than last year. Saskatchewan alone was represented by 193 competitors and 72 guests, totalling 264 competitors.

Grace Beattie from our very own Kelvington-Wadena constituency was one of these contenders, and she was proud to bring home a national gold medal in the 75-and-over five-pin bowling team. She played with Bill Harrison and Gladys Petrar of Dysart and Alvin and Helen Craig from Wynyard. Not to be outdone, in our constituency, Ray Johnson of Hendon brought home a national silver medal in the men's 75-and-over competition.

I think we should be extremely proud of our Saskatchewan team as they exemplify the strength and spirit of Saskatchewan seniors. The games are more than just an athletic competition for seniors. They are a celebration of the spiritual, mental, and physical well-being of all Canadian seniors.

Mr. Speaker, this event was truly a sign that our Saskatchewan seniors are indeed a force to be reckoned with. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Workplace Issues for Nurses

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 11, 1999 here's what the member from Saskatoon Nutana told the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses:

Never again will we allow ourselves to get too busy with other vital issues to fail to listen and respond . . . If there are . . . workplace issues that also need to be addressed, I promise you that they will be addressed quickly and effectively.

Well, Mr. Speaker, seven years later and after a nurses' strike, this is what the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses have to say today:

. . . the scope and destructive legacy of the Saskatchewan government's mismanagement of the nursing shortage is simple to outline but difficult to overstate.

Nurses are being burnt out. Patients are suffering. Why has this

government broken its promise to the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I suppose it's a coincidence today, but this is a very good news day in the province of Saskatchewan, led by the member from Saskatoon Nutana. Mr. Speaker, today the announcement of an additional 2,500 new training spaces in the province of Saskatchewan, part of a \$52.6 million program for education and training of Saskatchewan's young people. Adding to the commitment, Mr. Speaker, of our \$15.5 million commitment to training and spaces in this province, Mr. Speaker, the largest single investment of its kind in the province's history.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand on this side of the House with the member from Saskatoon Nutana on this wonderful day for young people, for training spaces, Mr. Speaker, for addressing what the Throne Speech says is this government's commitment to young people, to improving Saskatchewan health care and, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that Saskatchewan . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, once again this government is long on words and short on results. According to the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, vacancies have increased by almost 80 per cent in the last year. Overtime is skyrocketing, WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] claims are through the roof. But even worse, patient care is being jeopardized.

The nurses can't take it any more. They're tired, they're getting sick, and they're quitting, Mr. Speaker. When will the government start to address the issues that SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] is raising? When will it start to address the workplace issues that are causing our nurses to leave their jobs?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A few weeks ago, in fact just a little over a month and a bit ago, Mr. Speaker, I announced the creation and the implementation of the provincial recruitment agency. And at that same time, Mr. Speaker, I announced the first initiatives from the nursing recruitment committee that I established earlier this year.

And in response to that announcement, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite said, we can give the government credit because it's a first step. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a first step in a journey, Mr. Speaker, that we will take together to improve training spaces — the number of training spaces in this

province — to improve retention and recruitment issues in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I can go through the initiatives that we've taken since 2001, Mr. Speaker, but we are addressing the issues that SUN and others have raised, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue . . .

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, this minister talked a few days ago that he had taken a straw poll of nursing students and he told us that 90 per cent were planning to stay in this province. But until he guarantees full-time work — permanent, full-time work — until he can guarantee some mentorship for the first few months that they're on staff; until he can guarantee some stability in the workplace so they're not moved from ward to ward, from night to night, Mr. Speaker, they will not be staying.

Here's what one grad had to say after her first night at work, "My first night I was . . . [the only one] with 22 patients." That's a 1:22 patient-to-nurse ratio. "I want to stay in Saskatchewan, but I'm scared to go to work and be left on my own with 22 patients."

This is the reality that nurses are facing in Saskatchewan and because of that reality we have the worst nurse retention rate in Canada at 67 per cent. What does this minister plan to do to address the workplace concerns that we're hearing around the province?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And while the member opposite is again trying to quote me, let me quote myself in this regard, Mr. Speaker. Ninety per cent of the graduate nurses from last year's nursing education program have found work in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

That is not the worst retention rate in Canada, Mr. Speaker. Let me quote something else, Mr. Speaker, from the *Regina Leader-Post*, the story coming out of Edmonton, Mr. Speaker. The *Regina Leader-Post* article, October 25, "Alberta is experiencing a dire shortage of nurses that will get even worse as new hospitals open in Calgary and Edmonton."

Quote, Heather Smith of the United Nurses of Alberta, "The rural regions are . . . fearful that Edmonton and Calgary will act like black holes," Mr. Speaker. And the president of the United Nurses of Alberta says, "In fact, [Alberta has] . . . the lowest percentage of full-time positions in the country."

The Speaker: — Order.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seven years ago this government made promises to the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. It promised never to push nurses into the position that they would have to take job action. But I can guarantee you, they're getting close to that position. If this government, who has stolen many of our ideas over the last number of years, if it would have only listened six or seven years ago when the member from Melfort told them that they had to increase the number of training seats and they had to do a better job on recruitment, we wouldn't be in the train wreck that we're facing in our health system right now, Mr. Speaker.

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses says, "Five years of government denial and [the] token responses to the RN/RPN shortage has left Saskatchewan . . . worse off than any other province." Mr. Speaker, how could his government, how could this government have allowed this to happen in our Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I don't think the member opposite heard the quote that I made out of Alberta a few moments ago. And, Mr. Speaker, I encourage him to read *Hansard* and to hear it again. Saskatchewan now has, of the four Western provinces, the highest percentage of nurses working full-time — of the four Western provinces, the highest.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the information being brought forward by Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. In fact that's why I established a committee of people interested in the nursing field and working in the nursing field, Mr. Speaker, to advise this government on how to spend \$25 million that this government put forward — brand new money just two months ago, Mr. Speaker. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, what we've done already in this regard, Mr. Speaker, is to address some of the issues that SUN has raised.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the four recommendations made by the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, that's why we are already taking aggressive action on recruitment and retention issues. That's why we are putting programs in place . . .

The Speaker: — Thank you. The member's time has elapsed. The Chair recognizes the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, there have been 247 bed closures as a result of the nursing shortage in our province. We have heard that hospitals are closing left and right — whether it's in Preeceville, Bengough, or Spiritwood — they're closing left and right, Mr. Speaker.

And the situation is only going to get worse as we see more nurses retiring. This is what SUN had to say: "If Saskatchewan

had the same retention rate . . ." We don't need to compare to Alberta. I know how hard they hate when we start comparing this government to Alberta. But this is what SUN had to say: "If Saskatchewan had the same retention rate as Manitoba, we would have 800 more . . . [nurses working in this] province . . ." today, Mr. Speaker. It's shameful, the retention rate under this NDP government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this issue had to be dealt with six and seven years ago when Manitoba, their NDP cousins, dealt with it. Now this government is finally starting to deal with the problem. Well it's almost too late, Mr. Speaker. We're spending \$300 million on overtime. Will he not stand and admit that he's too late on dealing with this subject?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A couple of things in regards to this.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows — or he should know if his research people are up to the task, Mr. Speaker — that the Manitoba program is different than the program in Saskatchewan. And if he is advocating the Manitoba model, the entire Manitoba model for the province of Saskatchewan, he should stand up and advocate it. Secondly . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And secondly, if the member opposite wants to compare us to the province of Alberta on an ongoing basis, let's compare the whole package. What's the equalization deal in Manitoba this year, Mr. Speaker? — \$1.2 million.

Some Hon. Members: — Billion.

Hon. Mr. Taylor: — Billion. Billion dollars, Mr. Speaker. If, with the help of the opposition and their cousins in Ottawa we have \$800 million worth of more money in the province of Saskatchewan under equalization, imagine what that will mean, Mr. Speaker, to nursing education program in this province.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatoon Regional Health Authority this year has hired 215 new nurses. The Regina Qu'Appelle Regional Health Authority, Mr. Speaker, since April, 89 new nurses, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Oyate Safe House

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In his report this past September, the Children's Advocate called for the establishment of a collaborative partnership between the Oyate

and the Department of Community Resources. That partnership was to include a shared vision on common service delivery principles.

Mr. Speaker, the advocate wanted this within 60 days. This is recommendation 14(06) on page 37 of the advocate's report. Mr. Speaker, it's been 60 days. Since the minister did not provide this document yesterday, will he produce it and table it in this Assembly today?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, what's really important is that as we begin to work our way down this particular path and on this journey to help many of these children, what I keep telling that member opposite — and it's a very serious issue — is that it's not about him and it's not about the political agenda of the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. This is about positioning First Nations people to be actively involved in trying to find some healthy activity and some alternative lifestyle for their First Nations kids, Mr. Speaker. I've said this time and time again to that member and to that party, Mr. Speaker.

We should learn our lessons from the Indian residential schools, Mr. Speaker, in which the people of Saskatchewan and many people throughout the country tried to implement their solutions on First Nations people. That did not work, Mr. Speaker.

On this side of the Assembly we said we're going to engage the First Nations people to find solutions and that's exactly where we're going to stay, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I need no lesson from that minister on critical issues. That's why we bring it up every day in this House because we know it's a critical issue. That's why we asked for the advocate report. That's why we asked for the auditor's report, Mr. Speaker.

Has a document outlining the shared vision and common service delivery principles been delivered to the advocate? Has the minister met with the Children's Advocate since deciding to stay the course with Oyate?

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister for Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, my staff have been in constant contact with the advocate and the auditor, Mr. Speaker. We intend to comply, Mr. Speaker. And what's really important, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, is the model that we have unveiled is a very exciting model and we're going to start seeing good progress, Mr. Speaker, in dealing with this chronic problem that's been around Saskatchewan and the rest of Canada for many, many years and that is children being sexually exploited, Mr. Speaker.

And again I go back to a comment I made earlier, Mr. Speaker. On this side of the Assembly, I and we totally believe that we've got to have heavy First Nations involvement and to tap into the power and the culture and the vision of First Nations people when it comes to these kids.

And, Mr. Speaker, these children . . . What's really important is that we have to realize that this is 2006. We've got a brand new journey ahead of us, Mr. Speaker. It's not the 1960s or the 1970s where that party is mired in when it comes to First Nations involvement. We want to move forward. They're our partners and we embrace their role, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, he and his predecessors have covered this up for three years. Maybe he can explain why there's been no elder in the facility since August of last year.

Has a new service agreement been signed with Oyate? Can the minister table this document in the Assembly today? How many meetings have taken place with Oyate on the development of this new service agreement? And can the minister produce a draft copy of service agreement models that have been used in this discussion?

Mr. Speaker, why is the minister once again ignoring the advocate's report? A 60-day deadline was set and if anything has been done, I haven't seen it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, that member just doesn't get it and that party opposite just doesn't get it, Mr. Speaker. What has the advocate been advocating; what have we been talking about, Mr. Speaker — is that to embrace the First Nations power and their abilities to make a significant difference and a primary difference when it comes to these young children involved in this particular trade, Mr. Speaker.

From our perspective, Mr. Speaker, what is really important . . . We all know what needs to be done, Mr. Speaker. We have a brand new model. We have a brand new vision, and our vision certainly is going to be very inclusive of First Nations people, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

Again I go back to my earlier point. This is 2006. We need to embrace that power and the ability of First Nations people to make a significant difference in their own children's lives. We embrace that on this side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

I begin to question their genuine concern, Mr. Speaker, when all they're doing is calling down First Nations partners. And that's not where we should go, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — He doesn't get it. We have asked three questions, to table a document that he says he has tabled the thing. Let us see it. Let us see the document. Where are the minutes from the meetings he had with the Oyate board — the two missing meetings, the only missing? What's he hiding? What's he covering up on this?

Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor also found that there had been honorariums incorrectly paid to board members. Can the minister tell me, has this money been recovered from the Oyate board?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, what's really . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order please, members. Order. Order. Order. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member knows, when we announced yesterday our plan to move forward, Mr. Speaker, we put some incredible resources to the plan. The Minister of Justice's certainly done his part, Mr. Speaker, as this government has shown commitment and leadership when it comes to working with First Nations to find some of the solutions to children being exploited for sexual purposes here in Saskatchewan.

But I'll point out to the member, in our statement yesterday we said we will not reopen Oyate until all the recommendations of the advocate and the auditor have been put in place, Mr. Speaker. I indicated to the media yesterday that I'm comfortable in the direction we're going, that I'm confident we can come up with a solution and a plan, Mr. Speaker, and a true partnership, a collaborative partnership, Mr. Speaker.

But what is paramount to me is First Nations have got to be involved. And as far as I'm concerned and this party's concerned, Mr. Speaker, they will be involved.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Nutana says, move on and get over it. Move on and get over it, when we're dealing with children's lives on the street. Well, Mr. Speaker, we won't move on. We won't get over it. And he'll produce the documents — the minister of resources — to tell us what's going on on this issue and stop covering it up.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of

Community Resources.

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, when I see the crocodile tears of the member opposite I ask him the question . . . Although it's appropriate for them to ask the minister a question, I'm going to ask them a question.

Why is it, Mr. Speaker, several years ago that they all agreed to cut \$50 million from the Social Services budget, Mr. Speaker? And they all stood up beside their then leader saying, we're going to cut, Mr. Speaker. We're going to cut \$50 million from homeless children. We're going to cut from families, from support mechanisms for the most . . . the poorest of the poor in this province. They were proposing that. And now they get up and they say, oh, no, no, no, no, we care about that. Mr. Speaker, if they cared about it, they'd put their money where their mouth was as we did, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Progress of Green Strategy

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we hear much from this government about Saskatchewan being a green and prosperous economy. They like to talk a lot about being green. In last year's Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, they — this government — talked about a green strategy. They had held meetings across the province with many groups across the province, and they had this master plan. That was according to last year's Speech from the Throne.

Yet in this year's Speech from the Throne we don't hear anything about the green strategy, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister of the Environment . . . The Minister of the Environment said the other day in his ministerial statement that, he said, when the green strategy is finally completed there's going to be some great things. We're wondering when that green strategy, if it will ever see the light of day, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech this year builds on the campaign from 2003 where we talked about a green and prosperous economy. And, Mr. Speaker, we have been working around green issues right from that time and we're continuing to do that.

Mr. Speaker, we will end up with an overall green strategy which we will present to the public based on the work that was done by my predecessor through all of the consultations last year, through the work that we're doing this year. And, Mr. Speaker, it's going to be informed by the very good work by the member from Saskatoon and the work that he's doing around the energy conservation issues.

And, Mr. Speaker, what we will do is continue on the strong track that this party and this government has as we make

Saskatchewan an even greener place to live.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hart: — This is the same sort of answers we've been getting, and the people of this province have been getting about the green strategy for well over two years. There's a term in the environmental groups that they use to justify, describe when governments talk a lot about doing green things but really there's no action. They call it greenwashing, and that's what we get from this government. There's nothing but greenwashing. There's talk that someday we're going to do something, but there's no action.

We've seen a change in minister. We've seen changes in deputy ministers. And yet the minister says someday the people of this province are going to see the green strategy that will deal with things like waste management and multi-material stewardship programs. When is that minister going really to bring a plan forward, Mr. Speaker?

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, this is a very curious series of questions because, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has distributed a pamphlet in Saskatoon where they set out what the Sask Party is going to do for Saskatchewan. There's not a single discussion of any environmental issue in this summary. There's not a single thing in here that talks about the environment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know from the polling in the last two or three weeks that environment issues have moved right up behind health as a concern for Canadians. And I think, Mr. Speaker, they're starting to realize that they're down the wrong track. It's very clear at the federal government level that their colleagues have had great difficulty in responding to what Canadians see as very important about green issues. Mr. Speaker, we're going to do that as a government just as we've said all through the terms of our office here in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, the minister talked about polling, and I can assure that minister and those members that the polls tell us that we are on the right track, Mr. Speaker. The poll this summer in Weyburn-Big Muddy said we are on the right track, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, but what are the environmental groups saying about this government? They're saying they don't have a plan. That Saskatchewan on a per capita basis has the highest greenhouse gas emissions and this so-called green government has no plan to deal with any of that, Mr. Speaker.

When will they finally quit talking about it and actually do something?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, it's been quite a number of days in this legislature — in fact basically since I no longer had the Health portfolio — that I've had a few questions, so I really appreciate the chance to stand up and talk.

But, Mr. Speaker, when I've listened to the opposition it seems like their environmental strategy, their green strategy, is to trash talk the province and recycle ideas.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — To introduce guests, Mr. Speaker, leave to.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley would like to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly three guests that we have in your gallery. With us today we have members of the Real Voice for Choice, a group who is clearly standing up for the Canadian Wheat Board and for single-desk selling in the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Speaker, on the far side from me is Noreen Johns who is a farmer, women's activist from Allan, Saskatchewan, been very involved in community and in agriculture issues over many years. She sits on the farm support review committee and is now very active in the Real Voice for Choice.

With her, in the middle, is Earl Mickelson, and Earl is a farmer from Hagen. He is reeve of the RM [rural municipality] of Birch Hills and has worked tirelessly for the community there in trying to help get greater involvement. He has worked with the producer car group, the ethanol group, and he also is actively engaged with Real Voice for Choice.

On this end, Mr. Speaker, is Lonny McKague, known to many for his activity, both political activity and his involvement in the agriculture community and particularly, Mr. Speaker, his work with short-line rail. And he has shown incredible commitment within his community and within his area.

These folks are here today. We're going to be engaging in a Canadian Wheat Board debate. They are here to observe the

debate. They have a great compassion and passion for the farmers of Saskatchewan and want to see the single-desk selling of the wheat board retained. I'd ask all to welcome them here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Why is the member for Regina Lakeview on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — I'd like to ask leave to introduce some guests.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Lakeview.

Hon. Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure today that I introduce some guests who come from Japan and from within our province. They are all associated with Hitachi and some with SaskPower. They're working on various aspects of the clean coal project that SaskPower is interested in, as well as Hitachi's been a strong contributor to our whole wind initiative in southwest Saskatchewan. So, Mr. Speaker, I'll ask these people to stand up when they're introduced.

First is Mr. Takamitsu Nakazaki who is the chairman of Hitachi Canada Industries. Next one is Mr. Tom Kishchuk who is the president and CEO [chief executive officer] of Hitachi Canada Industries. Then Mr. Murray Daku who is the vice-president of Hitachi Canada Industries. Then Mr. Taiji Yoshida who is the general manager of international operations from Hitachi from Japan, and special welcome to Mr. Yoshida. Also there's Mr. Kaz Shinyashiki who is the vice-president of Marubeni Canada Ltd., and he's visiting us from Vancouver. And then finally we have Mr. Max Ball who is the manager of the SaskPower clean coal project. I ask all members to welcome them here to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — And why is the member for Humboldt on her feet?

Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister on behalf of the official opposition . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Leave is granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Chair recognizes the member for Humboldt.

Ms. Harpauer: — Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the minister and on behalf of the official opposition welcome the delegation from Hitachi from Japan here and to our Legislative Assembly. We're very grateful for the presence of Hitachi here in our province which has been here now since the

1980s. So welcome to the Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:30]

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment.

Investment in Education and Training

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise before the House this afternoon to share with you and with all members of the Assembly the efforts and the progress that we're making in Advanced Education and Employment to ensure we build the future for our young people right here.

Today our government announced an additional \$52.6 million for the education and training of Saskatchewan's young people. This is a major new commitment to address the tightening labour market as the province's economy continues to grow.

We are delivering on our promise to expand training opportunities to meet the demands of our province's vibrant and growing industries and businesses. This investment also helps Saskatchewan families today, providing our province's young people with even a brighter future and more opportunities to learn, grow, and prosper right here at home.

The investment consists of the following: \$13.3 million to create an additional 2,584 training opportunities in the area of health education, trades and skills, and basic education; \$4.7 million for training equipment; \$2 million to renovate and modernize training facilities; \$2 million for northern development; \$300,000 this year to establish the Saskatchewan Labour Market Commission; and \$30.3 million for post-secondary educational capital, including, Mr. Speaker, 2.8 million for the purchase of two mobile training labs to take training on the road to students and industries.

We're also very pleased to include new training opportunities that will be located at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology]. And, Mr. Speaker, regardless of what anybody says, we will work with First Nations and Métis people by ensuring that the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies and the Dumont Technical Institute, along with our regional colleges, have access to training dollars.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Now, Mr. Speaker, the best part of this plan is the emphasis on providing training to First Nations and Métis students in order that they can participate in Saskatchewan's growing labour market. And, Mr. Speaker, we will work with First Nations and Métis people to do that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Finally, Mr. Speaker, this 52.6 million

investment builds on our April 2006 commitment of \$15.5 million. And, Mr. Speaker, it is the greatest total investment ever in training in our province's history.

More important, Mr. Speaker, the 2,500 training opportunities created today provide Saskatchewan learners with more than 5,000 new, additional opportunities in this fiscal year, Mr. Speaker. This is good news for First Nations and Métis people. This is good news for our training institutions across the province. And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it's good news for Saskatchewan's young people.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, if imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, the Saskatchewan Party is embarrassed by the riches of attention we've had recently. As a result of this particular announcement, I can stand in this House proudly and say that, while I would offer my appreciation to the minister and her government for having moved in this area, they didn't do it on their own initiative, Mr. Speaker. They read this right out of the Enterprise Saskatchewan handbook that the official Leader of the Opposition introduced to the public of Saskatchewan some two years ago.

Mr. Speaker, the best part of this particular announcement today I think is the over 2,500 training seats that have been allocated to health education, trades and skills, and to basic education. I also believe that the moving of some of this money and some of these training seats into regional colleges and technical schools — whether they be First Nations or non-First Nations schools — is a very important step in the direction that this province needs to take in order to help secure the labour force for the future of this province.

Mr. Speaker, this province is in desperate need of trained workers today. And like so many other issues that have faced this government in the last 15 years of their tenure — in the last seven years that I've been in this House — they are late in coming to the realization of this particular issue.

Mr. Speaker, when the government followed the Saskatchewan Party plan to institute tax reductions, that we always said would benefit the economy, they came to it reluctantly. What they should have understood at that time is that when those incentives took hold and began to work in the economy, there would be an increased requirement for trained labour. Those two issues go hand in hand. As the economy grows, you need more workers. They took — reluctantly I might add — the steps to improve the economy, and now we're coming to the realization that the jobs that were created by those changing economic circumstances are seriously underpopulated right now, and we need more attention to training in this province to address that particular need.

So while I recognize clearly the need for this announcement and the additional training capacity that it will provide, I would say that the government has come to this realization late in the game. And it's unfortunate because we're going to have many

jobs now go unfilled until we can see the effect of this new training plan take hold in our province.

One additional thing I might add, Mr. Speaker, is that the \$30.3 million for post-secondary education capital spending is not delineated in this particular announcement. We do know that \$2.8 million will go to the purchase of these mobile training labs which I believe are already in the field and working very effectively. So this is money, as I understand it, for training labs that already exist.

The other money, we're not sure, Mr. Speaker, but we suspect a fair amount of the \$30 million will actually go the University of Regina's Laboratory Building which has seen serious cost overruns because of inadequate planning for that particular facility, and did not take into proper consideration the potential for serious escalation of construction costs.

So, Mr. Speaker, while we are quick to recognize the importance of additional training capacity in this province, and we appreciate the government taking this initiative, we do think that it's a little bit too late to have met the most important objectives of this need. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Community Resources.

Preventing the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth

Hon. Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to report today on the progress made by this government to prevent the sexual exploitation of children and youth.

My government's focus is to ensure the protection, safety, well-being of young people in need, Mr. Speaker, and we continue to use the recommendations of the all-party committee as a guide. To further help prevent the abuse of children and youth through sexual exploitation, my government is committing an additional \$350,000 annual funding to community-based organizations that serve these young people in Prince Albert and Regina and in Saskatoon. The total combined, Mr. Speaker, from existing and this new money is \$850,000 to outreach programs.

Mr. Speaker, these organizations deliver outreach services where the children are, on the street. As such these organizations are imperative for identifying vulnerable youth. Mr. Speaker, these organizations also provide youth and their families with services that help them find alternatives to street life.

Mr. Speaker, these youth are at an exceptionally high risk of sexually transmitted diseases and substance abuse. These young people are 120 times more likely to be a victim of violent crime than kids of the same age who are not involved in the street life.

The increased funding we announced yesterday is part of my government's commitment to deliver positive interventions in the lives of these vulnerable youth. This funding is in addition to the expansion of the provincial strategy on child sexual

exploitation announced by Saskatchewan Justice yesterday. Mr. Speaker, the combined commitment of both departments is over \$1 million annually.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of talk about Oyate in this Assembly and certainly in the media. Not long ago I committed to providing a decision about the future on Oyate. On September 14, the Children's Advocate suggested a 60-day time frame in which to establish a collaborative partnership with Oyate. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the end of the 60 days, and we announced our decision.

To clarify, Mr. Speaker, Oyate was a five-bed facility that has been closed since April of this year. Mr. Speaker, Oyate will remain closed until I am satisfied that enough progress has been made and that all of the auditor and Children's Advocate's recommendations have been met.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, and most significantly, we now have a new agreement with Ranch Ehrlo. And as we all know, Ranch Ehrlo is renowned for its child welfare services and programs. Mr. Speaker, Ranch Ehrlo will provide assessment and stabilization services, such as detoxification, to sexually exploited children and youth starting tomorrow. The ranch's expertise will help us ensure successful delivery of the services these children need and deserve, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to Oyate and our partnership with the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, there has been a sincere and hard effort to move forward on the recommendations of both the Provincial Auditor and Children's Advocate over the past 60 days. Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied that enough progress has been made to continue our partnership with the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council but with some significant changes. I want to repeat; Oyate will not reopen its doors until all the recommendations have been met and until I'm satisfied all the issues have been dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, if at any time there is non-compliance, we will not go forward. But today I have looked at the progress, and I'm satisfied with the changes to the way the services will be provided. This progress includes two departmental staff who are on the Oyate board; two additional department staff who'll be transitional care and financial consultants to the board; a program development committee made up of a First Nations elder, a youth who has experienced sexual exploitation, and a Ranch Ehrlo representative. This program development committee will provide ongoing guidance to the board.

And, Mr. Speaker, the most significant change is that Oyate will now focus only on transitional residential care. This care will assist the children and the youth to return to their families and communities once it is deemed safe — and I reiterate — once it is deemed safe. This is a very important role, Mr. Speaker. This service will ensure long-term plans are developed for these vulnerable children.

Over the past three years, Oyate has provided assessment and stabilization services as well as residential care. When Oyate reopens, Mr. Speaker, the facility will focus solely on follow-up care after their time at Ranch Ehrlo. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to mention that Ranch Ehrlo will lend their expertise to mentor and to support Oyate staff for delivering transitional

care.

As I have stated, Mr. Speaker, we recognize we were overreaching with Oyate. The problems are well documented and they continue to be given attention. We are addressing all of these issues, Mr. Speaker.

However, as we go forward, we will continue to work with First Nations. Let us not forget, Mr. Speaker, that the all-party committee on the prevention of sexually exploited children and youth, the all-party committee specifically recommended that tribal councils need to be full partners. Mr. Speaker, my government agrees with this recommendation, and I am committed to this approach for the benefit of these children.

Mr. Speaker, it has been suggested that the government's involvement with First Nations is politically motivated. Mr. Speaker, 80 per cent of the sexually exploited children and youth are Aboriginal. Mr. Speaker, First Nations involvement is absolutely essential if we're going to help these children. To deny this is to deny the lessons embedded in our history. Mr. Speaker, it is up to us to decide how to use these lessons to shape the future.

I am totally committed to First Nations people caring for First Nations children, Mr. Speaker. And I believe that the all-party recommendation was absolutely right. Mr. Speaker, First Nations partnership is — as I've said many times — critical for these children. Among other things, it ensures that we have a program that respects First Nations culture and values.

We are making good progress, Mr. Speaker, but there is much more to be done. I will not deny that. I want to continue the progress that we have made, with full effort, on the work that yet remains to be done.

Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that this is not easy work. These are not simple matters to address. Mr. Speaker, we need to find solutions to the terrible issues these children are facing. We need programs and services that work.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank absolutely everyone for their patience and their work as we progress to this point. The collective efforts of government, community partners, and First Nations will ensure that all Saskatchewan children and youth can feel safe, and more importantly, Mr. Speaker, be hopeful for the future. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:45]

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

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for the opportunity to respond. As the minister said, they were overreaching when they did this. Well, Mr. Speaker, that falls directly on the minister. He is in charge of the CBOs [community-based organization]. He is in charge of those children. We've stated many times in this House that he is the parent of those children. And to say that he's overreached and that this has gone on for three years without intervention admits

failure by that minister.

Mr. Speaker, this has never been an issue of First Nations. We have said many times in the House and in press conferences that we believe that the Aboriginal content in this program is critical. What we have stated, Mr. Speaker, is that the board and the current board of Oyate has not met its obligations, and thus so with all the documentation, the advocate's report, that this document or this issue should go back out to tender and allow other First Nations groups to bid on it.

When the minister says that there's progress and that there's agreement between themselves and Ranch Ehrlo and the other groups, and yet today in this very House he was asked three times to produce the documentation to show these agreements and, Mr. Speaker, not once did he produce those documents. Mr. Speaker, there were original agreements that were drawn up between the minister and the Oyate board.

Mr. Speaker, when I asked the deputy minister in the estimates there and said, name me one thing that the board has achieved. And, Mr. Speaker, what did he say? He said they built a house. Not one thing about the service delivery to the children that were in need. Not one thing about the issues that went on there with the criminal checks, with the beating up of a young lady, and all of those things. Not one thing did he say positively. Not one thing could he say, that they had met one piece, one iota of the original service agreement.

Now the minister wants to get up and tell us that there are new agreements but won't produce them in the House, Mr. Speaker, so how do we know what these agreements are?

Mr. Speaker, again we have that the minister is now putting staff on the board. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's three years too late. As a matter of fact, in the year 2005 there was only one board meeting between Oyate and DCRE [Department of Community Resources and Employment] — one meeting in a year, in a year that was a crisis mode. So what confidence, Mr. Speaker, do we have that this minister, the same minister with the same board is going to change anything?

Mr. Speaker, we would still like to see them go back out to tender, allow other Aboriginal groups who have the capability to do this to allow them to bid on it, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, why wasn't Ranch Ehrlo invited in, in the first place to bid? Why in Oyate did they not even have an elder on board since August? What confidence do we have without the agreements and seeing the agreements?

The minister wouldn't even say today if he's personally talked to the Children's Advocate on this. He said that his staff is. Well I would think that something as critical as this, as it has to deal with children . . . not only would he have talked to them. He would have met with them. He would have shown them agreements, got his concurrence, and the advocate would be here today saying he agrees. Haven't heard that, Mr. Speaker. All we've heard is there's an agreement between the minister that's covering this up and a board who didn't deliver.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure there are other Aboriginal groups — not only in this city and in this province — that could provide those service. And I call on the minister to do his job, protect the

children, and go out to tender and allow another Aboriginal group to provide the services needed. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 33 — The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Amendment Act, 2006

The Speaker: — Order please. Order. Order. Order please. The members will come to order. The Chair recognizes the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 33, An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Act be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Advanced Ed and Employment that Bill No. 33, The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Amendment Act, 2006 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 this Bill be read a second time? The Chair recognizes the minister.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 34 — The Labour Market Commission Act

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment.

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 34, An Act respecting the establishment of the Saskatchewan Labour Market Commission be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Advanced Education and Employment that Bill No. 34, The Labour Market Commission 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: — The motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Ms. Atkinson: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to stand on behalf of the government and table responses to written questions no. 41 through 50 inclusive.

The Speaker: — Responses to questions 41 through to 50 inclusive have been tabled.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Support for Canadian Wheat Board

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to speak in support of the Canadian Wheat Board and thousands of Saskatchewan farmers who support the single-desk system for marketing their grain. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my comments I will move a motion, seconded by the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Mr. Speaker, I want to preface my remarks with a statement made by the member from Kelvington-Wadena on October 31, 2006. In her remarks, Mr. Speaker, she mentioned that our opinion on the Canadian Wheat Board is not relevant in this legislature. That's recorded in *Hansard*, 114. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if she thinks the opinions of her constituents are relevant in this legislature. I wonder if she thinks that the whole area of agriculture and the agriculture economy is relevant in this legislature because, Mr. Speaker, the farmers of Saskatchewan are very, very concerned about the impact of this.

And I want to read into the record an article that was in the *Leader-Post* by one of the member's constituents. This was written by Mr. Leo Howse from Porcupine Plain. Mr. Howse starts his letter, and I quote:

How ironic that our soldiers are fighting and dying for democracy in Afghanistan, while in our own country with our Canadian Wheat Board (CWB), we appear to have lost our right to vote . . ."

Mr. Speaker, it speaks to the passion that people are feeling about this issue, people who are stretched to the limits, who are saying, how can we take another loss? And, Mr. Speaker, as a government in this province we must stand up for the farmers who in many cases have lost a voice.

And in this case, Mr. Speaker, it is about democracy. It is about calling our federal government to task, Mr. Speaker, so that they will live up to their own legal obligations and that before

they make any significant changes to the wheat board, they will hold a full plebiscite with a fair question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I ask the people of this province to judge whether or not this is the business of this legislature.

And I want to put one more piece into that judgment that I ask the people of this province to make, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in terms of the amount of money that the Canadian Wheat Board puts into farmers' hands and into the people of Saskatchewan hands with regard to the premiums that are made through the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Speaker, we're looking at somewhere between 150 — and I'll use the broadest range of figures that we get in terms of the analysis done by independent experts in this area, Mr. Speaker — from \$150 million to \$327 million. Mr. Speaker, if this farm economy loses that on an annual basis, somewhere in that range, who's going to backfill, Mr. Speaker?

I can tell you that is an issue for this province, which is already paying three times the provincial per capita average for farm and agriculture support and four times the federal per capita average. Mr. Speaker, it is an issue if this province and this farm economy were to lose another \$150 to \$327 million a year. Mr. Speaker, this is Saskatchewan legislative business. This is the business of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, she wasn't alone. The member from Melville-Saltcoats also had an opinion that was very similar, Mr. Speaker. What did he say? Well, Mr. Speaker, I quote: ". . . [we] should 'mind [our] . . . own business' on what is clearly a federal issue" — in the *Leader-Post*, October 25. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a federal-provincial issue. Agriculture is joint jurisdiction. And, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan New Democrats will always fight to make sure that our farmers have a voice at the national level and, Mr. Speaker, we will be open to hearing their voice at this level.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Mr. Speaker, this is about the fundamental principles of democracy. The Canadian Wheat Board Act, section 47.1 stipulates that it is the right of Prairie farmers to choose their marketing structures, and any proposed changes to the Canadian Wheat Board must be put to a farmer vote. Mr. Speaker, that is the democratic structure that we have in place. It is the legal structure and we expect our federal government to follow the law and not to run roughshod over democracy in this country and over the farmers' right to choose to market through this system, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, over the past few months farm groups, along with the NDP [New Democratic Party] governments of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, have been fighting to ensure that this very basic democratic right is retained. Where has the Sask Party been, Mr. Speaker? Where have they been? Well last year, Mr. Speaker, we had a motion in the legislature March 14, 2006, that read:

And further that this Assembly urge the federal government to allow the current democratic mechanisms in the Canadian Wheat Board Act to be the mechanisms by which the future of the Canadian Wheat Board as a single-desk seller is determined.

Well what did the member from Thunder Creek say, Mr. Speaker? He said and I quote, he said: "... a paragraph that they know we cannot and will not [discuss] in all conscience [cannot and will not] support," Mr. Speaker. Cannot and will not support the democratic mechanisms and the right of farmers to choose, Mr. Speaker. That, Mr. Speaker, is a tragedy and I think the farmers of Saskatchewan knowing, knowing that that's where the Sask Party sits on this, Mr. Speaker, they will not be happy; not be happy at all with their members.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite want to talk about their economic studies that conclude that the CWB [Canadian Wheat Board] really could have a choice in it, Mr. Speaker, that there could be a dual desk. Well, Mr. Speaker, there are no credible studies that support that. Even the Government of Alberta that has spent over \$1 million trying to get rid of the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Speaker, even their own study that they commissioned out of California shows that this simply could not work, Mr. Speaker. A small grain company — and it doesn't matter whether you call it CWB-II or some completely different name, Mr. Speaker — a small grain company with \$100 million base asset and going to producers for shares just isn't going to work.

[15:00]

How do we know that, Mr. Speaker? Well we've got a Saskatchewan Wheat Pool example. And that example shows us just how difficult it is even when you've got assets in province, even when you've got port access, Mr. Speaker, that they recognize that in order to survive in this very, very competitive world with very narrow margins that they have to consolidate, they have to amalgamate. And that, Mr. Speaker, is why they have chosen to put in a bid to try and buy Agricore United, Mr. Speaker, because they amongst many others recognize that this is a very, very difficult area to operate in. So what chance would some new, small CWB-II that has no assets either at port or in province ... how would they survive, Mr. Speaker? What utter nonsense.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province and the farmers of this province deserve to hear the straight goods, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, we as a government will work with the Manitoba government and we will work with those farmers who really want to make sure that the straight story is out, Mr. Speaker. And we will make sure that if the federal government does not stand up for democracy and if the federal government does not hold a plebiscite, Mr. Speaker, then the province of Saskatchewan and the province of Manitoba will make sure that they get that right, Mr. Speaker. We will hold a plebiscite. We will.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — And, Mr. Speaker, I think, I think that come next election, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite will find out from the farmers. They will find out during the next election that their rights, their democratic rights and their economic rights, Mr. Speaker, they will give them a message that those rights are not for sale, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there are so many, so many things that are in jeopardy in this discussion, Mr. Speaker. This, Mr. Speaker,

wheat board has provided significant benefit to the farmers of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the federal Conservatives have until this point clearly been attempting to run roughshod over their own legislation. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but they have been chopping away at the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Speaker, we have a tradition of elections that has really I think made a difference — having a farmer-elected board — and in that tradition, the elections do give opportunity for people who do not stand up for the single desk to run and to become a part of the board. Do you know what's happened, Mr. Speaker, to most of those who've done that? They've got in and they've got involved. Once they've got the factual information, Mr. Speaker, they become single-desk advocates. Once they've got knowledge, Mr. Speaker, once they have understanding of the system, they become single-desk advocates.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think there should be something that the members opposite learn from that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that there are cracks in the ranks of the federal government because there are members like Inky Mark of Manitoba who say that democratic principles are important, Mr. Speaker. And they are going to stand up against their own people. Why? They are going to stand up against that Conservative government because they believe that the democracy should be respected and that these farmers should have the right to vote on the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what has the federal government done? They have chipped away at the wheat board. They have set up closed meetings, Mr. Speaker — closed-door meetings — with only their special friends invited who want to get rid of the Canadian Wheat Board. They have now pulled together a task force, given them a very, very short period to work in. And that task force is supposed to come up with a plan that's going to take us into a positive future in that short period. What did they come up with? They came up with CWB-II, a grain company with no assets that won't survive, Mr. Speaker. And that's their plan.

Mr. Speaker, all they want to do is tear the guts out of the Canadian Wheat Board and allow the major companies to take over that whole business. That's all. And then, Mr. Speaker, what's going to happen? It'll always be a race to the bottom. Yes, you might get a good price today on the spot market but tomorrow you might be at the bottom of the line, Mr. Speaker. And that's the way it'll work in an open market system. Once in a while you'll win, but what'll happen to the majority? Mr. Speaker, they will not win.

Mr. Speaker, in this system people stand up for each other. Farmers stand up for each other. And by marketing through the Canadian Wheat Board all people get the benefit, Mr. Speaker. And that is vitally important.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — So what did they do, Mr. Speaker, as they chipped away at the board?

Well the elections have been in place for some time, Mr. Speaker. The system was laid out and part way into the system what did the federal government do? Changed the rules, changed the rules part way into the election. And really cut off about 16,000 potential voters, Mr. Speaker. Now that creates significant confusion. One more attempt to gerrymander and undermine the board and to undermine the democratic processes.

Mr. Speaker, what they did would be okay if it was done at the beginning of the process. We can't fault that in terms of setting some parameters, but not in the midst of an election where the materials have already gone out. Well maybe, Mr. Speaker, people will be able to correct that to some extent but some will be disenfranchised.

What else have they done as they've tried to chip away at the board and take a piece at a time, Mr. Speaker? Well we have a tradition also of appointed members who are appointed because of their expertise, that they can bring a particular expertise from their professional life on to the board. They can apply that to help make the board strong and effective.

What has the federal Conservative government done, Mr. Speaker? They've fired those people with expertise and they've appointed people, farmers, who in these cases are appointed because of their expertise is how to get rid of the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Speaker, how to undermine the Canadian Wheat Board. That's it. Well they carry into it some knowledge as farmers, Mr. Speaker. But their main claim to fame is they do not want single desk on the Canadian Wheat Board. One more attempt to try and chip away at a democratic structure that provides good economic benefit to the farmers of the Prairies, Mr. Speaker.

Well what else do they want to do? They've got a calculated attack here. They looked at all of the polling that's been done, the Ipsos Reed polling, and they say, well you know, on the board there is a bit of a weak sister. Barley's a little bit weaker, isn't it? And they figure well if we can hive off barley, then maybe we're going to have an advantage here. Maybe if we break off this piece, then we'll undermine the board a little more effectively.

So well maybe we'll call a vote on that. Now they're not going to tell us what the parameters might be on a plebiscite on barley. But, Mr. Speaker, are they going to include all of those people who for years have been doing very well selling feed barley, but not through the wheat board system? Will they get a vote, Mr. Speaker? Will the people who farm more land than others, will they get 2, 3, 4, 10 votes, Mr. Speaker?

We have a democratic structure here, Mr. Speaker. We have a tradition. We have a board that has provided benefit. These guys are doing everything they can to undermine it. And I can tell you that the governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan will not let that happen. We will do everything we can to make sure that farmers' democratic rights are honoured and respected, and that there is a fair question on a plebiscite, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — And, you know, you look at this

federal government and you say, you know . . . They come to power saying that they're there for the people, that they're populist and that they're there for the people and that they really want to make sure that there's good debate and discussion. But what do they do to the Canadian Wheat Board, people with knowledge?

Well let me just go back and say, Mr. Speaker, that when our current Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, was head of the National Citizens Coalition, what did he say about gag orders back then, Mr. Speaker? Here's what he said, and I quote:

The . . . [National Citizens Coalition] position is that such gag laws are unconstitutional and unenforceable. We intend to freely express our political opinions using our own resources. We encourage other organizations and individuals to do the same.

What does he do today as Prime Minister? Puts a gag order on the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Speaker. The same guy that said no, you shouldn't honour such gag laws. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a big insult to a society that is free and democratic. And I can tell you that the federal Conservatives have sunk to a new low as they have tried to undermine the democracy that farmers have enjoyed and we hope will continue to enjoy for decades.

Mr. Speaker, disenfranchising 16,000 voters, appointing people to the board only because they wanted to get rid of the board, Mr. Speaker, putting a gag order on — all of these things simply designed to try and undermine the wheat board to get it into weak shape, Mr. Speaker, and then they're try and hive it off a piece at a time.

Mr. Speaker, we will do everything we can to make sure the farmers have the opportunity to support the wheat board through their votes, through a fair and open vote.

Well I want to talk also, Mr. Speaker, about some of the other impacts that this potential loss of the board might have, Mr. Speaker. If the Canadian Wheat Board is destroyed — as this federal government seems determined to destroy it and the Government of Alberta seems determined to destroy it — it will be a significant blow to democracy. It will undermine democratic process, but it will also impact the investments that people of this province and the provinces next to us have made, Mr. Speaker.

Years past, farmers have been encouraged and invited to invest in agriculture, in value-add, and in their communities. Mr. Speaker, they have done so. Farmers have put together their hard-earned dollars and they have invested in inland terminals, Mr. Speaker. And the independent inland terminals, those that are not aligned with a major grain company, those that don't have a port, Mr. Speaker, those inland terminals will be in significant jeopardy with the loss of the wheat board because the wheat board has provided help to those operations by allocating cars, by marketing board grains, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, without the board there, they are in jeopardy. They know it. And the investment that these farmers have made in these inland terminals, the investment that their communities have made are in jeopardy.

Mr. Speaker, not only will they be in jeopardy on that front, but we have many farmers in the province of Saskatchewan and our neighbouring provinces who have been loading producer cars. Mr. Speaker, without an allocation of cars from the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Speaker, without their continual push to honour the rights of producer-car loaders, Mr. Speaker, these producer cars simply would not be operating at all effectively and people would be turning from them.

And, Mr. Speaker, in several of the opposition MLA's [Member of the Legislative Assembly] ridings, there are producer-car operations where communities have invested, again, significant, significant dollars not only to build infrastructure but also to build systems that work to make sure that farmers get a premium. Up to \$10 a tonne for producer-car loading . . . or up to \$10 — pardon me — a car for . . . \$10 for one car, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's very . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . \$10 per car, somebody's asking. I'd like to just make it clear — \$10 per car, Mr. Speaker, is a premium that those people are getting through producer-car loading.

And, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I think it's very, very important that we recognize that also by marketing through the board they are getting 10 to \$14 a premium, Mr. Speaker, 10 to \$14 per tonne. Now add the 10 to \$14 per tonne to the \$10 per car, Mr. Speaker. They're making significant premium by marketing through producer cars, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say that if the board is not there, that if the members opposite who want to get rid of the board and the Conservative members who want to get rid of the board have their way, Mr. Speaker, producer cars will not be able to operate effectively.

So if the producer cars aren't operating effectively, what happens next, Mr. Speaker? What happens next, Mr. Speaker? Well I'll tell you the next thing that happens, Mr. Speaker, is the short-line rail is in serious jeopardy. And if the short-line rail goes down, Mr. Speaker, significant, significant investment by farmers and by communities, Mr. Speaker, is gone — significant investment.

And I want to ask, Mr. Speaker, do the members opposite think that their farmers have so much money that they can afford to lose those premiums, Mr. Speaker? Do they think that this province has so much money that we can afford to lose 150 to \$327 million a year in returns that the Canadian Wheat Board provide for farmers of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? I don't think it can, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm sure, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that those members opposite would not want to be putting that kind of money in, Mr. Speaker, because they've already said over and over again, Mr. Speaker . . . and I would quote it, Mr. Speaker, but I don't have it in front of me. But they have said over and over again that they don't believe that this government should be investing in private business, Mr. Speaker. So they're not going to provide the support to the farmers who are in trouble. That's clear, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, we believe in democracy. We believe that the Canadian Wheat Board is providing a benefit, a significant benefit to farmers. We believe, Mr. Speaker, that when we listen to the companies that are buying through the Canadian Wheat Board, like Warburtons in Britain, and when we speak to

the companies in Japan that are buying Canadian wheat through the board, Mr. Speaker, we know that this board provides a tremendous service. And we know that those operations that are buying through the board don't want to see the board destroyed. That is clear, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[15:15]

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — And, Mr. Speaker, members opposite and the federal Conservatives like to say that the Ontario Wheat Board is an example that the board could survive, Mr. Speaker.

But I can tell you very clearly from the words, Mr. Speaker, the words of Dana Omland, who is the marketing manager for the Ontario Wheat Producers' Marketing Board — who grew up on a farm near Saskatoon — he says, Mr. Speaker, these things are very, very different. The marketing environment is completely different in Ontario than it is here, Mr. Speaker. And he is saying very clearly that the Canadian Wheat Board could not operate with that kind of environment, Mr. Speaker.

They can drive to where their sale is, Mr. Speaker. It would be the equivalent, it would be the equivalent, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to just respond. The member opposite is saying, are we inferior? Well, Mr. Speaker, it's a matter of geography, Mr. Speaker, where they can drive right to where they're selling their wheat, Mr. Speaker. We can't just . . . Every farmer can't get in their truck and drive to Vancouver and drive to the Thunder Bay port or to Churchill, Mr. Speaker, and move their grain that way. But they can drive to the end of sale in Ontario, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when that comes right from the people who are engaged in marketing in Ontario, who know their own system, Mr. Speaker, I think the members opposite should listen and stop talking about their fantasy ideas about how some other kind of board might work.

We have a board that works with and for farmers, and we want to retain that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Well, Mr. Speaker, clearly — clearly, Mr. Speaker — we want to see this board retained. We want to see it enhanced because, Mr. Speaker, it's not just about having the Canadian Wheat Board that provided so much support to those farmers when it was initiated early on.

I have letters, Mr. Speaker, from people in 1936 who talk about how important it was that this wheat board came into place and that they were no longer being gouged by the grain companies, Mr. Speaker — no longer being gouged by the grain companies. And so, Mr. Speaker, when I look at that in 1936, I say it was good for those people at that time.

It's evolved. It's evolved significantly since that time. And, Mr. Speaker, today we not only have a Canadian Wheat Board that is led by farmer elected directors, Mr. Speaker, but we have a Canadian Wheat Board that is looking far into the future. And they've put together their harvesting opportunities document,

Mr. Speaker, a document that really looks at how to take advantage in this very challenging area of marketing grain in and around the world, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, with that kind of direction, that kind of commitment that we're getting from the farmer-elected board, Mr. Speaker, it will only, it will only provide better service and better return to farmers.

I want to make one more comparison, Mr. Speaker, and that is to look at the Canadian Wheat Board structure and its goal. The Canadian Wheat Board has as its stated goal to provide the biggest return possible to the farmers, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you look at what all of the other companies, whether they are private or public companies, what they're engaged in is trying to get the biggest and the best return to their shareholder or to their owner, Mr. Speaker. Not to the primary producer, not to the primary producer, but to their shareholders, Mr. Speaker.

So here we have market power in the hands of a farmer elected board. And that market power is enabling them to bring a significant return to the farmers of these Prairie provinces, Mr. Speaker. Nobody, nobody wants to see that destroyed if they care about the future of agriculture in these Prairie provinces. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move this following motion, seconded by the member from Saskatchewan Rivers:

That this Assembly recognize the Prairie Producer Coalition's support for rights of producers, as legislated by the Canadian Wheat Board Act, and the resolution passed by 85 per cent of the delegates at SARM 2006 annual convention calling for the federal government to continue its financial support of government guarantees and single-desk selling of the Canadian Wheat Board;

Further that this Assembly call upon the federal Conservative government to respect current federal legislation and to honour the democratic process by allowing all producers of wheat, barley, and durum the right to affirm or deny any proposed change to the Canadian Wheat Board through a producer plebiscite as stipulated in the Canadian Wheat Board Act, section 47.1.

I so move, seconded by the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley and seconded by the member for Saskatchewan Rivers:

That this Assembly recognize the Prairie Producer Coalition's support for rights of producers, as legislated by the Canadian Wheat Board Act, and the resolution passed by 85 per cent of the delegates at SARM 2006 annual convention calling for the federal government to continue

its financial support of government guarantees and single-desk selling of the Canadian Wheat Board;

Further that this Assembly call upon the federal Conservative government to respect current federal legislation and to honour the democratic process by allowing all producers of wheat, barley, and durum the right to affirm or deny any proposed change to the Canadian Wheat Board through the producer plebiscite as stipulated in the Canadian Wheat Board Act, section 47.1.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? The Chair recognizes the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to first of all, Mr. Speaker, say a few words on a personal level. Mr. Speaker, five years ago, Mr. Speaker, five years ago after the death of my father, five years ago after the death of my father, we went through his belongings and through his papers and books. And we found an interesting publication. What we found was a document, a pamphlet, that was put out by the Canadian Wheat Board in 1985 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Canadian Wheat Board.

And what I found particularly interesting in this pamphlet, Mr. Speaker, was the very last page because on the last page this pamphlet spells out the Canadian Wheat Board's view of what was to happen in the future. Now remember, Mr. Speaker, that this was written in 1985. And I'll read the last paragraph:

While the operations of the Board have undergone many changes in 50 years, some things have not changed. These are the basics of the Board approach — sharing of market through the pooling system, fair allocation of delivery opportunity, and maintaining market clout through single-desk selling. The Board's future will depend on Prairie farmers not losing sight of these basics, some of which are even more important than 50 years ago. In a grain world dominated by multinational companies far larger than the Wheat Board, massive government subsidies in competing countries, and centralized government and private purchasing agencies, Prairie farmers can hardly afford to give up any market clout.

Written in 1985.

Today we are still in a world, in a grain world dominated by multinational companies far larger than the wheat board. We still have to deal with massive government subsidies in competing countries, particularly the US [United States] and the EU [European Union]. And today more than ever, just as it was in 1935 and just as it has stated in this 1985 publication on its 50th anniversary, "Prairie farmers can hardly afford to give up any market clout."

So, Mr. Speaker, I've listened to a great deal of what I would describe as memory loss combined with historical revisionism from the other side of this House, and so I thought it might be useful to revisit history and just talk about why the wheat board was created in the first place.

Ironically, Mr. Speaker, it was a Conservative prime minister who created the wheat board in 1935. In the late 1920s there were three provincial wheat pools and their wheat was marketed through a joint selling agency, the Canadian Co-operative Wheat Producers Ltd. But in 1929 we know what happened. All three wheat pools and their central selling agency got hit by the stock market crash. As grain prices plummeted, they turned to provincial governments for financial backing and these governments in turn looked to the national government for a guarantee on initial payments. And you'll remember, Mr. Speaker, this was the government of the infamous R.B. Bennett, the namesake of the Bennett buggy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as a Conservative, the last thing R.B. Bennett wanted to do was get in the way of the grain traders. But the situation was so bad, Mr. Speaker, that Bennett had to do something. So he guaranteed initial payments for grain, which of course infuriated the private traders. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, a friend of his — a guy named John McFarland — was appointed to head up the central selling agency for the pools, and he essentially became a policy adviser to Bennett.

As the Depression deepened and as our ancestors struggled to survive out here in Saskatchewan, in the eyes of the grain traders down east the futures market was operating, and I quote: "on the whole smoothly under the abnormal strains of the past three or four years." Even R.B. Bennett and his friend John McFarland were disgusted by the greed of these traders. In a letter to Bennett, McFarland said the futures market, and I quote:

... has neither functioned continuously nor smoothly. The only way it functioned smoothly is when it's going down. Most things run pretty well downhill and it is one of them.

The point is, Mr. Speaker, that with farmers in the survival mode in those years, even the Conservative government of the day recognized that the open market was not operating in the interests of farmers and that government had to do something to stabilize things. So in 1935 Bennett introduced legislation for a government marketing board, a compulsory wheat board actually, which people tend to forget. But opposition from the grain traders kicked in and the wheat board actually started off as a voluntary board with a guaranteed initial price, and we all know it became a single-desk board under the Liberals in 1943.

So what's the history lesson, Mr. Speaker? Well today, Mr. Speaker, over 60 years later farmers are once again in a survival mode and once again we have a Conservative government in Ottawa. But rather than protecting farmers from the open market, they intend to leave farmers at the mercy of the open market. Rather than stabilizing the prices farmers receive, they intend to destabilize the grain prices farmers presently receive through the Canadian Wheat Board.

Today rather than allow farmers the market power of the Canadian Wheat Board, these right wing ideologues intend to take away the last vestige of market power that farmers have and they are supported wholeheartedly by their Conservative cousins opposite.

It's very clear where the Saskatchewan Party stands. The member from Thunder Creek has on March 14, 2006 referred to

the "value-added killing effect" of the wheat board. On April 30, '04 he said the wheat board suffocates . . . "the wheat board suffocates the western prairies". The member from Humboldt has on June 6, 2000 referred to the wheat board as having a "stranglehold" on farmers. And the member from Rosetown, April 27, 2000 has talked about how the Canadian Wheat Board single desk has put, quote, "shackles on farmers".

Shackles, strangleholds, suffocating, value-added killing effect. Mr. Speaker, I'm betting that's the language that was used by those grain traders in the 1930s in their fight against market power for farmers.

What we have in the Saskatchewan Party is a denial of history, a denial of the lessons our grandparents learned the hard way. It's unbelievably short-sighted. The idea that farmers can compete and survive individually in today's open market is unbelievably naive.

I have here a column from *The Western Producer*, February 9, 2006 written by Wendy Holm. She says, and I quote:

Welcome to the 1920s. We've been here before. Those who fail to understand the lessons of history are bound to repeat them. Without political leaders prepared to listen to, understand and defend the economic and trade interests of Canada's farmers, we are all sitting ducks.

And she ends by saying:

Dual desk selling is code for destroying the market power of Canadian grain farmers and with it the economic future of Western Canada's farm communities. If we don't stand for something, we'll fall for anything. Think about it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — So let's be perfectly clear about one thing, Mr. Speaker, ending the single-desk marketing power of the wheat board will end the wheat board. So, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about what happens if the Canadian Wheat Board loses this single-desk power.

Mr. Speaker, even the most conservative of estimates indicate that Saskatchewan farmers stand to lose between 3 and \$400 million a year if the Canadian Wheat Board loses its single-desk mandate. And this matters, this matters to every Saskatchewan citizen. With high inputs, freight rates, trade injury, and low commodity prices — all of this compounded by weather — farmers have had to rely on farm support programs that we here in Saskatchewan pay at a level three to four times greater than the per capita average across this country.

[15:30]

If the single desk goes, you can add another 3 to 400 million burden that we will all carry here in Saskatchewan, farmers and non-farmers alike. That's why when the member from Melville-Saltcoats says the Minister of Agriculture should, quote, "mind his own business," I say to him and all members opposite that the fate of the Canadian Wheat Board most certainly is the business — not only of our provincial Minister of Agriculture — it is the business of every member of this

Assembly and of every citizen of this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — Mr. Speaker, there is the simple little concept that right wing thinkers have always had trouble with, and it's called democracy — the idea that people collectively and democratically run the economy, that the economy shouldn't run people. The federal government — supported of course by big grain companies, the railways, grain traders — have done everything they can to subvert the right of farmers to decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Speaker, on July 27 my wife and I celebrated our wedding anniversary by attending a rally in support of the Canadian Wheat Board. We did this in honour of my father and hers. Both had been teenagers during the Depression years. Both had farmed all their lives. Both were students of history. And both passed their lessons on to us before leaving this world.

At the rally we listened to farm leaders from across Canada: from the National Farmers Union; the Canadian Organic Certification Co-op; Keystone Agricultural Producers from Manitoba; Wild Rose Agricultural Producers from Alberta; Battle River Producer Car Group; Mission Terminal Incorporated; Canadian Federation of Agriculture; as well as political supporters such as our Minister of Agriculture and Manitoba's as well. But the crowd was overwhelmingly made up of farmers — 250 in all.

Across the street in a closed-door meeting was the federal Ag minister and his selected guests. We are told about 25 in all — a few farmers and farm group reps, perhaps a dozen in all, as well as reps from the ... representatives from the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange, Grain Vision, Canadian Chamber of Commerce, CFIB[Canadian Federation of Independent Business], and so on — most of them strong opponents of the single desk.

The contrast in these two meetings speaks for itself — a public meeting held for the Canadian Wheat Board; a private, taxpayer-funded meeting against. Two hundred and fifty, or ten times as many people at the pro wheat board rally. And this set the tone for the events to follow which the Minister of Agriculture has alluded to — a hand-picked task force, a ghost-writing letter campaign, the muzzling of the Canadian Wheat Board from promoting its own single desk. And in the middle of the election for new directors of the Canadian Wheat Board, the Minister Strahl removed 16,000 of the 45,000 farmers from the voting list. The disenfranchisement of those voters comes at a cost in dollars as well as democracy.

And now we hear that a plebiscite will be held on the marketing of barley early in the new year but only as part of a four-stage consultation process to end the single-desk power of the CWB. Mr. Speaker, as the confusion begins to build, this is all about democracy, the right of farmers on whether or not they want their wheat board to have single-desk powers. This is the legislated responsibility of the wheat board Act. It is clear that the federal Conservative government is intent at destroying the wheat board, and it won't allow democracy. It won't allow farmers to get in the way.

Mr. Speaker, remember the Crow. Remember the promises that were made during the Crow rate — lower freight rates, better service. Well every farmer knows how empty those promises were. The removal of the Crow rate costs our farmers \$500 million a year. Mr. Speaker, when they killed the Crow rate in 1995, many old-timers, including my parents, warned us that the wheat board would be next. So here we are. And I do remember the motto at that time — save the Crow.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a time for all citizens, rural and urban, to save the wheat board. And so, Mr. Speaker, in coffee shops, kitchens, and on the Net, the debate builds. Individuals and groups have joined together across political lines — the Prairie Producer Coalition, Real Voice for Choice — to mobilize and advocate for farmers. And so, Mr. Speaker, it's good that we have this debate here in this Assembly. Very shortly we will be holding a vote on this motion, and I think this vote today could be not only predictable but historic.

The members on this side of the House will stand in support of the single-desk marketing power of the Canadian Wheat Board and the right of farmers to decide its future. If those members stand to vote against this motion or water it down, they will be standing for an end to the Canadian Wheat Board and the service it has provided our farmers for over 60 years. And this will be remembered by the people of this province in the next provincial election. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — Mr. Speaker, I want to relate to you some of the comments that are being made by farmers as they discuss and debate this issue of the wheat board. And so I want to read a few pieces from *The Western Producer* and they're all from November 2. This is from Gordon Taylor of Landis. In his letter to the editor of *The Western Producer* he says, and I quote:

As farmers we better do some thinking on who wants to get rid of the CWB and who is going to benefit from its demise. Are these multinational grain companies going to send any profit they make from selling our grain back to us? Hmm, I rather doubt it.

We also better think about what we want. If the CWB goes, under the free trade agreement, if any if these companies think they have lost money competing with the CWB, they can sue the Canadian government for their losses.

As a producer, you think you are a big wheel and can sell your grain on the open world market and come out on top. Just remember what dogs do to wheels.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Borgerson: — Another letter, Mr. Speaker. This is from Allan Fritzke, Maple Creek, Saskatchewan. He says:

Let's just hand it over to American firms such as Cargill, ConAgra, Louis Dreyfus and select others who compete to control world trade in this commodity. They will do a much better job and the government won't have the financial millstone of the ... [Canadian Wheat Board]

around its neck.

It was interesting to note how share prices of elevator companies increased when the Conservatives won the election. Pure speculation based on getting rid of the . . . [Canadian Wheat Board]. Investors know that the grain companies will pocket the additional money, which is now being returned to the farmers by the . . . [Canadian Wheat Board].

So, Mr. Speaker, a correction on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture to comments he made earlier. His correction is that \$900 per car is the amount that he was referring to when he talked about the . . . or \$10 a tonne which is what he was referring to in his speech, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll close, Mr. Speaker, with this quote from *The Western Producer*. This is from Rudy Ammeter, Headingley, Manitoba.

All the changes we've seen in the last 10 or 15 years such as rail and elevator rationalization, loss of the Crow Rate and the two price system for wheat were supposed to usher in a brave new world in which competing countries would end all price-distorting subsidies and farmers' pockets would be filled as never before.

I'm still waiting. And the same groups that pushed for all these changes are now pushing for the elimination of the CWB.

And he ends this letter by saying:

I have voted Conservative for most of my life. Next time will be different.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time to be able to talk on the motion that we have before us today on the debate about the Canadian Wheat Board. And by the way it's a very controversial debate out there. Many of my supporters are one way. Many of my supporters are the other way. And I feel it's really not. . . When I made the comments that the minister spoke about when I said, and I will reiterate what I said before, is that they probably should mind their business and deal with things that fall under their jurisdiction. I stand behind those comments again today, Mr. Speaker.

There is so many areas that this provincial government could help Saskatchewan farmers and are totally trying to deflect the issue away from that by causing the wheat board debate to be even bigger than it actually needs be.

Mr. Speaker, this all comes down to the farmers of Saskatchewan — farmers which I may mention that are represented by just about every member on this side of the House which seems completely odd compared to what the

minister's comments are — and the federal government, Mr. Speaker. It boils down to those two things, the federal government and farmers of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that this government is famous for trying to pick winners and losers but this is the height of hypocrisy on the part of that government when it tries to play one farmer against the other in the province of Saskatchewan. In fact, Mr. Speaker, when it tries to play the livelihood of one farmer against the other it should not even be thought about by that government of the day.

Mr. Speaker, as you probably will expect that as I cannot support the motion and I want to tell you why. The first part of the motion says that this Assembly recognize the Prairie Producers Coalition supports the right of producers as legislated by the Canadian Wheat Board Act and, Mr. Speaker, a resolution passed by 85 per cent of delegates at the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] 2006 Annual Convention.

Well speak about living in the past. The minister neglected to tell everyone in this House, and every farmer in the province who already knows this, that SARM has taken a different position. They know how controversial this issue is.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, at this fall's convention SARM has taken a different direction because they have farmers they know also are on both sides of this issue. And they have come to the realization that they, as a farm lobby group and a leader group in this province, should leave it up to the farmers of Saskatchewan and the federal government.

But it doesn't stop there, Mr. Speaker. This motion goes on to talk about single-desk selling and not giving farmers of this province a choice to sell their product. I might add by the way that they put the inputs into, that they put the fertilizer and the chemical, taxes, everything that's created . . . it takes to create that product is theirs. But yet when it comes time to sell that product, what the NDP government is saying, you don't have the right to who you can sell that to. You don't have the right to say what you would like for that or hold that product until you get what you want. You are obligated to sell it under the Canadian Wheat Board.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to explain a little bit how that works for a lot of the urban public I'm sure that does not understand this debate. Because what happens is, when you have wheat in the province of Saskatchewan under the Canadian Wheat Board, you sign a contract for how many bushels of wheat you have. But you are at the whim of the Canadian Wheat Board, number one, how much of that product that you grow in that year that they will sell for you. There's no guarantee that you can sell all of your crop. If they decide they're . . . only can move X number of bushels, you could be left . . . A year like this is a good example, where there's piles of grain on the ground all over this province and may spoil if the Canadian Wheat Board cannot move that grain. But you do not have the right to move it at a lower price to somebody else. That right is taken away from you by the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Speaker, farmers are only asking . . . And the minister, I might add, talked about democracy today. Where is democracy when one farmer can tell another farmer how he can market his product?

I would like to talk to the members of urban public Saskatchewan today. If they want to sell their house in downtown Regina, how would they like it if the rules were like this? SPMC [Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation] will control how you sell your house. They not only will control who you sell it to, they will control how much you get for it. But they also will control . . . we may sell the upstairs this year, the downstairs next year, and the basement the year following.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — And, Mr. Speaker, I know that's an exaggeration of what's going on here. But that's exactly how farmers feel out there, that would like the choice to market the grain on their own behalf.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've had a lot of calls on this — I'm sure the Agriculture minister has — on both sides of the issue. I think in my constituency it probably works out about 50/50 — 50 would like to keep the monopoly of the Canadian Wheat Board; 50 per cent want the choice to market their grain on their own behalf and have that freedom and that democratic right to do so.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the younger farmers in the province of Saskatchewan. A lot of the calls that I've received are from younger farmers who aren't as technically challenged as I am, who are on the Internet every day. They're looking at markets. They market their canola. They market their lentils. They market their peas. They market canary seed. There's no end to the markets that they tap into out there on the Internet and other ways, other avenues. We have brokers all over the province helping them sell those products. And they get to choose when they sell that product and for what price. Now we all know grain prices have been depressed. And they certainly don't always get the price that they need to break even, but at least they get to choose the highest price they feel they can possibly get. That stops when you have to sell your wheat to the wheat board, Mr. Speaker.

[15:45]

Mr. Speaker, we've talked on a number of occasions about the prices and how depressed prices are. I want to give you an example today. The member for Moosomin did some checking for me today at one of his local elevators. And the prices today on number 1 feed wheat on the open market again, Mr. Speaker, is \$3.45 a bushel. Feed wheat under the Canadian Wheat Board today is 87 cents a bushel. Now you compare \$3.45 on the open market, 87 cents under the wheat board, plus a final payment — should there be a final payment — but you wait for that, Mr. Speaker.

If that's not a good enough comparison, Mr. Speaker, let's take a look at barley prices on the open market today. Today you can realize 2.50 a bushel out of feed barley; under the wheat board, 40 cents a bushel. Mr. Speaker, if we were talking 10 cents a bushel difference, there would probably be a good argument because the final payment would probably come out, counteract

that — in fact would probably be more. But what we're talking to here today is \$2.10 a bushel for feed barley. Do you think or any other farmer in this province think that the Canadian Wheat Board is going to come out with a payment of \$2.10? I have farmed for a number of years, Mr. Speaker, and in my wildest dreams I have never seen a payment like that for feed barley.

Mr. Speaker, number 1 thirteen five protein wheat today is 2.65 a bushel under the Canadian Wheat Board. Go back to what open market feed wheat is — it's 3.45 a bushel. And what I am trying to put through to you today, Mr. Speaker, and to this legislature is all farmers are asking out there — probably half; we don't know what the numbers would be — is a choice to make decisions that affect their families, affect their farms, affect their livelihood out there, to make that choice for themselves. And when the minister keeps talking about democracy on a number of occasions in his speech, where does democracy start and stop when it comes to be able to sell your own products, Mr. Speaker?

A couple of letters that I've received I thought were somewhat interesting, and the members opposite might take great interest in this. It actually comes from a member of the ACRE [action committee on the rural economy] committee who was appointed by that government. And I know the Deputy Premier will take great notice in this letter. And I'd like to read it into the record; it'll only take a minute or two, Mr. Speaker. And I quote:

Dear Mr. Wartman:

After listening . . . and watching your response to the federal government's decision to introduce marketing choice for wheat and barley farmers, I must express my profound disappointment.

As an active member of the ACRE committee for six years and chairperson . . .

Get this:

. . . chairperson of the ACRE Grains and Oilseeds subcommittee, I had the impression that your government was willing to engage in thoughtful discussion and innovative solutions regarding issues important to rural people.

This is a farmer from rural Saskatchewan.

I now have serious concerns regarding the lack of leadership and commitment that this government and you are demonstrating on the very important issue of marketing choice for wheat and barley farmers and indeed the future of primary grain producers in this province.

I would ask, Mr. Wartman, given the very serious economic circumstances that Saskatchewan grain farm families find themselves in, how can you so . . . [officially] defend the Canadian Wheat Board Marketing system and not acknowledge that it might bear some responsibility for the ongoing years of negative net farm income for grain farmers.

I would also ask how you can seriously defend the outrageously distorted numbers claimed by the defenders of single desk marketing with regard to the benefit that farmers receive from the ... [Canadian Wheat Board] Marketing system.

What are the numbers today? He goes on to say:

600 million, 1 billion? [He said] These numbers, factual or not [who knows; we have no idea where they came from] have no relevance at the farm gate. If you seriously believe that they do, I must ask you: Where is the money?

And he's talking about at the farm gate. This letter goes on for the number of points here, Mr. Speaker.

You and your government are also calling for a farmer vote on whether or not farmers support the single desk marketing of the ... [Canadian Wheat Board]. Surely you know that the farming community is torn on this issue. A vote would solve nothing. It would not diminish the resolve of farmers such as myself to be free to market wheat and barley to the buyer of our choice. It could potentially destroy any opportunity to ... [meaningful] restructure the grain marketing system to accommodate the needs of all grain farmers. Furthermore a vote would not create one dime of new investment in the grain industry.

And this letter goes on and on. And I thought the members opposite would take great heed in what this is saying because this is a man that they felt respectable enough to put on the ACRE committee, who they say — and I agree with — has done a good job on the ACRE committee. They better pay attention to what one of their own appointments are saying.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, the minister talked in his speech today about the three ... and I think both members did, about the 3 to \$400 million that the Canadian Wheat Board advantage is because we sell our grain through the Canadian Wheat Board. Mr. Speaker, I have no idea where that number comes from. I would like them to produce something that would show me where that 300 and 400 to 500 ... I've heard 600 million. That letter before me talked about this mythical number that comes out of the NDP telling us the Canadian Wheat Board is getting us more money. They may be, Mr. Speaker.

I've sold grain under the wheat board. I've sold feed barley to off-market. But I never knew whether the Canadian Wheat Board was getting us the best bang for the buck because they never competed for my grain. I was told who I could sell it to and I was actually told — when it come to wheat — when I could sell it, Mr. Speaker. That's the way our system today works. And what farmers out there are asking, the ones that want choice, they want that option to be able to sell that grain on their own behalf.

Mr. Speaker, we talked before about the NDP government living in the past. And I'd like to just read a couple of comments here about the Weyburn Inland Terminal. And I think the member from Nutana would find this very interesting.

And I'm going to quote, Mr. Speaker. In 1974, Roy Atkinson — a Landis area farmer and National Farmer's Union President from '69 to '78 — referred to the proposed Weyburn Inland Terminal as an albatross around the existing systems. Well that's what he felt at that time, Mr. Speaker.

How successful is the Weyburn Inland Terminal? I would suggest to you today that that is one of the most successful group of farmers in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, why they are successful is we got a group of farmers that went out and did it on their own, built that Weyburn Inland Terminal. And it's been a terrific success, and they make a profit for the farmers of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Bjornerud: — So, Mr. Speaker, I guess when the minister says that their ... you know, he talks about 1936, 1935 when the Wheat Board came into existence. I don't think anybody in this province would disagree there was a day that the Canadian Wheat Board did a great job for the farmers of Saskatchewan. They were needed. But today, Mr. Speaker, I believe things have changed and I believe farmers should have the choice to do as they so wish.

Mr. Speaker, we could go on here and I know there's a number of other speakers that want to talk today. But I think, when it comes down to ... The minister talked about respect for farmers out there. Well I think respect works both ways. You don't just have to ... There's a large group in the province of Saskatchewan would like to keep the monopoly on the Canadian Wheat Board and I have many of those supporters in my constituency. In fact some of my supporters feel that way.

But on the other hand, I think we owe the respect to the other half — I believe it's half — of the farmers in Saskatchewan to have the right to make that choice to market their grain how they want. And again, I go back to ... Mr. Speaker, before I take my seat ... And I will be voting against this motion.

But what we're asking is, you let the federal government and the farmers of Saskatchewan deal with this issue. I don't think it's fitting that this NDP government spend provincial taxpayers' dollars to pick winners and losers, to lobby on behalf of one side or the other. Mr. Speaker, let the farmers of this province and the federal government decide the outcome of this issue.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Chair recognizes the member for Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the heckles from the ideologues on the other side who remind me that the last time that I stood and spoke on an agriculture issue was the eve of my mother's funeral. And I reminded them at that time that I grew up on a farm. My daughter farms. I have relatives that farm in various places around this province. Does that make me an expert farmer? No, but it sure gives me trust that farmers, given the vote as the law requires, that those farmers will make the right choice. Those farmers have the right. They have the right by law. It's you

ideologues and your federal cousins . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I would just remind the member to make his remarks through the Chair.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this legislature we've moved a motion that supports the rights of producers as legislated by the Canadian Wheat Board Act, and we further call upon the federal Conservative government to respect current federal legislation and to honour the democratic process by allowing all producers of wheat, barley, and durum the right to affirm or deny any proposed changes to the Canadian Wheat Board through producer plebiscites as stipulated in the Canadian Wheat Board Act, section 47(1).

Mr. Speaker, that's what this debate is about. Let there be no mistake.

Sure we can have our opinions about whether the wheat board puts more money in the pockets of farmers or not, and that's a good debate to have, and I intend to add a little bit to that debate myself. But the fundamental question is, why don't the Conservatives and why don't the Saskatchewan Party trust farmers on their own wheat board? Let farmers have the vote. Why are they so determined not to honour the legislation? Why are they so determined, Mr. Speaker, not to follow the law?

You know, I find it ironic. Here it is; it's — what? — November 15th. Here we are four days after Remembrance Day, Mr. Speaker, four short days after Remembrance Day. And I know I attended — as did, I assume, virtually every member in the Assembly — attended a Remembrance Day ceremony. And what we honoured was those brave veterans that fought for — what? — for choice, for democratic freedoms, a right to be wrong occasionally or a right to be right, but a right to have a say. And many of those farmers . . . or many of those veterans, pardon me, Mr. Speaker, were farmers. They fought for the right to decide, and they're fighting for the right to follow the law. My goodness. What has this country come to when farmers have to fight to have the law obeyed so they can have a democratic vote? It's unbelievably absurd.

I am very proud of the comments, Madam Speaker, that the Minister of Agriculture made. I'm delighted that he affirmed that Saskatchewan and Manitoba will honour farmers' right to vote if the federal government does not. And I hope it doesn't come to that. I hope that the federal government follows its own legislation and allows farmers that choice.

I was also honoured to follow the hon. member . . .

An Hon. Member: — Saskatchewan Rivers.

Mr. Trew: — From Saskatchewan Rivers, thank you, and his very, very thoughtful remarks. And I really appreciated his remarks about the clout, the market clout that the Canadian Wheat Board provides to farmers. And I very much appreciated all of his speech, but that really stuck with me.

You know, Madam Speaker, in the trading world, bigger is better. That's the way corporations operate; bigger is better. The auto industry, all my lifetime, has gotten bigger and bigger and bigger, the smaller manufacturers falling by the wayside. And

you either get bigger or you disappear. Ask AMC [American Motors Corporation]. Chrysler bought out AMC. Ask any number of other auto companies that are now part of General Motors or Ford or Chrysler or others, I might say . . . I should say DaimlerChrysler.

Look at the retailers, the big boxes. Bigger is better. You hear stories, you read about for instance . . . Not to pick on Wal-Mart but it's something they're very good at. They will demand a certain quality, and they negotiate a very good price. For who? For Wal-Mart. Why? Because Wal-Mart's job is to make as much money as it can. For who? Wal-Mart. Bigger is better. I'm not trying to . . . Wal-Mart's very good at what they do.

What do the oil companies do? What's their job? Is it to look after you or me? No. Their job is to maximize profits for their shareholders, Madam Speaker.

And the Canadian Wheat Board is a bastion of support for Saskatchewan and Canadian farmers. Their mandate is to maximize the return to farmers, and they have done it consistently, year in, year out. And part of how they do it . . . There's many things they do, Madam Speaker, but one of the things the Canadian Wheat Board does, even though Canada controls only 18 per cent of the world trade of wheat, 18 per cent . . . But what they're able to do that an individual farmer can't do is the Canadian Wheat Board can sit out a cold market. They can sit it out. They can wait it out. And we have things like cash advance and there's other things. Farmers can still access some initial money.

But they'll sit out a cold market, and then enter it when there's a premium, and that premium is shared by all Canadian farmers who deliver through the Canadian Wheat Board. It's a wonderful system, but it is one that allows farmers, Madam Speaker, to do what they do best, that is to farm the land, to grow the crops, to manage their farms always having one eye on market and what's coming up next year and so on. But they don't have to watch the market hour by hour, day by day in case there's a sudden jump up or down in the price of wheat or barley. The Canadian Wheat Board provides that, that wonderful ability for farmers to do what they do best.

[16:00]

If you're looking for some sort of philosophical proof as to the effectiveness of the Canadian Wheat Board, Madam Speaker, I'd simply remind all the ideologues opposite that 11 times the United States have tried trade attacks on the Canadian Wheat Board. Eleven times they've attacked the Canadian Wheat Board under the free trade Act — 11 times. Eleven times the Americans have been proved wrong under the Free Trade Agreement, but that doesn't stop them from attacking the wheat board. Why do they attack it? Because it's to their disadvantage. It's to Canadian's advantage, American's disadvantage.

Well it seems to me if our Canadian farmers are enjoying any advantage from the wheat board that should be an argument for any self respecting party that supports farmers or supports agriculture to support the Canadian Wheat Board. Why on earth would we go and try and do the Americans' job — what the courts said they're wrong. And yet we elect a Conservative

government federally, Madam Speaker, and what happens? They want to do away with the wheat board, just like that.

And worse yet, they want to ignore the law. They want to ignore the law that says that any change to the wheat board can happen under two conditions. One, there must be adequate consultation regarding the Canadian Wheat Board — consultation with producers. Two, there must be a vote of producers of the grains. Well, well, well. And that's what they're running from, and that's what their federal Conservative cousins are running from, is the right of farmers to vote. I say shame.

The federal government, on top of all of that, is manipulating the voters list. We have the federal Minister of Agriculture, who has cut off, arbitrarily lopped off a significant portion. I believe it's one-third of the farmers that were on the Canadian Wheat Board voting list and they're just lopped off. They're not able to vote. And how does that work? What a strange time to start tinkering and manipulating a voters list, Mr. Speaker, right at the time when we have one of the most critical votes in the Canadian Wheat Board history, a vote that questions — and in our case, we support — the very essence of single-desk marketing. And yet they deny that in every way they possibly can, including trying to deny a significant portion of farmers their right to vote.

I wonder. Doesn't the Conservative government in Ottawa trust farmers? Don't they trust farmers to vote on the farmers' own business, the Canadian Wheat Board? Doesn't the Saskatchewan Party, the hon. member for Saltcoats, don't you trust your farmers to know to vote, Mr. Speaker?

I think we should all have a little bit of faith in farmers. We've said it . . . All my life I've known that Canadian farmers, Saskatchewan farmers are as good as any farmers anywhere in the world — better than most, better than most. Why on earth can't we trust those farmers with the vote on their Canadian Wheat Board?

I am very pleased to support this motion. I'm pleased to be speaking in favour of it. I have already said that companies, their goals are to maximize profits for their shareholders. And I can't say it any better than Mr. Howard Fohr who writes in his letter to *The Radville Star* on October 18 this year, 2006, and I quote:

In an open market, we will be subject to the whims of large world traders and will have to take what they give us. The goal of grain companies is to make money for shareholders, not for farmers.

This is just the way the grain companies are organized. That's what they're there for. He doesn't say the grain companies are evil. They're not. But their job, Mr. Speaker, is to maximize the profit for the grain company shareholders — simple as that.

I think we've made this case. I have said that we are generally in support, we are in support of single-desk marketing. We want a simple question. And in fact our government, in its attempt to develop an unbiased, definitive question that could be put to producers and which would require simply a yes or a no, not anything more than that . . . Our proposed question, Mr.

Speaker, would read as follows: do you want single-desk selling? Do you want single-desk selling? We're having a great debate around single-desk selling. Do you want single-desk selling or don't you? That's the yes or no question.

I am so pleased that our motion, Mr. Speaker, supports the rights of producers as legislated by the Canadian Wheat Board Act and that we call upon the federal Conservative government to respect current federal legislation and to honour the democratic process by allowing all producers of wheat, barley, and durum the right to affirm or deny any proposed change to the Canadian Wheat Board through a producer plebiscite as stipulated in the Canadian Wheat Board Act, section 47(1). I can't make it any plainer. We're simply saying to the federal government, honour the law.

I enjoyed the opportunity to speak, and I again want to thank the veterans this close to Remembrance Day for allowing us that great democratic freedom. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly pleased to be able to enter into this very animated and emotional debate that the Minister of Agriculture's put forward, Mr. Speaker. As we witnessed by the speakers, there's certainly a lot of emotion attached to this issue, Mr. Speaker. There are certainly valid arguments, Mr. Speaker, on both sides of this issue, and the speakers on both sides of the House have certainly put those arguments forward, Mr. Speaker.

However there is one dimension that I would like to touch on that hasn't been touched on in this debate, and that is the whole area of empowering producers, Mr. Speaker. Producers are empowered on this issue in two areas in my mind. One is the empowerment in the marketplace, and we've certainly heard that debate on both sides of the House this afternoon. But the other area where producers can be empowered and they have been asking for many years to have more power is in the whole area of policy-making.

In the area of policy, Mr. Speaker, particularly with regards to that segment of the industry — the grain and oilseed and pulse area — producers really don't have a lot of power in policy making for one main reason, I think, and that is because a lot of policy that, ag policy that pertains to that sector is made at the federal level. And the reason for that is because with most commodities we in Western Canada and here in Saskatchewan, we produce way more than what we consume. In fact for most commodities we probably export 80 per cent of what we produce and only consume within Canada 20 per cent, so that prices for those commodities in the grain, oilseed, and pulse sector are set in the international market and they're subject to the vagaries of farm policy in other areas of the world, in our competitors, Mr. Speaker.

And I know, speaking to a number of farm leaders, leaders of farm organizations, that the area of influence in policy making at the national level was one of their greatest frustrations. I remember a conversation with the founding president of APAS

[Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan], Mr. Terry Hildebrandt. He had spent a lot of time, him and his group, his executive, in Ottawa working on the agricultural policy framework, putting forward good alternatives and suggestions that would work for Saskatchewan farmers. They took many trips to Ottawa to meet with bureaucrats, to meet with the Minister of the Environment. At the end of the day all they received was lip service. They were . . . said oh yes, you've got some good ideas; we'll certainly take them into consideration. And yet when the final decisions were made, I remember a conversation with Terry Hildebrandt saying that he was very disappointed and frustrated because of the fact that their suggestions were virtually ignored, or at least many of them were, Mr. Speaker.

And some of that happens at a provincial level except that, Mr. Speaker, the producers and through their organization and as individuals have greater access to the policy makers and to the bureaucrats, Mr. Speaker. So I think a number of producers, when they sit down and think about this whole issue that we are debating about today, some of them at least I believe realize that this is an opportunity for them to have some real impact on an ag policy, on what probably is the only real ag policy that we have in that whole sector and that is the way we market our cereal grains, Mr. Speaker.

Because in the area of grain and oilseeds and pulses, I recall the words of Dr. Andy Schmitz, who spoke at the ag committee meeting at the MLC [Midwestern Legislative Conference] that this province hosted in the summer of 2005. He was asked to speak to the agricultural committee and outline a Canadian farm policy. And he was allocated 20 minutes to speak and he used less than five because here is what he said. He said, in Canada, particularly with grain and oilseeds, we don't have a national ag policy. All we have is a number of programs that respond to crisis situations.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, he was absolutely right. We have ag policy in the supply managed sector but we really don't have a national ag policy in the grain and oilseeds sector. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a result of an unwillingness I think over the years for both levels of government to deal with it.

It's a difficult area. For many years those of us involved in that sector have heard from the federal government and from the provincial government that the solutions to our problems as grain and oilseed producers will have to be solved at the world trade talks, at the WTO [World Trade Organization]. Well, Mr. Speaker, we've heard that for 20 years and we'll probably hear it for another 20 years. It's not going to happen. The time has come to have a made-in-Canada solution for that sector of this industry.

And so I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the producers of Western Canada look at the only long-term ag policy for their sector that we have had, the wheat board issue, as an opportunity to have some real input into making policy, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have, like many other members, I have constituents who have very strong feelings on either side of this particular issue, this wheat board issue and a number of . . . There are some in each camp I believe — in fact I know because I have spoken to them — who don't want to have a

vote on the issue. But, Mr. Speaker, I have consulted as much as possible with the producers of my constituency, and I have found that the vast majority of them want to have the ability to influence farm policy, Mr. Speaker. They want to have the right to vote on this issue, Mr. Speaker. That is what I've been told. I have done a lot of work on this issue, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that those statements, my statements represent the majority of the producers in my constituency, Mr. Speaker.

[16:15]

So if we are going to have this vote, as the federal Minister of Agriculture has already said, on the barley issue . . . that he said he will certainly have a vote before changes are being made to the way farmers of Saskatchewan and Western Canada market their barley, he's going to have a plebiscite. So what we need to do, Mr. Speaker — and I believe this is what the producers of this province would want — is to ensure that we have a fair and balanced question on this plebiscite, a question that will accurately reflect the position of the majority of the producers in Saskatchewan.

And the second thing that we need to ensure is that the voters list is a fair voters list, that it's made up of actual producers and not of absentee landlords who really haven't got a stake in this whole issue, who really don't care about this issue, who some of them don't even live in this province in fact, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I look at this whole issue, Mr. Speaker, and I look at the motion that the Minister of Agriculture has put forward, I see once again this government trying to play politics with an issue that is so important to the farmers of this province, Mr. Speaker.

They bring forward a motion which is not . . . the first part of it is not accurate, Mr. Speaker. As my colleague from Melville-Saltcoats has said, it's not accurate. They quoted a motion from the March 2006 SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention, but they failed to recognize that at the SARM mid-term convention in November, just last week, that SARM has backed away from that position. And they have said, as my colleague from Melville-Saltcoats has said, is that SARM's position now is to let the federal government and the producers decide this issue.

Well my interpretation and the interpretation of the constituents that I have spoke to is that they feel that the producers should be voting on this issue, Mr. Speaker. So I would have thought that perhaps the Minister of Agriculture would have had someone amend his motion to more accurately reflect what SARM's current position is. But he failed to do that, Mr. Speaker. The second part of the motion I don't have a problem with, Mr. Speaker. I believe that producers should have the right to vote on this issue, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, I have consulted widely with my constituents, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be a member of the Saskatchewan Party led by the member from Swift Current — a party, Mr. Speaker, that has the flexibility within it and the way it's structured, Mr. Speaker. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, even though I have these reservations about the first part of this motion, Mr. Speaker, I believe I have the duty as a member of this Legislative Assembly to accurately reflect the views of my

constituents, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — With respect to the motion before us regarding the wheat board, moved by the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, seconded by the member for Saskatchewan Rivers, is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Those who favour the motion, say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion, say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — I do believe the ayes have it. Call in the members for a standing vote.

[The division bells rang from 16:19 until 16:25.]

The Speaker: — There's been a motion moved by the Minister of Agriculture and Food, the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, seconded by the member for Saskatchewan Rivers:

That this Assembly recognize the Prairie Producer Coalition's support for rights of producers as legislated by the Canadian Wheat Board Act and the resolution passed by 85 per cent of the delegates at SARM 2006 annual convention calling for the federal government to continue its financial support of government guarantees and single-desk selling of the Canadian Wheat Board;

Further . . .

Order please, order please. Order please. Members have had . . . Order please. Members have been given full opportunity to debate.

Further, that this Assembly call upon the federal Conservative government to respect current federal legislation and to honour the democratic process by allowing all producers of wheat, barley, and durum the right to affirm or deny any proposed change to the Canadian Wheat Board through a producer plebiscite as stipulated in the Canadian Wheat Board Act, section 47.1.

Those who favour the motion please rise.

[Yeas — 28]

Calvert	Hamilton	Van Mulligen
Lautermilch	Hagel	Serby
Atkinson	Sonntag	Wartman
Forbes	Prebble	Crofford

Belanger	Higgins	Thomson
Nilson	Beatty	Taylor
Junor	Harper	McCall
Quennell	Trew	Yates
Addley	Morin	Borgerson
Hart		

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion please rise.

[Nays — 22]

Wall	Toth	Elhard
McMorris	D'Autremont	Krawetz
Draude	Hermanson	Bjornerud
Wakefield	Harpauer	Gantefer
Eagles	Weekes	Cheveldayoff
Huyghebaert	Kerpan	Kirsch
Brkich	Dearborn	Merriman
Duncan		

Clerk Assistant (Committees): — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 28; those opposed, 22.

The Speaker: — I declare the motion carried. Why is the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Asking leave to introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley has asked leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Wartman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, joining our guests from the Real Voice for Choice in your gallery is Fern Nielson from the northwest part of the province. Fern has been also very active in the agriculture community and is a member of the Farm Leaders Advisory Group.

And we appreciate the insights that are provided by the folks who are in the gallery and we wish them the best in their work as they move forward as a Real Voice for Choice. And I'd ask all members to please welcome Fern and the other guests again to the gallery. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS (continued)

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

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave of the House to introduce a motion of transmittal.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave of the House to introduce a motion of transmittal. Is leave

granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly I move:

That the Speaker on behalf of the Legislative Assembly transmit copies of the motion and verbatim transcripts of the motion just passed, to the federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Minister for Canadian Wheat Board.

I move, seconded by the Government Deputy House Leader, the hon. member for Regina Dewdney.

[16:30]

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader, the member for Moose Jaw North, seconded by the Deputy Government House Leader, the member for Regina Dewdney:

That the Speaker on behalf of the Legislative Assembly transmit copies of the motion and verbatim transcripts of the motion just passed to the federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 4

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Higgins that **Bill No. 4 – The Education Amendment Act, 2006 (No. 2)/Loi de 2006 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation (n° 2)** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to stand up and make a few comments regarding the education Bill before us, amendment Act 2006.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that the amendment is clarifying a number of issues in regards to The Education Act, specifically the issue of minority faith school divisions. And my colleagues and I had the pleasure of meeting with the Saskatchewan School Boards Association when they gave their reasons as to

why they felt this Bill was important to them.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, we also need to raise the fact that there are across the province of Saskatchewan — more specifically in rural Saskatchewan — there are a number of concerns when it comes to schools, the size of schools, and imminent closure of a number of schools across the province.

And the question that I believe we raised with the school boards association, exactly what was the purpose of this legislation? Was it intended just to curb the ability of communities, organizations, or parental groups to challenge school closures? And I think in some ways that's the reasoning for it.

However I can understand as well, Mr. Speaker, that the purpose is to clarify the definition of what minority faiths is. And if I understand the minister correctly, the minister talks about the first series of amendments being proposed are in the spirit of strengthening the process for formation of minority faith school divisions. And they will provide enhanced support for minority faith communities in establishing a separate school division.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we look at the province and we look at the makeup of the province and we look at the geographic location that many families face in relation to the education of their young people, I think that it's important that we also recognize that parents and schools, or parents and communities need to have a say, and recognition how they . . . how they continue to provide the educational opportunities for their students.

As well as the school, the Saskatchewan School Boards Association needs to have a very clear understanding of what the guidelines are in regards to minority faiths. As the minister indicated and as my colleague from Saskatoon also indicated, the original intent of the piece of legislation was to allow for . . . allowed for a separate school division in the province of Saskatchewan, namely the Catholic school division.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't have a problem with clarifying those aspects of The Education Act so that it in effect closes some loopholes, but as well it also recognizes the fact that there are other minority faith groups that need to be considered in this whole debate, and that their opportunity to form a separate school division isn't taken out of . . . isn't removed from them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I raise the question because I've been contacted by a number of groups — certainly in my constituency and I know many of my colleagues have as well — that have voiced great concern in regards to the amalgamation into the larger divisions and how that amalgamation is now impacting the delivery of education. And unfortunately as we've amalgamated into the larger school division, the ability to fund schools has all become a numbers game.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important for us to realize that education of our children isn't strictly . . . shouldn't strictly be based on numbers and the ability to fund schools. I read a letter in response to . . . sent from one of the school divisions to . . . a letter that they had received from a school board Chair indicating, where they say, we're all trying to provide the best

possible education for all the students in our school divisions within the existing financial realities. And then she goes on to say, the guiding reality is funding levels, and she talks about sustainability and the fact that RMs are . . . There's a revolt in municipalities in regards to funding of education, because this government has allowed and in fact encouraged a continued dependence on the property owner to fund education across the province of Saskatchewan.

And unfortunately the larger school divisions have now used that as an argument to close schools. And, Mr. Speaker, I think we need to look beyond that. And I trust that at the end of the day this legislation — and if I'm to understand it correctly — does look beyond that.

The minister also talked about school councils and the concern raised there, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the proposed new school councils, is the fact that a issue raised with me was I've had . . . over the years I've had some very strong parental councils in my constituency in many of my schools. And as has been indicated to me, it seems that their voice has not been heard very clearly by some of these regional boards in regards to the decisions they're making.

And so I would trust that when the minister talks about school councils actually having some involvement, that indeed that this legislation will do that, that there will actually be a voice that people have on their councils and that that voice will be heard. And if the regional school boards that have been put in place by this government, if they're not listening, then at least the Minister of Education at the time will acknowledge some of the concerns being raised by these school councils.

And so, Mr. Speaker, while I don't necessarily have a problem with the changes that are being proposed, I think it's important for us to realize that . . . And we trust that these changes will not implement . . . or impede schools or communities or parent organizations who may want to look at other alternatives down the road.

Now when I talk about the response from one of my school divisions to a letter from the current board and their talk about the funding levels and the need to make changes because of the funding levels and the fact that RMs are revolting, some of the small schools I have in my constituents . . . I know my colleagues as well . . . Research has been done, Mr. Speaker, whereby parents have concluded and ratepayers have concluded that they would be further ahead if they put their funding directly into the school. And they could adequately, Mr. Speaker, they could adequately put the teachers in position in schools and, in fact, they could actually do it at a lower rate — property tax rate — than they are currently being taxed today.

And so I just wanted to raise the concerns that are being brought to my attention that every time we turn around, we're told that we have to reduce because of funding levels that the boards of education don't have and the dependence on the property tax owner . But the unfortunate part is the smaller school has to pay the cost and they end up having to transport their . . . Their children have to be transported much greater distances.

In some cases in my constituency, those distances aren't that

large. But across the province there are situations, Mr. Speaker, where we realize some of those distances will just become unbearable for young people and we wonder whether or not they will really achieve the level of education we're trying to afford them.

So, Mr. Speaker, my comments today are based more on the fact . . . Let's, as we look at the legislation . . . And if I understand the minister correctly it's just ensuring that we have a proper understanding of what the legislation means and closing loopholes that may be used, that we're also aware of the fact that their parents and school boards, smaller school boards as well need to have a clarity in the legislation that indicates whether or not they have an ability to provide a choice and choose an option as to where their children are being educated.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I'm more than prepared to allow for further debate on this issue. Thank you.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a few comments about this particular legislation on this Bill. I know we don't have a real problem with it, but just want to make a few comments. I think when a . . . Out my way when a school amalgamation came, it was a huge concern out in our area because basically we don't have any huge centres. There are a lot of small schools, and everybody was worried that schools would be closed. That was people's most worried thought when they went to the meetings before it came along.

And now we're in a big division that runs all the way from Davidson all the way to the Alberta border, and they were quite concerned about the size of it. And there was talk about, you know, things . . . What would happen when the school closure moratorium came off — would there be immediate school closures and that, and what would our options be? And it was discussed at various little meetings and probably with local school boards and that, and a lot of questions to me were asked. Well what would our options be?

And I think this Bill, although I know it's possibly closing a loophole, that people won't just use that to especially open a faith-based school when they're really not faith based. And they shouldn't. But there's also the other option of private schools. Some of them had mentioned, you know, if we could open a private school. Because out in our area, you take west of me, I mean there is huge differences between towns. I mean there's a school maybe in Loreburn and Outlook and then you're crossing the lake. And you have to go all the way around Lake Diefenbaker if some of them schools close in that area. And you could be looking at people being on the bus for an hour, hour and a half, and most people do not want their kids on the bus, especially small kids, for an hour, hour and a half.

I was at a meeting in Kenaston this fall. The school board had a new meeting, which is good. I thought that they were going to go . . . they went to about four communities. One of them was in my constituency. My constituency only goes up to the edge of Outlook, and this particular division Sun West. And they had a meeting to discuss about the viabilities of schools — what the people and the parents in the communities thought the viability

for schools were. And with that, they provided some information on what it costs to educate a student in a small school versus a larger school. They had different sizes. And I know in some of my schools they talked about . . . It costs about \$4,900 roughly, they figured, to educate a student. In some of the larger centres they had it down to I think around 3,100.

So I mean, actually the people in the smaller schools they get a little concerned. They're hoping that they don't just look at the money end of the issue, that they also look at if that school is closed that there is huge consult, that they consult with the communities, and that when they close a small school in that area, that basically that is a last option open and most of the people realize that it has to close.

And I think that message was conveyed to the school trustees very well, at that end of it. And I hope they took that message home — that school closures should be the very last thing that you look at in the community, that you should explore all kind of options first to keep that school viable in any way you can.

One of the other things that they're looking at in my area is bringing over international students, at that end of it. In fact there's a meeting in Outlook coming up on Tuesday. And I know that the division and some of the towns are very favourable of that, to help keep some of these small schools open. And I hope the government, at that end, Immigration and that, will help and assist any way they can, if these schools in that division works in that direction. It sounds like the school division is in favour of it, which is good because we should be exploring all kind of different options when we're looking at keeping open a school, talking about . . . especially out in my area which there is great distances between some of these schools, if you close them, at that. And unfortunately due to the declining population, our schools are getting smaller, at that end of it.

But yet the students are receiving excellent education out there with that per capita. And some of the towns I've got, like Loreburn and Kenaston and Davidson, there's more kids going to university there than there probably is in the cities, going on to further their education. Most of these students in these small schools are going on to further their education which is good. So that speaks to even the viability of small schools out there, that you should be looking at just not the cost of keeping open a small school.

We also have to look at the impact of moving students 60 miles in another direction to another school. In my area that's what you're looking at in some areas, that you're looking at moving kids as much as 40 to 50 miles to another school if you close the school.

So I know that if a school closure does come — and which as an MLA I've been involved in a couple of them — they always talk about what are the options. You know, can we open a private school, at that end of it, and keep it going? And that takes a lot of . . . I see a lot of work on the community's part and a lot of dedication at that end of it. And I would hope with this piece of legislation that it still leaves that option open, that if a community wholeheartedly, if it chooses to open a private school that it doesn't have to jump through too many hoops at that end of it. It should be allowed to move in that direction if

the community as a whole can make it work.

[16:45]

So with that, Mr. Speaker, those are a few words that I wanted to say. I want to impart to the school division and to the government to always make sure that the last option to close a small school . . . should be the very last option to do that. That should be your very last option to do that. And if the community wants to move on to another level of schooling, they should be allowed to, and I think this legislation does allow them to do that. They have to go through the proper channels which is good. That's what everybody expects.

With that, Mr. Speaker, that's what I have to say on this particular piece of legislation.

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to speak on this particular Bill dealing with The Education Act and particularly dealing with the changes that have just taken place in the last couple of years, Mr. Speaker, resulting from the amalgamations, the forced amalgamations of the school divisions into — I believe it is — 12 or 13 divisions across Saskatchewan, excluding those that are strictly urban, Mr. Speaker.

This has had a serious impact across those school divisions, particularly when it comes to parents' opportunity to have input into the schools. And for this reason, this Bill includes the formation of school councils in which parents and interested members of the community could participate and provide advice.

Now I do have a bit of a problem with that, Mr. Speaker, in the sense that the parents can only provide advice and have no legal standing in that sense of a governance side of the thing in providing that advice to their local school which they did have previously across rural Saskatchewan. I recognize that in the urban settings with a lot of the local schools they did not have that opportunity to provide that governance input but that was there across rural Saskatchewan.

That has now been lost and now what this Bill does is tries to bring the school councils into place in those local schools without giving them any actual governance. Now some of the school divisions I'm told will allow those school councils — not the student councils but the parent councils — to have some role in governance in an advisory and maybe even stronger than an advisory capacity, but they won't have the legal mandate to actually carry that out. So that's a good part of the Bill, Mr. Speaker.

But there is another area that deals with the separate school system and the development of a separate school. What is happening right now is that if a community wants to provide a separate school, if they have the proper standing — i.e., there's a minority faith in the community, be that a Catholic or a Protestant faith, Mr. Speaker — that can say that we're a minority in the community and wish to have a separate religious school, that at the present time, they can do so. It's their

constitutional right and the minister has to provide that.

This change to the legislation will not impede that in preventing it, but what it will do is put in place time frames for that to happen. It means that they have to put in a notice by November 1 that they wish to form a separate school, and then it would take place the following school year. So November 1 is the deadline for application for a new school to come into place September 1 of the next year.

Mr. Speaker, the second part of this that's not part of this legislation but that a number of parents have a concern with is in The Education Act already, and it's the dates for notification of closure of a school. And presently, Mr. Speaker, that is in February. So the budgets, up until the new districts were formed, came down for December 31, January 1. And then notifications of school closures had to be done in February because they had to be done six months prior to the start of the school year, the subsequent school year which would have been in September.

So what we have in place is a notification process for the closure of a school that is done in February for that fall. But the notification for the establishment of a new separate school has to take place before November. So you're going to be 18 months, if a community says we desire to have a separate religious school in our community based on a minority faith situation, from the point of time they could have received a notification of a school closure in that community, would be approximately 18 months from the school closure notice to the establishment of a new separate . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . that's right.

And the member from Regina Northeast is agreeing with me, Mr. Speaker, that this is actually what's happening, is an 18-month time frame that's happening. And that is a concern because now The Education Act has changed to provide the budget process come in place August 31-September 1 Mr. Speaker. Previously it was December 31-January 1, with the closure notification of a school the next month after that in February.

There's no reason, Mr. Speaker, why that couldn't be continued on, that with the budgetary process being August-September, a one-month notification would put it into October, Mr. Speaker. So I think there is time frames in there for the minister to take a look at if they wish to accommodate some of the concerns. It would still make it extremely difficult if someone wanted to utilize the closure of a school as the reason for the formation of a separate school division, Mr. Speaker, extremely tight but still theoretically possible, although I don't know that it would be practically possible.

So I think that's something that the minister should take a look at. Otherwise it seems to be an attempt to utilize the legislation to put up roadblocks into the formation of potentially new separate religious schools, Mr. Speaker — either Catholic or Protestant as the case may be — for whichever the minority situation is in that community. So that's one of the areas that I would ask that the minister take a look at, at possibly changing the date of notification for the closure of a school that's currently operating.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to move adjournment of debate at the present time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Cannington that debate on second reading of Bill No. 4 be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Motion is carried. The Chair recognizes the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Hagel: — Mr. Speaker, given the time and where we are in the agenda, I will move that 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 16:52.]

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